

Iowa Core – Davenport Schools
Priority Essential Concepts and Skills for Sociology, Psychology, or AP Psychology
with Details and Examples

Introduction

Social studies is the integrated study of the social sciences and humanities to promote civic competence. Within the school program, social studies provides coordinated, systematic study drawing upon such disciplines as anthropology, archaeology, economics, geography, history, law, philosophy, political science, psychology, religion, and sociology, as well as appropriate content from the humanities, mathematics, and natural sciences. The primary purpose of social studies is to help young people develop the ability to make informed and reasoned decisions for the public good as citizens of a culturally diverse, democratic society in an interdependent world.

Definition of Social Studies
National Council for the Social Studies (NCSS)

The founders of our country emphasized that the vitality and security of a democracy depends upon the education and willingness of its citizens to participate actively in society. This level of participation requires civic competence. In other words, it is imperative that our future generations gain an understanding of the core concepts of social studies. Life in the United States within our democratic system is constantly changing which creates varying social circumstances. As a result, citizens need to adapt to such changes in order to sustain vital democratic traditions. Meeting this need is the mission of the social studies.

In social studies, students develop knowledge, skills, and dispositions, including but not limited to:

- Possessing basic knowledge and ways of thinking drawn from many academic disciplines
- Expressing ideas in written form
- Reading reflectively and critically
- Analyzing their own and others' opinions on social issues
- Becoming motivated to participate in civic and community life as active and informed citizens

As we work to carry on the ideals of the founders, we are compelled to revisit our fundamental beliefs and institutions and to construct new social contexts and relationships. The Iowa Core for Social Studies reflects the belief that the informed social studies student comprehends and applies to personal and public experiences the core content perspectives of the many academic fields of the social studies. Our entire social experiences, as well as our republic, are established upon the principles of individual citizenship. Therefore, it is necessary to pay attention to the education of those future citizens.

For that reason, the Iowa Core for Social Studies has been structured around five core social studies content areas. They are:

- Behavioral Sciences
- Economics
- Geography
- History
- Political Science/Civic Literacy

For each area, knowledge and skills have been identified and defined in terms of detailed understandings that students should be able to apply. It is of key importance that students possess the knowledge and skills associated with the economic, political, and social forces that make up the human systems in which they live. In addition, they must possess the historical knowledge which created the spatial, temporal, and cultural perspectives present in our world.

The Iowa Core for Social Studies is premised upon a rigorous and relevant K – 12 social studies program. Engaging students in the pursuit of active informed citizenship will require a broad range of understandings and skills. It will also require an articulated curriculum which connects students to the social world through informed instructional experiences led by teachers who are committed to active civic participation. This represents a bold step toward a vision of social and civic literacy for all of Iowa's students.

Behavioral Sciences

Behavioral sciences include, but are not limited to, the areas of sociology, anthropology and psychology. In addressing these disciplines the actions and reactions of humans are studied through observational and experimental methods.

Sociology, Psychology, or AP Psychology Course Priorities - Details and Examples

Essential Concept and/or Skill: *Understand the historical development of the behavioral sciences and the changing nature of society.*

Examples:

- Understand the fields of psychology and sociology developed in response to social and economic changes.
- Understand the role of major social institutions of American society.
- Understand the role of social institutions as well as individual and group behaviors, in bringing about social change.
- Understand that mass media, migrations, and conquest have affected social change by exposing one culture to another.
- Understand change and development in institutions further both continuity and change in societies.

Essential Concept and/or Skill: *Understand the influences on individual and group behavior and group decision making.*

Examples:

- Understand the components of social structure and how social structure affects the individual in society.
- Understand society practices social control through the use of norms and sanctions.
- Understand the role of deviance in society and its effects on individual and group behavior.
- Understand that a group may act, hold beliefs, and/or present itself as a cohesive whole, and yet individual members may hold varying beliefs.
- Understand that people might ignore evidence that challenges their beliefs and more readily accept evidence that supports them.

Essential Concept and/or Skill: *Understand the appropriate research procedures and skills of the behavioral scientist.*

Examples:

- Understand the appropriate uses of the research methods used by behavioral scientists.
- Understand the types of research methods used by behavioral scientists to study human behavior, social groups, social issues and problems.

Essential Concept and/or Skill: *Understand current social issues to determine how the individual is able to formulate opinions and responds to those issues.*

Examples:

- Understand past and current cultural, religious, and social reform movements.
- Understand that differences in the behavior of individuals arise from the interaction of heredity and experience.
- Understand that conflict between people or groups may arise from competition over ideas, resources, power, and/or status.
- Understand that personal values influence the types of conclusions people make.
- Understand that even when the majority of people in a society agree on a social decision, the minority who disagree must be protected from oppression.
- Understand ideas and modes of inquiry drawn from behavioral science and social theory in the examination of persistent issues and social problems.

Essential Concept and/or Skill: *Understand how social status, social groups, social change, and social institutions influence individual and group behaviors.*

Examples:

- Understand the concept of stratification.
- Understand gender, age, health, and socioeconomic status affect social inequality.
- Understand changes in social and political institutions reflect and affect individuals' values and behaviors.

Essential Concept and/or Skill: *Understand the process of how humans develop, learn, adapt to their environment, and internalize their culture.*

Examples:

- Understand that heredity, culture, and personal experience interact in shaping human behavior.
- Understand the stages of physical, perceptual, and intellectual development that humans experience from infancy to old age.
- Understand the concept of culture.
- Understand that peoples' values and behavior are shaped by their culture.
- Understand the processes of cultural transmission and cultural change.

Essential Concept and/or Skill: *Understand how personality and agents of socialization impact the individual.*

Examples:

- Understand the factors that shape personality and identity
- Understand the process of socialization leads individuals to become functioning members of society.
- Understand groups and institutions sometimes promote social conformity.

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