

Iowa Core – Davenport Schools
Priority Essential Concepts and Skills for U.S. History or AP U.S. History
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.

History

History is the study and analysis of the past. Built upon a foundation of historical knowledge, history seeks to analyze the past in order to describe the relationship between historical facts, concepts, and generalizations. History draws upon cause and effect relationships within multiple social narratives to help explain complex human interactions. Understanding the past provides context for the present and implications for the future.

U.S. History or AP U.S. History Course Priorities - Details and Examples

Essential Concept and/or Skill: *Understand historical patterns, periods of time, and the relationships among these elements.*

Examples:

- Understand concepts such as chronology, causality, change, conflict, and complexity to explain, analyze, and show connections among patterns of historical change and continuity.
- Understand significant historical periods and patterns of change within and across cultures, such as the development of ancient cultures and civilizations, the rise of nation states, and social, economic, and political revolutions.
- Understand patterns of social and cultural continuity in various societies.

Essential Concept and/or Skill: *Understand the role of culture and cultural diffusion on the development and maintenance of societies.*

Examples:

- Understand the ways groups, societies, and cultures have addressed human needs and concerns in the past.
- Understand societal patterns for preserving and transmitting culture while adapting to environmental or social change.
- Understand the value of cultural diversity, as well as cohesion, within and across groups.
- Understand the origins, central ideas, and global influence of world religions
- Understand cultural factors that have promoted political conflict.

Essential Concept and/or Skill: *Understand how and why people create, maintain, or change systems of power, authority, and governance.*

Examples:

- Understand the purpose of government and how its powers have been acquired, used, and justified.
- Understand different political systems from historical periods.
- Understand from a historical perspective the purpose and effects of treaties, alliances, and international organizations that characterize today's interconnected world.

Essential Concept and/or Skill: *Understand the role of individuals and groups within a society as promoters of change or the status quo.*

Examples:

- Understand the significance of important people, their work, and their ideas in the areas of political and intellectual leadership, inventions, discoveries, and the arts.
- Understand the role the values of specific people in history played in influencing history.
- Understand the significant religious, philosophical, and social movements and their impacts on society and social reform.
- Understand the effect of "chance events" on history.

Essential Concept and/or Skill: *Understand the effect of economic needs and wants on individual and group decisions.*

Examples:

- Understand how economic issues have influenced society in the past.
- Understand connections between the cultural achievements of early civilizations and the development of political and economic institutions.
- Understand that choices made by individuals, firms, or government officials often have unintended consequences that can offset the initial effects of the decision.
- Understand that the introduction of new products and production methods by entrepreneurs has impacted economic growth, competition, technological progress, and job opportunities.
- Understand the historical relationship between economic growth, higher production levels, new technologies, and standard of living.

Essential Concept and/or Skill: *Understand the effects of geographic factors on historical events.*

Examples:

- Understand ways that historical events have been influenced by, and have influenced, physical and human geographic factors in local, regional, national, and global settings.
- Understand reasons for changes in the world's political boundaries.
- Understand the historic reasons for conflicts within specific world regions.
- Understand past government policies designed to change a country's population characteristics.

Essential Concept and/or Skill: *Understand the role of innovation on the development and interaction of societies.*

Examples:

- Understand significant changes caused by technology, industrialization, urbanization, and population growth and the effects of these changes.
- Understand the historical impact of the interaction and interdependence of science, technology, and society in a variety of cultural settings.

Essential Concept and/or Skill: *Understand cause and effect relationships and other historical thinking skills in order to interpret events and issues.*

Examples:

- Understand processes such as using a variety of sources, providing, validating, and weighing evidence for claims, checking credibility of sources, and searching for causality.
- Understand relationships between and among significant events.
- Understand facts and concepts drawn from history, along with methods of historical inquiry, to inform decision-making about and action-taking on public issues.
- Understand the process of critical historical inquiry to reconstruct and reinterpret the past.
- Understand multiple viewpoints within and across cultures related to important events, recurring dilemmas, and issues.
- Understand how and why events may be interpreted differently depending upon the perspectives of participants, witnesses, reporters, and historians.

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