

Iowa Core – Davenport Schools
Priority Essential Concepts and Skills for 7th Grade Social Studies
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.

Grade 7 Priorities - Details and Example

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

Examples:

- Understand that all behavior is affected by both inheritance and experience
- Understand values, language, beliefs, and behaviors contribute to the transmission of culture.
- Understand that language and tools enable human beings to learn complicated and varied things from others.
- Understand that technology is important in spreading the ideas, values, and behavior patterns within a society.

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

Examples:

- Understand that personal values influence the types of conclusions people make.
- Understand the concepts of bias, prejudice, stereotyping, power, role, status, justice.
- Understand group and institutional influences on people, events, and elements of culture.

Essential Concept and/or Skill: *Understand how to evaluate social research and information.*

Examples:

- Understand that human behavior is studied using scientific methods.
- Understand basic distinctions between information that is based on fact and information that is based on opinion.

Economics

Economics addresses the production, distribution, and consumption of goods and services. The concept of scarcity is understood to mean that available resources are insufficient to satisfy the wants and needs of everyone. Economics is therefore founded upon the alternative use of available resources and the study of choices.

Grade 7 Priorities - Details and Example

Essential Concept and/or Skill: *Understand the role of scarcity and economic trade-offs and how economic conditions impact people's lives.*

Examples:

- Understand the cost and benefits of economic trade-offs and how scarcity of resources affects costs and benefits.
- Understand economic trade-offs at different levels (personal, business, local government).
- Understand the short term and long term impact of economic trade-offs on society.

Essential Concept and/or Skill: *Understand how governments throughout the world influence economic behavior.*

Examples:

- Understand goods and services that the government provides.
- Understand the government's purpose in preventing monopolies.
- Understand how taxes are used at the local, state, and national levels.
- Understand revenues and expenditures in the federal budget.
- Understand the concepts of balanced budget, budget deficit, budget surplus, and national debt.
- Understand the role of the Federal Reserve on the economy.
- Understand the process of filing personal tax returns.

Essential Concept and/or Skill: *Understand factors that create patterns of interdependence in the world economy.*

Examples:

- Understand the impact of imported and exported goods and services in the local community.
- Understand the concepts of free trade and trade barriers.
- Understand trade barriers imposed by the United States from a historical perspective and the impact of those actions.
- Understand the interdependence of America and other regions of the world in terms of imports and exports.
- Understand balance of trade and trade deficits and their impact on the price of goods.
- Understand that the increased interdependence of the world market causes economic conditions in one country to affect others.

Essential Concept and/or Skill: *Understand how universal economic concepts present themselves in various types of economies throughout the world.*

Examples:

- Understand the different types of economies and universal economic concepts (supply and demand, production, consumption, labor, capital, etc.) and their influence on each other.
- Understand how the laws of supply and demand affect price and consumers' responses to prices.
- Understand how the change of price for one good or service can affect the price for other goods and services.
- Understand causes of inflation, deflation, and recessions and who gains or loses from them.
- Understand the relation between gross domestic products and standards of living among countries.
- Understand unemployment.
- Understand the role of profit in motivating entrepreneurs in starting new businesses.

Geography

Geography is the study of the interaction between people and their environments. Geography therefore looks at the world through the concepts of location, place, human-environmental interaction, movement, and region.

Grade 7 Priorities - Details and Example

Essential Concept and/or Skill: *Understand the use of geographic tools to locate and analyze information about people, places, and environments.*

Examples:

- Understand the characteristics and purposes of geographic tools and representations of the earth such as maps, globes, graphs, charts, models, grid systems, aerial and other photographs, GIS, satellite-produced images and databases.
- Understand mental maps of locales, regions and the world.
- Understand geographic relationships such as population density and spatial distribution patterns.

Essential Concept and/or Skill: *Understand how geographic and human characteristics create culture and define regions.*

Examples:

- Understand human and physical characteristics of place.
- Understand the concept of region.
- Understand the physical environment affects life in different regions.
- Understand communities reflect the cultural backgrounds of their inhabitants.
- Understand patterns of cultural diffusion.

Essential Concept and/or Skill: *Understand how physical processes and human actions modify the environment and how the environment affects humans.*

Examples:

- Understand human systems develop in response to conditions in the physical environment.
- Understand major processes that shape patterns in the physical environment.
- Understand the environmental consequences of both the unintended and intended outcomes of major technological changes in human history.
- Understand technology influences the human capacity to modify the physical environment.
- Understand the environmental consequences of people changing the physical environment.
- Understand ecosystems in terms of their characteristics and ability to withstand stress caused by physical events.

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.

****None of the History Essential Concepts and Skills are PRIORITIES for 7th grade.****

Political Science/Civic Literacy

NOTE: The Essential Concepts and Skills listed in Social Studies – Political Science/Civic Literacy are the same as the Essential Concepts and Skills listed in 21st Century Skills – Civic Literacy.

Political science is the study of power and authority through the examination of political processes, governmental institutions, and human behavior in a civil society. In this context the study of civics is understood to include the form and function of government. Civic literacy encompasses civics but also addresses the individual's social and political participation.

Grade 7 Priorities - Details and Example

Essential Concept and/or Skill: *Understand how various political systems throughout the world define the rights and responsibilities of the individual.*

Examples:

- Understand constitutions protect individual rights and promote the common good.
- Understand the essential characteristics of limited and unlimited governments.

Essential Concept and/or Skill: *Understand the role of the United States in current world affairs.*

Examples:

- Understand conditions, actions and motivations that contribute to conflict and cooperation within and among nations.
- Understand current foreign policy issues and the means the United States is using to deal with them.

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