



Social Studies
Course: American Civics:
Grade: 7

Essential Course Information

- Course revision
- Curriculum aligned to Essential Elements
- Compliance with Chapter 185

Course Overview

Exploring the structure of the United States government on a local, state, and national level, this course challenges students to understand, analyze and evaluate the fundamental concepts and philosophies that led to the creation of the United States Constitution. Students will explore the impact of American democracy through engaging, interactive activities that introduces social, political, and economic concepts, while encouraging students to take learning beyond the classroom in order to be an involved and active citizen in the 21st century.

Unit	Estimated Class Time	Overview
<u>Unit 1</u> <u>Principles of Democracy</u>	12 weeks	The United States of America is unique among nations in that it was founded upon an idea. What unites us as Americans is our collective commitment to our shared values and ideals. However what makes the U.S.A. <i>distinctly</i> unique, is the rich diversity reflected in American Citizens today governed by the longest-lasting political blueprint for representative democracy: The U.S. Constitution. Any analysis of the structure of the American government requires that students first understand the foundational concepts that are the rationale for constitutional democracy. This unit will ask students to explore the key concepts and principles upon which the government of the United States was established and evaluate their impact on an ever-growing diverse American culture and society.
<u>Unit 2</u> <u>The Powers of the Constitution</u>	12 weeks	Students will connect the growing tensions American colonists' experienced under the tyranny of Great Britain and explore the ideals expressed in the Declaration of Independence, providing the background for how the document inspired generations of Americans to more fully realize its core concepts of liberty, equality, and justice. Students will investigate how the failures of the Articles of Confederation provided the opportunities needed to conceive the United States Constitution. Students will conclude their learning in this unit by evaluating how the U.S. Constitution and the New Jersey state constitution provide the structural framework for limited government and constitutional democracy, aimed at preventing tyrannical government and securing the rights of its citizens.
<u>Unit 3</u> <u>Civics at Work</u>	12 weeks	This unit examines how the structural framework for limited government and constitutional democracy studied in unit 2 is a crucial component of promoting the goals of the Constitution as stated in the Preamble. Students experience the Constitution as a living document and American democracy as an ongoing experiment requiring their active participation through various simulations of American Civics 'at work'. This unit will investigate the challenges and triumphs to fulfilling our American ideals through the applications of Constitutional powers, purposes of government, and the effectiveness of citizens in meeting the goals of the Constitution. Students will evaluate how each American ideal has grown and expanded to be more inclusive and identify areas in need of growth as citizens strive to fulfill the potential of 'a more perfect Union.'
<u>Unit 4</u> <u>Active Citizenship, Rights and Reforms</u>	8 weeks	In this unit, students will analyze how the country has changed both politically and socially in relation to our American ideals. In addition to civic education content, students require opportunities to develop and practice the skills and dispositions to become active and well-informed supporters of their community. While voting is an important responsibility of citizenship, students must also learn how to interact with the appropriate levels of government to address matters of public policy that affect their lives and occupations. This unit explores the nature of citizenship by examining how Constitutional rights, and the pursuit of equal rights for all, have and continue to lead to various reform movements in American society while offering questions and strategies to help students develop the skills they will need to be active members and supporters of their communities.

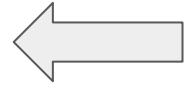
Content Continuum

6

US History Through Reconstruction

7

Civics
Active Citizenship and American Democracy



8

World History
Early Humans Through the Renaissance

INSTRUCTIONAL / SUPPLEMENTAL MATERIALS

Supplemental readings and online resources to enhance understanding of course content and skills

- DBQ Project
- Thinking Like a Historian: Stanford History Education Group
- iCivics
- NJ Amistad Commision and others.

All existing resources will be evaluated for alignment to new curriculum

KEY FEATURES OF REVISION

- Revised to align more with New Jersey's Middle School Civics mandate.
- Expanded the focus on local and state governments.
- Aligned to fit diverse perspectives and the influence of various groups on contemporary society.
- Greater differentiation between honors and non-honors.

English Language Learner, Special Education and Differentiation Strategies will be included at a later date.

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