

Content Advisor Feedback

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GUIDING QUESTIONS

1. Does each course follow a complete and logical development of social studies concepts presented? If not, what suggestions do you have for improvement?

Each course appears to be well considered. I have marked areas where I think there may be room for improvement.

2. Are there any gaps or concepts missing that should be addressed? Are there specific areas that need to be updated to reflect current research?

I have marked those below, with appropriate placement.

3. Do these high school course(s) sufficiently prepare students for postsecondary success? If not, please provide suggestions for improving the standards.

These courses need to anticipate the future a bit more, with inclusion of topics dealing with China, Ukraine, Mexico, and emerging technology including AI, robotics, and cryptocurrency.

4. Do the standards for the course(s) adequately address social studies skills? If not, please give examples of how the standards might be improved.

They do to my satisfaction.

5. Are the student expectations clear and specific? If not, please give examples of how the language might be improved.

I found the language well considered and easy to understand.

6. Are there student expectations that are not essential or unnecessarily duplicative and can be eliminated? If so, please identify by course and student expectation number, e.g., U.S. History 5.B, etc.

I have included a list below that introduces areas for retained learning and learning across courses.

7. Do you have any other suggestions for ways in which the high school courses can be improved?

See below.

§113.71. United States History Studies

(c) Knowledge and Skills

c (12) (B). Not sure what National Guard Unit 200 refers to, unless it is the New Mexico National Guard Unit, more correctly identified as the 200th Coast Artillery Regiment.

c (13) (D). I would recommend introducing the US support for French efforts in Indochina as a way of setting up the Vietnam conflict and as an example of proxy support.

c (15) (C). The Klan were and are certainly bad actors but mentioning them specifically serves to draw attention to them and away from the larger phenomenon of desires for “separateness” and militancy. I’d leave it general and cut them out or consider inviting a larger discussions of race-based identity efforts including the work of Marcus Garvey, *La Raza Unida*, Black Panthers, The Nation of Islam, and perhaps even The Plan de San Diego. There have been a lot of racial “superiority” efforts across the span of United States History, so discussing them in a broader context might prove useful.

c (17) General comment: We might be missing an opportunity to discuss the anti-war movement and the vitriol shown toward returning veterans of the Vietnam War, that has led to, in modern times, an intentional support for the members of the US military which is a significant cultural shift in the late 20th Century.

C (20) (A). Should we mention specific entities and events, like Al Qaeda/Taliban, ISIS, and other non-state actors? What about the concept of state-sponsored terrorism (Iran) or domestic terrorism including the patriot/militia movement? Should be intentional in talking about 9/11? Where does the Oklahoma City bombing fit into this mix?

c (21) (A). I would introduce the concept of “troll farms” whose intent and purpose is to spread discourse and dissent, often acting overseas. While we are at it, we might want to introduce the role that cryptocurrency plays in these operations. This is the world these kids are stepping into.

§113.72. World History Studies

(c) Knowledge and Skills

c (10) (A). Perhaps David Hume might be introduced as a philosopher that also influenced the American experiment. Charles Darwin claimed to be heavily influenced by his writings, and Hume is credited with making the first distinction between “feeling” and “thinking.” This difference is important as a point of discussion into how we know what we know, and how teaching is conducted. His influence is also felt in the realm of human behavior and ultimately psychology.

c (11) (E). I believe this would be a place to introduce Adam Smith to a history audience. He is mentioned in economics, but I would use him as the champion of capitalism and “the invisible hand” as a counterbalance to the specific mention of Marxism.

c (12) (A). Perhaps here might be a good place to describe Bismarck and the rise of the German Empire and balance of power issues in Europe. There is a reason that the Hall of Mirrors in Versailles is important—it was where the modern German nation was declared (1871) as well as where its empire dissolved (1919). If we can introduce the creation of greater Germany, then 1914 and 1939 make more sense. This is even more important today. The major European powers of the late 19th Century believed they had achieved the perfect balance that would prevent war in Europe from ever occurring again. They had a similar sentiment in 1945. Now, in Ukraine, we see some of these same issues—different players—rising again.

c (12) (D). The Taiping Civil War in China from 1850-1864 was the bloodiest civil war in human history and fueled in part by religious zealotry and a desire for human equality. European powers took advantage the chaos and advanced their national self-interest at the expense of the Chinese who were suffering and dying. It established the Qing dynasty as supreme but in such a weakened state while advancing the cause of the ethnic Han Chinese, the most populous ethnic group on the planet today.

c (15) (D). The Mexican Revolution list of names should include Francisco “Pancho” Villa and there should also be a discussion of attempts at American intervention including the Tampico Incident, the seizure of Vera Cruz, and the Punitive Expedition.

c (15) (D). Stalin and his Russian Communists were among the greatest exterminators of humanity in history. A discussion of the Holodomor (the Terror-Famine of Ukraine) which killed as many as 5 million Ukrainians would do much to explain current conflicts. This war, a long way from here, will have a lasting impact on the world these students will inherit. It would seem prudent to provide some context.

c (16) (I). The 1944 Bretton Woods conference and the creation of the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund set up the current global economic system. It happened near Mount Washington in New Hampshire. This is an important event—perhaps more so than the creation of the United Nations—in creating the current world order. We should not pass up an opportunity to teach our kids how the world they are inheriting is financed.

§113.73. World Geography Studies

No recommendations.

§113.74. United State Government

(c) Knowledge and Skills

c (1) (B). The influence of Athenian Democracy, The Roman Republic, and the idea of a constitution from these traditions seems to have been overlooked. The influence is Jerusalem, Athens, Rome, London, and Philadelphia.

c (1) (C). In a perfect world, and given the changing demographics in Texas, a discussion of the various attempts at Mexican constitutions—in essence a unit on comparative republics between the US and Mexico—would be nice and broaden the approach to teaching government by providing a frame of reference and educating some of our fellow citizens of the political experience and traditions of a neighboring country.

c (2) (A). This would be a great opportunity to introduce the concepts of Civic Virtue, and Public Virtue, and be intentional about including this language in the requirements.

c (5) (C). Often the US Constitution is not considered as a commercial document and is seen only for its political effects. I would point out that in fact the US Constitution provides a legal framework for the accumulation of stuff and the pursuit of happiness, which in the US understanding usually means accumulating stuff. I would make an explicit case in the TEKS for looking for aspects of the US Constitution that address economic and commercial concerns and how this legal scaffolding helped foster free enterprise and created the economic prosperity of the country. A great way to encourage retained learning between courses.

§113.75. Economics

(c) Economics

c (1) (“E”). The concept of “risk” needs to be introduced here, as it will be referred to in other classes. The idea of socializing risk through government policy or private instruments like insurance makes no sense without explaining the great unknown and unknowable—risk. The presence of risk informs everything from religion to going to work and attending school. We need to introduce the concept to these students to give context to later and different discussions.

c (11) (A). I would insert a brief history of money here. I am not sure how it should be worded, but the concept of a tangible object that represents stored and portable value needs to be part of the curriculum to provide context for later discussions.

c (12) (A). I would add the word “history,” to read “explain the history and structure of the Federal Reserve System.” This allows the teacher to explain how the Fed was the remedy to the economic whiplash often suffered by Americans.

c (16) (“H”). I would add a line that requires teachers to teach the difference between income and wealth, which is a cornerstone to the American free enterprise system.

§113.76. Personal Financial Literacy

(c) Knowledge and skills

c (9) (A). I would recommend inserting a discussion of what taxes are, who invented them in the distant past, what purpose they serve, and why they are a part of daily life. I believe many of our students might find the mere concept of taxes to be a bit murky. If you don't know what they are, how they came about, who gets to determine what they are, and how these funds are applied, then you are missing a huge opportunity to discuss how governments are constituted, why they do what they do, why people throw tea into Boston Harbor, etc. We simply need to explain what taxes are and how come we have them and what implications this concept has for human activity and flourishing.

§113.78. Psychology

(c) Knowledge and skills

c (5) (F). Should we include a discussion of environmental pollutants and malnutrition have on cognitive development and the implications this has for societies? Lead and nicotine come to mind, as does a high starch/carb diet vs. a protein rich diet.

§113.79. Sociology

(c) Knowledge and skills

c (3) (“O”). I would include a statement discussing cultural continuity and social/cultural conservative as well, for balance if for nothing else. There seems to be a lot about change in this course, but not much discussion of how people have managed to stay stuck to this planet for millennia by figuring out the winning formula and sticking with it.

c (5) (G). I don't understand what this means. Are we talking about a purely American context? Or, could we also introduce apply this concept to other instances? For instance, Native Americans have a long history of being tribal, and most self-described as “the true humans” (*numunu* in Comanche, for instance) as opposed to the “others.” Gentiles vs. Jews, Samaritans, Greeks, etc. from a Biblical context, even “the chosen” vs. the Canaanites and Philistines. The Spanish created a caste system in Mexico. Muslims enshrine in sharia law the unequal treatment of Christians and Jews. As it stands, this course seems to imply that poor treatment of various groups mentioned in the text are an American phenomenon. It is a human phenomenon and should be contextualized as such.

Submitted by Donald Frazier

c (5) (L). I would put Marcus Garvey in the list as a useful contrast.

§113.80. Special Topics in Social Studies

Nothing to add. Great course.

§113.81. Advanced Research Methods

Nothing to add. Great course.

§113.82. Advanced Applications in Social Studies

Nothing to add. Great course.

§XX. Independent Studies

Nothing to add. Great course.