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I WHAT ARE CIVIC LIFE, POLITICS, AND GOVERNMENT?

A What is civic life? What is politics? What is government?

Why are government and politics necessary?

What purposes should government serve?

CONTENT SUMMARY AND RATIONALE

Civic life is the public life of the citizen concerned with the affairs of the community and nation as contrasted with private or personal life, which is devoted to the pursuit of private and personal interests.

Politics is a process by which a group of people, whose opinions or interests might be divergent, reach collective decisions that are generally regarded as binding on the group and enforced as common policy. Political life enables people to accomplish goals they could not realize as individuals. Politics necessarily arises whenever groups of people live together, since they must always reach collective decisions of one kind or another.

Government is the formal institutions of a society with the authority to make and implement binding decisions about such matters as the distribution of resources, allocation of benefits and burdens, and the management of conflicts.

Differing assumptions about the proper relationship between civic and private life influence ideas about the purposes of government. Differing ideas about the purposes of government have profound consequences for the well-being of individuals and society. For example, if one believes that the activities of government should be restricted to providing for the security of the lives and property of citizens, one might believe in placing severe restrictions on the right of government to intrude into their

Politics is a process by which a group of people, whose opinions or interests might be divergent, reach collective decisions that are generally regarded as binding on the group and enforced as common policy.

private or personal lives. On the other hand, if one believes that the moral character of the individual should be a public or civic matter, one might support a broad range of laws and regulations concerning private behavior and belief.

Differing ideas about the purposes of government have profound consequences for the well-being of individuals and society.

Citizens need to understand competing ideas about civic life, politics, and government so that they can make informed judgments about what government should and should not do, how they are to live their lives together, and how to support the proper use of authority or combat the abuse of political power.

CONTENT STANDARDS

1 Defining civic life, politics, and government

Students should be able to explain the meaning of the terms civic life, politics, and government.

To achieve this standard, students should be able to

- distinguish between **civic life**—the public life of the citizen concerned with the affairs of the community and nation—and **private life**—the personal life of the individual devoted to the pursuit of private interests
- describe **politics** as the process by which a group of people, whose opinions or interests might be divergent,
 - ▶ reach collective decisions that are generally regarded as binding on the group and enforced as common policy
 - ▶ seek the power to influence decisions about such matters as how their government will manage the

Differing ideas about the purposes of government have profound consequences for the well-being of individuals and society.

[Without government:] No arts; no letters; no society; and which is worst of all, continual fear and danger of violent death; and the life of man, solitary, poor, nasty, brutish, and short.

Thomas Hobbes (1651)

- distribution of resources, allocation of benefits and burdens, and management of conflicts
 - ▶ accomplish goals they could not realize as individuals
- describe **government** as the formal institutions with the authority to make and implement binding decisions about such matters as the distribution of resources, the allocation of benefits and burdens, and the management of conflicts
 - ▶ define political authority, identify its sources and functions, and differentiate between authority and power without authority
 - ▶ identify examples of formal institutions with the authority to control and direct the behavior of those in a society, e.g., tribal councils, courts, monarchies, democratic legislatures

2 Necessity of politics and government

Students should be able to explain the major arguments advanced for the necessity of politics and government.

To achieve this standard, students should be able to

- explain why politics is found wherever people gather together, i.e., it is a process by which a group of people reach collective decisions generally regarded as binding on the group and enforced as common policy
- explain several major arguments for the necessity of politics and government, e.g., because human beings

We hold these Truths to be self-evident, that all Men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights... That to secure these Rights, Governments are instituted among Men.

Declaration of Independence (1776)

- ▶ cannot fulfill their potential without politics and government
 - ▶ are sinful or depraved by nature
 - ▶ would be insecure or endangered without government
 - ▶ working collectively can accomplish goals and solve problems they could not achieve alone
- describe historical and contemporary examples of how governments have reflected these major arguments

3 The purposes of politics and government

Students should be able to evaluate, take, and defend positions on competing ideas regarding the purposes of politics and government and their implications for the individual and society.

To achieve this standard, students should be able to

- explain competing ideas about the purposes of politics and government, e.g.,
 - ▶ improving the moral character of citizens
 - ▶ furthering the interests of a particular class or ethnic group
 - ▶ achieving a religious vision
 - ▶ glorifying the state
 - ▶ promoting individual security and public order
 - ▶ enhancing economic prosperity

*[A purpose of government is]
to inbreed and cherish in a
great people the seeds of
virtu, and public civility.*

John Milton (1641)

- ▶ protecting individual rights
- ▶ promoting the common good
- ▶ providing for a nation's security
- describe historical and contemporary examples of governments which serve these purposes
- explain how the purposes served by a government affect relationships between the individual and government and between government and society as a whole, e.g., the purpose of promoting a religious vision of what society should be like may require a government to restrict individual thought and actions and place strict controls on the whole of society

B What are the essential characteristics of limited and unlimited government?

CONTENT SUMMARY AND RATIONALE

Limited government provides a basis for protecting individual rights and promoting the common good in contrast to unlimited government which endangers these values. Limited government is constitutional government. Unlimited governments include authoritarian and totalitarian systems.

The **rule of law** is an essential component of limited government. The central notion of a rule of law is that society is governed according to widely known and accepted rules followed not only by the governed but also by those in authority.

In framing a government which is to be administered by men over men, the great difficulty lies in this: You must first enable the government to control the governed; and in the next place oblige it to control itself.

James Madison (1788)

Civil society is that sphere of voluntary individual, social, and economic relationships and organizations that, although limited by law, is not part of governmental institutions. Civil society provides a domain where individuals are free from unreasonable interference from government. By providing for independent centers of power and influence, civil society is an indispensable means of maintaining limited government.

Political and economic freedoms and limited government are interrelated. Limited government protects both political and economic freedoms which, in turn, provide a means of maintaining and reinforcing limited government.

An awareness of the characteristics of limited government provides citizens with a basis for making reasoned judgments about proposals to alter their own government and for evaluating the governments of other nations.

An understanding of the concept of limited government and its essential components helps citizens understand the necessity of maintaining those conditions that prevent a government from exceeding its powers.

CONTENT STANDARDS

1 Limited and unlimited governments

Students should be able to explain the essential characteristics of limited and unlimited governments.

To achieve this standard students should be able to

- describe the essential characteristics of limited and unlimited governments
 - ▶ limited governments have established and respected restraints on their power, e.g.,

Civil society is that sphere of voluntary individual, social, and economic relationships and organizations that, although limited by law, is not part of governmental institutions. Civil society provides a domain where individuals are free from unreasonable interference from government.

- constitutional government—
governments characterized by legal
limits on political power
- ▶ unlimited governments are those in which there are
no regularized and effective means of restraining
their power, i.e.,
 - authoritarian systems—governments
in which political power is concen-
trated in one person or a small group,
and individuals and groups are subor-
dinated to that power
 - totalitarian systems—modern forms
of extreme authoritarianism in which
the government attempts to control
every aspect of the lives of individuals
and prohibits independent associations
- identify historical and contemporary examples of limited and
unlimited governments and explain their classification, e.g.,
 - ▶ limited governments—United States, Great
Britain, Botswana, Japan, Israel, Chile
 - ▶ unlimited governments—Nazi Germany,
Imperial Japan, Spain under Franco,
Argentina under Perón, Iraq under
Hussein, Iran

*No freeman shall be taken,
or imprisoned, or outlawed,
or exiled, or in any way
harmed...except by the
legal judgment of his peers
or by the law of the land.*

Magna Carta (1215)

*Power tends to corrupt
and absolute power
corrupts absolutely.*

Lord Acton (1887)

2 The rule of law

Students should be able to evaluate, take, and defend positions on the importance of the rule of law and on the sources, purposes, and functions of law.

To achieve this standard, students should be able to

- explain the difference between the rule of law and the “rule of men”
- explain why the rule of law means more than simply having laws
- explain alternative ideas about the sources of law, e.g., custom, Supreme Being, sovereigns, legislatures
- identify different varieties of law, e.g., divine law, natural law, common law, statute law, international law
- explain alternative ideas about the purposes and functions of law such as
 - ▶ regulating relationships among people and between people and their government
 - ▶ providing order, predictability, security, and established procedures for the management of conflict
 - ▶ specifying the allocation of rights and responsibilities and of benefits and burdens
 - ▶ providing the ultimate source of authority in a political community
 - ▶ regulating social and economic relationships in civil society
- explain how the rule of law can be used to restrict the actions of private citizens and government officials alike in order to protect the rights of individuals and to promote the common good

*Wherever Law ends,
Tyranny begins.*

John Locke (1690)

3 Civil society and government

Students should be able to explain and evaluate the argument that civil society is a prerequisite of limited government.

To achieve this standard, students should be able to

- define civil society as the sphere of voluntary personal, social, and economic relationships and organizations that, although limited by law, is not part of government, e.g., family, friendships, membership in nongovernmental organizations, participation in unions and business enterprises
- explain how civil society provides opportunities for individuals to associate for social, cultural, religious, economic, and political purposes
- explain how civil society makes it possible for people individually or in association with others to bring their influence to bear on government in ways other than voting and elections
- describe the historical role of religion in the development of a private sphere of life
- explain, using historical and contemporary examples, how the resources of civil society have been used to maintain limited government
- compare the relationships between government and civil society in constitutional democracies and in authoritarian and totalitarian regimes using historical and contemporary examples

Civil society makes it possible for people individually or in association with others to bring their influence to bear on government in ways other than voting and elections.

4 The relationship of limited government to political and economic freedom

Students should be able to explain and evaluate competing ideas regarding the relationship between political and economic freedoms.

To achieve this standard, students should be able to

- identify essential political freedoms, e.g., freedom of religion, speech, press, and assembly
- identify essential economic freedoms, e.g., freedom to enter into contracts, choose one's own employment, own and dispose of property, engage in business enterprises
- explain competing ideas about the relationship between political and economic freedoms, e.g., that political freedom is more important than economic freedom, that political and economic freedom are inseparable
- explain how political and economic freedoms serve to limit governmental power
- evaluate the argument that limited government is essential to the protection of political and economic freedoms

C What are the nature and purposes of constitutions?

CONTENT SUMMARY AND RATIONALE

The term “**constitution**” has alternative meanings, and constitutions serve differing purposes in different nations. In some a constitution is merely a description of a form of government. In others, such as the United States and France, a constitution is considered a higher law that establishes and limits government in order to protect individual rights as well as to promote the common good. In nations with unlimited governments, constitutions often have served as a cloak to misrule, disguising the unconstrained behavior of those in power.

In the United States, **constitutional government** is equated with limited government. Even in a constitutional government, however, the constitution alone cannot guarantee that the limits imposed on government will be respected or that the purposes of government will be served. There are certain social, economic, and political conditions that enable constitutional government to flourish.

To preserve and improve constitutional government, citizens must understand the necessary conditions for its existence. There must be general agreement about the proper relationship among the people, their constitution, and their government. Finally, not only must the constitution regulate institutions, the people also must cultivate a disposition to behave in ways consistent with its values and principles.

Articles 114, 115, 117, 118, 123, 124 and 153 of the constitution of the German Reich are canceled until further notice. This allows certain restrictions to be imposed on personal freedom, on the right to express a free opinion, the freedom of the press, of association and the right to hold meetings, it allows restrictions on the secrecy of the mail, post and telecommunications systems, the ordering of house searches and confiscation of property and restrictions on property rights.

Decree of the Reich President (1933)

CONTENT STANDARDS**1 Concepts of “constitution”**

Students should be able to explain different uses of the term “constitution” and to distinguish between governments with a constitution and a constitutional government.

To achieve this standard students should be able to

- distinguish among the following uses of the term constitution
 - ▶ a document or collection of documents
 - ▶ a written document augmented over time by custom, legislation, and court decisions
 - ▶ a description of a form of government
 - ▶ a higher law that limits the powers of government, i.e., a constitutional (or limited) government
- distinguish between governments with a constitution and constitutional (limited) government
- identify historical and contemporary examples of nations that have had constitutions that do not limit power, e.g., Nazi Germany, the former Soviet Union, and the People’s Republic of China; distinguish them from nations that have constitutional governments, e.g., Germany, United Kingdom, Japan, United States

Though written constitutions may be violated in moments of passion or delusion, yet they furnish a text to which those who are watchful may again rally and recall the people; they fix too for the people the principles of their political creed.

Thomas Jefferson (1802)

2 Purposes and uses of constitutions

Students should be able to explain the various purposes served by constitutions.

To achieve this standard, students should be able to

- explain how constitutions set forth the structure of government, give the government power, and establish the relationship between the people and their government
- explain how constitutions may limit government's power in order to protect individual rights and promote the common good; give historical and contemporary examples
- explain how constitutions may embody the core values and principles of a political system and provide a reference point for citizens to use in evaluating the actions of their government
- describe historical and contemporary instances of how constitutions have been disregarded or used to promote the interests of a particular group, class, faction, or a government itself, e.g., slavery, exclusion of women from the body politic, prohibition of competing political parties
- explain how constitutions can be vehicles for change and for resolving social issues, e.g., use of the Fourteenth Amendment to the United States Constitution in the civil rights movement of the 1950s and 1960s; establishment of the Japanese Constitution after World War II, which provided women the right to vote
- explain how constitutions can be devices for preserving core values and principles of a society, e.g., prohibition of religious tests for public office, protection of private property by the United States Constitution

Constitutions may embody the core values and principles of a political system and provide a reference point for citizens to use in evaluating the actions of their government.

3 Conditions under which constitutional government flourishes

Students should be able to evaluate, take, and defend positions on what conditions contribute to the establishment and maintenance of constitutional government.

To achieve this standard, students should be able to

- explain the social, economic, and political conditions that may foster constitutional government
- evaluate the claim that the formal establishment of a government under a constitution is not of itself sufficient to maintain liberty
- evaluate the reasons why some nations have been successful in establishing constitutional government, while others have not, e.g., post-World War II Germany, Japan (successes); Nigeria, Kenya, Argentina under Perón (failures)
- identify the most important responsibilities individual citizens and people serving in government should assume to insure the preservation and improvement of constitutional government

Constitutions may limit government in order to protect individual rights and promote the common good.

D What are alternative ways of organizing constitutional governments?

CONTENT SUMMARY AND RATIONALE

The way a government is organized is a reflection of its most fundamental purposes. For that reason, constitutional governments organize their institutions to channel and limit the exercise of political power to serve the purposes for which they have been established.

The most common forms of organization of the institutions of central governments at the national level are **systems of shared powers** and **parliamentary systems**.

- In **systems of shared powers**, such as the United States, powers are separated among branches. Each branch has primary responsibility for certain functions, but each branch also shares these powers and functions with the others, e.g., the president, Congress, and the Supreme Court all share power over the laws of the nation.
- In **parliamentary systems** such as Great Britain, authority is held by a bicameral legislature called Parliament. Parliament consists of the House of Lords and the House of Commons. The prime minister is chosen by convention from the ranks of the majority party in Commons. The prime minister forms a cabinet and directs the administration of the government.

There are several kinds of relationships between the central government of a nation and other units of government within the nation. The most common forms of such relationships, all of which have been or can be found in the United States, are **confederal**, **federal**, and **unitary systems**.

In constitutional governments the basis of representation can vary. Representation may be based on such factors as gender, property, social class, geography, race, or religion. There are also variations in electoral systems. In some systems, electoral districts choose a single member elected by plurality or majority—winner-take-all; in other systems, electoral districts choose multiple members in proportion to the number of votes received—proportional representation.

By comparing alternative means of organizing constitutional governments and the ways they provide for representation, citizens become aware of the advantages and disadvantages of their own system and how it may be improved. This understanding also provides a basis for evaluating whether one's own government is diverging from its constitutional design and purposes. This knowledge not only helps citizens to understand their own government, it enables them to grasp the meaning of events in the world, such as the fall of parliamentary governments, the breakup of federations, or the weaknesses of confederations.

CONTENT STANDARDS

1 Shared powers and parliamentary systems

Students should be able to describe the major characteristics of systems of shared powers and of parliamentary systems.

To achieve this standard, students should be able to

- describe the major characteristics of systems of shared powers, e.g., in the United States and Brazil
 - ▶ powers are separated among branches, each branch has primary responsibility for certain functions, e.g., legislative, executive, and judicial

By comparing alternative means of organizing constitutional governments and the ways they provide for representation, citizens become aware of the advantages and disadvantages of their own system and how it may be improved.

- ▶ each branch also shares some of the powers and functions of the other branches, e.g.,
 - legislatures may pass laws, but the executive may veto them
 - the executive nominates certain public officials, but the legislature must approve them
 - legislatures may pass laws, but in many countries the judiciary may declare them unconstitutional
- describe the major characteristics of parliamentary systems, e.g., in the United Kingdom and Israel
 - ▶ authority is held by a legislature called Parliament
 - ▶ members of Parliament are chosen in general elections, but they lose their positions at any time the government “falls” (resigns) and new elections are held
 - ▶ prime minister and cabinet may be replaced by Parliament if a majority votes “no confidence” in the government
 - ▶ the political party or parties that form a majority in Parliament choose the prime minister
 - ▶ the prime minister and members of the Cabinet must all be members of the legislature—Parliament

- identify historical and contemporary examples of parliamentary systems and systems of shared powers
- evaluate the various ways power is distributed, shared, and limited in systems of shared powers and parliamentary systems in terms of such criteria as effectiveness, prevention of the abuse of power, responsiveness to popular will, stability
- evaluate the relative advantages and disadvantages of systems of shared powers and parliamentary systems in terms of the purposes of constitutional government

2 Confederal, federal, and unitary systems

Students should be able to explain the advantages and disadvantages of federal, confederal, and unitary systems of government.

To achieve this standard, students should be able to

- define confederal, federal, and unitary systems of government
 - ▶ **confederal system**—a system of government in which sovereign states delegate powers to a central government for specific purposes, e.g., mutual defense against foreign enemies
 - ▶ **federal system**—a system in which a national government shares powers with state governments, but the national government may act directly on individuals within the states, e.g., national government may require individuals to pay income taxes

*As far as the principle...
[of confederacy] has prevailed,
it has been the cause of
incurable disorder and
imbecility in government.*

Alexander Hamilton (1788)

- ▶ **unitary system**—a system in which all power is concentrated in a central government; state and local governments can exercise only those powers given to them by the central government
- identify historical and contemporary examples of confederal, federal, and unitary systems
- evaluate the various ways power is distributed, shared, and limited in confederal, federal, and unitary systems in terms of such criteria as effectiveness, prevention of the abuse of power, responsiveness to popular will, stability
- explain the relative advantages and disadvantages of confederal, federal, and unitary systems in terms of the purposes of constitutional government

3 Nature of representation

Students should be able to evaluate, take, and defend positions on how well alternative forms of representation serve the purposes of constitutional government.

To achieve this standard, students should be able to

- explain the major arguments for and against representative government as distinguished from direct popular rule
- describe common bases upon which representation is or has been established, e.g.,
 - ▶ geographic areas
 - ▶ citizenship

Your representative owes you, not his industry only, but his judgment; and he betrays instead of serving you if he sacrifices it to your opinion.

Edmund Burke (1774)

- ▶ social class or caste
- ▶ age, sex, or property
- ▶ religion, race, and ethnicity
- evaluate differing bases of electoral systems, e.g.,
 - ▶ winner-take-all systems
 - ▶ proportional systems
- evaluate differing theories of representation, e.g., the theory that the foremost obligation of a representative is to promote the interests of
 - ▶ a particular constituency
 - ▶ the society as a whole

II WHAT ARE THE FOUNDATIONS OF THE AMERICAN POLITICAL SYSTEM?

A What is the American idea of constitutional government?

CONTENT SUMMARY AND RATIONALE

Using a written constitution to set forth the values and principles of government and to establish and limit its powers is among the nation’s most distinctive accomplishments. The American system of government relies upon its citizens’ holding these constitutional values and principles in common.

The Framers of the United States Constitution intended to establish, in the words of James Madison, an “energetic” and effective government, one capable of fulfilling the purposes for which it was created. The Constitution provides for institutions that facilitate the formation of majorities on various issues at the same time as it limits the powers of those majorities to protect the basic liberties of the people. The Bill of Rights was adopted as an additional means of limiting the powers of the national government and has become central to the American idea of constitutional government.

An understanding of the extent to which Americans have internalized the values and principles of the Constitution will contribute to an appreciation of the enduring influence of the Constitution as it has helped to shape the character of American society.

Citizens must understand the fundamental ideas of American constitutional government and their history and contemporary relevance to develop a reasoned commitment to them, as well as to use them as criteria to evaluate their own behavior and the behavior of government officials.

The important distinction so well understood in America between a Constitution established by the people and unalterable by the government, and a law established by the government and alterable by the government seems to have been little understood and less observed in any other country.

James Madison (1788)

CONTENT STANDARDS**1 The American idea of constitutional government**

Students should be able to explain the central ideas of American constitutional government and their history.

To achieve this standard, students should be able to

- describe major historical events that led to the creation of limited government in the United States, e.g.,
 - ▶ Magna Carta (1215), common law, and the Bill of Rights (1689) in England
 - ▶ colonial experience, Declaration of Independence (1776), Articles of Confederation (1781), state constitutions and charters, United States Constitution (1787), Bill of Rights (1791) in the United States
- explain the importance of the central ideas of the natural rights philosophy in the creation of American constitutional government, e.g., that all persons have the right to life, liberty, property, and the pursuit of happiness just because they are human beings; that the major purpose of government is to protect those rights
- explain the major ideas about republican government which influenced the development of the United States Constitution, e.g., the concept of representative government, the importance of civic virtue or concern for the common good

[The government of the United States is] a government limited...by the authority of a paramount Constitution.

James Madison (1788)

- explain the central ideas of American constitutional government such as
 - ▶ popular sovereignty, i.e., the people as the ultimate source of the power to create, alter, or abolish governments
 - ▶ the necessity for a written constitution to set forth the organization of government and to grant and distribute its powers, e.g., among different branches of the national government, between the national government and the states, and between the people and the government
 - ▶ the Constitution as a “higher law” that authorizes and legitimizes an “energetic” and effective government of limited powers
 - ▶ the Constitution as legitimizing majority rule in certain key areas of decision making, while limiting the power of these majorities in order to protect the rights of individuals
- explain how various provisions of the Constitution and principles of the constitutional system are devices to insure an effective government that will not exceed its limits
- explain how the design of the institutions of government and the federal system channels and limits governmental power in order to serve the purposes of American constitutional democracy

*The people made
the Constitution, and
the people can unmake it.
It is the creature of their own
will, and lives only by their will.*

John Marshall (1821)

2 How American constitutional government has shaped the character of American society

Students should be able to explain the extent to which Americans have internalized the values and principles of the Constitution and attempted to make its ideals realities.

To achieve this standard, students should be able to

- explain ways in which belief in limited government has influenced American society
- explain ways in which the Constitution has encouraged Americans to engage in commercial and other productive activities
- explain how major features of the Constitution, such as federalism and the Bill of Rights, have helped to shape American society
- describe, giving historical and contemporary examples, how Americans have attempted to make the values and principles of the Constitution a reality

It was from America that... ideas long locked in the breast of solitary thinkers, and hidden among Latin folios—burst forth like a conqueror upon the world...and the principle gained ground, that a nation can never abandon its fate to an authority it cannot control.

Lord Acton (1907)

B What are the distinctive characteristics of American society?**CONTENT SUMMARY AND RATIONALE**

The distinctive characteristics of American society have shaped the way Americans perceive the proper relationship among individuals, society, and the government. Americans need to know the distinctive characteristics of their society in order to know who they are—their identity as a people. This understanding of a common identity and common purposes provides a basis on which a diverse American society can work cooperatively to solve common problems and manage conflicts within constitutional boundaries.

Unlike many other nations, the United States never experienced feudalism, accepted an inherited caste system, or recognized a nobility. The existence of a frontier, large-scale and continuing immigration, and the abundance and widespread ownership of property, have fostered the growth of a democratic way of life. Notable exceptions that have worked against the attainment of social equality are the history of slavery, the treatment of Native Americans, and discrimination against various groups.

Voluntarism is another prominent characteristic of American life. The American tradition of voluntarism emerged from the colonists' dependence on one another during the early settlement period, it was enhanced by the influence of a frontier, and encouraged by Americans' religious beliefs. This propensity for voluntarism has continued to the present day and has given rise to questions that citizens need to address: Is it advantageous for society that functions such as education and social welfare be performed by voluntary associations? By government? Or should both have a role? Would American society be harmed or enhanced if the propensity to voluntarism declined?

The one absolutely certain way of bringing this nation to ruin, of preventing all possibility of its continuing to be a nation at all would be to permit it to become a tangle of squabbling nationalities... each preserving its separate nationality.

Theodore Roosevelt (1910)

Americans form and join associations in great numbers. The broad range of religious, service, and civic groups forms a part of the rich network of associations that characterizes American society. The powerful role of these kinds of groups, as well as interest groups, labor unions, and professional organizations, is an important factor in understanding American political life.

Recognition of the many forms of diversity in American society— ethnicity, race, religion, class, language, gender, or national origin—embraced in a constitutional system, is a prerequisite to making judgments about the benefits diversity offers and the challenges it poses.

CONTENT STANDARDS

1 Distinctive characteristics of American society

Students should be able to explain how the following characteristics tend to distinguish American society from most other societies.

To achieve this standard, students should be able to

- explain important factors that have helped shape American society, such as
 - ▶ absence of a nobility or an inherited caste system
 - ▶ religious freedom
 - ▶ a history of slavery
 - ▶ the Judeo-Christian ethic
 - ▶ relative geographic isolation
 - ▶ abundance of land and widespread ownership of property

*Democracy is still upon its trial.
The civic genius of our people
is its only bulwark.*

William James (1897)

- ▶ social, economic, and geographic mobility
 - ▶ effects of a frontier
 - ▶ large scale immigration
 - ▶ diversity of the population
 - ▶ individualism
 - ▶ work ethic
 - ▶ market economy
 - ▶ relative social equality
 - ▶ universal public education
- compare the distinctive characteristics of American society with those of other countries

2 The role of voluntarism in American life

Students should be able to evaluate, take, and defend positions on the importance of voluntarism in American society.

To achieve this standard, students should be able to

- explain factors that have inclined Americans toward voluntarism, e.g., colonial conditions, the Puritan ethic, frontier traditions, religious beliefs
- describe the role of voluntary associations in performing functions usually associated with government, such as providing social welfare and education; give historical and contemporary examples
- describe the extent of voluntarism in American society compared to other countries

*Americans of all ages,
all stations in life, and all
types of disposition are forever
forming associations...at the
head of any new undertaking,
where in France you would find
the government or in England
some territorial magnate,
in the United States you are
sure to find an association.*

Alexis de Tocqueville (1835)

- explain the relationship of voluntarism to Americans' ideas about limited government
- evaluate arguments regarding what responsibilities properly belong to individuals or to groups and to the private sector or to the government and how these responsibilities should be shared by the private sector and government

3 The role of organized groups in political life

Students should be able to evaluate, take, and defend positions on the contemporary role of organized groups in American social and political life.

To achieve this standard, students should be able to

- identify examples of organized groups and discuss their historical and contemporary role in local, state, and national politics, e.g., unions, professional organizations; religious, charitable, service, and civic groups
- describe and evaluate the role of organized groups in performing functions usually associated with government, such as providing social welfare and education

4 Diversity in American society

Students should be able to evaluate, take and defend positions on issues regarding diversity in American life.

To achieve this standard, students should be able to

- identify the many forms of diversity found in American society, e.g., racial, religious, ethnic, socioeconomic, regional, linguistic
- explain the impact on American politics, both historically and at present, of the racial, religious, socioeconomic, regional, ethnic, and linguistic diversity of American society
- explain alternative ideas about the role and value of diversity in American life both historically and at present
- describe conflicts that have arisen from diversity and explain the means by which some have been managed and explain why some conflicts have persisted unabated
- explain the importance of adhering to constitutional values and principles in managing conflicts over diversity

America is woven of many strands; I would recognize them and let it so remain.... Our fate is to become one and yet many.

Ralph Ellison (1952)

C What is American political culture?**CONTENT SUMMARY AND RATIONALE**

In contrast to most other nations, the identity of an American citizen is defined by shared political values and principles rather than by ethnicity, race, religion, class, language, gender, or national origin. These shared values and principles have helped to promote cohesion in the daily life of Americans and in times of crisis have enabled them to find common ground with those who differ from them.

Although political conflicts sometimes have erupted in violence, such as labor disputes, race riots, and draft riots, citizens should understand that political conflict in the United States has usually been less divisive and violent than in many other nations. This is in part because American political conflict, with the major exception of the Civil War, has generally taken place within a constitutional framework which allows for protest politics and promotes the peaceful resolution of differences.

To understand their nation, citizens should appreciate the nature and importance of their political culture, which provides a foundation for the stability of their system, and its capacity to respond to the needs and interests of the people through peaceful change.

CONTENT STANDARDS**1 American national identity and political culture**

Students should be able to explain the importance of shared political and civic beliefs and values to the maintenance of constitutional democracy in an increasingly diverse American society.

To achieve this standard, students should be able to

The principle on which this country was founded and by which it has always been governed is that Americanism is a matter of the mind and heart; Americanism is not, and never was, a matter of race and ancestry. A good American is one who is loyal to this country and to our creed of liberty and democracy.

Franklin Delano Roosevelt (1943)

- explain that shared political and civic beliefs and values define an American citizen rather than ethnicity, race, religion, class, language, gender, or national origin
- explain the shared ideas and values of American political culture as set forth in
 - ▶ basic documents such as the Declaration of Independence, the United States Constitution and Bill of Rights
 - ▶ other sources such as *The Federalist* and Anti-federalist writings, the Declaration of Sentiments of the Seneca Falls Convention of 1848, Abraham Lincoln’s “Gettysburg Address,” Woodrow Wilson’s “Fourteen Points,” Franklin Roosevelt’s “Four Freedoms,” Martin Luther King’s “Letter from the Birmingham Jail,” and many landmark decisions of the Supreme Court of the United States
- describe beliefs common to American political culture, such as the belief in equality of opportunity; mistrust of power, as well as high expectations of what elected officials and government should do; the need to admit to faults or shortcomings in their society; and the belief that they can individually and through collective effort alleviate social, economic, or political problems

Here, in the first paragraph of the Declaration [of Independence], is the assertion of the natural right of all to the ballot; for how can “the consent of the governed” be given, if the right to vote be denied?

Susan B. Anthony (1873)

2 Character of American political conflict

Students should be able to describe the character of American political conflict and explain factors that usually tend to prevent it or lower its intensity.

To achieve this standard, students should be able to

- describe political conflict in the United States both historically and at present, such as conflict about
 - ▶ geographic or sectional interests
 - ▶ slavery and indentured servitude
 - ▶ national origins
 - ▶ extending the franchise
 - ▶ extending civil rights to all Americans
 - ▶ the role of religion in American public life
 - ▶ the rights of organized labor
 - ▶ the role of government in regulating business
 - ▶ engaging in wars
- explain some of the reasons why political conflict in the United States, with notable exceptions such as the Civil War, nineteenth century labor unrest, the 1950s and 1960s civil rights struggles, and the opposition to the war in Vietnam, has generally been less divisive than in many other nations. These include
 - ▶ a shared respect for the Constitution and its principles
 - ▶ the existence of many opportunities to influence government and to participate in it

Here in America we are descended in blood and spirit from revolutionists and rebels—men and women who dare to dissent from accepted doctrine. As their heirs, we may never confuse honest dissent with disloyal subversion.

Dwight D. Eisenhower (1954)

- ▶ the concept of a loyal opposition
 - ▶ willingness to relinquish power when voted out of office
 - ▶ acceptance of majority rule tempered by respect for minority rights
 - ▶ recourse to the legal system to manage conflicts
 - ▶ availability of land and abundance of natural resources
 - ▶ a relatively high standard of living
 - ▶ opportunities to improve one's economic condition
 - ▶ opportunities for free, public education
 - ▶ a sense of unity within diversity
- explain the ways in which universal public education and the existence of a popular culture that crosses class boundaries have tended to reduce the intensity of political conflict by creating common ground among diverse groups

A thirst for liberty seems to be the ruling passion not only of America but of the present age.

Thomas Hutchinson (1711)

D What values and principles are basic to American constitutional democracy?

CONTENT SUMMARY AND RATIONALE

The constitutional values and principles held by Americans provide the foundation for their attitudes regarding the proper ends and means of political life. They have shaped American political institutions and practices.

In addition to experience, several intellectual traditions have influenced the development of American constitutional democracy. Among the most important of these were the ideas of **classical liberalism** with its emphasis on individual rights and **classical republicanism**. Throughout most of our history, the ideas associated with liberalism have been dominant. These ideas emerged in the seventeenth century and were further developed during the eighteenth-century Enlightenment. The view that the individual, possessing certain inalienable rights, is the basic unit of society is the fundamental element of classical liberal thought. Classical liberalism includes the ideas that governments are created by the people to protect their inalienable rights to life, liberty, and property and derive their authority from the consent of the governed. The Declaration of Independence is a succinct statement of the central ideas of classical liberalism.

Two central ideas of classical republicanism are the concepts of **civic virtue** and the **common good**. Civic virtue requires the individual to subordinate personal interests to the interests of the community as a whole—the common good. Republicanism considers promotion of the common good—the good of the people as a whole rather than the good of the individual or of certain segments of society—to be the fundamental purpose of government. This purpose is reflected in the Preamble to the Constitution and the body of the Constitution. Classical republicanism, like democracy, includes the idea of rule by the people exercised directly or indirectly through representatives.

The republican is the only form of government which is not eternally at open or secret war with the rights of mankind.

Thomas Jefferson (1790)

The values and principles of American constitutional democracy are sometimes in conflict, and their very meaning and application are often disputed. For example, although most Americans agree that the idea of equality is an important value, they may disagree about what priority it should be given in comparison with other values such as liberty. And they may disagree on the meaning of equality when it is applied to a specific situation. To participate constructively in public debate concerning fundamental values and principles, citizens need to understand them sufficiently.

Disparities have always existed between the realities of daily life and the ideals of American constitutional democracy. The history of the United States, however, has been marked by continuing attempts to narrow the gap between these ideals and reality. For these reasons, Americans have united in political movements to abolish slavery, extend the franchise, remove legal support for segregation, and provide equality of opportunity for each individual. Citizens must be aware of historical and contemporary efforts in which Americans have joined forces to achieve this end.

Citizens, therefore, need to understand that American society is perpetually “unfinished” and that each generation must address ways to narrow the disparity between ideals and reality.

CONTENT STANDARDS

1 Liberalism and American constitutional democracy

Students should be able to explain the meaning of the terms “liberal” and “democracy” in the phrase “liberal democracy.”

To achieve this standard, students should be able to

- explain that the term “liberal” is derived from “liberty” and refers to a form of government in which individual rights and freedoms are protected

*The Spirit that prevails
among Men of all degrees,
all ages and sexes is the
Spirit of Liberty.*

Abigail Adams (1775)

- ▶ explain that the term liberal has its historical roots in the ideas of liberalism that emerged in the seventeenth century and developed during the eighteenth-century Enlightenment
- ▶ explain the relationship between liberalism and the Protestant Reformation and the rise of market economies and free enterprise
- ▶ explain that the central idea of liberalism is a belief that the individual has rights which exist independently of government and which ought to be protected by and against government
- ▶ explain the difference between the use of the term “liberal” when it is referring to the American form of government and the use of the terms “liberal” and “conservative” in referring to positions on the spectrum of American politics
- explain that the term “democracy” is derived from the Greek word for “rule by the people”
 - ▶ explain that the central focus of democracy is that the people are the source of authority for government and how that idea is related to free elections and widespread participation
 - ▶ explain the difference between the use of the term “democratic” to refer to the American form of government and the use of the term to refer to the Democratic Party in the United States

*As I would not be a slave,
so I would not be a master.
This expresses my idea of
democracy. Whatever differs
from this, to the extent of the
difference, is no democracy.*

Abraham Lincoln (1858)

- explain how the basic premises of liberalism and democracy are joined in the Declaration of Independence, where they are stated as “self-evident Truths,” i.e.,
 - ▶ “all men are created equal”
 - ▶ “they are endowed... with certain unalienable rights”
 - ▶ governments are artificial—they “are instituted among men”
 - ▶ people have a right to create a government to protect their rights
 - ▶ governments are established for the limited purposes of securing individual rights
 - ▶ authority is derived from consent of the governed
 - ▶ people have the right to alter or abolish government when it fails to fulfill its purposes

2 Republicanism and American constitutional democracy

Students should be able to explain how and why ideas of classical republicanism are reflected in the values and principles of American constitutional democracy.

To achieve this standard, students should be able to

- define a “republic” as a state in which the citizenry as a whole is considered sovereign but which is governed by elected representatives rather than directly by the people, as in direct democracy

The Government of the Union, then, is emphatically and truly a government of the people. In form and in substance it emanates from them. Its powers are granted by them, and are to be exercised directly on them and for their benefit.

John Marshall (1819)

- explain major ideas of republicanism, i.e.,
 - ▶ government of a republic seeks the public or common good rather than the good of a particular group or class of society
 - ▶ “civic virtue” of citizens is essential; civic virtue means that citizens put the public or common good above their private interests
- explain how ideas of classical republicanism are reflected in the United States Constitution, e.g., in the Preamble, the guarantee to the states of a “republican form of government” in Article IV Section 4 provisions for the election of representatives to the Congress in Article I Section 2 and the Seventeenth Amendment
- explain the difference between the use of the term “republican” to refer to the American form of government and the use of the term to refer to the Republican Party in the United States
- explain why classical republicanism and liberalism are potentially in conflict, e.g., the primary purpose of government—promotion of the public or common good vs. protection of individual rights
- evaluate, take, and defend positions on the importance of civic virtue for American democracy today

3 Fundamental values and principles

Students should be able to evaluate, take, and defend positions on what the fundamental values and principles of American political life are and their importance to the maintenance of constitutional democracy.

To achieve this standard, students should be able to

- explain the following values which are widely considered to be fundamental to American civic life
 - ▶ individual rights, i.e., life, liberty, property, and the pursuit of happiness
 - ▶ the public or common good
 - ▶ self government
 - ▶ justice
 - ▶ equality
 - ▶ diversity
 - ▶ openness and free inquiry
 - ▶ truth
 - ▶ patriotism
- explain the following principles widely considered to be fundamental to American constitutional democracy
 - ▶ popular sovereignty—the concept that ultimate political authority rests with the people who create and can alter or abolish governments
 - ▶ constitutional government, including
 - rule of law
 - representative institutions
 - separated and shared powers

The life of a republic lies certainly in the energy, virtue, and intelligence of its citizens.

Andrew Johnson (1865)

*Let me be a free man—
free to travel, free to stop,
free to work, free to trade
where I choose, free to choose
my own teachers, free to follow
the religion of my fathers,
free to think and talk and
act for myself—and I will
obey every law, or submit
to the penalty.*

Chief Joseph (1879)

- checks and balances
 - individual rights
 - separation of church and state
 - federalism
 - civilian control of the military
- identify the fundamental values and principles expressed in basic documents, significant political speeches and writings, and the individual and group actions that embody them
 - explain how the institutions of government reflect fundamental values and principles, e.g., justice, equality, the common good, popular sovereignty, checks and balances
 - explain the interdependence among certain values and principles, e.g., individual liberty and diversity
 - explain the significance of fundamental values and principles for the individual and society

4 Conflicts among values and principles in American political and social life

Students should be able to evaluate, take, and defend positions on issues in which fundamental values and principles may be in conflict.

To achieve this standard, students should be able to

- describe historical and contemporary issues which involve conflicts among fundamental values and principles and explain how these conflicts might be resolved
 - ▶ liberty and equality
 - ▶ liberty and authority
 - ▶ individual rights and the common good

I contend that woman has just as much right to sit in solemn counsel in conventions, conferences, associations and general assemblies, as man—just as much right to sit upon the throne of England or in the Presidential chair of the United States.

Angelina Grimke (1837)

- explain why people may agree on values or principles in the abstract but disagree when they are applied to specific issues, e.g., the right to life and capital punishment

5 Disparities between ideals and reality in American political and social life

Students should be able to evaluate, take, and defend positions about issues concerning the disparities between American ideals and realities.

To achieve this standard, students should be able to

- explain the importance of Americans' establishing ideals in political life and their insistence on comparing current practices with these ideals
- explain, using historical and contemporary examples, discrepancies between American ideals and the realities of American social and political life, e.g., the ideal of equal opportunity and the reality of unfair discrimination
- describe historical and contemporary efforts to reduce discrepancies between ideals and reality in American public life, e.g., abolitionists; suffrage, union, and civil rights movements; government programs such as Head Start; civil rights legislation and enforcement
- explain ways in which discrepancies between reality and the ideals of American constitutional democracy can be reduced by
 - ▶ individual action
 - ▶ social action
 - ▶ political action

I have a dream that my four little children will one day live in a nation where they will not be judged by the color of their skin but by the content of their character.

Martin Luther King Jr. (1963)

III HOW DOES THE GOVERNMENT ESTABLISHED BY THE CONSTITUTION EMBODY THE PURPOSES, VALUES, AND PRINCIPLES OF AMERICAN DEMOCRACY?

A How are power and responsibility distributed, shared, and limited in the government established by the United States Constitution?

CONTENT SUMMARY AND RATIONALE

The system of government established by the Constitution has resulted in a complex dispersal of powers. As a result, every American lives under the jurisdiction of national, state, and local governments, all of whose powers and responsibilities are separated and shared among different branches and agencies.

All these governments—national, state, and local—affect the daily life of every American. This complex system of multiple levels and divisions of government is difficult to understand and is sometimes inefficient. It may result in delaying or preventing actions which may or may not be desirable. However, this system was seen by the Framers of the Constitution as a principal means of limiting the power of government. It also provides numerous opportunities for citizens to participate in their own governance. It reflects the principle of popular sovereignty, enables citizens to hold their governments accountable, and helps to insure protection for the rights of the people.

Citizens who understand the reasons for this system of dispersed power and its design are able to evaluate, to monitor, and to influence it effectively.

The people, sir, erected this government. They gave it a constitution, and in that constitution they have enumerated the powers which they bestow on it. They have made it a limited government.

Daniel Webster (1830)

CONTENT STANDARDS**1 Distributing governmental power and preventing its abuse**

Students should be able to explain how the United States Constitution grants and distributes power to national and state government and how it seeks to prevent the abuse of power.

To achieve this standard, students should be able to

- explain how the overall design and specific features of the Constitution are intended to
 - ▶ aggregate power at different levels to allow government to be responsive and effective, e.g., powers granted to Congress in Article I, Section 8
 - ▶ disperse power among different levels of government to reduce chances of its abuse, protect individual rights and promote the common good
 - ▶ balance and check powers to prevent their abuse, e.g., separated institutions with shared powers, provisions for veto and impeachment, federalism, judicial review, separation of church and state, subordination of the military to civilian control, the Bill of Rights

Constitutions are checks upon the hasty action of the majority. They are the self-imposed restraints of a whole people upon a majority of them to secure sober action and a respect for the rights of the minority.

William Howard Taft (1911)

2 The American federal system

Students should be able to evaluate, take, and defend positions on issues regarding the distribution of powers and responsibilities within the federal system.

To achieve this standard, students should be able to

- explain why the Framers adopted a federal system in which power and responsibility are divided and shared between a national government, having certain nationwide responsibilities, and state governments having state and local responsibilities
- explain how the Constitution’s overall design and specific features were intended to place limitations on both national and state governments, e.g., states cannot restrict interstate commerce
- explain how the federal system provides numerous opportunities for citizens to participate through its dispersal of power among and between
 - ▶ national, state, and local governments
 - ▶ branches and agencies of the national, state, and local governments
- explain how the federal system provides numerous opportunities for citizens to hold their governments accountable
- explain ways in which federalism is designed to protect individual rights to life, liberty, and property and how it has at times made it possible for states to deny the rights of certain groups, e.g., states’ rights and slavery, denial of suffrage to women and minority groups
- describe historical conflicts over the respective roles of national and state governments and the importance of the Tenth Amendment
- evaluate the respective roles of national and state governments in the contemporary federal system

The question of the relation of the states to the federal government is the cardinal question of our constitutional system....It cannot, indeed, be settled by the opinion of any one generation.

Woodrow Wilson (1908)

B How is the national government organized and what does it do?**CONTENT SUMMARY AND RATIONALE**

The actions of the national government have significant consequences on the daily lives of all Americans, their communities, and the welfare of the nation as a whole. These actions affect their security, their standard of living, and the taxes they will pay.

To understand the impact of the national government on their daily lives and the lives of their communities, citizens need to understand how it functions. To deliberate with other citizens about political action and to influence governmental actions that affect their lives, citizens need to know the distribution of responsibilities among the various branches and agencies of government and where and how decisions are made.

CONTENT STANDARDS**1 The institutions of the national government**

Students should be able to evaluate, take, and defend positions on issues regarding the purposes, organization, and functions of the institutions of the national government.

To achieve this standard, students should be able to

- describe the purposes, organization, and functions of the three branches of the national government
 - ▶ **legislative**, i.e., the Congress, composed of a House of Representatives and a Senate, including their committees and their respective staffs and most prominent auxiliary agencies, e.g., the Congressional Budget Office, Library of Congress

The power vested in the American courts of justice of pronouncing a statute to be unconstitutional forms one of the most powerful barriers that have ever been devised against the tyranny of political assemblies.

Alexis de Tocqueville (1835)

- ▶ **executive**, including its most prominent agencies, e.g., State, Defense, Health and Human Services, Justice, Education
 - ▶ **judicial**, including the Supreme Court of the United States and the federal court system
 - ▶ **independent regulatory agencies**, e.g., Federal Reserve Board, Food and Drug Administration, Federal Communications Commission
- evaluate the extent to which each branch of the government reflects the people’s sovereignty, e.g., Congress legislates on behalf of the people, the president represents the people as a nation, the Supreme Court acts on behalf of the people as a whole when it interprets their Constitution
 - explain why certain provisions of the Constitution result in tensions among the three branches of government, e.g., the power of the purse, the power of impeachment, advice and consent, veto power, judicial review
 - explain how and why beliefs about the purposes and functions of the national government have changed over time
 - evaluate the argument that separation of powers, checks and balances, and judicial review tend to slow down the process of making and enforcing laws, thus insuring better outcomes
 - evaluate current issues concerning representation, e.g., term limitations, legislative districting, geographical and group representation

2 Major responsibilities of the national government in domestic and foreign policy

Students should be able to evaluate, take, and defend positions on issues regarding the major responsibilities of the national government for domestic and foreign policy.

To achieve this standard, students should be able to

- explain the major responsibilities of the national government for domestic policy and how domestic policies affect their everyday lives and their community
- explain the major responsibilities of the national government for foreign policy and how foreign policies, including trade policy and national security, affect their everyday lives and their community
- evaluate competing arguments about the proper role of government in major areas of domestic and foreign policy, e.g., health care, education, child care, regulation of business and industry, foreign aid, intervention abroad

3 Financing government through taxation

Students should be able to evaluate, take, and defend positions on issues regarding how government should raise money to pay for its operations and services.

To achieve this standard, students should be able to

- explain the history of taxation in the United States and why taxation is necessary to pay for government

*Taxes are what we pay
for civilized society.*

Oliver Wendell Holmes Jr. (1904)

- explain provisions of the United States Constitution that authorize the national government to collect taxes, i.e., Article I, Sections 7 and 8, Sixteenth Amendment
- identify major sources of revenue for the national government, e.g., individual income taxes, social insurance receipts (Social Security and Medicare), borrowing, taxes on corporations and businesses, estate and excise taxes
- identify major uses of tax revenues received by the national government, e.g., direct payment to individuals (Social Security, Medicaid, Medicare, Aid to Families with Dependent Children), interstate highways, national defense, interest on the federal debt, national parks
- explain why there is often a tension between citizens' desire for government services and benefits and their unwillingness to pay taxes for them
- evaluate the equity of various kinds of taxes

C How are state and local governments organized and what do they do?**CONTENT SUMMARY AND RATIONALE**

State governments are established by state constitutions. Each has its own legislative, executive, and judicial branch. States possess substantial powers that, along with their local and intermediate governments, affect citizens' lives from birth to death.

Local governments provide most of the services citizens receive, and local courts handle most civil disputes and violations of the law. State and local governments license businesses, professions, automobiles, and drivers; provide essential services such as police and fire protection, education, and street maintenance; regulate zoning and the construction of buildings; provide public housing, transportation, and public health services; and maintain streets, highways, airports, and harbors.

Because of their geographic location and the fact that their meetings usually are open to the public, state and local governments are often quite accessible to the people. Members of city councils, boards of education, mayors, governors, and other officials are often available to meet with individuals and groups and to speak to students and civic organizations.

Citizens need to know the purposes, organization, and responsibilities of their state and local governments so they can take part in their governance.

CONTENT STANDARDS**1 The constitutional status of state and local governments**

Students should be able to evaluate, take, and defend positions on issues regarding the proper relationship between the national government and the state and local governments.

To achieve this standard, students should be able to

- describe similarities and differences between their state constitution and the federal constitution
- describe the limits the United States Constitution places on the powers of the states, e.g., coining money, prohibitions against impairing interstate commerce, making treaties with foreign governments, restrictions imposed by the Fourteenth Amendment and the Bill of Rights through the process of incorporation
- describe the limits the United States Constitution places on the powers of the national government over state governments, e.g., the national government cannot abolish a state, the Tenth Amendment to the Constitution reserves certain powers to the states
- identify powers most commonly associated with state governments
 - ▶ **reserved powers**—powers not delegated to the national government or prohibited to states by the United States Constitution, e.g., legislation regarding public safety, marriage and divorce;

The proposed Constitution, so far from implying an abolition of the State Governments, makes them constituent parts of the national sovereignty... and leaves in their possession certain exclusive and very important portions of sovereign power. This fully corresponds, in every rational import of the terms with the idea of a Federal Government.

Alexander Hamilton (1787)

education; the conduct of elections; chartering regional and local governments; licensing drivers, businesses, and professions

- ▶ **concurrent powers**—powers jointly held with the national government, e.g., legislating taxation, regulating trade and industry, borrowing money, maintaining courts, protecting the environment
- explain how the citizens of a state can change their state constitution and give examples of such changes in their own state
- evaluate changes that have taken place in the relationship between state and local governments and the national government
- evaluate the argument that state and local governments provide significant opportunities for experimentation and innovation

2 Organization of state and local governments

Students should be able to evaluate, take, and defend positions on issues regarding the relationships between state and local governments and citizen access to those governments.

To achieve this standard, students should be able to

- describe how their state and local governments are organized, e.g., the organization of legislative, executive, and judicial functions at state and local levels

The support of State governments in all their rights, as the most competent administration of our domestic concerns, are the surest bulwarks against anti-republican tendencies.

Thomas Jefferson (1801)

- evaluate the relationship between their state and local governments
- explain how the policies of state and local governments provide citizens ways to monitor and influence their actions and hold members of government accountable, e.g., requirements of fair and public notice of meetings, meetings of government agencies must be open to the public, public trials, provision of opportunities for citizens to be heard

3 Major responsibilities of state and local governments

Students should be able to identify the major responsibilities of their state and local governments and evaluate how well they are being fulfilled.

To achieve this standard, students should be able to

- identify the major responsibilities of their state and local governments and explain how those governments affect their lives
- identify the major sources of revenue for state and local governments, e.g., property, sales, and income taxes; fees and licenses; taxes on corporations and businesses; inheritance taxes
- evaluate the equity of major sources of revenue for state and local governments

D What is the place of law in the American constitutional system?**CONTENT SUMMARY AND RATIONALE**

The rule of law operates within a framework provided by the United States Constitution. It establishes limits on both those who govern and the governed, making possible a system of ordered liberty which protects the basic rights of citizens and promotes the common good. This basic notion of the rule of law has been accompanied by the ideal of equal protection of the law, a central theme in the history of the United States.

Law pervades American society. Americans look to the principal varieties of law—constitutional, civil, and criminal—for the protection of their rights to life, liberty, and property. It is often argued, however, that Americans are overly dependent on the legal system to manage disputes about social, economic, and political problems rather than using other means available to them such as private negotiations and participation in the political process.

An understanding of the place of law in the American constitutional system enhances citizens' capacity to appreciate the importance of law in protecting individual rights and promoting the common good. This understanding provides a basis for deciding whether to support new laws and changes in existing law.

Americans look to the principal varieties of law—constitutional, civil, and criminal—for the protection of their rights to life, liberty, and property.

CONTENT STANDARDS

1 The place of law in American society

Students should be able to evaluate, take, and defend positions on the role and importance of law in the American political system.

To achieve this standard, students should be able to

- explain why the rule of law has a central place in American society, e.g., it
 - ▶ establishes limits on both those who govern and the governed
 - ▶ makes possible a system of ordered liberty that protects the basic rights of citizens
 - ▶ promotes the common good.
- describe historical and contemporary events and practices that illustrate the central place of the rule of law, e.g.,
 - ▶ **events**, e.g., U.S. Supreme Court cases such as *Marbury v. Madison*, *Brown v. Board of Education*, *U.S. v. Nixon*
 - ▶ **practices**, e.g., submitting bills to legal counsel to insure congressional compliance with constitutional limitations, higher court review of lower court compliance with the law, executive branch compliance with laws enacted by Congress

All persons shall be entitled to the full and equal enjoyment of the goods, services, facilities, privileges, advantages, and accommodations of any place of public accommodation, as defined in this section, without discrimination or segregation on the ground of race, color, religion, or national origin.

Civil Rights Act of 1964

Separate educational facilities are inherently unequal...[We] hold that the plaintiffs...[are] deprived of the equal protection of the laws guaranteed by the Fourteenth Amendment.

Earl Warren (1954)

- describe historical and contemporary events and practices that illustrate the absence or breakdown of the rule of law, e.g.,
 - ▶ **events**, e.g., vigilantism in the early West, Ku Klux Klan attacks, urban riots, corruption in government and business, police corruption, organized crime
 - ▶ **practices**, e.g., illegal searches and seizures, bribery, interfering with the right to vote, perjury
- explain, using historical and contemporary examples, the meaning and significance of the idea of equal protection of the laws for all persons, e.g., the Fourteenth Amendments, Americans with Disabilities Act, equal opportunity legislation
- explain how the individual’s rights to life, liberty, and property are protected by the trial and appellate levels of the judicial process and by the principal varieties of law, e.g., constitutional, criminal, and civil law
- evaluate the argument that Americans depend too much on the legal system to solve social, economic, and political problems rather than using other means, such as private negotiations, mediation, and participation in the political process

2 Judicial protection of the rights of individuals

Students should be able to evaluate, take, and defend positions on current issues regarding the judicial protection of individual rights.

To achieve this standard, students should be able to

- explain the importance of an independent judiciary in a constitutional democracy

- explain the importance of the right to due process of law for individuals accused of crimes, e.g., habeas corpus, presumption of innocence, impartial tribunal, trial by jury, right to counsel, right against self-incrimination, protection against double jeopardy, right of appeal
- describe historical and contemporary instances in which judicial protections have not been extended to all persons
- describe historical and contemporary instances in which judicial protections have been extended to those deprived of them in the past
- explain why due process rights in administrative and legislative procedures are essential for the protection of individual rights and the maintenance of limited government
- explain major means of conflict resolution, including negotiation, arbitration, mediation, and litigation and their advantages and disadvantages
- describe the adversary system and evaluate its advantages and disadvantages
- explain how the state and federal courts' power of judicial review reflects the American idea of constitutional government, i.e., limited government
- evaluate arguments for and against the power of judicial review

If the meanest man in the republic is deprived of his rights, then every man in the republic is deprived of his rights.

Jane Addams (1903)

E How does the American political system provide for choice and opportunities for participation?**CONTENT SUMMARY AND RATIONALE**

The American political system provides citizens with numerous opportunities for choice and participation. The formal institutions and processes of government such as political parties, campaigns, and elections are important avenues for choice and citizen participation. Another equally important avenue is the many associations and groups that constitute civil society. All provide ways for citizens to monitor and influence the political process.

American constitutional democracy is dynamic and sometimes disorderly. The political process is complex and does not always operate in a smooth and predictable manner. Individually and in groups, citizens attempt to influence those in power. In turn, those in power attempt to influence citizens. In this process, the public agenda—the most pressing issues of the day—is set, and public opinion regarding these issues is formed.

If citizens do not understand the political process and how to participate in it effectively, they may feel overwhelmed and alienated. An understanding of the political process is a necessary prerequisite for effective and responsible participation in the making of public policy.

CONTENT STANDARDS**1 The public agenda**

Students should be able to evaluate, take, and defend positions about how the public agenda is set.

To achieve this standard, students should be able to

Morality cannot be legislated, but behavior can be regulated. Judicial decrees may not change the heart, but they can restrain the heartless.

Martin Luther King Jr. (1963)

- explain that the “public agenda” consists of those matters that occupy public attention at any particular time, e.g., crime, health care, education, abortion, national debt, environmental protection, international intervention
- describe how the public agenda is shaped by political leaders, political institutions, political parties, interest groups, the media, individual citizens
- explain how individuals can help to shape the public agenda, e.g., joining interest groups or political parties, making presentations at public meetings, writing letters to newspapers and government officials
- explain why issues important to some groups and the nation do not become a part of the public agenda

2 Public opinion and behavior of the electorate

Students should be able to evaluate, take, and defend positions about the role of public opinion in American politics.

To achieve this standard, students should be able to

- explain the concept of public opinion and alternative views of the proper role of public opinion in a democracy
- explain how public opinion is measured, used in public debate, and sometimes can be manipulated
- evaluate ways that government and the media influence public opinion
- evaluate the influence of public opinion on public policy and the behavior of public officials

Public opinion sets bounds to every government and is the real sovereign in every free one.

James Madison (1791)

Whenever conditions are equal, public opinion brings immense weight to bear on every individual. It surrounds, directs, and oppresses him. The basic constitution of society has more to do with this than any political laws. The more alike men are, the weaker each feels in the face of all.

Alexis de Tocqueville (1835)

3 Political communication: television, radio, the press, and political persuasion

Students should be able to evaluate, take, and defend positions on the influence of the media on American political life.

To achieve this standard, students should be able to

- explain the meaning and importance of freedom of the press
- evaluate the role of television, radio, the press, newsletters, and emerging means of communication in American politics
- compare and contrast various forms of political persuasion and discuss the extent to which traditional forms have been replaced by electronic media
- explain how Congress, the president, and state and local public officials use the media to communicate with the citizenry
- evaluate historical and contemporary political communication using such criteria as logical validity, factual accuracy, emotional appeal, distorted evidence, appeals to bias or prejudice, e.g.,
 - ▶ speeches such as Lincoln’s “House Divided,” Sojourner Truth’s “Ain’t I a Woman?,” Chief Joseph’s “I Shall Fight No More Forever,” Roosevelt’s “Four Freedoms,” Martin Luther King Jr.’s “I Have a Dream”
 - ▶ government wartime information programs, campaign advertisements
 - ▶ political cartoons

I fear three newspapers more than a hundred thousand bayonets.

Napoleon Bonaparte (c. 1800)

Whatever facilitates a general intercourse of sentiments, as good roads, domestic commerce, a free press, and particularly a circulation of newspapers through the entire body of people...is favorable to liberty.

James Madison (1788)

4 Political parties, campaigns, and elections

Students should be able to evaluate, take, and defend positions about the roles of political parties, campaigns, and elections in American politics.

To achieve this standard, students should be able to

- describe the origins and development of the two party system in the United States
- evaluate the role of third parties in the United States
- explain how and why American political parties differ from ideological parties in other countries
- explain the major characteristics of American political parties, how they vary by locality, and how they reflect the dispersion of power, providing citizens numerous opportunities for participation
- describe the role of political parties in channeling public opinion, allowing people to act jointly, nominating candidates, conducting campaigns, and training future leaders
- explain why political parties in the United States are weaker today than they have been at some times in the past
- describe varied types of elections, e.g., primary and general, local and state, congressional and presidential, initiative, referendum, recall
- evaluate the significance of campaigns and elections in the American political system
- evaluate current criticisms of campaigns and proposals for their reform

*The future of this republic
is in the hands of the
American voter.*

Dwight D. Eisenhower (1949)

*Political parties serve
to keep each other in check,
one keenly watching the other.*

Henry Clay (c. 1840)

5 Associations and groups

Students should be able to evaluate, take, and defend positions about the contemporary roles of associations and groups in American politics.

To achieve this standard, students should be able to

- identify and explain the historical role of various associations and groups active in American politics, e.g., political organizations, political action committees (PACs), interest groups, voluntary and civic associations, professional organizations, unions, religious groups
- describe, giving historical and contemporary examples, the role of associations and groups in performing functions otherwise performed by government, such as social welfare and education
- describe the contemporary roles of associations and groups in local, state, and national politics
- evaluate the degree to which associations and groups enhance citizen participation in American political life

Better use has been made of association and this powerful instrument of action has been applied for more varied aims in America than anywhere else in the world.

Alexis de Tocqueville (1835)

6 Forming and carrying out public policy

Students should be able to evaluate, take, and defend positions about the formation and implementation of public policy.

To achieve this standard, students should be able to

- describe a current issue of public policy at local, state, or national level
 - ▶ identify the major groups interested in that issue and explain their positions
 - ▶ identify the points at which citizens can monitor or influence the process of public policy formation
 - ▶ explain the processes by which public policy concerning that issue is formed and carried out
- explain why conflicts about values, principles, and interests may make agreement difficult or impossible on certain issues of public policy, e.g., affirmative action, abortion, environment, gun control, capital punishment

IV WHAT IS THE RELATIONSHIP OF THE UNITED STATES TO OTHER NATIONS AND TO WORLD AFFAIRS?

A How is the world organized politically?

CONTENT SUMMARY AND RATIONALE

The world is divided into **nation-states** that claim sovereignty over a defined territory and jurisdiction over everyone within it. These nation-states interact using diplomacy, formal agreements, and sanctions which may be peaceful or involve the use of force.

At the international level there is no political organization with power comparable to that of the nation-state to enforce agreements. As a result, when interests among nation-states clash, wars may erupt.

There are, however, international governmental organizations that provide avenues through which nation-states interact and attempt to manage conflicts peacefully. In addition, numerous nongovernmental organizations play increasingly important roles.

To make judgments about the role of the United States in the world today and what course American foreign policy should take, citizens need to understand some of the major elements of international relations and how world affairs affect them.

The world is divided into nation-states that claim sovereignty over a defined territory and jurisdiction over everyone within it.

If we do not want to die together in war, we must learn to live together in peace.

Harry S Truman (1945)

Meeting jaw to jaw is better than war.

Winston Churchill (1954)

CONTENT STANDARDS**1 Nation-states**

Students should be able to explain how the world is organized politically.

To achieve this standard, students should be able to

- explain the division of the world into nation-states that claim sovereignty over a defined territory and jurisdiction over everyone within it
- explain why there is no political organization at the international level with power comparable to that of the nation-state

2 Interactions among nation-states

Students should be able to explain how nation-states interact with each other.

To achieve this standard, students should be able to

- describe the most important means nation-states use to interact with one another
 - ▶ trade
 - ▶ diplomacy
 - ▶ treaties, agreements
 - ▶ international law
 - ▶ economic incentives and sanctions
 - ▶ military force and the threat of force

It is essential, if man is not to be compelled to have recourse, as a last resort, to rebellion against tyranny and oppression, that human rights should be protected by the rule of law.

UN Declaration of Human Rights (1948)

- explain common reasons for the breakdown of order among nation-states, e.g., conflicts about national interests, ethnicity, and religion; competition for resources and territory; the absence of effective means to enforce international law
- explain the consequences of the breakdown of order among nation-states
- explain why and how the breakdown of order among nation-states can affect their own lives and the lives of others

3 International organizations

Students should be able to evaluate, take, and defend positions on the purposes and functions of international organizations in the world today.

To achieve this standard, students should be able to

- describe the purposes and functions of the major governmental international organizations, e.g., United Nations, NATO, World Court, Organization of American States
- describe the purposes and functions of major nongovernmental international organizations, e.g., World Council of Churches, Roman Catholic Church, International Red Cross, Amnesty International, multinational corporations

Human rights stand upon a common basis; and by all reason that they are supported, maintained, and defended for all the human family. The essential characteristics of humanity are everywhere the same.

Frederick Douglass (1854)

B How do the domestic politics and constitutional principles of the United States affect its relations with the world?

CONTENT SUMMARY AND RATIONALE

At times in their history, Americans have sought to isolate themselves from the rest of the world. At other times, the nation has played a prominent or even dominant role in world affairs.

Domestic politics and the principles of the United States Constitution impose constraints on the nation's relations with the rest of the world. Disagreements over the meaning of these principles and the degree to which they should guide the ends and means of foreign policy have raised some of the most difficult issues in American history.

An understanding of the behavior of the United States in the world arena and the processes by which foreign policy is made and implemented provides the necessary foundation for making judgments about the proper direction of American foreign policy.

CONTENT STANDARDS**1 The historical context of United States foreign policy**

Students should be able to explain the principal foreign policy positions of the United States and evaluate their consequences.

To achieve this standard, students should be able to

- explain the significance of principal policies and events in the United States' relations with the world, e.g., the American Revolution, Monroe Doctrine, Mexican and Spanish American Wars, World Wars I and II, formation of the United Nations, Marshall Plan, NATO, Korean and Vietnam Wars, end of the Cold War, interventions in Latin America
- explain how and why the United States assumed the role of world leader after World War II and what its leadership role is in the world today
- evaluate the major foreign policy positions that have characterized the United States' relations with the world, e.g., isolated nation, imperial power, and world leader

*Peace, commerce, and honest
friendship with all nations,
entangling alliances with
none...*

Thomas Jefferson (1801)

2 Making and implementing United States foreign policy

Students should be able to evaluate, take, and defend positions about how United States foreign policy is made and the means by which it is carried out.

To achieve this standard, students should be able to

- explain powers the Constitution gives to the president, Congress, and the federal judiciary in foreign affairs and how these powers have been used over time
- describe the process by which United States foreign policy is made, including the roles of federal agencies, domestic interest groups, the public, and the media
- explain the tension between constitutional provisions and the requirements of foreign policy, e.g., the power of Congress to declare war and the need for the president to make expeditious decisions in times of international emergency, the power of the president to make treaties and the need for the Senate to approve them
- describe the various means used to attain the ends of United States foreign policy, such as diplomacy; economic, military and humanitarian aid; treaties; sanctions; military intervention; covert action
- explain how and why domestic politics may impose constraints or obligations on the ways in which the United States acts in the world, e.g., long-standing commitments to certain nations, lobbying efforts of domestic groups, economic needs
- describe ways in which Americans can influence foreign policy

Our policy [the Marshall Plan] is directed not against any country or doctrine but against hunger, poverty, desperation and chaos.

George C. Marshall (1947)

3 The ends and means of United States foreign policy

Students should be able to evaluate, take, and defend positions on foreign policy issues in light of American national interests, values, and principles.

To attain this standard, students should be able to

- explain the idea of the national interest
- evaluate the use of the national interest as a criterion for American foreign policy
- explain the influence of American constitutional values and principles on American foreign policy, e.g., a commitment to the self-determination of nations
- explain possible tensions among American values, principles, and interests as the nation deals with the practical requirements of international politics, e.g., a commitment to human rights and the requirements of national security
- evaluate the current role of the United States in peacemaking and peacekeeping

*We must have a sense
of unity and a national
purpose in our foreign policy.*

Ronald Reagan (1974)

C How has the United States influenced other nations, and how have other nations influenced American politics and society?

CONTENT SUMMARY AND RATIONALE

The United States does not exist in isolation; it is part of an interconnected world in whose development it has played and continues to play a considerable role. The American political tradition, including the ideas expressed in the Declaration of Independence, the United States Constitution, and the Bill of Rights, has had a profound influence abroad. The nation has exerted economic, technological, and cultural influence on other nations. At the same time, the United States and its citizens have been affected by political, economic, technological, and cultural influences from other countries.

Because of the interconnectedness of the world, many pressing domestic problems, including the economy and the environment, are also international issues. Thus, what once was considered a clear distinction between domestic and foreign policy is in some cases no longer valid.

To take part in debates about domestic and foreign policy, citizens need to be aware of developments in the world and their effects, and to evaluate proposals for dealing with them.

CONTENT STANDARDS

1 Impact of the American concept of democracy and individual rights on the world

Students should be able to evaluate, take, and defend positions about the impact of American political ideas on the world.

Just what is it that America stands for? If she stands for one thing more than another, it is for the sovereignty of self-governing people....She stands as an example of free institutions, and as an example of disinterested international action in the main tenets of justice.

Woodrow Wilson (1916)

What we call foreign affairs is no longer foreign affairs. It's a local affair. Whatever happens in Indonesia is important to Indiana....We cannot escape each other.

Dwight D. Eisenhower (1959)

To achieve this standard, students should be able to

- describe the impact on other nations of the American Revolution and of the values and principles expressed in the Declaration of Independence and the United States Constitution including the Bill of Rights
- describe the influence abroad of American ideas about rights and how the ideas of others about rights have influenced Americans

2 Political developments

Students should be able to evaluate, take, and defend positions about the effects of significant international political developments on the United States and other nations.

To achieve this standard, students should be able to

- explain the effects on the United States of significant world political developments, e.g., the French, Russian, and Chinese Revolutions; rise of nationalism; World Wars I and II; decline of colonialism; terrorism; multiplication of nation-states and the proliferation of conflict within them; the emergence of regional organizations such as the European Union
- explain the effects on other nations of significant American political developments, e.g., immigration policies; opposition to communism; promotion of human rights; foreign trade; economic, military, and humanitarian aid
- explain why allegiance to some nation-states is being challenged by competing loyalties, such as those to ethnic, religious, tribal, or linguistic groups

- explain why transnational loyalties sometimes supersede loyalty to a nation-state, e.g., Communist International, Islam, Christianity

3 Economic, technological, and cultural developments

Students should be able to evaluate, take, and defend positions about the effects of significant economic, technological, and cultural developments in the United States and other nations.

To achieve this standard, students should be able to

- describe some of the principal economic, technological, and cultural effects the United States has had on the world, e.g., assembly line manufacturing, research and development in computer technology, popular music, fashion, film, television
- explain the principal effects of developments in other nations on American society and on their own lives
 - ▶ economic conditions, e.g., multinational corporations, internationalization of capital, migration of labor, and other effects of an interdependent world economy
 - ▶ technological developments, e.g., fax machines, electronic communications networks, jet air travel, personal computers, television, motion pictures
 - ▶ cultural developments, e.g., religious movements, resurgence of ethnic consciousness, mass markets, sports

Economic, technological, and cultural developments in other nations have had significant effects on the United States.

4 Demographic and environmental developments

Students should be able to evaluate, take, and defend positions about what the response of American governments at all levels should be to world demographic and environmental developments.

To achieve this standard, students should be able to

- describe the impact of major demographic trends on the United States, e.g., population growth, immigration
- describe principal environmental conditions that affect the United States, e.g., destruction of rain forests, air pollution, water pollution
- evaluate historical and contemporary responses of the American government to demographic and environmental changes

5 United States and international organizations

Students should be able to evaluate, take, and defend positions about what the relationship of the United States should be to international organizations.

To achieve this standard, students should be able to

- describe the role of the United States in establishing and maintaining principal international organizations, e.g., UN, UNICEF, GATT, World Bank, NATO, OAS, International Monetary Fund
- identify some important bilateral and multilateral agreements to which the United States is signatory, e.g., NAFTA, Helsinki Accord, Antarctic Treaty, Most Favored Nation Agreements
- evaluate the role of the United States in international organizations

V WHAT ARE THE ROLES OF THE CITIZEN IN AMERICAN DEMOCRACY?

A What is citizenship?

CONTENT SUMMARY AND RATIONALE

Citizenship in American constitutional democracy differs from membership in an authoritarian or totalitarian regime. In American democracy each citizen is a full and equal member of a self-governing community endowed with fundamental rights and entrusted with responsibilities.

Both the government and the citizens are responsible for the protection of the rights of individuals and for the promotion of the common good. It is a fundamental responsibility of the citizen to see that government serves the purposes for which it was created.

In order to fulfill this role, individuals need to understand what citizenship means in American constitutional democracy.

In view of the Constitution, in the eye of the law, there is in this country no superior, dominant, ruling class of citizens. There is no caste here. Our Constitution is color-blind, and neither knows nor tolerates classes among citizens. In respect of civil rights, all citizens are equal before the law. The humblest is the peer of the most powerful.

John Marshall Harlan (1896)

CONTENT STANDARDS**1 The meaning of citizenship in the United States**

Students should be able to explain the meaning of citizenship in the United States.

To achieve this standard, students should be able to

- explain the idea that citizenship
 - ▶ is legally recognized membership in a self-governing community
 - ▶ confers full membership in a self-governing community; no degrees of citizenship or legally recognized states of inferior citizenship are tolerated
 - ▶ confers equal rights under the law
 - ▶ is not dependent on inherited, involuntary groupings such as race, ethnicity, or ancestral religion
 - ▶ confers certain rights and privileges, e.g., the right to vote, to hold public office, to serve on juries
- explain that Americans are citizens of both their state and the United States

The only title in our democracy superior to that of President [is] the title of citizen.

Louis Brandeis (1937)

2 Becoming a citizen

Students should be able to evaluate, take, and defend positions on issues regarding the criteria used for naturalization.

To achieve this standard, students should be able to

- explain the distinction between citizens and noncitizens (aliens) and the process by which aliens may become citizens
- compare naturalization in the United States with that of other nations
- evaluate the criteria used for admission to citizenship in the United States:
 - ▶ residence in the United States for five years
 - ▶ ability to read, write, and speak English
 - ▶ proof of good moral character
 - ▶ knowledge of the history of the United States
 - ▶ knowledge of and support for the values and principles of American constitutional government

B What are the rights of citizens?**CONTENT SUMMARY AND RATIONALE**

In a political system in which one of the primary purposes of government is the protection of individual rights, it is important for citizens to understand what these rights are and their relationship to each other and to other values and interests of their society.

The concept of rights is complex and cannot be treated thoroughly in this set of standards. These standards, however, will provide a basis for the analysis of public issues involving rights. To do so, it is useful to distinguish among three categories of rights that are of particular significance in the American political system. These are personal, political, and economic rights.

Few rights, if any, are considered absolute. Rights may reinforce or conflict with each other or with other values and interests and require reasonable limitations. Therefore, it is important for citizens to develop a framework that clarifies their ideas about rights and the relationships among rights and other values and interests. This framework provides a basis for making reasoned decisions about the proper scope and limits of rights.

CONTENT STANDARDS**1 Personal rights**

Students should be able to evaluate, take, and defend positions on issues regarding personal rights.

To achieve this standard, students should be able to

- explain the meaning of personal rights as distinguished from political rights, e.g., the right to privacy or the right

There is no security for the personal or political rights of any man in a community where any man is deprived of his personal or political rights.

Benjamin Harrison (1892)

to freedom of conscience as distinguished from the political right to peaceably assemble and petition for a redress of grievances

- identify major documentary statements of personal rights, e.g., the Declaration of Independence, the Northwest Ordinance, the United States Constitution including the Bill of Rights, state constitutions and bills of rights
- explain the importance to the individual and to society of such personal rights as
 - ▶ freedom of thought and conscience
 - ▶ privacy and personal autonomy
 - ▶ freedom of expression and association
 - ▶ freedom of movement and residence
 - ▶ right to due process of law and equal protection of the law
- explain how personal rights are secured in American constitutional democracy by such means as the rule of law, checks and balances, an independent judiciary, a vigilant citizenry
- evaluate contemporary issues that involve the question of personal rights, e.g., restricted membership in organizations, school prayer, sexual harassment, refusal of medical care

*The house of everyone
is to him as his castle and
fortress, as well for his defense
against injury and violence
as for his repose.*

Sir Edward Coke (1604)

2 Political rights

Students should be able to evaluate, take, and defend positions on issues regarding political rights.

To achieve this standard, students should be able to

- explain the meaning of political rights as distinguished from personal rights, e.g., the right of free speech for political discussion as distinct from the right of free speech for expression of one’s personal tastes and interests, or the right to register to vote as distinct from the right to live where one chooses
- identify the major documentary statements of political rights—the Declaration of Independence, the Northwest Ordinance, the United States Constitution including the Bill of Rights, state constitutions and bills of rights, civil rights legislation, court decisions
- explain the importance to the individual and society of such political rights as
 - ▶ freedom of speech, press, assembly, petition
 - ▶ right to vote and run for public office
- explain how political rights are secured by constitutional government and by such means as the rule of law, checks and balances, an independent judiciary, and a vigilant citizenry
- evaluate contemporary issues that involve political rights, e.g., proportional voting, “hate speech,” access to classified information, changing the boundaries of congressional and state legislative districts

Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof; or abridging the freedom of speech, or of the press, or the right of the people peaceably to assemble, and to petition the Government for a redress of grievances.

First Amendment (1791)

3 Economic rights

Students should be able to evaluate, take, and defend positions on issues regarding economic rights.

To achieve this standard, students should be able to

- explain the meaning of economic rights as distinguished from personal and political rights, e.g., the right to use money to buy personal property as distinct from the right to donate money for political campaigns
- identify major documentary statements of economic rights—the Declaration of Independence, the United States Constitution including the Bill of Rights, state constitutions and bills of rights, legislation, court decisions, and the common law
- explain the importance to the individual and society of such economic rights as the right to
 - ▶ acquire, use, transfer, and dispose of property
 - ▶ choose one’s work, change employment
 - ▶ join labor unions and professional associations
 - ▶ establish and operate a business
 - ▶ copyright and patent
 - ▶ enter into lawful contracts
- explain how economic rights are secured by constitutional government and by such means as the rule of law, checks and balances, an independent judiciary, and a vigilant citizenry

I believe each individual is naturally entitled to do as he pleases with himself and the fruit of his labor, so far as it in no wise interferes with any other man’s rights.

Abraham Lincoln (1858)

- evaluate the view that economic responsibilities follow from economic rights
- evaluate contemporary issues that involve economic rights, e.g., minimum wages, consumer product safety, taxation, affirmative action, eminent domain, zoning, copyright, patents

4 Relationships among personal, political, and economic rights

Students should be able to evaluate, take, and defend positions on the relationships among personal, political, and economic rights.

To achieve this standard, students should be able to

- explain the relationship between the economic right to acquire, use, transfer, and dispose of property to political rights
- explain the relationship of economic rights such as the right to choose one's work, to change employment, and to join a labor union and other lawful associations to political rights
- explain and give examples of situations in which personal, political, or economic rights are in conflict
- evaluate the argument that poverty, unemployment, and urban decay serve to limit both political and economic rights
- evaluate the argument that personal, political, and economic rights reinforce each other

We must preserve the right of free speech and the right of free assembly. But the right of free speech does not carry with it—as has been said—the right to holler fire in a crowded theatre. We must preserve the right to free assembly. But free assembly does not carry with it the right to block public thoroughfares to traffic. We do have a right to protest. And a right to march under conditions that do not infringe the Constitutional rights of our neighbors.

Lyndon B. Johnson (1965)

5 Scope and limits of rights

Students should be able to evaluate, take, and defend positions on issues regarding the proper scope and limits of rights.

To achieve this standard, students should be able to

- explain what is meant by the “scope and limits” of a right, e.g., the scope of one’s right to free speech in the United States is extensive and protects almost all forms of political expression; however, the right to free speech can be limited if and when speech seriously harms or endangers others
- evaluate the argument that all rights have limits
- explain considerations and criteria commonly used in determining what limits should be placed on specific rights, e.g.,
 - ▶ clear and present danger
 - ▶ compelling government interest
 - ▶ national security
 - ▶ chilling effect on the exercise of rights
 - ▶ libel or slander
 - ▶ public safety
 - ▶ equal opportunity
- evaluate positions on contemporary conflicts between rights, e.g., the right to a fair trial and the right to a free press, the right to privacy and the right to freedom of expression, one person’s right to free speech versus another’s right to be heard
- evaluate positions on a contemporary conflict between rights and other social values and interests, e.g., the right of the public to know what their government is doing versus the need for national security, the right to property versus the protection of the environment

*The only thing necessary
for the triumph of evil is for
good men to do nothing.*

Attributed to Edmund Burke (1729–1797)

C What are the responsibilities of citizens?**CONTENT SUMMARY AND RATIONALE**

The purposes of American constitutional democracy are furthered by citizens who continuously reexamine the basic principles of the Constitution and monitor the performance of political leaders and government agencies to insure their fidelity to constitutional values and principles. In addition, they must examine their own behavior and fidelity to these values and principles.

Citizens also need to examine situations in which their responsibilities may require that their personal desires or interests be subordinated to the common good. To make these judgments requires an understanding of the difference between personal and civic responsibilities as well as the mutual reinforcement of these responsibilities.

In Germany the Nazis came first for the Communists, and I didn't speak up because I wasn't a Communist. Then they came for the Jews, and I didn't speak up because I wasn't a Jew. Then they came for the trade unionists, and I didn't speak up because I wasn't a trade unionist. Then they came for the Catholics, and I didn't speak up because I was a Protestant. Then they came for me, and by that time no one was left to speak up.

Attributed to Martin Niemoeller
(1946)

CONTENT STANDARDS**1 Personal responsibilities**

Students should be able to evaluate, take, and defend positions on issues regarding the personal responsibilities of citizens in American constitutional democracy.

To achieve this standard, students should be able to

- explain the distinction between personal and civic responsibilities, as well as the tensions that may arise between them
- evaluate the importance for the individual and society of
 - ▶ taking care of one’s self
 - ▶ supporting one’s family and caring for, nurturing, and educating one’s children
 - ▶ accepting responsibility for the consequences of one’s actions
 - ▶ adhering to moral principles
 - ▶ considering the rights and interests of others
 - ▶ behaving in a civil manner

*No government action,
no economic doctrine,
no economic plan or
project can replace that
God-imposed responsibility
of the individual man
and the woman to
their neighbors.*

Herbert Hoover (1931)

2 Civic responsibilities

Students should be able to evaluate, take, and defend positions on issues regarding civic responsibilities of citizens in American constitutional democracy.

To achieve this standard, students should be able to

- evaluate the importance of each citizen reflecting on, criticizing, and reaffirming basic constitutional principles
- evaluate the importance for the individual and society of
 - ▶ obeying the law
 - ▶ being informed and attentive to public issues
 - ▶ monitoring the adherence of political leaders and governmental agencies to constitutional principles and taking appropriate action if that adherence is lacking
 - ▶ assuming leadership when appropriate
 - ▶ paying taxes
 - ▶ registering to vote and voting knowledgeably on candidates and issues
 - ▶ serving as a juror
 - ▶ serving in the armed forces
 - ▶ performing public service
- evaluate whether and when their obligations as citizens require that their personal desires and interests be subordinated to the public good
- evaluate whether and when moral obligations or constitutional principles require one to refuse to assume certain civic responsibilities

I often wonder whether we do not rest our hopes too much upon constitutions, upon laws and upon courts. These are false hopes; believe me, these are false hopes. Liberty lies in the hearts of men and women; when it dies there, no constitution, no law, no court can save it.

Judge Learned Hand (1944)

D What civic dispositions or traits of private and public character are important to the preservation and improvement of American constitutional democracy?

CONTENT SUMMARY AND RATIONALE

American constitutional democracy requires the responsible self-governance of each individual; one cannot exist without the other. Traits of private character such as moral responsibility, self-discipline, and respect for individual worth and human dignity are essential to its well-being.

American constitutional democracy cannot accomplish its purposes, however, unless its citizens are inclined to participate thoughtfully in public affairs. Traits of public character such as public spiritedness, civility, respect for law, critical mindedness, and a willingness to negotiate and compromise are indispensable for its vitality.

These traits of private and public character also contribute to the political efficacy of the individual, the healthy functioning of the political system, and the individual's sense of dignity and worth.

CONTENT STANDARDS

1 Dispositions that lead the citizen to be an independent member of society

Students should be able to evaluate, take, and defend positions on the importance to American constitutional democracy of dispositions that lead individuals to become independent members of society.

To achieve this standard, students should be able to

If there is anything which it is the duty of the whole people to never entrust to any hands but their own, that thing is the preservation and perpetuity of their own liberties and institutions.

Abraham Lincoln (1854)

- explain the meaning and importance of self-discipline and self-governance—adhering voluntarily to self-imposed standards of behavior rather than requiring the imposition of external controls
- explain the meaning and importance of individual responsibility—fulfilling the moral and legal obligations of membership in society

2 Dispositions that foster respect for individual worth and human dignity

Students should be able to evaluate, take, and defend positions on the importance to American constitutional democracy of dispositions that foster respect for individual worth and human dignity.

To achieve this standard, students should be able to

- explain the meaning and importance of respect for the rights and choices of individuals—even beyond the legally enforceable rights guaranteed by the Constitution—such as holding and advocating differing ideas and joining associations to advance their views
- explain the meaning and importance of compassion—concern for the well-being of others

3 Dispositions that incline the citizen to public affairs

Students should be able to evaluate, take, and defend positions on the importance to American constitutional democracy of dispositions that incline citizens to public affairs.

To achieve this standard, students should be able to

- explain the meaning of civic mindedness—what the Founders called civic virtue—or attentiveness to and concern for public affairs

Active citizens...are public meeting-goers and joiners of voluntary organizations who discuss and deliberate with others about the policies that will affect them all, and who will serve their country not only as taxpayers and occasional soldiers, but by having a considered notion of the public good that they genuinely take to heart. The good citizen is a patriot.

Judith Shklar (1991)

Civility costs nothing and buys everything

Lady Mary Wortley Montagu (1756)

- explain the meaning of patriotism—loyalty to the values and principles underlying American constitutional democracy as distinguished from jingoism and chauvinism

4 Dispositions that facilitate thoughtful and effective participation in public affairs

Students should be able to evaluate, take, and defend positions on the importance to American constitutional democracy of dispositions that facilitate thoughtful and effective participation in public affairs.

To achieve this standard, students should be able to

- evaluate the usefulness of the following traits in facilitating thoughtful and effective participation in public affairs
 - ▶ **civility**—treating other persons respectfully, regardless of whether or not one agrees with their viewpoints; being willing to listen to other points of view; avoiding hostile, abusive, emotional, and illogical argument
 - ▶ **respect for the rights of other individuals**—having respect for others’ right to an equal voice in government, to be equal in the eyes of the law, to hold and advocate diverse ideas, and to join in associations to advance their views
 - ▶ **respect for law**—willingness to abide by laws, even though one may not be in complete agreement with every law; willingness to work through peaceful, legal means to change laws which one thinks to be unwise or unjust

The life of the nation is secure only while the nation is honest, truthful, and virtuous.

Frederick Douglass (1885)

Some people look back upon any setback as the end. They’re always looking for the benediction rather than the invocation....But you can’t quit. That isn’t the way our country was built.

Herbert H. Humphrey (1977)

- ▶ **honesty**—willingness to seek and express the truth
- ▶ **open mindedness**—considering others' points of view
- ▶ **critical mindedness**—having the inclination to question the validity of various positions, including one's own
- ▶ **negotiation and compromise**—making an effort to come to agreement with those with whom one may differ, when it is reasonable and morally justifiable to do so
- ▶ **persistence**—being willing to attempt again and again to accomplish worthwhile goals
- ▶ **civic mindedness**—paying attention to and having concern for public affairs
- ▶ **compassion**—having concern for the well-being of others, especially for the less fortunate
- ▶ **patriotism**—being loyal to the values and principles underlying American constitutional democracy, as distinguished from jingoism and chauvinism
- ▶ **courage**—the strength to stand up for one's convictions, when conscience demands
- ▶ **tolerance of ambiguity**—the ability to accept uncertainties that arise, e.g., from insufficient knowledge or understanding of complex issues or from tension among fundamental values and principles

*No man is an island entire
of itself; every man is a piece
of the continent, a part of the
main; if a clod be washed away
by the sea, Europe is the less,
as well as if a promontory
were, as well as if a manor
of thy friend's or of thine
own were; any man's death
diminishes me, because I
am involved in mankind;
and therefore never send
to know for whom the
bell tolls; it tolls for thee.*

John Donne (1631)

E How can citizens take part in civic life?**CONTENT SUMMARY AND RATIONALE**

The well-being of American constitutional democracy depends upon the informed and effective participation of citizens concerned with the preservation of individual rights and the promotion of the common good. The strength and significance of Americans' participatory habits were remarked upon in the nineteenth century by Alexis de Tocqueville, who was struck by the degree of their social participation. Americans have retained this characteristic of engaging in cooperative action for common purposes. Participation in political life, contrasted with the wider realm of organized social participation, has ebbed in recent decades, however. Indifference to or alienation from politics may characterize a significant segment of the population. Citizens should realize that their intelligence and energy are needed in political forums, that democracy wanes when citizens shun politics.

There are two general ways to approach problems that confront society. One is through social action; the other is through political action. For example, in dealing with crime, a course of social action might include forming a neighborhood watch. A course of political action might include meeting with officials, demanding that police provide adequate protection, and agreeing to pay the necessary taxes for them to do so. In dealing with hunger, social action might include working in a soup kitchen organized by a charitable organization; political action might include devising a government program to feed the hungry and acting to insure its adoption and public funding.

Social and political action are not mutually exclusive; they may overlap. In given circumstances, however, one approach may be more appropriate. Both political and social action are essential for the health of American constitutional democracy.

Whether in private or in public, the good citizen does something to support democratic habits and the constitutional order.

Judith Shklar (1991)

Inside the polling booth every American man and woman stands as the equal of every other American man and woman. There they have no masters save their own minds and consciences.

Franklin Delano Roosevelt (1936)

If citizens want their voices to be heard, they must become active participants in the political process. Although elections, campaigns, and voting are at the center of democratic institutions, citizens should be aware that beyond electoral politics there is a wide range of participatory opportunities available to them. These possibilities include attending political meetings, contacting public officials, joining advocacy groups and political parties, and taking part in demonstrations.

Political leadership and careers in public service are vitally important in a democratic society. Citizens need to understand the contributions of those in public service as well as the practical and ethical dilemmas political leaders face.

To answer the question “Why should I participate in the political system?” the citizen needs to examine and evaluate the relationships between the attainment of individual and public goals on one hand and participation in the life of the political community on the other.

If American constitutional democracy is to endure, its citizens must recognize that it is not “a machine that would go of itself.” They also must be aware of the difficulty of establishing free institutions, as evidenced by the experience of the Founders as well as events in the contemporary world. American constitutional democracy requires the continuing and dedicated participation of an attentive, knowledgeable, and reflective citizenry.

*As citizens of this democracy,
you are the rulers and the
ruled, the law-givers and the
law-abiding, the beginning
and the end.*

Adlai Stevenson (1952)

CONTENT STANDARDS**1 The relationship between politics and the attainment of individual and public goals**

Students should be able to evaluate, take, and defend positions on the relationship between politics and the attainment of individual and public goals.

To achieve this standard, students should be able to

- explain the relationship of individual participation in the political process to the realization of the fundamental values of American constitutional democracy
- explain the relationship between participation in the political process and the attainment of individual and collective goals

2 The difference between political and social participation

Students should be able to explain the difference between political and social participation.

To achieve this standard, students should be able to

- explain what distinguishes participation in government and political life from nonpolitical participation in civil society and private life, e.g., participating in a campaign to change laws regulating nursing homes as opposed to volunteering to work in a nursing home
- evaluate the importance of both political and social participation to American constitutional democracy

*Where everyman is...
participator in the govern-
ment of affairs, not merely at
an election one day in the year
but every day...he will let the
heart be torn out of his body
sooner than his power be
wrested from him by a
Caesar or Bonaparte.*

Thomas Jefferson (1816)

*Leadership and learning
are indispensable to
each other.*

John F. Kennedy (1963)

3 Forms of political participation

Students should be able to evaluate, take, and defend positions about the means that citizens should use to monitor and influence the formation and implementation of public policy.

To achieve this standard, students should be able to

- describe the many ways citizens can participate in the political process at local, state, and national levels
- describe historical and current examples of citizen movements seeking to expand liberty, to insure the equal rights of all citizens, and/or to realize other values fundamental to American constitutional democracy, such as the suffrage and civil rights movements
- explain what civil disobedience is, how it differs from other forms of protest, what its consequences might be, and evaluate the circumstances under which it might be justified
- evaluate the importance of voting as a form of political participation
- evaluate the usefulness of other forms of political participation in influencing public policy, e.g., attending political and governmental meetings, filing a legal challenge, demonstrating, contacting public officials, working in campaigns, contributing money to political parties or causes, writing letters, boycotting, community organizing, petitioning, picketing, expressing opinions on talk shows, running for political office

Liberty cannot be preserved without a general knowledge among the people, who have a right...and a desire to know; but besides this they have a right, an indisputable, unalienable, indefeasible, divine right to that most dreaded and envied kind of knowledge, I mean of the characters and conduct of their rulers.

John Adams (1765)

4 Political leadership and careers in public service

Students should be able to evaluate, take, and defend positions about the functions of leadership in a American constitutional democracy.

To achieve this standard, students should be able to

- explain the functions of political leadership and why leadership is a vital necessity in American constitutional democracy
- describe various ways one can exercise leadership in public affairs
- describe opportunities for citizens to engage in careers in public service
- describe the personal qualities necessary for political leadership
- explain and evaluate ethical dilemmas that might confront political leaders

5 Knowledge and participation

Students should be able to explain the importance of knowledge to competent and responsible participation in American democracy.

To achieve this standard, students should be able to

- explain why becoming knowledgeable about public affairs and the values and principles of American constitutional democracy and communicating that knowledge to others is an important form of participation
- explain how awareness of the nature of American constitutional democracy may give citizens the ability to reaffirm or change fundamental constitutional values
- evaluate the claim that constitutional democracy requires the participation of an attentive, knowledgeable, an competent citizenry

In a time of turbulence and change, it is more true than ever that knowledge is power.

John F. Kennedy (1962)

No free government, nor the blessing of liberty, can be preserved to any people, but by...a frequent recurrence to fundamental principles.

George Mason (1776)