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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 may be divergent, reach collective decisions that are generally regarded as binding on the group and enforced as common policy. Every social group, including the family, schools, labor unions, and professional organizations, is engaged in politics, in its broadest sense. Politics is an inescapable activity, and political life enables people to accomplish goals they could not realize as individuals.

Government is the people and institutions in a society with authority to make, carry out, enforce laws, and settle disputes about law that, in general, deal with the distribution of resources in a society, the allocation of benefits and burdens, and the management of conflict.

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

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

believe in placing severe restrictions on the right of government to intrude into their 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.

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

- define and distinguish between private life and civic life
 - ▶ **private life** concerns the personal life of the individual, e.g, being with family and friends, joining clubs or teams, practicing one’s religious beliefs, earning money
 - ▶ **civic life** concerns taking part in the governance of the school, community, tribe, state, or nation, e.g., helping to find solutions to problems, helping to make rules and laws, serving as elected leaders

- describe **politics** as the ways people whose ideas may differ reach agreements that are generally regarded as binding on the group, e.g., presenting information and evidence, stating arguments, negotiating, compromising, voting
- describe **government** as the people and institutions with authority to make, carry out, enforce laws, and manage disputes about law
 - ▶ define authority as the right, legitimized by custom, law, consent, or principles of morality, to use power to direct or control people
 - ▶ identify institutions with authority to direct or control the behavior of members of a society, e.g., a school board, city council, state legislature, courts, Congress
 - ▶ define power without authority as power that is not legitimized by custom, law, consent, or principles of morality
 - ▶ identify examples of the exercise of power without authority, e.g., a street gang, a military junta, a self-proclaimed dictatorship

2 Necessity and purposes of government

Students should be able to evaluate, take, and defend positions on why government is necessary and the purposes government should serve.

To achieve this standard, students should be able to

- explain major ideas about why government is necessary, e.g.,
 - ▶ people’s lives, liberty, and property would be insecure without government, e.g., there would be no laws to control people’s behavior, the strong might take advantage of the weak
 - ▶ individuals by themselves cannot do many of the things they can do collectively, e.g., create a system of highways, provide armed forces for the security of the nation, make and enforce laws
- evaluate competing ideas about the purposes government should serve, e.g.,
 - ▶ protecting individual rights
 - ▶ promoting the common good
 - ▶ providing economic security
 - ▶ molding the character of citizens
 - ▶ furthering the interests of a particular class or group
 - ▶ promoting a particular religion

*[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)

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.

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.

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

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

Civil society provides a domain where individuals are free from unreasonable interference from government.

CONTENT STANDARDS**1 Limited and unlimited governments**

Students should be able to describe 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.,
 - constitutional governments— governments characterized by legal limits on political power
 - ▶ unlimited governments are those in which there are no effective means of restraining their power, e.g.
 - authoritarian systems— governments in which political power is concentrated in one person or a small group, and individuals and groups are subordinated 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

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)

- identify historical and contemporary examples of limited and unlimited governments and justify 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

2 The rule of law

Students should be able to explain the importance of the rule of law for the protection of individual rights and the common good.

To achieve this standard, students should be able to

- explain the difference between the rule of law and the “rule of men”
- 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
- explain the consequences of the absence of a rule of law, e.g.,
 - ▶ anarchy
 - ▶ arbitrary and capricious rule
 - ▶ absence of predictability
 - ▶ disregard for established and fair procedures

*Wherever Law ends,
Tyranny begins.*

John Locke (1690)

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 nations a constitution is only a description of a form of government. In the United States, as well as in some other nations, a constitution is a form of **higher law** that **establishes** the powers of government and **limits** them in order to protect individual rights as well as to promote the common good. In some nations with unlimited governments, constitutions have served as a cloak to misrule, disguising the unconstrained behavior of rulers.

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

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)

CONTENT STANDARDS

1 Concepts of “constitution”

Students should be able to explain alternative 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
 - ▶ constitution as a description of a form of government
 - ▶ constitution as a document
 - ▶ constitution as a higher law limiting the powers of government, i.e., a constitutional or limited government
- identify historical and contemporary nations with constitutions that in reality do not limit power, e.g., former Soviet Union, Nazi Germany, Iraq under Saddam Hussein
- identify historical and contemporary nations with constitutions that in reality do limit power, e.g., United States, United Kingdom, Germany, Japan, Botswana, Chile
- explain that a government with a constitution but with no effective ways to enforce its limitations is not a constitutional government

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)

2 Purposes and uses of constitutions

Students should be able to explain the various purposes constitutions serve.

To achieve this standard, students should be able to

- explain how constitutions
 - ▶ set forth the purposes of government
 - ▶ describe the way a government is organized and how power is allocated
 - ▶ define the relationship between a people and their government
- describe historical and contemporary examples of how constitutions have been used to promote the interests of a particular group, class, religion, or political party, e.g., the People’s Republic of China, Kenya, Mexico
- describe historical and contemporary examples of how constitutions have been used to protect individual rights and promote the common good, e.g., United States Constitution “Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion,” (First Amendment) “The right of citizens of the United States to vote shall not be denied...on account of sex” (Nineteenth Amendment)

In the United States, as well as in some other nations, a constitution is a form of higher law that establishes and limits government in order to protect individual rights as well as to promote the common good.

3 Conditions under which constitutional government flourishes

Students should be able to explain those conditions that are essential for the flourishing of constitutional government.

To achieve this standard, students should be able to

- explain the importance of establishing and maintaining conditions that help constitutional government to flourish such as
 - ▶ a citizenry that
 - is educated and enjoys a reasonable standard of living
 - understands and supports the constitution and its values and principles
 - willingly assumes the responsibilities of citizenship
 - insists that government officials respect limitations the constitution places on their authority
 - ▶ persons serving in government who
 - understand and support the constitution and its values and principles
 - respect limitations the constitution places on their authority

A popular government without popular information or the means of acquiring it is but a prologue to Farce or Tragedy or perhaps both. Knowledge will forever govern ignorance, and a people who mean to be their own Governors must arm themselves with the power knowledge gives.

James Madison (1788)

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 of which has primary responsibility for certain functions, but each branch also shares these powers and functions with other branches, e.g., the president, Congress, and the Supreme Court all share power regarding 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**.

The way a government is organized is a reflection of its most fundamental purposes.

By comparing alternative means of organizing constitutional governments, 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 also 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
 - ▶ the president and members of the Cabinet cannot be members of Congress
 - ▶ powers are separated among branches, each branch has primary responsibility for certain functions, e.g., legislative, executive, and judicial
 - ▶ each branch also shares the powers and functions of the other branches, e.g.,
 - Congress may pass laws, but the president may veto them

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

- the president nominates certain public officials, but the Senate needs to approve them
- Congress may pass laws, but the Supreme Court may declare them unconstitutional
- describe the major characteristics of parliamentary systems, e.g., in the United Kingdom
 - ▶ authority is held by a legislature called Parliament
 - ▶ the political party or parties that can form a majority in Parliament choose the prime minister
 - ▶ the prime minister chooses members of Parliament to serve in the cabinet
 - ▶ the prime minister and members of the cabinet must all be members of the legislature—Parliament
 - ▶ the prime minister and cabinet direct the administration of the government
 - ▶ the prime minister and cabinet may be replaced by Parliament if a majority vote “no confidence” in the government

2 Confederal, federal, and unitary systems

Students should be able to explain the advantages and disadvantages of confederal, federal, 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 national government for specific purposes
 - ▶ federal system—a system in which power is divided and shared between national and state governments
 - ▶ 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 examples of confederal, federal, and unitary systems in the history of the United States, e.g.,
 - ▶ confederal system—the United States under the Articles of Confederation and the Confederate States of America
 - ▶ federal system—the government of the United States
 - ▶ unitary system—state governments of the United States
- explain the major advantages and disadvantages of confederal, federal, and unitary systems

Each state retains its sovereignty, freedom, and independence and every Power, Jurisdiction and right, which is not by this confederation expressly delegated to the United States, in Congress assembled.

Articles of Confederation (1788)

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 this nation’s most distinctive accomplishments. The American system of government relies on its citizens’ commitment to these constitutional values and principles set forth in the Constitution, as well as in the Declaration of Independence and other writings. These values and principles provide the foundation for the establishment, in James Madison’s words, of an “energetic” and effective government, one capable of fulfilling the purposes for which it was created—to protect the inalienable rights of the individual to life, liberty, and property and to promote the common good.

But an equally important purpose of the Constitution is to separate and limit the powers of government so that the basic liberties of the people are not infringed. The Bill of Rights was added to the Constitution to clarify and strengthen limitations on the powers of the national government, and it has become central to the American idea of constitutional government.

Citizens must understand the importance of the fundamental ideas of American constitutional government 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.

Using a written constitution to set forth the values and principles of government and to establish and limit its powers is among this nation’s most distinctive accomplishments.

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

James Madison (1788)

CONTENT STANDARDS

1 The American idea of constitutional government

Students should be able to explain the essential ideas of American constitutional government.

To achieve this standard, students should be able to

- explain essential ideas of American constitutional government as expressed in the Declaration of Independence, the Constitution, and other writings, e.g.,
 - ▶ the people are sovereign; they are the ultimate source of power
 - ▶ the Constitution is a higher law that authorizes a government of limited powers
 - ▶ the purposes of government, as stated in the Preamble to the Constitution, are to
 - form a more perfect union
 - establish justice
 - insure domestic tranquility
 - provide for the common defense
 - promote the general welfare
 - secure the blessings of liberty to ourselves and our posterity
- explain how the following provisions of the United States Constitution give government the power it needs to fulfill the purposes for which it was established

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)

Interpreted as it ought to be interpreted, the Constitution is a GLORIOUS LIBERTY DOCUMENT.

Frederick Douglass (1852)

- ▶ **delegated or enumerated powers**, e.g., to lay and collect taxes, to make treaties, to decide cases and controversies between two or more states (Articles I, II & III)
- ▶ the **general welfare provision** (Article I, Section 8)
- ▶ the **necessary and proper clause** (Article I, Section 8, Clause 18)
- explain the means of limiting the powers of government under the United States Constitution
 - ▶ separation and sharing of powers
 - ▶ checks and balances
 - ▶ Bill of Rights
- explain how specific provisions of the United States Constitution, including the Bill of Rights, limit the powers of government in order to protect the rights of individuals, e.g., habeas corpus; trial by jury; ex post facto; freedom of religion, speech, press, and assembly; equal protection of the law; due process of law; right to counsel
- evaluate, take, and defend positions on current issues involving constitutional protection of individual rights, such as
 - ▶ limits on speech, e.g., “hate speech,” advertising, libel and slander, “fighting words”
 - ▶ separation of church and state, e.g., school vouchers, prayer in public schools
 - ▶ cruel and unusual punishment, e.g., death penalty
 - ▶ search and seizure, e.g., warrantless searches
 - ▶ privacy, e.g., fingerprinting of children, national identification cards, wiretapping, DNA banks

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)

Liberty cannot live apart from constitutional principle.

Woodrow Wilson (1887)

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

The distinctive characteristics of American society have shaped Americans' ideas about the proper relationship among individuals, society, and the government. Americans need to understand these characteristics 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 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.

A belief in social equality and a democratic way of life have fostered voluntarism, another prominent characteristic of Americans.

A belief in social equality and a democratic way of life has fostered voluntarism, another prominent characteristic of Americans. The American tradition of voluntarism emerged from the colonists' dependence on one another during the early settlement period, was enhanced by the influence of a frontier, and was 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 certain 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 if the propensity to voluntarism declined?

The distinctive characteristics of American society have shaped Americans' ideas about the proper relationship among individuals, society, and the government.

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 identify and explain the importance of historical experience and geographic, social, and economic factors that have helped to shape American society.

To achieve this standard, students should be able to

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

A belief in social equality and a democratic way of life have fostered voluntarism, another prominent characteristic of Americans.

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

William James (1897)

I come of Quaker stock. My ancestors were persecuted for their beliefs. Here they sought and found religious freedom. By blood and conviction I stand for religious tolerance both in act and in spirit.

Herbert Hoover (1928)

- ▶ effects of a frontier
- ▶ large scale immigration
- ▶ diversity of the population
- ▶ individualism
- ▶ work ethic
- ▶ market economy
- ▶ relative social equality
- ▶ universal public education

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, frontier traditions, religious beliefs
 - ▶ identify services that religious, charitable, and civic groups provide in their own community, e.g., health, child, and elderly care; disaster relief; counseling; tutoring; basic needs such as food, clothing, shelter
 - ▶ identify opportunities for individuals to volunteer in their own schools and communities

3 Diversity in American society

Students should be able to evaluate, take, and defend positions on the value and challenges of diversity in American life.

To achieve this standard, students should be able to

- identify the many forms of diversity in American society, e.g., regional, linguistic, racial, religious, ethnic, socioeconomic
- explain why diversity is desirable and beneficial, e.g., increases choice, fosters a variety of viewpoints, encourages cultural creativity
- explain why conflicts have arisen from diversity, using historical and contemporary examples, e.g., North/South conflict; conflict about land, suffrage, and other rights of Native Americans; Catholic/Protestant conflicts in the nineteenth century; conflict about civil rights of minorities and women; present day ethnic conflict in urban settings
- evaluate ways conflicts about diversity can be resolved in a peaceful manner that respects individual rights and promotes the common good

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 (1915)

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

In contrast to most other nations, the identity of an American 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.

While political conflicts sometimes have erupted in violence—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 other nations. This is because American political conflict, with the major exception of the Civil War, labor unrest, civil rights struggles, and the opposition to the war in Vietnam, 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 of American political culture, which provides a foundation for the stability of the system of government and its capacity to respond to the needs and interests of the people through peaceful change.

CONTENT STANDARDS**1 American identity**

Students should be able to explain the importance of shared political values and principles to 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 an American’s identity stems from belief in and allegiance to shared political values and principles rather than from ethnicity, race, religion, class, language, gender, or national origin, which determine identity in most other nations
- identify basic values and principles Americans share as set forth in such documents as the Declaration of Independence, the United States Constitution, the Gettysburg Address
- explain why it is important to the individual and society that Americans understand and act on their shared political values and principles

2 The character of American political conflict

Students should be able to describe the character of American political conflict and explain factors that usually prevent violence or that 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 and 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
 - ▶ engaging in wars

We march in the name of the Constitution, knowing that the Constitution is on our side. The right of the people peaceably to assemble and to petition the Government for a redress of grievances shall not be abridged. That’s the First Amendment.

Martin Luther King Jr. (1963)

- explain some of the reasons why political conflict in the United States, with notable exceptions such as the Civil War, labor unrest, civil rights struggles, and the opposition to the war in Vietnam generally has been less divisive than in many other nations. These include
 - ▶ a shared respect for the Constitution and its principles
 - ▶ a sense of unity within diversity
 - ▶ many opportunities to influence government and to participate in it
 - ▶ willingness to relinquish power when voted out of office
 - ▶ acceptance of the idea of majority rule tempered by a respect for minority rights
 - ▶ willingness to use 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

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

CONTENT SUMMARY AND RATIONALE

Agreement on certain fundamental values and principles is essential to the preservation and improvement of American constitutional democracy. They are stated in the Declaration of Independence, the Constitution, the Gettysburg Address, and other significant documents, speeches, and writings. They provide common ground on which Americans can work together to decide how best to promote the attainment of individual, community, and national goals.

The values and principles of American constitutional democracy have shaped the nation’s political institutions and practices. These values and principles are sometimes in conflict, however, 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. They also 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 a sufficient understanding of them.

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 ideals and reality. For these reasons, Americans have joined forces in political movements to abolish slavery, extend the franchise, remove legal support for segregation, and provide equality of opportunity for each individual. Citizens need to be aware of historical and contemporary efforts of Americans who, through individual, social, and political action, have sought to lessen the disparity between ideals and reality. Citizens need to understand that American society is perpetually “unfinished,” and that each generation has an obligation to help the nation move closer to the realization of its ideals.

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

Abigail Adams (1775)

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 among these are Life, Liberty, and the Pursuit of Happiness— That to secure these Rights, Governments are instituted among Men, deriving their just Powers from the Consent of the Governed....

Declaration of Independence (1776)

CONTENT STANDARDS**1 Fundamental values and principles**

Students should be able to explain the meaning and importance of the fundamental values and principles of American constitutional democracy.

To achieve this standard, students should be able to

- identify fundamental values and principles as expressed in
 - ▶ basic documents, e.g., Declaration of Independence and United States Constitution
 - ▶ significant political speeches and writings, e.g., *The Federalist*, Washington’s Farewell Address, Lincoln’s Gettysburg Address, King’s “I Have a Dream” speech
 - ▶ individual and group actions that embody fundamental values and principles, e.g., suffrage and civil rights movements
- explain the meaning and importance of each of the following values considered to be fundamental to American public life
 - ▶ individual rights: life, liberty, property, and the pursuit of happiness
 - ▶ the common or public good
 - ▶ self government
 - ▶ justice
 - ▶ equality

I have never had a feeling, politically, that did not spring from the sentiments embodied in the Declaration of Independence.

Abraham Lincoln (1861)

America has always been about rights.... While many nations are based on a shared language or ethnic heritage, Americans have made rights the foundation of their national identity.

J. Jackson Barlow (1987)

- ▶ diversity
- ▶ openness and free inquiry
- ▶ truth
- ▶ patriotism
- explain the meaning and importance of the following fundamental principles of 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** which includes
 - the rule of law
 - representative institutions
 - shared powers
 - checks and balances
 - individual rights
 - separation of church and state
 - federalism
 - civilian control of the military

The way to secure liberty is to place it in the people's hands, that is, to give them the power at all times to defend it in the legislature and in the courts of justice.

John Adams (1787)

2 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 are in conflict.

To achieve this standard, students should be able to

- describe conflicts among fundamental values and principles and give historical and contemporary examples of these conflicts, such as
 - ▶ conflicts between liberty and equality, e.g., liberty to exclude others from private clubs and the right of individuals to be treated equally
 - ▶ conflicts between individual rights and the common good, e.g., liberty to smoke in public places and protection of the health of other persons
- explain why people may agree on values or principles in the abstract but disagree when they are applied to specific issues
 - ▶ agreement on the value of freedom of expression but disagreement about the extent to which expression of unpopular and offensive views should be tolerated, e.g., neo-Nazi demonstrations, racial slurs, profanity, lyrics that advocate violence
 - ▶ agreement on the value of equality but disagreement about affirmative action programs

*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)

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

Students should be able to evaluate, take, and defend positions on issues concerning ways and means to reduce disparities between American ideals and realities.

To achieve this standard, students should be able to

- identify some important American ideals, e.g., liberty and justice for all, an informed citizenry, civic virtue or concern for the common good, respect for the rights of others
- explain the importance of ideals as goals, even if they are not fully achieved
- explain, using historical and contemporary examples, discrepancies between American ideals and the realities of political and social life in the United States, e.g., the ideal of equal justice for all and the reality that the poor may not have equal access to the judicial system.
- describe historical and contemporary efforts to reduce discrepancies between ideals and the reality of American public life, e.g., abolition, suffrage, civil rights, and environmental protection movements
- explain ways in which discrepancies between reality and the ideals of American constitutional democracy can be reduced by
 - ▶ individual action
 - ▶ social action
 - ▶ political action

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)

*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)

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 action by government which may or may not be desirable. The Framers of the Constitution saw this system as a principal means of limiting the power of government. It 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, monitor, and influence it more effectively.

Americans live under the jurisdiction of national, state, and local governments.

CONTENT STANDARDS**1 Distributing, sharing, and limiting powers of the national government**

Students should be able to explain how the powers of the national government are distributed, shared, and limited.

To achieve this standard, students should be able to

- explain how the three opening words of the Preamble to the Constitution, “We the People,” embody the principle of the people as sovereign—the ultimate source of authority
- explain how legislative, executive, and judicial powers are distributed and shared among the three branches of the national government
 - ▶ legislative power—although primary legislative power lies with Congress, it is shared with the other branches, e.g., the executive branch can submit bills for consideration and can establish regulations, the Supreme Court can interpret laws and can declare them unconstitutional
 - ▶ executive power—although primary executive power is with the executive branch, it is shared by the other branches, e.g., congressional committees have authority to review actions of the executive branch, the Senate must approve appointments and ratify treaties, the Supreme Court can review actions of the executive branch and declare them unconstitutional

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)

- ▶ judicial power—although primary judicial power is with the federal judiciary, it is shared with other branches, e.g., the president appoints federal judges, the Senate can approve or refuse to confirm federal court appointees, the executive branch can hold administrative hearings on compliance with regulations and laws, Congress can “overturn” a Supreme Court interpretation of a law by amending it
- explain how each branch of government can check the powers of the other branches
 - ▶ legislative branch has the power to
 - establish committees to oversee activities of the executive branch
 - impeach the president, other members of the executive branch, and federal judges
 - pass laws over the president’s veto by two-thirds majority vote of both Houses
 - disapprove appointments made by the president
 - propose amendments to the United States Constitution

- ▶ executive branch has the power to
 - veto laws passed by Congress
 - nominate members of the federal judiciary
- ▶ judicial branch has the power to
 - overrule decisions made by lower courts
 - declare laws made by Congress to be unconstitutional
 - declare actions of the executive branch to be unconstitutional

2 Sharing of powers between the national and state governments

Students should be able to explain how and why powers are distributed and shared between national and state governments in the federal system.

To achieve this standard, students should be able to

- identify the major parts of the federal system
 - ▶ national government
 - ▶ state governments
 - ▶ other governmental units, e.g., District of Columbia; American tribal governments; territories of Puerto Rico, Guam, American Samoa; Virgin Islands

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)

- describe how some powers are shared between the national and state governments, e.g., power to tax, borrow money, regulate voting
- describe functions commonly and primarily exercised by state governments, e.g., education, law enforcement, health and hospitals, roads and highways
- identify powers prohibited to state governments by the United States Constitution, e.g., coining money, conducting foreign relations, interfering with interstate commerce, raising an army and declaring war (Article I, Section 10)
- explain how and why the United States Constitution provides that laws of the national government and treaties are the supreme law of the land
- explain how the distribution and sharing of power between the national and state governments increases opportunities for citizens to participate and to hold their governments accountable

B What does the national government 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 political process on their daily lives and the lives of their communities, citizens need to understand how the national government functions. To deliberate with other citizens about political action and to influence governmental actions that affect their lives, citizens need to know the allocation of responsibilities among various components of government and where and how decisions are made.

CONTENT STANDARDS**1 Major responsibilities for domestic and foreign policy**

Students should be able to explain the major responsibilities of the national government for domestic and foreign policy.

To achieve this standard, students should be able to

- identify historical and contemporary examples of important domestic policies, e.g., Pure Food and Drug Act, Environmental Protection Act, civil rights laws, child labor laws, minimum wage laws, Aid to Families with Dependent Children, Social Security

The domestic and foreign policies established by the national government have significant consequences for the daily lives of all Americans.

- explain how and why domestic policies affect their lives
- identify historical and contemporary examples of important foreign policies, e.g., Monroe Doctrine, Marshall Plan, immigration acts, foreign aid, arms control, promoting democracy and human rights throughout the world
- explain how and why foreign policies affect own lives

2 Financing government through taxation

Students should be able to explain the necessity of taxes and the purposes for which taxes are used.

To achieve this standard, students should be able to

- explain why taxation is necessary to pay for government
- identify provisions of the United States Constitution that authorize the national government to collect taxes, i.e., Article One, 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, tariffs on foreign goods
- 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), national defense, interest on the federal debt, interstate highways

*Taxes are what we
pay for civilized society.*

Oliver Wendell Holmes Jr. (1904)

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

State governments are established by state constitutions. That is, each has its own legislative, executive, and judicial branches. States possess substantial powers that, along with their local and intermediate governments, affect a citizen's life 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.

Local governments provide most of the services citizens receive.

CONTENT STANDARDS**1 State governments**

Students should be able to explain why states have constitutions, their purposes, and the relationship of state constitutions to the federal constitution.

To achieve this standard, students should be able to

- explain that their state has a constitution because the United States is a federal system
- identify major purposes of the constitution of the state in which they live
- identify and explain the basic similarities and differences between their state constitution and the United States Constitution
- explain why state constitutions and state governments cannot violate the United States Constitution
- explain how citizens can change their state constitution and cite examples of changes

2 Organization and responsibilities of state and local governments

Students should be able to describe the organization and major responsibilities of state and local governments.

To achieve this standard, students should be able to

- identify major responsibilities of their state and local governments, e.g., education, welfare, streets and roads, parks, recreation, and law enforcement
- describe the organization of their state and local governments, e.g., legislative, executive, and judicial functions at state and local levels
- identify major sources of revenue for state and local governments, e.g., property, sales, and income taxes; fees and licenses; taxes on corporations and businesses; borrowing
- explain why state and local governments have an important effect on their own lives

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)

D Who represents you in local, state, and national governments?**CONTENT SUMMARY AND RATIONALE**

Few Americans can identify most of the key people elected to serve them. It is important not only to know who these people are, but what their responsibilities are, and how they can be contacted on matters of interest. Such knowledge is an essential first step in providing Americans with the capacity to take part in their own governance.

CONTENT STANDARDS**1 Who represents you in legislative and executive branches of your local, state, and national governments?**

Students should be able to identify their representatives in the legislative branches as well as the heads of the executive branches of their local, state, and national governments.

To achieve this standard, students should be able to

- name the persons representing them at state and national levels in the legislative branches of government, i.e., representatives and senators in their state legislature and in Congress
- name the persons representing them at local, state, and national levels in the executive branches of government, e.g., mayor, governor, president
- explain how they can contact their representatives and when and why it is important to do so
- explain which level of government they should contact to express their opinions or to get help on specific problems, e.g., **opinions** about a curfew for persons under 16 years of age, an increase in state sales tax, aid to another country; **problems** with street lights, driver's license, federal income taxes

Few Americans can identify most of the key people elected to serve them.

E 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.

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 often is 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 rights
- understand the importance of voluntary adherence to the law
- identify the purposes of American public life best served by law and the purposes best served by other means
- support new laws and changes in existing law that are in accord with the fundamental values and principles of the Constitution and serve the needs of their communities and the nation
- evaluate the operation of the legal system and proposals for improvement

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 explain the importance of law in the American constitutional system.

To achieve this standard, students should be able to

- explain the importance of the rule of law in
 - ▶ establishing limits on both those who govern and the governed
 - ▶ protecting individual rights
 - ▶ promoting the common good
- describe historical and contemporary examples of the rule of law, e.g., *Marbury v. Madison*, *Brown v. Board of Education*, *U.S. v. Nixon*
- identify principal varieties of law, e.g., constitutional, criminal, civil
- explain how the principal varieties of law protect individual rights and promote the common good

2 Criteria for evaluating rules and laws

Students should be able to explain and apply criteria useful in evaluating rules and laws.

To achieve this standard, students should be able to

If individuals enter into a state of society the laws of that society must be the supreme regulator of their conduct.

Alexander Hamilton (1788)

- identify the strengths and weaknesses of a rule or law by determining if it is
 - ▶ well designed to achieve its purposes
 - ▶ understandable, i.e., clearly written, its requirements are explicit
 - ▶ possible to follow, i.e, does not demand the impossible
 - ▶ fair, i.e., not biased against or for any individual or group
 - ▶ designed to protect individual rights and to promote the common good
- draft rules for their schools or communities that meet the criteria for a good or well-constructed rule or law

3 Judicial protection of the rights of individuals

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

To achieve this standard, students should be able to

- explain the basic concept of due process of law, i.e., government must use fair procedures to gather information and make decisions in order to protect the rights of individuals and the interests of society
- explain the importance to individuals and to society of major due process protections

Nor shall any State deprive any person of life, liberty, or property, without due process of law; nor deny to any person within its jurisdiction the equal protection of the laws.

Fourteenth Amendment (1868)

- ▶ habeas corpus
 - ▶ presumption of innocence
 - ▶ fair notice
 - ▶ impartial tribunal
 - ▶ speedy and public trials
 - ▶ right to counsel
 - ▶ trial by jury
 - ▶ right against self-incrimination
 - ▶ protection against double jeopardy
 - ▶ right of appeal
- explain why due process rights in administrative and legislative procedures are essential for the protection of individual rights and the maintenance of limited government, e.g., the right to adequate notice of a hearing that may affect one's interests, the right to counsel in legislative hearings
 - describe the adversary system and evaluate its advantages and disadvantages
 - explain the basic principles of the juvenile justice system and the major differences between the due process rights of juveniles and adults
 - describe alternative means of conflict management and evaluate their advantages and disadvantages, e.g., negotiation, mediation, arbitration, and litigation
 - evaluate arguments about current issues regarding judicial protection of the rights of individuals

F 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. Politics is not always smooth and predictable. 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 deal with 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 explain what is meant by the public agenda and how it is set.

To achieve this standard, students should be able to

The American political system provides citizens with numerous opportunities for choice and participation.

- explain that the public agenda consists of those matters that occupy public attention at any particular time, e.g., crime, health care, education, child care, environmental protection, drug abuse
- describe how the public agenda is shaped by political leaders, interest groups, the media, state and federal courts, individual citizens
- explain how individuals can help to shape the public agenda, e.g., by joining interest groups or political parties, by making presentations at public meetings, by writing letters to government officials and to newspapers

2 Political communication

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 importance of freedom of the press to informed participation in the political system
- evaluate the influence of television, radio, the press, newsletters, and emerging means of electronic communication on American politics
- explain how Congress, the president, the Supreme Court, and state and local public officials use the media to communicate with the citizenry
- explain how citizens can evaluate information and arguments received from various sources so that they can make reasonable choices on public issues and among candidates for political office

*I fear three newspapers more than
a hundred thousand bayonets.*

Napoleon Bonaparte (c.1800)

- evaluate opportunities the media provide for individuals to monitor actions of their government, e.g., televised broadcasts of proceedings of governmental agencies, such as Congress and the courts, press conferences held by public officials
- evaluate opportunities the media provide for individuals to communicate their concerns and positions on current issues, e.g., letters to the editor, talk shows, “op-ed pages,” public opinion polls

3 Political parties, campaigns, and elections

Students should be able to explain how political parties, campaigns, and elections provide opportunities for citizens to participate in the political process.

To achieve this standard, students should be able to

- describe the role of political parties
- describe various kinds of elections, e.g., primary and general, local and state, congressional, presidential, recall
- explain ways individuals can participate in political parties, campaigns, and elections

4 Associations and groups

Students should be able to explain how interest groups, unions, and professional organizations provide opportunities for citizens to participate in the political process.

To achieve this standard, students should be able to

- describe the historical roles of prominent associations and groups in local, state, or national politics, e.g., abolitionists,

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)

suffragists, labor unions, agricultural organizations, civil rights groups, religious organizations

- describe the contemporary roles of prominent associations and groups in local, state, or national politics, e.g., AFL-CIO, National Education Association, Chamber of Commerce, Common Cause, League of Women Voters, American Medical Association, National Rifle Association, Greenpeace, National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP), Public Citizen, World Wildlife Federation
- explain how and why Americans become members of associations and groups
- explain how individuals can participate in the political process through membership in associations and groups

5 Forming and carrying out public policy

Students should be able to explain how public policy is formed and carried out at local, state, and national levels and what roles individuals can play in the process.

To achieve this standard, students should be able to

- define public policy and identify examples at local, state, and national levels
- describe how public policies are formed and implemented
- explain how citizens can monitor and influence the formation and implementation of public policies
- explain why conflicts about values, principles, and interests may make agreement difficult or impossible on certain issues of public policy, e.g., affirmative action, gun control, environmental protection, capital punishment, equal rights

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** each of which claims 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 may involve the use of force.

At the international level there is no political organization with power comparable to that of the nation-state to make binding decisions and enforce agreements. As a result, when conflicts arise among nation-states, wars may erupt on local, regional, or worldwide levels.

There are, however, governmental and nongovernmental international organizations that provide avenues through which nation-states can interact and attempt to manage their affairs and conflicts peacefully.

To make judgments about the role of the United States in the world today and the 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 each of which claims sovereignty over a defined territory and jurisdiction over everyone within it.

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

- describe how the world is divided 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 Interaction 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 and agreements
 - ▶ humanitarian aid
 - ▶ economic incentives and sanctions
 - ▶ military force and the threat of force

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

Harry S Truman (1945)

- explain reasons for the breakdown of order among nation-states, e.g. conflicts about national interests, ethnicity, and religion; competition for resources and territory; 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

3 United States' relations with other nation-states

Students should be able to explain 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 the most important powers the United States Constitution gives to the Congress, president, and federal judiciary in foreign affairs
 - ▶ Congress—can declare war, approve treaties (Senate), raise and support armies, and provide a navy (Article I, Section 8)
 - ▶ president—is Commander in Chief, can make treaties and appoint ambassadors (Article II)
 - ▶ federal judiciary—can decide cases affecting treaties and ambassadors, and those involving treason (Article III)

What we call foreign affairs is no longer foreign affairs. It's a local affair. Whatever happens in Indonesia is important to Indiana....

Dwight D. Eisenhower (1959)

- describe various means used to attain the ends of United States foreign policy, e.g., diplomacy; economic, military, and humanitarian aid; treaties; trade agreements; incentives; sanctions; military intervention; covert action
- identify important current foreign policy issues and evaluate the means the United States is using to deal with them

4 International organizations

Students should be able to explain the role of major international organizations in the world today.

To achieve this standard, students should be able to

- describe the purposes and functions of major governmental international organizations, e.g., UN, NATO, OAS, World Court
- describe the purposes and functions of major nongovernmental international organizations, e.g., International Red Cross, World Council of Churches, Amnesty International

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)

B 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 an important role. The American political tradition, including the ideas expressed in the Declaration of Independence, the Constitution, and the Bill of Rights, has had a profound influence abroad. In turn, Americans have been affected by the political ideas of other nations from the ideas of the natural rights philosophers and classical republicanism of the founding period to ideas about social and economic rights such as those found in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

Political, economic, demographic, and environmental developments in the world affect Americans and require the United States to respond with reasoned and effective policies to deal with them. 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 international policy is no longer valid in some cases.

To take part in debate 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.

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)

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

Students should be able to describe the influence of American political ideas on other nations.

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 American ideas about rights have had on other nations and international organizations, e.g., French Revolution; democracy movements in Eastern Europe, People’s Republic of China, Latin America, South Africa; United Nations Charter; Universal Declaration of Human Rights
- describe the impact of other nations’ ideas about rights on the United States, e.g., natural rights in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, social and economic rights in the twentieth century

The Declaration of Independence...gave liberty not alone to the people of this country, but hope to all the world, for all future time.

Abraham Lincoln (1861)

2 Political, demographic, and environmental developments

Students should be able to explain the effects of significant political, demographic, and environmental trends in the world.

To achieve this standard, students should be able to

- describe the impact of current political developments in the world on the United States, e.g., conflicts within and among other nations, efforts to establish democratic governments
- describe the impact of major demographic trends on the United States, e.g., population growth, increase in immigration and refugees
- describe environmental conditions that affect the United States, e.g., destruction of rain forests and animal habitats, depletion of fishing grounds, air and water pollution

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

A What is citizenship?

CONTENT SUMMARY AND RATIONALE

Citizenship in a constitutional democracy differs from membership in an authoritarian or totalitarian regime. In a 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 of a constitutional democracy 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 in a constitutional democracy means.

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**

Students should be able to explain the meaning of American citizenship.

To achieve this standard, students should be able to

- explain the important characteristics of citizenship in the United States. Specifically, citizenship
 - ▶ is legally recognized membership in a self-governing community
 - ▶ confers full membership in a self-governing community—there are no degrees of citizenship or of legally tolerated states of inferior citizenship in the United States
 - ▶ confers equal rights under the law
 - ▶ is not dependent on inherited, involuntary groupings such as race, gender, or ethnicity
 - ▶ 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

2 Becoming a citizen

Students should be able to explain how one becomes a citizen of the United States.

To achieve this standard, students should be able to

- explain that anyone born in the United States is a U.S. citizen
- explain the distinction between citizens and noncitizens (aliens)
- describe the process by which noncitizens may become citizens
- compare naturalization in the United States with that of other nations
- evaluate the criteria established by law that are 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 democracy

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 these standards. These standards, however, will provide a basis for the analysis of public issues involving rights. It is useful to distinguish among three categories of rights that are of particular significance in the American political system. These are the right to a private or personal domain, 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 necessitating reasonable limitations on them. It is important, therefore, for citizens to develop a framework that clarifies their ideas about rights and the relationships among rights and other values and interests. Such a framework provides citizens with 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 involving personal rights.

To achieve this standard, students should be able to

- identify personal rights, e.g., freedom of conscience, freedom to marry whom one chooses, to have children, to associate with whomever one pleases, to live where one chooses, to travel freely, to emigrate
- identify the major documentary sources of personal rights, e.g., Declaration of Independence, United States Constitution, including the Bill of Rights, state constitutions
- explain the importance to the individual and to society of such personal rights as
 - ▶ freedom of conscience and religion
 - ▶ freedom of expression and association
 - ▶ freedom of movement and residence
 - ▶ privacy
- identify and evaluate contemporary issues that involve personal rights, e.g., restricting membership in private organizations, school prayer, dress codes, curfews, sexual harassment, the right to refuse medical care

The right of the people to be secure in their persons, houses, papers, and effects, against unreasonable searches and seizures, shall not be violated.

Fourth Amendment (1791)

2 Political rights

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

To achieve this standard, students should be able to

- identify political rights, e.g., the right to vote, petition, assembly, freedom of press
- 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 to express personal tastes and interests, the right to register to vote as distinct from the right to live where one chooses
- identify major statements of political rights in documents such as the Declaration of Independence, United States Constitution, including the Bill of Rights, state constitutions, and civil rights legislation
- explain the importance to the individual and society of such political rights as
 - ▶ freedom of speech, press, assembly, and petition
 - ▶ right to vote and to seek public office
- identify and evaluate contemporary issues that involve political rights, e.g., hate speech, fair trial, free press

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 involving economic rights.

To achieve this standard, students should be able to

- identify important economic rights, e.g., the right to own property, choose one’s work, change employment, join a labor union, establish a business
- identify statements of economic rights in the United States Constitution, e.g., requirement of just compensation, contracts, copyright, patents
- explain the importance to the individual and to 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
- identify and evaluate contemporary issues regarding economic rights, e.g., employment, welfare, social security, minimum wage, health care, equal pay for equal work, freedom of contract

As a jury trial is drawn from the primary right to a fair trial... so earning is implicit in equal American citizenship.

Judith Shklar (1991)

4 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. The right to free speech, however, can be limited if and when that speech seriously harms or endangers others
- explain the argument that all rights have limits
- explain criteria commonly used in determining what limits should be placed on specific rights, e.g.,
 - ▶ clear and present danger rule
 - ▶ compelling government interest test
 - ▶ national security
 - ▶ libel or slander
 - ▶ public safety
 - ▶ equal opportunity
- identify and evaluate positions on a contemporary conflict between rights, e.g., right to a fair trial and right to a free press, right to privacy and right to freedom of expression
- identify and 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 most stringent protection of free speech would not protect a man in falsely shouting fire in a theater and causing a panic.

Oliver Wendell Holmes Jr. (1919)

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

An examination of the importance of personal and political and economic rights must be accompanied by an examination of personal and civic responsibilities. For American constitutional democracy to flourish and seek to attain its ideals, citizens must not only be aware of their rights, they must also exercise them responsibly and fulfill those personal and civic responsibilities necessary in a self-governing, free, and just society.

Citizens must examine the basic values and principles of the United States Constitution and monitor the performance of political leaders and government agencies to insure their fidelity to them. In addition, they must examine their own behavior in relation to those values and principles and learn to deal appropriately with situations in which their responsibilities may require that their personal rights, desires, or interests be subordinated to the common good.

To make judgments about their responsibilities, citizens must understand 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)

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

Adlai Stevenson (1952)

CONTENT STANDARDS**1 Personal responsibilities**

Students should be able to evaluate, take, and defend positions on the importance of personal responsibilities to the individual and to society.

To achieve this standard, students should be able to

- evaluate the importance of commonly held personal responsibilities, such as
 - ▶ taking care of one’s self
 - ▶ supporting one’s family
 - ▶ 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
- identify and evaluate contemporary issues that involve personal responsibilities, e.g., failure to provide adequate support or care for one’s children, cheating on examinations, lack of concern for the less fortunate

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

Herbert Hoover (1931)

2 Civic responsibilities

Students should be able to evaluate, take, and defend positions on the importance of civic responsibilities to the individual and society.

To achieve this standard, students should be able to

- evaluate the importance of commonly held civic responsibilities, such as
 - ▶ obeying the law
 - ▶ paying taxes
 - ▶ respecting the rights of others
 - ▶ being informed and attentive to public issues
 - ▶ monitoring political leaders and governmental agencies and taking appropriate action if their adherence to constitutional principles is lacking
 - ▶ deciding whether and how to vote
 - ▶ participating in civic groups
 - ▶ performing public service
 - ▶ serving as a juror
 - ▶ serving in the armed forces
- explain the meaning of civic responsibilities as distinguished from personal responsibilities
- evaluate when their responsibilities as Americans require that their personal rights and interests be subordinated to the public good
- evaluate the importance for the individual and society of fulfilling civic responsibilities
- identify and evaluate contemporary issues that involve civic responsibilities, e.g., low voter participation, avoidance of jury duty, failure to be informed about public issues

Every voter ought not merely to vote, but to vote under the inspiration of a high purpose to serve a nation.

Calvin Coolidge (1924)

In Republics, the great danger is, that the majority may not sufficiently respect the rights of the minority.

James Madison (1829)

D What dispositions or traits of 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. Certain traits of private character such as moral responsibility, self-discipline, and respect for individual worth and human dignity are essential to the well-being of the society.

No democracy can accomplish its purposes, however, unless its citizens are inclined to participate thoughtfully in public affairs. Certain traits of public character such as civility, respect for law, civic mindedness, critical mindedness, persistence, and a willingness to negotiate and compromise are indispensable for the vitality of American constitutional democracy.

Such traits of private and public character also contribute to the fulfillment of the individual and to his or her efficacy as a citizen.

*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)

CONTENT STANDARDS

1 Dispositions that enhance citizen effectiveness and promote the healthy functioning of American constitutional democracy

Students should be able to evaluate, take, and defend positions on the importance of certain dispositions or traits of character to themselves and American constitutional democracy.

To achieve this standard, students should be able to

- explain the importance to the individual and society of the following dispositions or traits of character
 - ▶ **individual responsibility**—fulfilling the moral and legal obligations of membership in society
 - ▶ **self-discipline/self-governance**—adhering voluntarily to self-imposed standards of behavior rather than requiring the imposition of external controls
 - ▶ **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
 - ▶ **courage**—the strength to stand up for one’s convictions when conscience demands
 - ▶ **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

*Civility costs nothing
and buys everything.*

Lady Mary Wortley Montagu (1756)

- ▶ **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 are thought to be unwise or unjust
- ▶ **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

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

John Milton (1641)

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

Attributed to
Edmund Burke (1729–1797)

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

The well-being of constitutional democracy depends on 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 government, contrasted with the wider realm of organized social participation, has ebbed in recent decades, however. Indifference to or alienation from politics characterizes a significant segment of the population. Citizens should realize that their intelligence and energy are needed in political forums and 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 and demanding that police provide adequate protection. 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. At times, one approach may be more appropriate or desirable than another. Nevertheless, both political and social action are essential for the health of American constitutional democracy.

If liberty and equality, as is thought by some, are chiefly to be found in democracy, they will be attained when all persons alike share in the government to the utmost.

Aristotle (c. 340 B.C.)

The greatest menace to freedom is an inert people.

Louis Brandeis (1927)

If citizens want their views to be considered, 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 American constitutional democracy. 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 relationship between the attainment of individual and public goals and participation in the civic and political life of the community.

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 by events in the contemporary world. Constitutional democracy requires the continuing and dedicated participation of an attentive, knowledgeable, and reflective citizenry.

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

Judith Shklar (1991)

CONTENT STANDARDS

1 Participation in civic and political life and the attainment of individual and public goals

Students should be able to explain the relationship between participating in civic and political life and the attainment of individual and public goals.

To achieve this standard, students should be able to

- identify examples of their own individual goals and explain how their participation in civic and political life can help to attain them, e.g., living in a safe and orderly neighborhood, obtaining a good education, living in a healthy environment
- identify examples of public goals and explain how participation in civic and political life can help to attain them, e.g., increasing the safety of the community, improving local transportation facilities, providing opportunities for education and recreation

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 political from social participation, e.g., participating in a campaign to change laws regulating the care of children as opposed to volunteering to care for children
- explain the importance of both political and social participation to American constitutional democracy
- identify opportunities in their own community for both political and social participation

*Where everyman is...
participator in the government
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 a Bonaparte.*

Thomas Jefferson (1816)

3 Forms of political participation

Students should be able to describe the means by which Americans can monitor and influence politics and government.

To achieve this standard, students should be able to

- explain how Americans can use the following means to monitor and influence politics and government at local, state, and national levels
 - ▶ voting
 - ▶ becoming informed about public issues
 - ▶ discussing public issues
 - ▶ communicating with public officials
 - ▶ joining political parties, interest groups, and other organizations that attempt to influence public policy and elections
 - ▶ attending meetings of governing bodies
 - ▶ working in campaigns
 - ▶ taking part in peaceful demonstration
 - ▶ circulating and signing petitions
 - ▶ contributing money to political parties or causes
- describe historical and current examples of citizen movements seeking to promote individual rights and the common good, e.g., abolition, suffrage, labor and civil rights movements
- explain what civil disobedience is, how it differs from other forms of protest, what its consequences might be,

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)

Among free men there can be no successful appeal from the ballot to the bullet; and...they who take such appeal are sure to lose their case, and pay the cost.

Abraham Lincoln (1863)

and circumstances under which it might be justified

- explain why becoming knowledgeable about public affairs and the values and principles of American constitutional democracy and communicating that knowledge to others is a form of political participation

4 Political leadership and public service

Students should be able to explain the importance of political leadership and public service in a constitutional democracy.

To achieve this standard, students should be able to

- describe personal qualities necessary for political leadership
- explain the functions of political leadership and why leadership is a vital necessity in a constitutional democracy
- explain and evaluate ethical dilemmas that might confront political leaders
- identify opportunities for political leadership in their own school, community, state, and the nation
- explain the importance of individuals working cooperatively with their elected leaders
- evaluate the role of “the loyal opposition” in a constitutional democracy
- explain the importance of public service in a constitutional democracy
- identify opportunities for public service in their own school, community, state and the nation
- identify career opportunities in public service

The aim of every political constitution is, or ought to be, first to obtain for rulers men who possess most wisdom to discern and most virtue to pursue, the common good of the society and in the next place, to take the most effectual precaution for keeping them virtuous whilst they continue to hold their public trust.

James Madison (1787)

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, and competent citizenry

*A leader has to lead,
or otherwise he has
no business in politics.*

Harry S Truman (1955)

*If a nation expects
to be ignorant and free,
in a state of civilization,
it expects what never
was and never will be.*

Thomas Jefferson (1816)