

New York State Learning Standards for Social Studies

Standard 1: History of the United States and New York

Students will use a variety of intellectual skills to demonstrate their understanding of major ideas, eras, themes, developments, and turning points in the history of the United States and New York.

Standard 2: World History

Students will use a variety of intellectual skills to demonstrate their understanding of major ideas, eras, themes, developments, and turning points in world history and examine the broad sweep of history from a variety of perspectives.

Standard 3: Geography

Students will use a variety of intellectual skills to demonstrate their understanding of the geography of the interdependent world in which we live—local, national, and global—including the distribution of people, places, and environments over the Earth’s surface.

Standard 4: Economics

Students will use a variety of intellectual skills to demonstrate their understanding of how the United States and other societies develop economic systems and associated institutions to allocate scarce resources, how major decision-making units function in the United States and other national economies, and how an economy solves the scarcity problem through market and non market mechanisms.

Standard 5: Civics, Citizenship, and Government

Students will use a variety of intellectual skills to demonstrate their understanding of the necessity for establishing governments; the governmental system of the United States and other nations; the United States Constitution; the basic civic values of American constitutional democracy; and the roles, rights, and responsibilities of citizenship, including avenues of participation.

Standard 1 – History of the United States and New York

Key ideas are identified by numbers (1).
Performance indicators are identified by bullets (•).
Sample tasks are identified by asterisks (*).

1. The study of New York State and United States history requires an analysis of the development of American culture, its diversity and multicultural context, and the ways people are unified by many values, practices, and traditions.

Students:

- **know the roots of American culture, its development from many different traditions, and the ways many people from a variety of groups and backgrounds played a role in creating it**
- **understand the basic ideals of American democracy as explained in the Declaration of Independence and the Constitution and other important documents**
- **explain those values, practices, and traditions that unite all Americans.**

This is evident, for example, when students:

- * read stories about the early days of American society and discuss the way of life of those times
- * discuss how basic ideals of American democracy are shown in such speeches as Lincoln's Gettysburg Address and Martin Luther King's "I Have a Dream" speech
- * explain ways that families long ago expressed and transmitted their beliefs and values through oral traditions, literature, songs, art, religion, community celebrations, mementos, food, and language (Taken from *National Standards for History for Grades K-4*)
- * compare the characters and events described in historical fiction with primary sources such as historic sites themselves; artifacts of the time found in museums and at state historic sites; journals, diaries, and photographs of the historical figures in stories; and news articles and other records from the period in order to judge the historical accuracy and determine the variety of perspectives included in the story. (Adapted from *National Standards for History for Grades K-4*).

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(2.) Important ideas, social and cultural values, beliefs, and traditions from New York State and United States history illustrate the connections and interactions of people and events across time and from a variety of perspectives.

Students:

- **gather and organize information about the traditions transmitted by various groups living in their neighborhood and community**
- **recognize how traditions and practices were passed from one generation to the next**
- **distinguish between near and distant past and interpret simple timelines.**

This is evident, for example, when students:

- * conduct interviews with family members, collect family memorabilia such as letters, diaries, stories, photographs, and keepsakes; classify information by type of activity: social, political, economic, cultural, or religious; discuss how traditions and practices were passed from one generation to the next; determine the extent to which the traditions and practices are shared by other members of the class
- * study the history and traditions of their neighborhoods and local communities. Consider the school and school community by describing who attends school (diversity, demographics); the histories of their schools and school communities (then and now); what was taught; and rights, rules, and responsibilities (then and now).
- * research the neighborhood or local community, considering location and the significance of its location; its demographics (e.g., ethnicity, languages, religions, levels of education, age groups); the history of why it was settled, when and by whom; economic patterns and changes in employment; social and cultural life; and government and politics
- * create personal and family timelines to distinguish between near and distant past and identify family origins; interpret simple timelines by recognizing correct chronological order of major events such as Native American settlement of North America, Columbus's voyage in 1492, the American Revolution, writing the Constitution, the presidency of Abraham Lincoln, World War I, and the beginning of space exploration.

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3. Study about the major social, political, economic, cultural, and religious developments in New York State and United States history involves learning about the important roles and contributions of individuals and groups.

Students:

- **gather and organize information about the important accomplishments of individuals and groups, including Native American Indians, living in their neighborhoods and communities**
- **classify information by type of activity: social, political, economic, technological, scientific, cultural, or religious**
- **identify individuals who have helped to strengthen democracy in the United States and throughout the world.**

This is evident, for example, when students:

- * listen to and participate in classroom debates and discussions of important events and people in U. S. history and New York history, and examine more than one viewpoint on some events and people
- * discuss heroes, why some people are heroes, and why some individuals might be heroes to certain groups and not to others
- * conduct a historical case study about an important environmental concern affecting their city's or neighborhood's water supply, housing accommodations, or transportation system, and examine competing views on the issues
- * investigate the importance of scientific and technological inventions such as the compass, steam engine, internal combustion engine, and computer chip.

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4. The skills of historical analysis include the ability to: explain the significance of historical evidence; weigh the importance, reliability, and validity of evidence; understand the concept of multiple causation; understand the importance of changing and competing interpretations of different historical developments.

Students:

- **consider different interpretations of key events and/or issues in history and understand the differences in these accounts**
- **explore different experiences, beliefs, motives, and traditions of people living in their neighborhoods, communities, and State**
- **view historic events through the eyes of those who were there, as shown in their art, writings, music, and artifacts.**

This is evident, for example, when students:

* read historical narratives, literature, and many kinds of documents and investigate building, tools, clothing, and artwork to explore key events and/or issues in the history of their city, community, neighborhood, state, and nation; summarize the main ideas evident in the source and identify the purpose or point of view from which the source was created; discuss how interpretations or perspectives develop and change as new information is learned.

(Based on *National Standards for History Grades K-4*)

* visit historic sites, museums, libraries, and memorials to gather information about important events that affected their neighborhoods, communities, or region

* explore the literature, oral traditions, drama, art, architecture, music, dance, and other primary sources of a particular historic period.

Standard 2 – World History

Key ideas are identified by numbers (1).
Performance indicators are identified by bullets (•).
Sample tasks are identified by asterisks (*).

1. The study of world history requires an understanding of world cultures and civilizations, including an analysis of important ideas, social and cultural values, beliefs, and traditions. This study also examines the human condition and the connections and interactions of people across time and space and the ways different people view the same event or issue from a variety of perspectives.

Students:

- **read historical narratives, myths, legends, biographies, and autobiographies to learn about how historical figures lived, their motivations, hopes, fears, strengths, and weaknesses**
- **explore narrative accounts of important events from world history to learn about different accounts of the past to begin to understand how interpretations and perspectives develop**
- **study about different world cultures and civilizations focusing on their accomplishments, contributions, values, beliefs, and traditions.**

This is evident, for example, when students:

- * create a list of characteristics for the concept of civilization, focusing on the early civilizations that developed in Mesopotamia, Egypt, and the Indus Valley
- * analyze pictures and maps of the civilizations of Kush and Egypt, including information about their architectural, artistic, and technological achievements
- * assume the roles of citizens, merchants, foreign residents, or slaves in ancient Sparta or Athens, describing life in these city states, the rights and responsibilities of a citizen in each city, and their social and political roles
- * research different kinds of sources (archaeological, artistic, written) about the civilizations in the Americas before the coming of the Europeans (Taken from *National Standards for World History*)
- * study about the major cultural achievements of an ancient civilization (e.g., West African, Japanese, Chinese, European).

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2. Establishing timeframes, exploring different periodizations, examining themes across time and within cultures, and focusing on important turning points in world history help organize the study of world cultures and civilizations.

Students:

- **distinguish between past, present, and future time periods**
- **develop timelines that display important events and eras from world history**
- **measure and understand the meaning of calendar time in terms of years, decades, centuries, and millennia, using BC and AD as reference points**
- **compare important events and accomplishments from different time periods in world history.**

This is evident, for example, when students:

- * arrange the events in a historical narrative, biography, or autobiography in correct chronological order
- * group important historic events in world history according to clearly defined time periods (periodization). For example, periods might include early civilizations, rise of empires, age of exploration, the twentieth century
- * create, as part of a class, a mural-sized, illustrated timeline of important achievements, inventions, and accomplishments of nineteenth century Europe and America (Adapted from *National Standards for World History*)
- * identify key turning points and important events in world history and explain their significance
- * create personal and family timelines to distinguish between near and distant past and interpret simple timelines that show a progression of events in world history; create a picture timeline tracing developments in world history, such as the appearance of the wheel, making simple tools out of iron (Hittites), building the pyramids, building Roman aqueducts, inventing paper in China, astronomical discoveries in the Muslim world, metallurgy advances in West Africa, and the invention of the steam engine in England. (Adapted from *National Standards for History for Grades K-4*)

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3. Study of the major social, political, cultural, and religious developments in world history involves learning about the important roles and contributions of individuals and groups.

Students:

- **understand the roles and contributions of individuals and groups to social, political, economic, cultural, scientific, technological, and religious practices and activities**
- **gather and present information about important developments from world history**
- **understand how the terms *social, political, economic, and cultural* can be used to describe human activities or practices.**

This is evident, for example, when students:

- * read historical stories, myths, legends, and fables to learn how individuals have solved problems, made important contributions, and influenced the lives of others
- * listen to historical narratives about the history of children and families in different cultures throughout the world to learn about different family structures; children's, women's, and men's roles; daily life; religious or spiritual beliefs and practices; customs and traditions
- * read biographies about famous historical figures, focusing on their personal lives, goals, and accomplishments and the effects of their achievements on the lives of others
- * write historical narratives in the form of letters, diary accounts, or news reports from the point of view of a child who lived during a particular historic time period and who witnessed an important event or development
- * listen to and participate in classroom debates and discussions of important myths, legends, people, and events in world history; determine admirable traits and identify examples of courage.

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Sample tasks are identified by asterisks (*).

4. The skills of historical analysis include the ability to investigate differing and competing interpretations of the theories of history, hypothesize about why interpretations change over time, explain the importance of historical evidence, and understand the concepts of change and continuity over time.

Students:

- **consider different interpretations of key events and developments in world history and understand the differences in these accounts**
- **explore the lifestyles, beliefs, traditions, rules and laws, and social/cultural needs and wants of people during different periods in history and in different parts of the world**
- **view historic events through the eyes of those who were there, as shown in their art, writings, music, and artifacts.**

This is evident, for example, when students:

- * explain different perspectives on the same phenomenon by reading myths from several civilizations, recognizing the different ways those people explained the same phenomenon (e.g., how the world was created)
- * listen to historical stories, biographies, or narratives to identify who was involved, what events occurred, where the events took place, and the outcomes or consequences
- * list analytical questions to guide their investigations of historical documents, pictures, diary accounts, artifacts, and other records of the past
- * construct picture timelines that show important events in their own lives, including descriptions of the events and explanations of why they were important.

Standard 3 – Geography

Key ideas are identified by numbers (1).
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Sample tasks are identified by asterisks (*).

1. Geography can be divided into six essential elements which can be used to analyze important historic, geographic, economic, and environmental questions and issues. These six elements include: the world in spatial terms, places and regions, physical settings (including natural resources), human systems, environment and society, and the use of geography. (Adapted from *The National Geography Standards, 1994: Geography for Life*)

Students:

- study about how people live, work, and utilize natural resources
- draw maps and diagrams that serve as representations of places, physical features, and objects
- locate places within the local community, State, and nation; locate the Earth's continents in relation to each other and to principal parallels and meridians. (Adapted from *National Geography Standards, 1994*)
- identify and compare the physical, human, and cultural characteristics of different regions and people (Adapted from *National Geography Standards, 1994*)
- investigate how people depend on and modify the physical environment.

This is evident, for example, when students:

- * draw simple maps of their communities or regions showing the major landmarks, industries, residential areas, business districts, transportation networks, health and educational facilities, and recreation areas
- * examine different kinds of maps to identify and define their components, including key, title, legend, cardinal and intermediate directions, scale, and grid
- * use cardboard, wood, clay, or other materials to make a model of their community or region showing their physical characteristics (Taken from *National Geography Standards, 1994*)
- * read about children living in other cultures to learn about their customs, beliefs, and traditions; natural resource use; food; shelter; socialization and schooling; and other important components of culture
- * draw maps and pictures showing how people make use of and modify their physical environments (e.g., land use for agriculture, mining, residential developments, transportation networks, recreation).

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2. Geography requires the development and application of the skills of asking and answering geographic questions; analyzing theories of geography; and acquiring, organizing, and analyzing geographic information. (Adapted from: *The National Geography Standards, 1994: Geography for Life*)

Students:

- ask geographic questions about where places are located; why they are located where they are; what is important about their locations; and how their locations are related to the location of other people and places (Adapted from *National Geography Standards, 1994*)
- gather and organize geographic information from a variety of sources and display in a number of ways
- analyze geographic information by making relationships, interpreting trends and relationships, and analyzing geographic data. (Adapted from *National Geography Standards, 1994*)

This is evident, for example, when students:

- * read historical narratives and talk about the importance of where places are located, try to determine why they are located where they are, and assess the relationship of location to other locations and people in the story
- * use a map grid (e.g., latitude and longitude or an alphanumeric system) to answer questions about location and place
- * use different types of map scales (linear, fractional, and word) to measure the distance between two places
- * map the locations of places in the community or region, using appropriate symbols (e.g., dots or points for cities and towns; different shapes for residential and business areas; lines for transportation networks)
- * present oral and written reports using maps, charts, tables, graphs, and other visual displays showing spatial relationships, locations, and other geographic information.

Standard 4 – Economics

Key ideas are identified by numbers (1).
Performance indicators are identified by bullets (•).
Sample tasks are identified by asterisks (*).

1. The study of economics requires an understanding of major economic concepts and systems, the principles of economic decision making, and the interdependence of economies and economic systems throughout the world.

Students:

- know some ways individuals and groups attempt to satisfy their basic needs and wants by utilizing scarce resources
- explain how people's wants exceed their limited resources and that this condition defines scarcity
- know that scarcity requires individuals to make choices and that these choices involve costs
- study about how the availability and distribution of resources is important to a nation's economic growth
- understand how societies organize their economies to answer three fundamental economic questions: What goods and services shall be produced and in what quantities? How shall goods and services be produced? For whom shall goods and services be produced?
- investigate how production, distribution, exchange, and consumption of goods and services are economic decisions with which all societies and nations must deal.

This is evident, for example, when students:

- * role-play a family or group situation in which group members make an economic decision about whether to purchase a new car, plan a family or group trip, or invest the money
- * discuss the differences between capital, human, and natural resources and classify pictures of each resource type in the appropriate category
- * use map symbols to locate and identify natural resources found in different regions of the United States and in other countries in the Western Hemisphere
- * identify several personal as well as family buying choices, list their associated costs and benefits, and explain how and why particular decisions are/have been made; clarify how prices and one's own values influence individual and family decision making
- * describe the characteristics of at least two of the following economic units: a family, a worker, a small business, a labor union, a large corporation, a government agency (local, state, or national); identify the kinds of economic choices each economic unit must make and explain the positive and negative results of at least one choice
- * organize information based on interviews of a laborer, a service provider, a small business owner, a banker, a business executive, an elected government official, or a government employee to identify how individuals produce and distribute goods and services, why individuals make the kinds of decisions they make, and how individuals describe the effects of their decisions on others
- * observe economic characteristics of places; draw conclusions about how people in families, schools, and communities all over the world must depend on others to help them meet their needs and wants.

Key ideas are identified by numbers (1).
Performance indicators are identified by bullets (•).
Sample tasks are identified by asterisks (*).

2. Economics requires the development and application of the skills needed to make informed and well-reasoned economic decisions in daily and national life.

Students:

- **locate economic information, using card catalogues, computer databases, indices, and library guides**
- **collect economic information from textbooks, standard references, newspapers, periodicals, and other primary and secondary sources**
- **make hypotheses about economic issues and problems, testing, refining, and eliminating hypotheses and developing new ones when necessary**
- **present economic information by developing charts, tables, diagrams, and simple graphs.**

This is evident, for example, when students:

- * collect and discuss newspaper articles about economic issues and problems affecting their community, region, or the State
- * design a display board showing how they might acquire and spend income
- * research a local industry to determine what it produces, how it makes this product, its distribution system, and how the finished product is marketed
- * analyze a set of graphs or tables showing selected imports and exports for the United States to make hypotheses about what might happen if these imports or exports increase or decrease in value
- * use a variety of textbooks and news articles to identify a list of potential economic problems or issues facing the United States or other nations in the Western Hemisphere. Working in groups, brainstorm a list of possible solutions, the potential effects of these solutions, and rank order the solutions in terms of their likelihood of success.

Standard 5 – Civics, Citizenship, and Government

Key ideas are identified by numbers (1).
Performance indicators are identified by bullets (•).
Sample tasks are identified by asterisks (*).

1. The study of civics, citizenship, and government involves learning about political systems; the purposes of government and civic life; and the differing assumptions held by people across time and place regarding power, authority, governance, and law. (Adapted from *The National Standards for Civics and Government*, 1994)

Students:

- know the meaning of key terms and concepts related to government, including *democracy, power, citizenship, nation-state, and justice*
- explain the probable consequences of the absence of government and rules
- describe the basic purposes of government and the importance of civic life
- understand that social and political systems are based upon people's beliefs
- discuss how and why the world is divided into nations and what kinds of governments other nations have.

This is evident, for example, when students:

- * create a chart on newsprint listing the reasons for creating governments and the reasons why all groups and societies create rules and laws
- * create a class constitution and develop class rules
- * role-play a day without rules or laws
- * collect and discuss newspaper cartoons dealing with rules and laws
- * compile a list of different nations of the world and identify the type of government each nation has
- * compare governmental structures of the United States and Canada, and selected nations of Latin America
- * hold a mock trial focusing on situations that embody such concepts as fairness, justice, or equality.

Key ideas are identified by numbers (1).
Performance indicators are identified by bullets (•).
Sample tasks are identified by asterisks (*).

2. The state and federal governments established by the Constitutions of the United States and the State of New York embody basic civic values (such as justice, honesty, self-discipline, due process, equality, majority rule with respect for minority rights, and respect for self, others, and property), principles, and practices and establish a system of shared and limited government. (Adapted from *The National Standards for Civics and Government*, 1994)

Students:

- **explain how the Constitutions of New York State and the United States and the Bill of Rights are the basis for democratic values in the United States**
- **understand the basic civil values that are the foundation of American constitutional democracy**
- **know what the United States Constitution is and why it is important. (Adapted from *The National Standards for Civics and Government*, 1994)**
- **understand that the United States Constitution and the Constitution of the State of New York are written plans for organizing the functions of government**
- **understand the structure of New York State and local governments, including executive, legislative, and judicial branches**
- **identify their legislative and executive representatives at the local, state, and national governments. (Adapted from *The National Standards for Civics and Government*, 1994)**

This is evident, for example, when students:

- * create a list of basic civic values and discuss how these can best be modeled on the personal and classroom level
- * create a chart comparing the organization of local, state, and federal governments
- * given a list of local, county, state, and national leaders, determine which are elected and which are appointed
- * identify those branches of government responsible for making, enforcing, and interpreting local, state, and national laws
- * compare and contrast New York State government with the federal government by creating charts of each level
- * simulate or role-play an activity dealing with the functions of the branches of government
- * create a timeline that charts events leading up to the writing of the Declaration of Independence and the United States Constitution.

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Sample tasks are identified by asterisks (*).

3. Central to civics and citizenship is an understanding of the roles of the citizen within American constitutional democracy and the scope of a citizen’s rights and responsibilities.

Students:

- understand that citizenship includes an awareness of the holidays, celebrations, and symbols of our nation
- examine what it means to be a good citizen in the classroom, school, home, and community
- identify and describe the rules and responsibilities students have at home, in the classroom, and at school
- examine the basic principles of the Declaration of Independence and the Constitutions of the United States and New York State
- understand that effective, informed citizenship is a duty of each citizen, demonstrated by jury service, voting, and community service
- identify basic rights that students have and those that they will acquire as they age.

This is evident, for example, when students:

- * interview or survey adults in the community to identify some ways they participate in political action, voluntary activities, or community service
- * draft a classroom charter, a constitution, or a set of laws that defines a code of conduct
- * discuss and agree on a classroom charter and compare it to the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child
- * use dramatic play with puppets to investigate the consequences of breaking a rule (e.g., a child arrives home late for dinner)
- * make pages for a big book for each holiday
- * understand the significance of and recite the Pledge of Allegiance
- * discuss the colors of the American flag and make personal flags as symbols of themselves
- * examine the flags of other nations
- * undertake a mock trial based on themes from classroom books.

Key ideas are identified by numbers (1).
Performance indicators are identified by bullets (•).
Sample tasks are identified by asterisks (*).

4. The study of civics and citizenship requires the ability to probe ideas and assumptions, ask and answer analytical questions, take a skeptical attitude toward questionable arguments, evaluate evidence, formulate rational conclusions, and develop and refine participatory skills.

Students:

- **show a willingness to consider other points of view before drawing conclusions or making judgments**
- **participate in activities that focus on a classroom, school, or community issue or problem**
- **suggest alternative solutions or courses of action to hypothetical or historic problems**
- **evaluate the consequences for each alternative solution or course of action**
- **prioritize the solutions based on established criteria**
- **propose an action plan to address the issue of how to solve the problem.**

This is evident, for example, when students:

- * brainstorm a list of alternative solutions for a real classroom or school problem
- * write letters to the local paper suggesting preferred alternatives in a local issue
- * develop a historic walking tour of the neighborhood or community
- * role-play the main characters involved in an actual community controversy, attempting to generate alternatives in their roles
- * create a school newspaper or school-wide gallery showing student and faculty works of art
- * debate topics important to students
- * hold a mock trial including witnesses, attorneys, jurors and a judge.