



## PA Academic Standards: Social Studies

The 2020–21 school year presents a unique set of opportunities and challenges due to the disruption to instruction in spring 2020 as well as the uncertainty as the school year unfolds. Educators know that every school year there are students who require support in addressing unfinished learning from prior grades, a challenge that will be felt more prominently in the 2020–21 school year. It is vitally important that educators are supported to make deliberate instructional choices that allow all students to effectively engage with grade-level work.

The most effective and equitable way to support students in their learning is to ensure that the vast majority of time is spent engaging with grade-level district defined content, remediating with precision and accelerating as needed. It is entirely possible to hold high expectations for all students while addressing unfinished learning in the context of grade-level work. Since time is a scarce commodity in classrooms — made more limited by anticipated closures and remote or hybrid learning models in the fall of 2020 — strategic instructional choices about which content to prioritize must be made.<sup>1</sup>

Assessing students at the start of the year will identify learning gaps and provide data to inform grade level instruction — as well as incorporating both remediation and acceleration along the way. Diagnostic assessments determine student strengths, weaknesses, knowledge, and skills. Diagnostic assessments allow teachers to adjust the curriculum to meet the unique needs of all students. While some concepts have greater emphasis in a particular year, all standards deserve a defined level of instruction. Neglecting concepts may result in learning gaps in student skill and understanding and may leave students unprepared for the challenges of a later grade.

This guidance document is designed to identify and define areas of high-level focus in Social Studies instruction supported by key PA Academic Standards. Note that while all standards deserve a defined level of instruction, neglecting key concepts may result in learning gaps in student skill and understanding and may leave students unprepared for the challenges of a later grade.

The focus areas detailed in each Social Studies domain center around Long Term Transfer Goals that enable students to independently use their learning to:

- Support the ideals of civic rights and responsibilities as set forth in the Preamble of the United States Constitution in regard to their local, state, nation and international relationships with actions and deeds. (Civics and Government)
- Make economic choices which impact self and others in personal, local, state, national and international governments. (Economics)
- Make decisions at personal, local, state, national, and international levels which will impact freedoms and liberties of self and others (Geography)
- Study the past struggle of balancing liberty and freedom to influence decisions that will impact their future at personal, local, state, national and international levels. (History)

---

<sup>1</sup> Adapted from 2020–21 Priority Instructional Content in English Language Arts/literacy and Mathematics, Student Achievement Partners/Achieve the Core. May 2020

## GRADE 3-8 SOCIAL STUDIES FOCUS OF INSTRUCTION (2020-2021)

This guidance document is designed to identify and define areas of high-level focus in Social Studies instruction supported by key PA Academic Standards. Note that while all standards deserve a defined level of instruction, neglecting key concepts may result in learning gaps in student skill and understanding and may leave students unprepared for the challenges of a later grade.

Focus Areas of Instruction	PA Academic Standards
<b>Historical Analysis &amp; Skill Development</b>	<b>Given grade band considerations and how instruction is designed, the Grade 8 standard is displayed to reflect the desired learning.</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Continuity and change over time</li> </ul>	<b>8.1.8.A</b> Compare and contrast events over time and how continuity and change over time influenced those events.
<b>History</b>	<b>8.2.8.C./8/3/8/C./8.4.8.C</b> Compare and contrast the ways continuity and change have impacted Pennsylvania/US/world history.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Social, political, cultural, and economic contributions of specific individuals and groups from Pennsylvania/US/world</li> <li>Conflict and cooperation</li> <li>Research</li> </ul>	<b>8.1.8.C</b> Produce an organized product on an assigned historical topic that presents and reflects on a thesis statement and appropriate primary and secondary sources.
<b>Geography</b>	<b>8.2.8.A/8.3.8.A/8.4.8.A</b> Compare and contrast the social, political, cultural, and economic contributions of specific individuals and groups from Pennsylvania.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Basic geographic literacy</li> <li>Human characteristics of places and regions</li> <li>Interactions between people and the environment</li> </ul>	<b>8.2.8.D/8.3.8.A/8.4.8.A</b> Compare and contrast examples of how conflict and cooperation among groups and organizations impacted the history and development of Pennsylvania/US/world history.
<b>Economics</b>	<b>7.1.8.A</b> Explain and illustrate how geographic tools are used to organize and interpret information about people, places, and environments.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Scarcity and choice</li> <li>Markets and economic systems</li> <li>Functions of government</li> <li>Economic interdependence</li> <li>Income, profit, and wealth</li> </ul>	<b>7.3.8.A</b> Explain the human characteristics of places and regions using...criteria.
<b>Civics and Government</b>	<b>7.4.8.A</b> Illustrate the effects of the physical systems on people within regions.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Principles and Documents of Government</li> <li>Rights and Responsibilities of Citizenship</li> <li>How Government Works</li> <li>How International Relationships Function</li> </ul>	<b>6.1.8.B</b> Compare decisions made because of limited resources and unlimited wants. Analyze the resources that are combined to create goods and services.
	<b>6.2.8.G</b> Examine how various economic systems address the three basic questions. •What to produce? •How? •For whom?
	<b>6.3.8.B</b> Predict how changes to government involvement at the state and national levels may affect the economy.
	<b>6.4.8.D</b> Explain how the level of transportation, communication networks, and technology affect economic interdependence.
	<b>6.5.8.C</b> Explain the organization of different types of businesses.
	<b>5.1.8.C</b> Analyze the principles and ideas that shaped local, Pennsylvania, and national governments.
	<b>5.2.8.A</b> Summarize the role of citizens in terms of right and responsibilities in different government systems.
	<b>5.3.8.C</b> Describe how local, state, and national governments provide services.
	<b>5.4.8.C</b> Explain how common problems (e.g., natural disasters, ethnic conflict, environmental concerns) are addressed by organizations and governments.