



## 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

## K-2 SOCIAL STUDIES FOCUS OF INSTRUCTION (2020-2021)

This guidance document is designed to identify areas of focus in Social Studies instruction and defines high level focus of 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>Social Studies Thinking- Connecting to Communities</b>	<b>Given grade band considerations and how instruction is designed, the Grade 2 standard is displayed to reflect the desired learning.</b>
<p><b>Civics and Government</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Explain the importance of rules and laws</li> <li>• Explain and demonstrate responsible community behavior</li> <li>• Develop a basic understanding of the structure, organization, and operation of governments</li> </ul>	<p><b>5.1.2.B</b> <i>Explain the importance of rules in the classroom and school community.</i></p> <p><b>5.2.2.A</b> <i>Identify and explain the importance of responsibilities at school, at home, and in the community.</i></p> <p><b>5.3.2.B</b> <i>Identify local government leaders.</i></p>
<p><b>Economics</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Identify influences of scarcity and choice within the school and community</li> <li>• Develop a basic understanding of markets and economics systems</li> <li>• Identify how the government functions in an economy</li> <li>• Identify factors that contribute to economic independence</li> <li>• Develop a basic understanding of income, profit, and wealth</li> </ul>	<p><b>5.4.2.E</b> <i>Explain how a community reaches a compromise.</i></p> <p><b>6.1.2.C</b> <i>Explain how choice has consequences.</i></p> <p><b>6.2.2.A</b> <i>Identify goods, services, consumers, and producers in the local community.</i></p> <p><b>6.3.2.C</b> <i>Define taxes and who pays them.</i></p> <p><b>6.4.2.D</b> <i>Identify buyers and sellers and how their wants and needs are addressed.</i></p>
<p><b>Geography</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Identify basic geographic tools</li> <li>• Develop an awareness of location</li> <li>• Explain the location of where people work, live, or play in the region or community</li> <li>• Develop understanding of physical systems and their impact on people</li> </ul>	<p><b>6.5.2.A</b> <i>Explain how money earned by individuals is used to meet wants and needs.</i></p> <p><b>7.1.2.A</b> <i>Identify how basic geographic tools are used to organize information.</i></p> <p><b>7.2.2.A</b> <i>Identify the physical characteristics of places.</i></p> <p><b>7.3.2.A</b> <i>Identify the effect of local geography on the residents of the region. (e.g., food, clothing, industry, trade, types of shelter, etc.)</i></p>
<p><b>History</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Develop a sense of past, present, and future to understand change over time</li> <li>• Identify the contributions of those who contribute to our community and state</li> <li>• Identify documents and artifacts of importance</li> <li>• Recognize the contributions of individuals and groups within the community</li> </ul>	<p><b>7.4.2.A</b> <i>Identify how environmental changes can impact people.</i></p> <p><b>8.1.2.A</b> <i>Read and interpret information on simple timelines.</i></p> <p><b>8.2.2.A</b> <i>Identify historical figures in the local community.</i></p> <p><b>8.3.2.B</b> <i>Identify American artifacts and their importance in American history.</i></p> <p><b>8.4.2.A</b> <i>Explain why cultures have commemorations and remembrances.</i></p>