

Florida Sunshine State Standards for Social Studies



Government and the Citizen

The Florida Sunshine State Standards “identify what students should know and be able to do for the 21st century” and provide a direction for student learning. The Standards and benchmarks for each grade level:

- ❖ “balance the mastery of important facts, ideas, and key terms with essential intellectual and practical skills that address present and future real-life needs of students;”
- ❖ “address the diversity of Florida’s growing population as well as the international communities that make up the global society and economy.”

In SIRS’ study of the Florida Sunshine State Standards, we see a direct correlation between the goals and objectives that are emphasized and the framework upon which SIRS Interactive Citizenship has been developed. SIRS Interactive Citizenship content emphasizes the generalizations and concepts that act as the framework for understanding democratic political institutions and their emergence throughout history, while the Discovery and Inquiry activities and related chapter lessons exemplify our commitment to critical thinking skills.

What Citizens Need to Know About Government, addresses the Social Studies grade level expectations for **Government and the Citizen** and presents a framework for understanding America’s ongoing struggle to realize the ideals of the Declaration of Independence and the U.S. Constitution and each citizen’s role in this democracy. Through this framework, students are able to connect the past and the present as well as appreciate universal historical themes and dilemmas by accessing primary source documents such as, biographies, documents, diaries, letters, legends and speeches and links to related articles and web sites while focusing on the basic concepts of government. Thus, students develop the higher order thinking skills deemed necessary by the Florida Sunshine State Standards.

<<http://www.firn.edu/doe/menu/ssss.htm>> [2001, November 14]



Florida Sunshine State Standards
correlation with
What Citizens Need to Know About Government



Government and the Citizen
[Civics and Government]

Standard 1:

The student understands the structure, functions, and purposes of government and how the principles and values of American democracy are reflected in American constitutional government. (SS.C.1.4)

1. understands the nature of political authority and the nature of the relationship between government and civil society in limited governments (e.g., constitutional democracies) and unlimited governments (e.g., totalitarian regimes).

- Chapter 1, The Power of Government, discusses the essential characteristics of custom, command and consent forms of government. Descriptions of absolute monarchy, authoritarian governments and totalitarianism are included.

2. understands the ideas that led to the creation of limited government in the United States (e.g., ideas of natural rights philosophy, and the concept of popular sovereignty).

- Chapter 1 describes historical political ideas such as natural rights and divine right of kings. Links to the writings of European political thinkers such as Locke, Montesquieu and Rousseau are also found in Chapter 1. Additionally, the “rule of law” and the “rule of man” are contrasted and a link to the writings of Voltaire who championed the “rule of law” embodied in the U.S. Constitution, is provided.

- Chapters 10 and 11 present information about state and local governments, allowing students to access state constitutions.

3. understands how the overall design and specific features of the Constitution prevent the abuse of power by aggregating power at the national, state, and local levels of government; and using a system of checks and balances (e.g., federalism).

- Chapter 3 fully discusses the U.S. Constitution and lays the foundation for understanding how powers and responsibilities are shared by national and state governments.
- Chapter 2 describes the federal system of government including the system of checks and balances.

4. understands the role of special interest groups, political parties, the media, public opinion, and majority/minority conflicts on the development of public policy and the political process.

- Chapter 13, Press, Polls, Lobbies, discusses the influence of the media, public opinion polls and lobbies on governmental change. Examples of modern day media events are presented.
- Chapter 16, Political Parties and Campaigns, has links to major political parties and third party Web sites, such as the Libertarian and Green Parties.
- Chapter 4, The Presidency, describes the president's increasingly powerful role in setting public policy.

Standard 2:

The student understands the role of the citizen in American democracy. (SS.C.2.4)

1. develops and defines his her own political beliefs and tendencies.

- Chapter 14, Citizenship, describes the rights, responsibilities and benefits of citizenship. It also discusses the ethnic diversity of American society and traces the history of immigration policy.

2. assesses the role that his or her own political behavior plays in determining the flow of power through our political system and for resolving conflicts in a pluralistic society.

- Chapter 13 discusses involvement in local, state and national level special interest and citizen lobbies such as Common Cause.

3. understands issues of personal concern: the rights and responsibilities of the individual under the U.S. Constitution, the importance of civil liberties, the role of conflict resolution and compromise, and issues involving ethical behavior in politics.

- Chapter 14 begins a discussion of the difference between personal and civic responsibilities and obligations by presenting an American Bar Association document discussing this issue.
- Chapter 9, The Bill of Rights and Minority Rights, details the rights of the individual under Constitutional law. Historical and current issues are presented for analysis.

4. understands the distinction between citizens and noncitizens (aliens) and the process by which aliens may become citizens.

- Chapter 14 discusses the ethnic diversity of American society and traces the history of immigration policy.

5. understands how personal, political, and economic, rights are secured by constitutional government and by such means as the rule of law, checks and balances, an independent judiciary, and a vigilant citizenry.

- In Chapter 9, The Bill of Rights and Minority Rights, students learn about the struggles individuals and groups have experienced in order to protect minority and civil rights. Links are provided to Supreme Court decisions that illustrate its impact on the individual.
- Chapter 3 fully discusses the U.S. Constitution and lays the foundation for understanding how powers and responsibilities are shared by national, state and local governments.
- Chapter 2 enables students to understand the necessity for establishing a system of checks and balances.
- Chapter 7 explains how the U.S. judicial system secures individual rights.

6. understands the argument that personal, political, and economic rights reinforce each other.

- Part II, Problems of Government, allows students to research issues dealing with Ethics, Education, Health Care, Poverty, Agriculture, Business, Transportation and Labor.

7. knows the points at which citizens can monitor or influence the process of public policy formation.

- Chapter 16, Political Parties and Campaigns, explains how individual and public goals are achieved through participation in the political process.