

Massachusetts History and Social Science Curriculum Framework



The Massachusetts Curriculum Framework for Civics and Government, a part of the political science curriculum, is "...the study of the rights and duties of citizens and the nature of civic virtue." Students learn:

- ❖ equal rights and duties of citizens
- ❖ purposes, form, and limited extent of their government and its authority
- ❖ fundamental differences between this form and other forms of government.

In SIRS' study of the Massachusetts Curriculum Framework, 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 learning standards for Civics and Government and presents a framework for understanding "...principles essential to American constitutionalism" and 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 Massachusetts Curriculum Framework.

<<http://www.doe.mass.edu/frameworks/current.html>> [2001, November 14]



Massachusetts History and Social Science Curriculum Framework
correlation with
What Citizens Need to Know About Government



Strand Four - Civics and Government – Grades 11/12

Learning Standard 16:
Authority, Responsibility, and Power

Students will explain forms of authority in government and other institutions; explain purposes of authority and distinguish authority from mere power, as in “ a government of laws, but not of men”; and describe responsible and irresponsible exercise of both authority and power.

- describe, analyze, and appraise uses of governmental authority to alter social conditions, such as labor laws that legalized union organizing, collective bargaining, and democratic voting in workplaces.

- Chapter 25 describes the history of the labor movement and outlines federal laws that were passed to protect workers.
- Chapter 24, allows students to develop a historical perspective of the rise of commerce and early economic policies.

- distinguish right from power and assess the assertion “might makes right.”

- Chapter 1, Power of Government, emphasizes the importance of government and the moral values upon which democracy is based. It outlines different political systems such as: governments by command, custom and consent.
Chapter 1 also contrasts the “rule of law” and the “rule of man” and provides a link to the writings of Voltaire who championed the “rule of law.”

Learning Standard 17: The Founding Documents.

Students will learn in progressively greater detail the content and the history of the Founding Documents of the United States— the Declaration of Independence, United States Constitution, and selected Federalist papers. They will assess the reasoning, purposes, and effectiveness of the documents; and, similarly, elements of the Constitution of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts.

- Students acquire in-depth understanding of the Founding Documents, including selected *Federalist* papers and Anti-Federalist positions, key addresses and papers by political and civic leaders, and changes in law designed to fulfill more justly the promise of the Founding Documents.

-The United States' European heritage is documented in Chapter 1 where students can read documents such as the Magna Carta and English Bill of Rights.
- Chapter 2 reviews essential ideas that dominated the Constitutional Convention and links to the Federalist Papers.
- Chapter 1 provides links to the text of the Declaration of Independence.
- Chapter 3 outlines the structure and content of the U.S. Constitution and links to its text.

- Students explain the ideals of human dignity and the rights of individuals fundamental to the arguments of the Declaration of Independence.

- Chapter 9 summarizes each of the Bill of Rights and links to its text.

Learning Strand 18: Principles and Practices of American Government.

Students will describe how the United States government functions at the local, state, national and international levels, with attention to the Constitution of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, its Declaration of the Rights of the Inhabitants, and the basic elements of its Frame of Government; analyze the background and evolution of constitutional and democratic government in the United States to the present day; and explain the place of institutions of government in securing the rights of citizens.

- Students analyze and compare primary source documents such as the Magna Carta, English Bill of Rights, Mayflower Compact, Declaration of Independence, Articles of Confederation, Constitutions of the United States and Massachusetts.

- The United States' European heritage is documented in Chapter 1 where students can read documents such as the Magna Carta and English Bill of Rights.
- In Chapter 10, students have access to the Massachusetts Constitution and links to state government information, including the National Conferences of Legislature Home Page.

- They understand the reasons for the adoption of amendments to the United States Constitution.

- Chapter 3 provides a historical perspective with regard to amending the Constitution.

- Students understand landmark interpretations of the U.S. Constitution and its amendments, including the importance of Marbury v. Madison, McCulloch v. Maryland, Dred Scott v. Sanford, Plessy v. Ferguson, National Labor Relations Board v. Jones & Laughlin Steel Corporation, Brown v. Board of Education, and Roe v. Wade.

- Landmark Supreme Court decisions such as Marbury v. Madison, McCulloch v. Maryland, Plessy v. Ferguson, Roe v. Wade and Brown v. Board of Education can be found in Chapter 7.

- They understand and analyze political and legal issues in contemporary American society and how Supreme Court decisions have affected these issues.

- Chapters 2, 10 and 11 define the responsibilities of the three branches of government at the federal, state and local levels and provide links to Web sites that identify the occupants of various government departments.
- Chapter 2 discusses separation of powers, including the system of checks and balances, branches of government and the Federalist Papers.
- Alexis de Tocqueville's "Democracy in America" is featured in Chapters 3 and 23 with direct links to Web sites profiling his life and works.
Chapter 7, The Justice System, defines "due process" and explains its importance to individuals and society.

Standard 19: Citizenship.

Students will learn the rights and duties of citizens and the principle of equal rights for all; consider the nature of civic virtue in a school, a community, a nation; and identify major obstacles and threats to civil rights.

- Drawing on Core Knowledge in History, students describe and appraise the current condition of democracy and human and civil rights in selected nations, including the United States.

- Chapter 14, Citizenship, discusses the ethnic diversity of American society and traces the history of immigration policy. It lists citizens' rights and responsibilities.
- Due process and the rights of the accused are discussed in Chapters 7 and 9.
- Chapter 9, The Bill of Rights and Minority Rights, discusses numerous issues that pit individual rights against society's need for stability, including, but not limited to, "right to know" laws versus privacy rights, the abortion controversy and the rights of youth. These and other issues in the chapter provide information on which to base student debate.
- Chapters 27 and 28 trace the history of U.S. political and military involvement in world affairs especially during the twentieth century.

Learning Standard 20: Forms of Government.

Students will study, compare, contrast and analyze diverse forms of government; the ways of life and opportunities they permit, promote, and prohibit; and their effects on human rights. They will evaluate forms of government in terms of justice, ordered liberty, efficiency, public safety, educational opportunity, and economic and social mobility.

- Drawing on Core Knowledge in History of this and earlier grade spans, students compare and contrast the legitimacy of various governments.

- In Chapter 1 the student will find descriptions and examples of monarchy, totalitarianism, communism and a comparison between presidential and parliamentary systems.

- Students recognize and explain instances in which the United States has sought to create or support democratic governments.

- Chapter 28, Foreign Policy, explores America's role in a changing world. Links to organizations such as the Peace Corps allow students to investigate humanitarian and social exchanges initiated by the U.S. Government.
- Chapter 27, National Defense, introduces students to the economic, social and political effects of terrorism on the U.S. and other nations.