

North Carolina Social Studies Curriculum



The North Carolina Department of Public Education is committed to the education of its student body in a rapidly changing world. This commitment reflects three major concerns:

- ❖ the ability for students to compete in a global economy
- ❖ the ability to understand and operate complex communication and information systems
- ❖ the ability to apply higher level thinking skills to make decisions and solve problems.

The goals of the Social Studies Government curriculum are to learn about the legal foundations of government as well as the workings of federal and state institutions. Students analyze political parties and interest groups and compare United States institutions with that of other nations.

In SIRS' study of the North Carolina Social Studies Curriculum, 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 American democracy concepts taught in High School Government 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 sources 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 North Carolina Social Studies Curriculum.

<<http://www.dpi.state.nc.us/curriculum/socialstudies/elp.html>>[2001, December 10]



North Carolina Social Studies Curriculum
correlation with
What Citizens Need to Know About Government



Goals and Objectives: High School Government
Grade Level: 9 – 12

Competency Foundations and Principles

Goal 1 The learner will trace the origins of constitutional principles and the foundations of the American governmental system and assess their development through American history.

1.2 Analyze those elements that make up the foundations of the American governmental system.

1.3 Assess constitutional changes and their implications for the American governmental system.

- *Chapter 1 traces the roots of American democracy from our European heritage to the writing of the Constitution. Students see how the writings of men such as Descartes, Hobbes, Locke, Montesquieu, Rousseau, Voltaire and Smith influenced the founding fathers.*
- *From Chapter 2, students can read about the Constitutional Convention of 1787 and access the series of newspaper articles known as, The Federalist Papers.*
- *Chapter 3 provides access to the Constitution. Students learn the process necessary to amend this document.*
- *In Chapter 9, students read the Bill of Rights and subsequent constitutional amendments to learn the impact they have made on the individual.*

Competency Structure and Function

Goal 2 The learner will analyze the structure, history, and functioning of the legislative, executive, and judicial branches of state and federal governments.

- 2.1 Describe the structure of the legislative, executive, and judicial branches of state and federal governments.
- 2.2 Trace the history of the legislative, executive, and judicial branches of state and federal governments.
- 2.3 Analyze the functioning of the legislative, executive, and judicial branches of state and federal governments.

- *Chapters 4 and 5 explore the executive branch of government and focus on the Presidency and the Cabinet.*
- *Chapter 6 explains the powers of Congress. Students can access the Senate and House of Representative web sites to learn about the make-up of each.*
- *In Chapter 7, students learn about the justice system, particularly the federal court system. A link to the Supreme Court web site provides a vehicle for students to complete an in-depth investigation of the Justices, the court and the cases that come before it.*
- *Chapter 10 focuses on state government structure. Students can read a particular state's constitution via an embedded link.*
- *Chapter 11 explains the relationship between local and state governments.*

Competency Enactment and Enforcement

Goal 3 The learner will trace the enactment, implementation, and enforcement of state and federal laws.

- 3.1 Elaborate on how state and federal laws are enacted.
- 3.2 Summarize how state and federal laws are implemented.
- 3.3 Assess the enforcement of state and federal laws.

- *Chapter 3 explains how a bill becomes a law.*
- *Chapter 7 details the workings of the federal court system. Students learn how cases are handled at the lower court levels, as well as the appeals process.*
- *Chapter 10 focuses on the state court system.*

Competency How Decisions Are Made

Goal 4 The learner will analyze decision-making processes in executive, legislative, and judicial branches of governments.

- 4.1 Describe executive, legislative, and judicial decision-making processes in state and federal governments.

4.2 Compare decision-making processes in executive, judicial, and legislative branches of governments.

4.3 Analyze similarities and differences in decision-making processes in the United States and in governments of other nations.

- *Chapter 4 discusses the decision-making process inherent in the office of the President.*
- *Chapter 5 explains the role the Cabinet plays in decision-making and setting policy.*
- *Students can learn the intricacies of Congress' committee structure when reading Chapter 6.*
- *In Chapter 1, students can learn about the decision-making process of the British Parliament by accessing the Parliament's web site.*

Competency Political Parties and Interest Groups

Goal 5 The learner will assess the importance of political parties and interest groups in the formation of public opinion influencing governmental processes.

5.1 Summarize the history, structure, and functions of political parties in the United States.

5.2 Elaborate on the variety, tactics, and influence of interest groups in the formation of public opinion.

5.3 Judge the influence of political parties and/or interest groups in the workings of the government.

- *Chapter 16 traces the history of political parties from Washington's warning against them to the present day structure. Students may explore existing political parties by accessing the web sites of the Republican, Democratic, Libertarian and Green parties.*
- *Chapter 13 explores the influence special interest groups and Political Action Committees (PACS) have on the workings of government.*

Competency Dynamics of State, Federal, and International Relationships

Goal 6 The learner will analyze relationships between the government of the United States and those of other nations.

6.1 Elaborate on formal and informal relationships between state and federal governments.

6.2 Trace changes in relationships between state and federal governments over

time.

6.3 Analyze formal and informal means of interacting with the governments of other nations.

- *Chapter 27 describes the nation's national defense policy and how international politics affects it.*
- *Chapter 28, Foreign Policy, provides information on the government's involvement with other nations and participation in international organizations, such as NATO.*