

Nebraska Content Standards



The Nebraska Content Standards for Social Studies/History is based on the assumption that the study of social studies is to “help young people make informed and reasoned decisions for the public good as citizens of a culturally diverse, democratic society in an interdependent world.” The goal of the Power, Authority, and Governance component is to teach students how governments work and the role and responsibilities of citizens.

In SIRS’ study of the Nebraska Social Studies Content 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 expectations for Power, Authority and Governance 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 to 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 Nebraska Content Standards.

<<http://www.nde.state.ne.us/Issu/AcadStand.html>> [2002, February 6]



Nebraska Content Standards
correlation with
What Citizens Need to Know About Government



12.4 United States and Nebraska Government and the Economy

12.4.1 Students will compare the United States constitutional system in 1789 with forms of democracy that developed in ancient Greece and Rome, in England, and in the American colonies and states in the 18th century.

- *Chapter 1 discusses the emergence of a constitutional system in the United States colonies and compares this to 18th century England.*
- *Chapter 16 discusses Greek and Roman political ideas with links to the writings of Aristotle and Plato.*

12.4.2 Students will identify and explain the Declaration of Independence, the Articles of Confederation, and the Constitutions of the United States and Nebraska describing their treatment of:

- Fundamental political principles, such as constitutional and limited government, rule of law, democracy and republicanism, sovereignty, consent of the governed, separation of powers, checks and balances, and federalism.
- Fundamental liberties, rights and values, such as religion, speech, press, assembly and petition, due process, equality under the law, individual worth and dignity, and majority rule and minority rights.

- *From Chapter 1, students may examine the Declaration of Independence and the Articles of Confederation.*
- *From Chapter 3, students may examine the U.S. Constitution.*
- *From Chapter 10, students may examine the Nebraska Constitution.*

12.4.3 Students will identify examples of fundamental American political principles contained in the Nebraska Constitution, the Declaration of Independence, the United States Constitution, and the Federalist Papers, comparing them to principles of government and law developed by leading European political thinkers, such as Locke, Hobbes, Montesquieu, Rousseau, and Blackstone.

- *Chapter 2 contains links to the Federalist Papers and the writings of William Blackstone.*
- *Chapter 1 contains links to the writings of Locke, Hobbes, Montesquieu, and Rousseau.*

12.4.4 Students will analyze the amendments to the United States Constitution, identifying factors, such as the conflicts they addressed and the reasons for their adoption.

- *Chapter 9 examines the Amendments to the United States Constitution.*

12.4.5 Students will summarize landmark Supreme Court interpretations of the United States Constitution and its amendments, such as basic freedoms, due process, equal protection of the law, and government powers, analyzing the historical trends and contemporary patterns of United States Supreme Court decisions.

- *Chapter 9 contains links to landmark Supreme Court decisions and discusses their impact on Constitutional interpretations.*

12.4.6 Students will identify and explain the fundamental concepts of democracy, focusing on the equality of all citizens under the law, the fundamental worth and dignity of the individual, majority rule and minority rights, the necessity of compromise, individual freedom, and the rule of law.

- *Chapter 9 focuses on the Bill of Rights and minority rights. Students may access Harvard University's Civil Rights Project web site from a related link at the end of the chapter.*

12.4.7 Students will analyze in writing, discussion, and debate current issues confronting local, state, and national governments in terms of perennial challenges to democracies, such as conflicts between:

- Majority rule and minority rights.
- Individual rights and the public interest.
- Levels of taxations and the expectation of public service.

- *Chapter 9 presents a discussion of the ongoing struggle for civil rights.*
- *Chapter 12 examines paying for government and the issues surrounding the levying of taxes.*

12.4.8 Students will analyze and compare national and state governments, identifying factors, such as:

- The structures, functions, and authority of each.
- The principles of federalism, separation of powers, and checks and balances.
- The extent to which power is shared rather than divided or separated.
- Procedures for constitutional amendment.

- *Chapter 2 examines federalism, separation of powers, and checks and balances.*
- *Chapter 10 examines state governments. Students may access their state's government web site from a link found in the related sites at the end of the chapter.*
- *Chapter 11 examines local governments.*

12.4.9 Students will explain how United States and Nebraska legislative, executive, and judicial institutions make public policy, through vehicles, such as:

- Legislation, regulations, executive orders, and judicial review.
- Constitutional requirements and institutional procedures.
- Special policies related to foreign affairs, civil rights, and economics and the budget.

- *Chapters 4 and 5 examine the executive branch of government.*
- *Chapter 6 examines the legislative branch of government.*
- *Chapter 7 examines the judicial branch of government.*
- *Chapter 10 examines state government and has a link to the Nebraska Constitution.*

12.4.10 Students will identify and distinguish among the units of local governments in Nebraska, such as counties, cities, towns, and regional authorities by analyzing a local public issue.

- *From Chapter 10 students can access the Nebraska state government web site.*

- *A link to state legal matters is also available from Chapter 10.*
- *Chapter 11 provides links to county and city government web sites.*

12.4.11 Students will compare a unicameral with a bicameral form of government.

- *Chapter 1 compares major political systems, including unicameral and bicameral forms of government.*

12.4.12 Students will explain and give current examples of how political parties, interest groups, the media, and individuals influence the policy agenda and decision making of government institutions.

- *Chapter 13 examines the influence of the media, special interest groups, and Political Action Committees have on elected officials and policy-making.*
- *Chapter 16 looks at political parties and how they shape government.*

12.4.13 Students will describe campaigns for national, state, and local elective office, identifying factors, such as:

- The nominating process.
- The influence of media coverage, campaign advertising and public opinion polls.
- Demographic causes and political effects of reapportionment and redistricting.
- Voter turnout and the constituencies of the major political parties.
- The Electoral College.

- *Chapter 16 examines political campaigns including the nominating process, the campaign trail, and the party conventions. The two-party system is examined including a discussion of the role of third parties and independents. Links to the Democratic, Republican, Libertarian, and Green Parties web sites are available.*
- *Chapter 15 discusses the Electoral College and has a link to its web site.*
- *Chapter 6 looks at the effects of reapportionment and redistricting.*

12.4.14 Students will explain the rights, responsibilities, and benefits of citizenship in the United States and Nebraska.

- *Chapter 14 examines the rights and responsibilities of citizenship.*

12.4.15 Students will develop the skills needed for informed participation in public affairs by:

- Analyzing public issues.
- Evaluating candidates for public office.
- Evaluating the performance of public officials.
- Communicating with public officials.

- *Part II, Problems of Government, addresses public affairs issues.*

These include:

- *ethics*
- *environment*
- *education*
- *poverty*
- *health care*
- *agriculture*
- *transportation*
- *business*
- *national defense*
- *foreign policy*
- *labor*
- *cities*

- *From Chapter 6, students can access the Senate and House of Representatives' web site to learn about the voting record of their state representatives.*

Content Standards **12.4.16 – 12.4.27** will be covered in an upcoming Interactive Citizenship product, **What Citizens Need to Know About Economics.**