

# Social Studies Content Standards for Texas Public Schools



## **Standard 113.35 - United States Government**

The Texas Education Agency in coordination with the Social Studies Center, using the National Council for Social Studies guidelines, defines Social Studies education as, "...helping young people develop the ability to make informed and reasoned decisions for the public good as citizens of a culturally diverse, democratic society in an interdependent world."

The Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills (TEKS) for the study of Government focus on

- ❖ the founding principles, beliefs and powers of the United States government at the national, state and local levels
- ❖ the United States Constitution
- ❖ the examples of government policies that encourage scientific research
- ❖ the relationship of governmental policies and the culture of the United States
- ❖ the critical thinking skills to create a product on a contemporary government issue.

In SIRS' study of the Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills, we see a direct correlation between the goals and objectives that are emphasized and the framework upon which SIRS Interactive Citizenship has been developed.

*What Citizens Need to Know About Government*, emphasizes the generalizations and concepts that act as the framework for understanding the structure, function and powers of government at the national, state and local levels, by providing primary and secondary source materials such as "full-text documents, landmark Supreme Court decisions, biographies, speeches, letters, and related periodical articles" and web sites. Additionally, the problems of government, such as poverty, education, ethics, agriculture and national defense provide a context in which to understand the importance of "voluntary individual participation in a democratic society." Discovery and Inquiry activities and related chapter lessons exemplify our commitment to critical thinking skills.

SIRS Interactive Citizenship will address the Geography and Economics components of the Government TEKS in future products.

[http://socialstudies.tea.state.tx.us/teks\\_and\\_tas/teks/course\\_description.htm](http://socialstudies.tea.state.tx.us/teks_and_tas/teks/course_description.htm) [2001, August 27]

## Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills



## What Citizens Need to Know About Government



### § 113.35 United States Government

(1) History. The student understands major political ideas and forms of government in history. The student is expected to:

- A. explain major political ideas in history such as natural law, natural rights, divine right of kings, and social contract theory; and
- B. identify the characteristics of classic forms of government such as absolute monarchy authoritarianism, classical republic, feudalism, liberal democracy, and totalitarianism.

*A. Chapter 1 describes historical political ideas such as natural rights and divine right of kings and links to Rousseau’s “Social Contracts.”*

*B. Descriptions and examples of absolute monarchy, authoritarian governments and totalitarianism are included.*

(2) History. The student understands how constitutional government, as developed in the United States, has been influenced by people, ideas, and historical documents. The student is expected to:

- A. analyze the principles that underlie the Declaration of Independence and the U.S. Constitution, including those of Thomas Hobbes, John Locke, and Charles de Montesquieu;
- B. analyze the contributions of the political philosophies of the Founding Fathers, including John Adams, Alexander Hamilton, Thomas Jefferson, and James Madison, on the development of the U.S. government;

*A. Chapter 1 links to the full-text of the Declaration of Independence, and the writings of Hobbes, Locke and Montesquieu. Chapter 3 contains the U.S. Constitution.*

*B. Chapters 1 and 3 have links to Library of Congress, the Thomas Jefferson Web site, the U.S. History Web site, and the James Madison Legacy Home Page.*

C. analyze debates and compromises necessary to reach political decisions using historical documents; and

D. identify significant individuals in the field of government and politics, including Abraham Lincoln, George Washington, and selected contemporary leaders.

***C. Chapter 1 contains historical documents such as the Iroquois Constitution, Magna Carta, English Bill of Rights and Articles of Confederation.***

***D. Chapter 16 presents the ideas of Washington and Jefferson. Chapters 4 and 6 provide information and links to contemporary political leaders such as U.S. Presidents, Senators, and Congressmen.***

(3) History. The student understands the roles played by individuals, political parties, interest groups, and the media in the U.S. political system, past and present. The student is expected to:

A. give examples of the processes used by individuals, political parties, interest groups, or the media to affect public policy; and

B. analyze the impact of political changes brought about by individuals, political parties, interest groups, or the media, past and present.

***A. The role the media and Political Action Committees (PACs) play in determining past and present public policy is presented in Chapter 13. Examples include lobbying groups such as Common Cause and media coverage of the Presidential debates.***

***B. Chapter 16 presents historical and contemporary examples of the impact of political party structures and links to Web sites such as Campaign Finance Home Page and Opensecrets.org.***

(8) Government. The student understands the American beliefs and principles reflected in the U.S. Constitution. The student is expected to:

A. explain the importance of a written constitution;

B. evaluate how the federal government serves the purposes set forth in the Preamble to the U.S. Constitution;

***A. Chapter 3 links directly to the U.S. Constitution.***

***B. Chapter 3 discusses the Preamble to the U.S. Constitution.***

C. analyze how the Federalist Papers explain the principles of the American constitutional system of government;

***C. Chapter 2 details the Federalist Papers and contains these primary source documents.***

D. evaluate constitutional provisions for limiting the role of government, including republicanism, checks and balances, federalism, separation of powers, popular sovereignty, and individual rights;

***D. Chapter 2 describes the structure of the federal government (i.e., Separation of Powers, checks and balances).***

E. analyze the processes by which the U.S. Constitution can be changed and evaluate their effectiveness; and

***E. Students learn the process for amending the Constitution in Chapter 3.***

F. analyze how the American beliefs and principles reflected in the U.S. Constitution contribute to our national identity.

***F. Chapter 3 allows students to link to Free! The Freedom Forum Online Web site as well as historical documents such as Alexis de Tocqueville's writings.***

(9) Government. The student understands the structure and functions of the government created by the U.S. Constitution. The student is expected to:

A. analyze the structure and functions of the legislative branch of government, including the bicameral structure of Congress, the role of committees, and the procedure for enacting laws;

***A. Chapter 6 links to the House and Senate Web sites and details the workings of each including the means by which a bill becomes law.***

B. analyze the structure and functions of the executive branch of government, including the constitutional powers of the president, the growth of presidential power, and the role of the Cabinet and executive departments;

***B. Students learn about the office of the President and the role the Cabinet plays in his administration in Chapters 4 and 5. Links to Cabinet Level agencies are available.***

C. analyze the structure and functions of the judicial branch of government, including the federal court system and types of jurisdiction.

***C. Chapter 7 details the justice system.***

D. analyze the structure and functions of the selected independent executive agencies and regulatory commissions such as the National Aeronautics and Space Administration and the Federal Communications Commission;

***D. Chapter 8, The Bureaucracy, explains “fourth branch of government”. Independent agencies such as FCC and Social Security Administration can be accessed.***

E. explain how certain provisions of the U.S. Constitution provide for checks and balances among the three branches of government.

***E. Chapter 2, Separation of Powers, discusses the checks and balances set up under the Constitution to preserve democratic rule.***

F. analyze selected issues raised by judicial activism and judicial restraint;

***F. Chapter 3 explains the differences between strict and loose interpretations of the Constitution and discusses social issues such as abortion and school prayer.***

G. explain the major responsibilities of the federal government for domestic and foreign policy;

***G. Chapter 27, National Defense, and Chapter 28, Foreign Policy, detail federal government’s role in these areas.***

H. compare the structure and functions of the Texas state government to the federal system; and

***H. Chapter 10 links to the Texas Constitution and government.***

I. analyze the structure and functions of local government.

***I. Chapter 11 discusses local government structures and has a link to the U.S. Conference of Mayors Web site.***

(10) Government. The student understands the concept of federalism. The student is expected to:

A. explain why the Founding Fathers created a distinctly new form of

***A. Chapters 1 and 2 provide a historical perspective on the adoption of the federal system.***

federalism and adopted a federal system of government instead of a unitary system.

B. categorize government powers as national, state, or shared;

C. analyze historical conflicts over the respective roles of national and state governments; and

D. evaluate the limits on the national and state governments in the U.S. federal system of government.

(11) Government. The student understands the processes for filling public offices in the U.S. system of government. The student is expected to:

A. compare different methods of filling public offices, including elected and appointed offices at the local, state, and national levels; and

B. analyze and evaluate the process of electing the President of the United States.

***B. Chapters 2 and 10 detail the powers held concurrently and separately by national and state governments.***

***C. In Chapter 2 students learn about the fears expressed during the Continental Congress of governmental powers. Chapter 10 presents accounts of state and federal relations since 1795 until the present. Examples include citations from the Supreme Court decision in McCulloch v. Maryland (1819.)***

***D. Students can access current articles on states' rights.***

***A. Chapter 4 explains the process by which the President fills top level posts, including Cabinet positions and Supreme Court openings. Students learn about Cabinet positions in Chapter 5 and Congressional seats in Chapter 6. Filling State and local government positions are discussed in Chapter 10 and 11.***

***B. Chapter 16 discusses the inner workings of political conventions and traces the road to the Presidency from Washington to Bush with links to the Federal Election Homepage and Campaign Finance Homepage.***

(12) Government. The student understands the role of the political parties in the U.S. system of government. The student is expected to:

- A. identify the functions of the political parties;
- B. analyze the two-party system and evaluate the role of the third parties in the United States;
- C. analyze the role of political parties in the electoral process at local, state, and national levels; and
- D. identify opportunities for citizens to participate in political party activities at local, state, and national levels.

*A. Chapter 16 identifies the functions of political parties in the U.S. and presents a historical perspective of their necessity in a free society.*

*B. Chapter 16 defines the two-party system and the role that third parties play. Links to the Democrat, Republican, Libertarian and Green Parties Web sites are available.*

*C. Students are able to analyze the role of political parties by reading Chapter 16's current articles.*

*D. Citizen participation in political party activities is easily identified in Chapter 16's Web sites. For example students can identify local contacts for the Green Party from its Web page.*

(13) Government. The student understands the similarities and differences that exist among the U.S. system of government and other political systems. The student is expected to:

- A. compare the U.S. system of government with other political systems;
- B. analyze the advantages and disadvantages of federal, confederate, and unitary systems of government; and

*A. Chapter 1 provides for comparison of the U.S. democratic government with that of totalitarian, authoritarian, absolute monarchy and custom forms of government.*

*B. Students can read the Articles of Confederation and the Albany Plan of Union in Chapter 1, and about the Federal Government in Chapter 2.*

C. analyze advantages and disadvantages of presidential and parliamentary systems of government.

***C. Chapter 1 discusses England's long history of Parliamentary Government with a link to the United Kingdom Parliament Home Page.***

(14) Citizenship. The student understands rights guaranteed by the U.S. Constitution. The student is expected to:

A. understand the roles of limited government and the rule of law to the protection of individual rights;

***A. In Chapter 3 students can access the Constitution and read the text guaranteeing individual rights.***

B. analyze the rights guaranteed by the Bill of Rights, including the first amendment freedoms;

***B. Chapter 9, Bill of Rights and Minority Rights, contains the Bill of Rights Amendments and a discussion of the First Amendment's guarantees of freedom of expression.***

C. analyze issues addressed in selected cases such as Engel v. Vitale, Miranda v. Arizona and Schenck v. U.S. that involve Supreme Court interpretations of rights guaranteed by the U.S. Constitution;

***C. In Chapter 7, students can read the minority and majority opinions for Engel v. Vitale, Miranda v. Arizona and Schenck v. U.S. They can also access the Supreme Court Web site for all Supreme Court proceedings, past and present.***

D. analyze the role of each branch of government in protecting the rights of individuals;

***D. Chapter 9 presents instances when Congress and the judiciary acted upon individual rights issues such as the Equal Rights Amendment.***

E. explain the importance of due process rights to the protection of individual rights and to the limits on the powers of government; and

***E. Chapter 9 explains the Fifth Amendment and the concept of due process.***

F. analyze the impact of the incorporation doctrine involving due process and the Bill of Rights on individual rights, federalism, and majority rule.

***F. Chapter 9 links to Web sites such as Civil Rights Project, Disability, Government Home Page, and the History of Women's Suffrage.***

(15) Citizenship. The student understands the difference between personal and civic responsibilities. The student is expected to:

A. explain the difference between personal and civic responsibilities;

***A. Chapter 14, Citizenship, begins a discussion of the difference between personal and civic responsibilities and obligations by presenting an American Bar Association document discussing this issue.***

B. evaluate whether and/or when the obligations of citizenship requires that personal desires and interests be subordinated to the public good;

***B. Chapter 14 presents historical and contemporary examples of when the public good was used to deny citizenship to individuals/groups.***

C. evaluate whether and/or the rights of individuals are inviolable even against claims for the public good; and

***C. Chapter 9, Bill of Rights and Minority Rights, presents legislature and judicial decisions that affect individuals and groups.***

D. analyze the consequences of political decisions and actions on society.

***D. Chapters 18-22 discuss the political and social issues related to the environment, agriculture, health care, poverty and education.***

(16) Citizenship. The student understands the importance of voluntary individual participation in the U.S. democratic society. The student is expected to:

A. analyze the effectiveness of various methods of participation in the political process at local, state, and national levels;

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

B. analyze historical and contemporary examples of citizen movements to bring about political change or to maintain continuity;

***B. Part II, Problems of Government, contains chapters that detail citizen movements that have brought about change in the areas of the environment, health care, education, poverty, agriculture, and transportation.***

C. analyze the factors that influence an individual's political attitudes and actions; and

***C. Chapter 16 presents links to articles and Web sites dealing with political parties and their influence on voting.***

D. compare and evaluate characteristics, style, and effectiveness of state and national leaders, past and present.

***D. Chapter 4 discusses past and present Presidents, while Chapter 17 discusses political leaders and ethics.***

(17) Citizenship. The student understands the importance of the expression of different points of view in a democratic society. The student is expected to:

A. analyze different points of view of political parties and interest groups on important contemporary issues;

***A. Chapter 16, Political Parties and Campaigns, has links to mayor political parties and third party Web sites.***

B. analyze the importance of free speech and press in a democratic society; and

***B. Chapter 13 discusses the importance of a free press tracing its history from Washington's day to the present.***

C. express and defend a point of view on an issue of contemporary interest in the United States.

***C. Part II – Problems of Government chapters present discussions on the following issues: Ethics, Education, Environment, Poverty, Agriculture, Transportation, National Defense, and Foreign Policy.***