

Understanding Your Child's Social Studies Education in North Carolina: Grades 9-12

Welcome!

This guide will help you understand what your child will learn in North Carolina Social Studies for grades 9-12. The social studies standards cover behavioral sciences, civics/government, economics/financial literacy, geography, U.S. history, and world history. The National Council for Social Studies defines Social Studies as, "The study of individuals, communities, systems, and their interactions across time and place that prepares students for local, national, and global civic life." Examples of students' work include understanding behavioral sciences, promoting civic engagement, understanding economic decision-making, and achieving financial literacy.

Within the 9-12 Social Studies Standards framework, your child will engage in activities and assignments that showcase their understanding of concepts and conceptual ideas. Students will explore culture and human behavior through the disciplinary strand of behavioral sciences. Through the political science focus on civics and government, students will examine the structure and function of governments, the foundations and participatory nature of government, and ways to promote civic engagement, develop a sense of responsibility, and understand the role of the individual within their community. When students study social studies through the lens of economics, they are asked to analyze the factors that influence economic choices and decision-making. The economic lens of social studies fosters critical thinking and problem-solving skills necessary for making decisions in everyday life that satisfy human wants and needs. Additionally, students will work towards achieving financial literacy, gaining the knowledge and skills necessary for sound financial decision-making in their lives.

The discipline most familiar to people in the study of social studies is history. History is the study of change over time and how the societies we live in come to be. Through the lens of History, students study aspects of human society and use narratives to examine and analyze sequences of past events to objectively determine the patterns of cause and effect. In geography, students will explore state, national, and global landscapes and the geography of their local community. Geography focuses on the study of place and the relationships between people and their environments. Students will examine how humans interact with the natural environment and how "place" impacts people, their beliefs, the way people live, and the things they do in the places they live. Although history and geography are quite similar, the difference between the lens of history and the lens of geography is that history studies events and people with a focus on change over time - "when" and "how," while geography focuses on the "where" and "spacial perspective". As a parent, you can look forward to witnessing the growth of your child's understanding and application of these essential social studies concepts, fostering a well-rounded and socially aware learner.

Social Studies Overview: Grades 9-12

What Your Child Will Learn:

In grades 9-12 your child will use inquiry skills to explore the history, geography, economy, government, and culture of their local community, North Carolina, the United States, and the world. They will learn about important events, diverse cultures, and how the past shapes our present. Inquiry learning allows students to use the lenses of a historian, geographer, economist, or political scientist to gain knowledge and deepen their understanding of the past and today's world. The inquiry process in each grade and course of the North Carolina Social Studies Standard Course of Study asks students to inquire, think critically, evaluate sources, use evidence, solve problems, communicate ideas, and take action.

American History

The American History course is designed to build on what students have previously learned in social studies and will prepare them for college and career and to be engaged citizens. Through the course, students will explore different aspects of American history using various lenses, such as inquiry, culture, human behavior, geography, government, and the economy. Students will also examine significant moments in American history to understand why they happened and their impact on the world. Additionally, students will be encouraged to consider different points of view and form their own opinions based on the facts they learn. The course will also teach valuable skills such as asking good questions, examining facts, expressing their ideas, and understanding what's happening in the present day. By the end of the course, students will be well-versed in American history, better equipped to engage with the modern world, and prepared to be informed and productive citizens.

Founding Principles of the United States and North Carolina: Civic Literacy

The Founding Principles of the United States of America and North Carolina: Civic Literacy course is designed to build on what students have previously learned in social studies and will prepare them for college and career and to be engaged citizens. This course provides an in-depth study of the governmental and political systems of North Carolina and the United States. It builds on the Founding Principles, as specified in N.C. Session Law 2019-82, House Bill 924. Students will learn about how power and responsibility are defined by the U.S. Constitution, and how these principles are implemented in the legal, judicial, and political systems of North Carolina and the United States. In this course, students will analyze how well the American government protects citizens' rights. Using inquiry-based learning, they'll also investigate how the American system of government has changed over time. This will include developing their skills so that they will be able to think critically about various topics, issues, and claims, and then communicate their ideas and take action to make a positive impact. By the end of the course, students will be able to understand how the American system of government works. This knowledge will help them to be better prepared for college and career, and to be informed and productive citizens.

World History

The World History course is designed to build on what students have previously learned in social studies. Students will have the opportunity to learn about the development of societies, nations, economies, and cultures from different parts of the world post-1200 and use inquiry-based learning, to investigate how those various nations and societies have changed over time. This will include developing their skills so that they will be able to think critically about various topics, issues, and claims, and then communicate their ideas and take action to make a positive impact. They will also explore the historical background of each area, covering events, people, and the impact of history, religion, government, diplomacy, human behavior, cultural practices, beliefs, and economic, political, and social institutions. Unlike just memorizing facts, the standards for this course go beyond that. The World History course will be taught in the context of the global society students live in today. The goal is to help them understand how events and decisions from ancient, classical, and modern history still influence the world we live in.

Economics and Personal Finance

In the Economics and Personal Finance (EPF) course, students will learn about economics, personal finance, income and education, money management, critical consumerism, and financial planning. This course is designed to help students make sense of economic decisions, learn how to use money wisely, choose the right education and career path, and become financially responsible citizens. This course has been legislated by N.C. Session Law 2019-82, House Bill 924. Given that learning about economics and personal finance is important from kindergarten through high school, most students will begin the course with a basic understanding of economic principles and money management.

Conceptual Knowledge by Course

The table below provides examples of understandings and skills your child will learn in grades 9-12 in history, geography, economics, civics and government, and behavioral sciences. They demonstrate how students' ideas and conceptual understandings become increasingly sophisticated as they progress through grades K-8.

These are assessment examples that align with the NC Social Studies standards. The assessments are not exhaustive, and teachers may use various methods to assess student understanding. The assessments provided are only examples, offering insight into the tasks students might encounter to demonstrate their knowledge, skills, and understanding of learning.

HISTORY STRAND		
Grade Band	Understandings What will students learn	Assessment Examples What students should be able to do
World History	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Global interaction and cooperation can lead to policy decisions that can change society over time The experiences and achievements of various individuals and groups can lead to innovations that facilitate change in society that lead to lasting achievement 	Individually, as pairs or in small groups, students are given information packets about a turning point in world history. Students use their information packet to develop a brief presentation using a tournament bracket format. Students must include why the turning point deserves to win the title of "Most Transformative Event in World History." After the presentations, students (individually, in groups, or as a class) select the winner of each match-up based upon the lasting impact of each turning point until a final champion is crowned. As an extension, the students write a paragraph explaining their final choice.
American History	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Significant historical turning points can have multiple causes Internal and external conflicts can shape the ways in which a nation develops Economic, social, cultural, geographic, and political factors can change the direction of a nation's history 	After discussing World War I, students complete a three-column graphic organizer. The columns should be labeled: "Social," "Political," and "Economic." The rows of the graphic organizers should be the causes and effects of World War I. The students identify the causes and effects of the War and list them in the appropriate columns and rows.
Civic Literacy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> When individuals and groups identify with the larger dominant group, those identifications can play a significant role in determining how a society develops Cooperation and compromise may help establish individual and civic rights over time 	Teachers give students documents with information to read about the evolution of voting rights for women in the United States. Based on the information in the documents, students create a visual representing their interpretation of what they read. The visual representation can be a drawing, painting, or graphic design. The visual may not include any writing-- only pictures, images, and symbols.
GEOGRAPHY STRAND		
Grade Band	Understandings What will students learn	Assessment Examples What students should be able to do
World History	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Immigration patterns and trends can lead to national and global demographic shifts 	Students are given a brief summary/scenario describing geopolitics and demographic shifts for a nation. The students must provide evidence from the scenarios to support their reason for the possible unintentional consequences.

American History	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Movement and migration may impact legislation, public policy, and the environment 	Students use a Jigsaw activity to understand the opportunities and challenges associated with geographic expansion. Students work in groups to review documents about miners, ranchers, or farmers moving west throughout the 19th century. Students respond as a group to the following question: <i>How did those opportunities and challenges shape the development of the United States and impact their group (farmers, miners, or ranchers)?</i> Students then form groups of three, with one farmer, one miner, and one rancher to share the experiences of their assigned character.
Civic Literacy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Policy and legislation may impact movement 	Students look at a list of international environmental agreements of the last century. After reviewing the agreements and the stance of the United States on each one of the agreements, students create an example of a new international agreement the United States would take part in.

ECONOMICS STRAND

Grade Band	Understandings What will students learn	Assessment Examples What students should be able to do
World History	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Economic decisions and policies have contributed to the dependence and interdependence of global economic systems 	Students create a comic strip explaining how a particular international economic policy challenged international interdependence, national sovereignty, or tribal sovereignty.
American History	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Economic decisions and policies impact affluence, poverty, and mobility in America 	Students use primary sources about the post-World War II economic boom to create a chart describing the causes and effects of the economic boom on individuals' quality of life.
Civic Literacy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Economic policy decisions of state and federal governments can lead to changes in lifestyle and may have positive or negative consequences 	Students review data on the largest foreign imports and exports from North Carolina. Students write a headline summarizing the role North Carolina plays in the world economy.
Economics and Personal Financial Literacy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Students must be able to differentiate market structures based on their characteristics 	Students are given a list of characteristics describing different market structures. Students analyze the list of characteristics to determine which market structure each list of characteristics belongs to and how that list of characteristics might determine decision-making.

CIVICS AND GOVERNMENT STRAND		
Grade Band	Understandings What will students learn	Assessment Examples What students should be able to do
World History	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Governments play a role in the creation and resolution of conflict around the world • Individuals, groups, and governments may contribute to the expansion or restriction of freedom and equality • Minorities and marginalized groups often challenge existing governments to facilitate change 	Students complete a two-column cause-and-effect chart in which they define/describe key policies or treaties that led to conflict in the left column and how those policies led to international conflict in the right column. Students should include specific examples in the right column.
American History	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Governments may use power to expand or restrict freedom, equality, and rights • Minorities and marginalized groups often challenge leaders and governments to facilitate change 	The teacher gives students various primary sources of protests from the Suffrage movement. After reviewing the different sources, students create a presentation explaining how the individuals and groups organized, strategized, and advocated to expand voting rights for all individuals.
Civic Literacy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The founding principles have influenced policies, laws, and decisions • Citizenship and civic participation can impact the structure and function of local, state, and national government • Minorities and marginalized groups often challenge leaders and governments to make societies more equitable • Minorities and marginalized groups often challenge the founding principles of a nation 	Students are given several documents to read, each describing government maintenance of order and security. Students create a triple Venn Diagram showing the similarities and differences in how federal, state, and local governments each maintain order and security.

BEHAVIORAL SCIENCE STRAND		
Grade Band	Understandings What will students learn	Assessment Examples What students should be able to do
World History	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There are different types of catalysts that can be responsible for influencing change within a society • Culture, society, and global interaction may impact identity 	Students write an entry for the <i>Encyclopedia of Science and Technology</i> highlighting how significant advancements impacted society in various regions of the world. The teacher should determine the number of entries based on the time period or events the students are studying.
American History	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There are multiple perspectives of America's national identity • American society has been impacted by technology, innovation, reasoning, and religious beliefs • Various groups contribute to the identity of a nation 	Students are given a list of innovations/ inventions that occurred in American society since the advent of the internet. Students select the innovations/inventions they perceive as having reinforced American values and beliefs and describe why they feel the innovations/inventions were impactful.
Civic Literacy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • As the values and beliefs of society change those changes are often reflected in legislative, executive, and judicial decisions • Minorities and marginalized groups often challenge leaders to live up to the values and principles of a nation 	Students select one law and one public policy, from a list generated by the teacher. The students write a short statement detailing how one or more of the values helped to influence the creation of the law and policy they selected.

How to Help Your Child at Home:

As a parent, your involvement is crucial in enhancing your child's understanding of history, geography, and the world around them. Here are some concrete ways to actively contribute to their learning at home. Incorporating these activities into your family routine creates a supportive environment that complements and enriches your child's social studies education.

- **Two-Way Communication:** Collaborate with your child's classroom teacher. Meet with your child's teacher(s) early in the year and help the teacher get to know your child. Recognizing the teacher's efforts in the classroom is also a great way to show support for your child and the teacher. Making intentional efforts to say "thank you" also helps foster positive communication between the home and the classroom. Taking part in school events whenever possible is another way to foster positive communication.
- **Ask Thoughtful Questions:** Engage your child in meaningful conversations about what they've learned in social studies. Please encourage them to share their thoughts, questions, and insights. By fostering open dialogue, you create a space for them to express and solidify their understanding.
 - Examples of Questions you may consider asking:
 - What events or historical figures have you found most interesting in your history class?
 - How do you think the past has shaped the present? Can you give me an example?
 - How does geography influence people's lives in different parts of the world?
 - Why do you think it's important for citizens to participate in their government?
 - What have you learned about making wise financial decisions or budgeting?
 - Is there anything you find particularly interesting or concerning happening in the world?
 - How do you think global events can impact our community or country?
- **Read Together:** Explore a world of knowledge through literature. Incorporate books and articles about history, culture, and social studies into your reading routine. Visit your local library together, allowing your child to choose topics that intrigue them.
- **Visit Museums and Historical Sites:** Transform learning into a family adventure by visiting museums and historical sites. These outings reinforce classroom lessons and provide a hands-on and memorable way for your child to connect with their study subjects.
 - Free museums and historical sites you can visit in North Carolina:
 - North Carolina Museum of Natural Sciences (Raleigh)
 - North Carolina Museum of History (Raleigh)
 - North Carolina Museum of Art (Raleigh)
 - North Carolina Maritime Museums (Beaufort, Southport, Hatteras)
 - North Carolina Museum of the Coastal Plain (Tarboro)
 - North Carolina Transportation Museum (Spencer)

- Historic Bath (Bath)
 - Guilford Courthouse National Military Park (Greensboro)
 - Fort Raleigh National Historic Site (Manteo)
 - Wright Brothers National Memorial (Kill Devil Hills)
 - Museum of the Cherokee Indian (Cherokee)
- **Media Literacy Discussions:** Stay informed about current events by watching the news together. Take the opportunity to discuss what's happening globally and locally. This practice deepens your child's awareness of the world and nurtures their critical thinking skills. Discuss news articles, advertisements, or online content together. Teach your child to critically evaluate sources, identify biases, and distinguish between reliable and unreliable information.
 - **Vote Together:** Transform civic engagement into a family affair by discussing choices and planning to vote together. This hands-on experience introduces your child to the democratic process and instills a sense of responsibility for active citizenship.
 - **Document Family History:** Explore your family's history together. Encourage your child to interview relatives, look at old photos, and discover shared stories. This enhances their understanding of history and connects them to their heritage.
 - **Create a Travel Journal:** Encourage your child to maintain a journal if your family enjoys travel. Documenting experiences from various locations fosters an appreciation for diverse landscapes, cultures, and histories.
 - **Financial Literacy Activities:** Introduce age-appropriate financial concepts. Create a simple budget together, discuss saving money, or involve your child in making informed purchasing decisions.
 - **Learn Online With Your Child Using Teacher Suggested Resources. Here Are Several Safe and Vetted Online Learning Sites:**
 - [iCivics](#) provides a platform to engage students in meaningful civic learning. They provide free inventive resources to ensure every student receives a high-quality civic education. As the largest provider of civics curriculum in the country, it is used in 50 states by over 110,000 teachers.
 - [Kids in the House](#) is a public service website provided by the Office of the Clerk of the U.S. House of Representatives. Its mission is to provide educational and entertaining information about the legislative branch of the United States Government to students of all ages. Topics covered include the role of the U.S. House of Representatives, the legislative process, and House history.
 - [Center for Civic Education](#) promotes an enlightened and responsible citizenry committed to democratic principles and actively engaged in the practice of democracy. It develops high-quality curriculum materials, provides exceptional professional development for teachers, and advocates for stronger civic education in the United States and emerging democracies.

Resources:

The following resources can be found at the link below:

- State Board of Education Approved K-12 Social Studies Standards
- Crosswalk
- Unpacking
- Strand Maps
- Glossary
- Graduation Requirements & Credit Allowances

[NCDPI Social Studies Resources](#)