

United States Government: 9-12

Course Description:

The Government High School course focuses on the United States' founding principles and beliefs. Students will study the structure, functions, and powers of government at the national, state, and local levels. Integrate the six social studies standards of essential content knowledge and four process skills will be integrated for instructional purposes.

Standard Number: 1.0 Culture

Standard: Culture encompasses similarities and differences among people, including their beliefs, knowledge, changes, values, and tradition. Students will explore these elements of society to develop an appreciation of and respect for the variety of human cultures.

Learning Expectations:

The student will

1.1 understand the influence of natural rights on American culture.

1.2 understand the impact of the political system on American culture.

Performance Indicators:

1.1 understand the influence of natural rights on American culture.

At Level 1, the student is able to

identify John Locke's concept of life, liberty, and property as natural rights.

At Level 2, the student is able to

discover changing definitions of life, liberty and property in American history.

At Level 3, the student is able to

challenge which of the natural rights is most significant in American culture today.

1.2 understand the impact of the political system on American culture.

At Level 1, the student is able to

list elements of American culture throughout American history.

At Level 2, the student is able to

analyze the origins of American culture inherent in the American political system.

At Level 3, the student is able to

weigh the relative importance of political systems on culture.

Sample Tasks:

Students will study historical documents concerning individual and natural rights such as the Magna Carta, English Bill of Rights, and the Declaration of Independence to write a "Student Bill of Rights" or "Student Manifesto" for their school and/or community. Students will work in small groups to compile a list of 5 to 10 essential rights that are necessary for life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness.

Standard Number: 2.0 Economics

Standard: Globalization of the economy, the explosion of population growth, technological changes and international competition compel students to understand, both personally and globally, production, distribution, and consumption of goods and services. Students will examine and analyze economic concepts such as basic needs versus wants, using versus saving money, and policy-making versus decision-making.

Learning Expectations:

The student will

2.1 understand economic systems and political structures.

2.2 understand the rise of capitalism in the United States.

2.3 understand how all nations use "tools of foreign policy" such as alliances, economic aid, economic sanctions, trade agreements, propaganda, military aid, treaties, troop movements, and wars to promote national interests.

2.4 understand the connection among resources and institutions that govern the management and distributions of those resources.

Performance Indicators:

2.1 understand economic systems and political structures.

At Level 1, the student is able to

know various economic systems and political structures.

At Level 2, the student is able to

differentiate between the features of various economic systems and political structures.

At Level 3, the student is able to

recommend an economic system that is most effective in today's global society.

2.2 understand the rise of capitalism in the United States.

At Level 1, the student is able to

define the tools of economic foreign policy.

At Level 2, the student is able to

illustrate the growth of capitalism in the United States.

At Level 3, the student is able to

measure the relative effectiveness of capitalism on individuals and groups in America.

2.3 understand how all nations use "tools of foreign policy" such as alliances, economic aid, economic sanctions, trade agreements, propaganda, military aid, treaties, troop movements, and wars to promote national interests.

At Level 1, the student is able to

define the tools of economic foreign policy.

At Level 2, the student is able to

compare the consequences of choosing and implementing each of these tools.

At Level 3, the student is able to

select and defend which tools are most effective in promoting a country's national interest.

2.4 understand the connection among resources and institutions that govern the management and distributions of those resources.

At Level 1, the student is able to

identify institutions that manage resources.

At Level 2, the student is able to

calculate which institutions are most important in the management of resources.

At Level 3, the student is able to

evaluate the effectiveness of institutions which are responsible for the management, and distribution of resources.

Sample Tasks:

Students will do a case study of two countries: one industrialized, developed nation and one agricultural, developing country and compare the following: GNP, type of government, major resources and industry, education and literacy rate, and foreign policy to create an economic forecast for the next five years for each country.

Standard Number: 3.0 Geography

Standard: Geography enables the students to see, understand and appreciate the web of relationships between people, places, and environments. Students will use the knowledge, skills, and understanding of concepts within the six essential elements of geography: world in spatial terms, places and regions, physical systems, human systems, environment and society, and the use of geography.

Learning Expectations:

The student will

3.1 Understand and analyze how the forces of cooperation and conflict among people influence the division and control of the earth's surface

3.2 understand and analyze the impact of physical and human geography on given political systems.

3.3 understand the use of geography in determining policies such as zoning, redistricting, and the census.

Performance Indicators:

3.1 Understand and analyze how the forces of cooperation and conflict among people influence the division and control of the earth's surface

At Level 1, the student is able to

list examples of regional cooperation and conflicts based on geographic interests.

At Level 2, the student is able to

distinguish between geographic causes and economic, social, and political causes of conflict and cooperation.

At Level 3, the student is able to

predict possible conflicts and alliances based on geographic needs and select possible solutions.

2. understand and analyze the impact of physical and human geography on given political systems.

At Level 1, the student is able to

trace patterns of demographic change and the growth of the American political system.

At Level 2, the student is able to

review examples of successes and failures of political systems to meet the needs of individuals and groups based on physical and human geography.

At Level 3, the student is able to

determine and create the ideal society using physical and human geography.

3.3 understand the use of geography in determining policies such as zoning, redistricting, and the census.

At Level 1, the student is able to

recognize geographic factors that influence governmental policies.

At Level 2, the student is able to

illustrate the geographic factors, which influence governmental policies.

At Level 3, the student is able to

assess how each individual geographic factor influences governmental policies.

Sample Tasks:

Students will study the concepts of gerrymandering and redistricting to analyze congressional districts using census data and make predictions about future decisions impacting these districts.

Standard Number: 4.0 Governance and Civics

Standard: Governance establishes structures of power and authority in order to provide order and stability. Civic efficacy requires understanding rights and responsibilities, ethical behavior, and the role of citizens within their community, nation, and world.

Learning Expectations:

The student will

- 4.1 understand the role of politics and government in society.
- 4.2 understand the role of constitutions in preventing abuses of government power.
- 4.3 understand the basic features of major forms of governments in the world.
- 4.4 understand the basic features of major forms of governance in the world.
- 4.5 understand the role of the United States legal system.
- 4.6 understand the concept of federalism.

Performance Indicators

4.1 understand the role of politics and government in society.

At Level 1, the student is able to

define terms used in politics and government.

At Level 2, the student is able to

describe the purpose of governance and its characteristics and why it is necessary.

At Level 3, the student is able to

critique the necessity of government.

4.2 understand the role of constitutions in preventing abuses of government power.

At Level 1, the student is able to

notice the role constitutions have played in various governments.

At Level 2, the student is able to

explain how constitutions prevent abuses of government power.

At Level 3, the student is able to

create a constitution for a society, which prevents abuses of power.

4.3 understand the basic features of major forms of governments in the world.

At Level 1, the student is able to

identify major forms of government.

At Level 2, the student is able to

compare the basic features of major governments in the world.

At Level 3, the student is able to

rank the effectiveness of forms of governments using the criteria of protection of individual rights or promoting the good of the whole as the basis for judgment.

4.4 understand the basic features of major forms of governance in the world.

At Level 1, the student is able to

identify the six founding principles of the Constitution: Federalism checks and balances, popular sovereignty, separation of powers, judicial review, and limited government.

4.5 understand the role of the United States legal system.

At Level 1, the student is able to

trace the process of civil and criminal court systems.

At Level 2, the student is able to

review the principles of equal justice under the law.

At Level 3, the student is able to

determine the extent to which our justice system promotes the principle of justice.

4.6 understand the concept of federalism.

At Level 1, the student is able to

describe how states and local governments are organized;
define federalism.

At Level 2, the student is able to

explain how state and local governments are interrelated with the federal government.

At Level 3, the student is able to

classify responsibilities of federal, state, and local governments and their relatedness;

resolve the conflicts that are inherent in the concept of federalism, using constitutional principles.

Sample Tasks:

Students will study the major types of government in the world to create a "new, ideal society" of their peers (25 to 30). This society needs a mission statement stating the purpose of their new government, a flow chart describing the type of government and how it will work with roles clearly spelled out for all of its members, and a list of 5 laws that have to last for 10 to 15 years. Students will work in groups to create this "ideal society" and make a short presentation to the class explaining and defending their society.

Standard Number: 5.0 History

Standard: History involves people, events, and issues. Students will evaluate evidence to develop comparative and causal analyses and to interpret primary sources. They will construct sound historical arguments and perspectives on which informed decision in contemporary life can be based.

Learning Expectations:

The student will

5.1 understand historical and modern examples of the concepts of limited and unlimited governance.

5.2 understand specific historical documents and institutions which shaped the principles of the United States Constitution.

5.3 understand the importance of the rule of laws and the sources, purposes, and function of law.

5.4 understand the United States Constitution as a "living document" in both principle and practice.

5.5 understand how the United States foreign policy is determined by the concept of national interest in both historical and modern settings.

5.6 understand the balance between the protection of individual rights and the general welfare of all citizens.

Performance Indicators:

5.1 understand historical and modern examples of the concepts of limited and unlimited governance.

At Level 1, the student is able to

define limited and unlimited governments and list examples of each.

At Level 2, the student is able to

distinguish the characteristics of limited and unlimited government.

At Level 3, the student is able to

assess the reason for developing limited and unlimited government at any given time.

5.2 understand specific historical documents and institutions which shaped the principles of the United States Constitution.

At Level 1, the student is able to

identify documents and institutions which shaped the principles of the United States Constitution.

At Level 2, the student is able to

illustrate the application of these principles throughout the United States Constitution.

At Level 3, the student is able to

debate the effectiveness of the principles of the United States Constitution.

5.3 understand the importance of the rule of laws and the sources, purposes, and function of law.

At Level 1, the student is able to

identify the rule of law, its sources, purposes, and the function of law.

At Level 2, the student is able to

examine the effect of rule of law upon groups and individuals in the United States.

At Level 3, the student is able to

evaluate, adopt, and defend positions on the importance of the rule of law.

5.4 understand the United States Constitution as a "living document" in both principle and practice.

At Level 1, the student is able to

read and know the United States Constitution and its amendments.

At Level 2, the student is able to

calculate the impact of the Constitution upon our lives today.

At Level 3, the student is able to

analyze the characteristics that make the Constitution a living document.

5.5 understand how the United States foreign policy is determined by the concept of national interest in both historical and modern settings.

At Level 1, the student is able to

define the concepts of foreign policy and national interest.

At Level 2, the student is able to

illustrate how the concept of national interest affects United States foreign policy.
At Level 3, the student is able to

determine how foreign policy is based on the national interests of the United States in relation to various countries.

5.6 understand the balance between the protection of individual rights and the general welfare of all citizens.

At Level 1, the student is able to

recognize examples of individual rights and the general welfare of all citizens.

At Level 2, the student is able to

detect the tensions between protecting individual rights and the general welfare of all citizens.

At Level 3, the student is able to

determine the constitutional basis for balancing the protection of individual rights and promoting the good of the whole.

Sample Tasks:

Students will study the major events, ideas, and individuals of the Suffragist and Civil Rights movement to create, in small groups, a 2 to 4 minute public service announcement that targets 18 to 24 year olds (the lowest voting age group in the U.S.) and emphasizes the importance of voting and political participation in our society.

Standard Number: 6.0 Individuals, Groups, and Interactions

Standard: Personal development and identity are shaped by factors including culture, groups, and institutions. Central to this development are exploration, identification, and analysis of how individuals and groups work independently and cooperatively.

Learning Expectations:

The student will

6.1 understand the impact of individual and group decisions on citizens and communities.

6.2 understand how groups can effect change at the local, state national and world levels.

6.3 understand the evolution of political parties and their role as a mechanism for creating and sustaining political participation.

6.4 understand how the philosophies of liberalism and conservatism correlate to the two major American political parties.

6.5 understand the impact and influence of participatory citizenship on government at all levels.

6.6 understand the role of individual leaders who have affected policies, case laws, and legislation.

6.7 understand the role of political action committees, non-profit organizations, and other groups that influenced policy and institutions.

Performance Indicators:

6.1 understand the impact of individual and group decisions on citizens and communities.

At Level 1, the student is able to

work independently and cooperatively to accomplish goals.

At Level 2, the student is able to

relate such factors as physical endowment and capabilities, learning, motivation, personality, perception, and behavior to individual development.

At Level 3, the student is able to

identify and interpret examples of stereotyping, conformity, and altruism.

6.2 understand how groups can effect change at the local, state national and world levels.

At Level 1, the student is able to

identify and analyze examples of tension between expressions of individuality and group or institutional efforts to promote social conformity.

At Level 2, the student is able to

describe the role of institutions in furthering both continuity and change.

At Level 3, the student is able to

apply knowledge of how groups and institutions work to meet individual needs and promote the common good.

6.3 understand the evolution of political parties and their role as a mechanism for creating and sustaining political participation.

At Level 1, the student is able to

trace the evolution of political parties.

At Level 2, the student is able to

associate political participation with the evolution of political parties.

At Level 3, the student is able to

consider the creation of a new political party, which will sustain political participation.

6.4 understand how the philosophies of liberalism and conservatism correlate to the two major American political parties.

At Level 1, the student is able to

define the terms "liberal" and "conservative" as they relate to political parties today and in the past.

At Level 2, the student is able to

practice role-playing liberal and conservative decision-making with political party affiliation.

At Level 3, the student is able to

critique the effectiveness and consistency of political labeling related to political parties.

6.5 understand the impact and influence of participatory citizenship on government at all levels.

At Level 1, the student is able to

list examples of citizen participation.

At Level 2, the student is able to

classify types of citizen participation.

At Level 3, the student is able to

select a student-designed project that requires citizen participation.

6.6 understand the role of individual leaders who have affected policies, case laws, and legislation.

At Level 1, the student is able to

recall individuals who have affected policies, case law, and legislation.

At Level 2, the student is able to
associate individuals with policies, case and legislation.

At Level 3, the student is able to
rank individuals based on the impact they have had on policies, case law, and legislation.

6.7 understand the role of political action committees, non-profit organizations, and other groups that influenced policy and institutions.

At Level 1, the student is able to
identify existing political action committees and non-profit organizations.

At Level 2, the student is able to
describe the processes used by these groups in shaping governmental policies and institutions.

At Level 3, the student is able to
recommend a course of action utilizing these groups to resolve a local issue.

Sample Tasks:

Students will participate in a mock U.S. Senate simulation that requires: 1) identifying and researching a national issue 2) compiling research into a bill that will be submitted to a particular committee. 3) studying and selecting a political party during the simulation, 4) participating in the committee process to evaluate other bills from the class 5) participating in "Senate floor debate" as bills that passed out of committee are discussed and voted on.