

The Guiding Principles for Virginia's 2022 History and Social Science Standards Revisions

INTRODUCTION

Virginia's History and Social Science standards aim to restore excellence, curiosity and excitement around teaching and learning history. The teaching of history should illuminate insights from the past and inspire current and future generations to lead lives that are informed and inspired by those who walked this journey before them.

EXPECTATIONS FOR VIRGINIA'S STUDENTS

Every graduate from Virginia's K-12 schools will possess a robust understanding of the places, people, events and ideas that comprise the history of Virginia, the United States and world civilizations. Our students will learn from the rise and fall of civilizations across time, so that we may pursue and maintain government and economic systems that have led to human achievement. The Virginia standards are grounded in the foundational principles and actions of great individuals who preceded us so that we may learn from them as we strive to maintain our political liberties and personal freedoms and thrive as a nation.

The United States, whose founding history is rooted in Virginia's history, has led the world in political, social and economic thought and action in ways that fundamentally changed the interactions and expectations of individual citizens with government. Students will know that the Declaration of Independence first stated that "all men are created equal, and that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness." The standards will recognize the world impact of America's quest for a "more perfect Union" and the optimism, ideals and imagery captured by Ronald Reagan's "shining city upon a hill" speech. Students will know our nation's exceptional strengths, including individual innovation, moral character, ingenuity and adventure, while learning from terrible periods and actions in direct conflict with these ideals.

Our students will also understand that our history encompasses a broad civilization beyond their neighborhood, Virginia and the United States. They will learn that humankind has spanned continents, ethnicities and religions, with common qualities that unite us and differences that enrich our society. The events of our history demonstrate that people have incredible ability to inspire, innovate and improve lives, and this human story also shows that evil exists with the capability of destroying civilizations, communities and individual lives.

The standards provide an unflinching and fact-based coverage of world, United States and Virginia history. Students will study the horrors of wars and genocide including the Holocaust and the ethnic cleansing campaigns that have occurred throughout history and continue today. They will better understand the abhorrent treatment of Native Americans, the stain of slavery, segregation and racism in the United States and around the world, and the inhumanity and deprivations of communist regimes. Students will

also study inspirational moments including the achievements of Greek and Roman governments and advancements in engineering, architecture and art, the European Enlightenment, the American Revolution, the triumph of America's Greatest Generation in World War II, the Marshall Plan, the civil rights movement, the fall of the Berlin Wall, Project Apollo and the heroic sacrifice of Flight 93 passengers.

Students will have an in-depth understanding of the good and the bad in the world, United States and Virginia history. The standards will include an appreciation of the attributes and actions that have made America the world's exemplar of freedom, opportunity and democratic ideals. This comprehensive story of the United States and the world will prepare every student for the rights, opportunities and responsibilities of Americans. As noted by George Santayana over 100 years ago, "those who cannot remember the past are condemned to repeat it."

PRINCIPLES

The foundational principles for these History and Social Science learning standards include:

- Individual liberty and representative government are cornerstones of the American way of life;
- The Declaration of Independence and the Constitution are remarkable documents that provide the freedoms and framework for our constitutional republic.
- We aspire to live up to the Founders' ideals for a society that recognizes all individuals are created equal.
- Enshrined on our national seal is the phrase "E Pluribus Unum" – "Out of Many, One." Immigrants from around the world have come to our shores seeking freedom and opportunity to build a better life and have contributed to our communities and added to the rich history of achievement in our country.
- Free enterprise, property rights and the rule of law enable an economic system that allocates assets through free markets and competition and fosters innovation, opportunity and efficiency. Centralized government planning in the form of socialism or communist political systems is incompatible with democracy and individual freedoms.
- America is exceptional but not perfect.
- The rights codified in the United States and Virginia constitutions and the Bill of Rights provide for individual freedoms that place a responsibility on current and future generations of Americans to engage in the political process with civility and fulfill their civic duty.
- Over the ages, civilizations have grown, prospered and vanished. Every student should understand our Great American Experiment is not guaranteed forever. As Benjamin Franklin warned citizens over 200 years ago, "you have a republic... if you can keep it."

IMPLEMENTATION OF VIRGINIA’S HISTORY AND SOCIAL SCIENCE STANDARDS IN 2022

Human history is complex and evolving as new technologies emerge and old stories are uncovered. We update our standards every seven years because we continue to learn more about the multiple facets of historical events through new discoveries and expanded research.

The virtues and flaws of Virginia, the United States and other world civilizations will be taught in an objective, factual and age-appropriate way by balancing fact and inquiry-based learning opportunities. History and Social Science education will highlight our shared humanity and the opportunity to work together in our constitutional republic to improve our own lives as well as the lives of our families and communities. The study of history and civics through these standards will provide the foundation for students to be engaged and informed citizens who will continue to strengthen our communities, our economy and our republic.

The success of Virginia’s 2022 History and Social Science standards depends on the sound judgement and strong preparation of teachers and informed engagement by parents. The standards and state-developed curriculum frameworks will serve as guides for best-in-class teaching and learning. While the immense responsibility of defining curriculum and texts used in classrooms across Virginia rests with local school boards, our standards should be implemented in the following ways:

- Students should be exposed to the facts of our past, even when those facts are uncomfortable. Teachers should engage students in age-appropriate ways that do not ascribe guilt to any population in the classroom. Teachers and students should insist on dignity and respect for each other as part of civil society.
- The Virginia Department of Education will provide our teachers with excellent instructional tools and training so they will be able to teach *all* of our history in an objective, fair, empathetic, nonjudgmental and developmentally appropriate manner in accordance with Title IV and Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964.
- Teachers must facilitate open and balanced discussions on difficult topics, including discrimination and racism, and present learning opportunities without personal or political bias.
- Every local school board has the responsibility and resources to select and fully implement standards that are aligned with the core history and social science curricula for every grade level and course.
- The curriculum selected by a local school board should provide a level of consistency and comprehension, so that “teacher-created curriculum” is unnecessary.
- Parents should have open access to all instructional materials utilized in any Virginia public school. Division policies and practices should reflect this commitment.

The Preface for Virginia’s 2022 History and Social Science Standards Revisions

In 1995, the Virginia Board of Education published **Standards of Learning** in English, mathematics, science, and history and social science for kindergarten through grade 12. Subsequently, Standards of Learning were developed for all academic content areas. The Standards of Learning are designed to raise the academic achievement of all students in Virginia by providing clear and specific benchmarks for student success at each grade level.

Pursuant to legislation from the 2000 Virginia General Assembly, the Board of Education established a seven-year cycle for review of the Standards of Learning. Thus, the 1995 *History and Social Science Standards of Learning* were reviewed in 2001, 2008, and 2015. The Virginia Department of Education convened review committees in 2021-2022 to review and revise the 2015 History and Social Science Standards of Learning, and the results of those reviews are reflected in this document.

Curriculum, on the other hand, created at the division or local level, should prescribe a specific sequence of coherent “units” or “modules” that combine instructional strategies with resources and a sequence of student activities to help students meet the standards. A locally developed curriculum should specify how resources, instructional strategies, content vocabulary, student activities, formative and summative assessments, and evaluation procedures may be combined into those coherent units.

To assist school divisions with the creation of the local curricula, the Virginia Department of Education will separately issue **Curriculum Frameworks** for the HSS. The Curriculum Frameworks will suggest instructional resources (print and non-print), suggested students' activities, suggested formative and summative assessment and evaluation materials, and suggested pacing. They will also include scaffolding and differentiation suggestions to help curriculum developers address the needs of struggling learners and those who need challenges. The Frameworks will offer important instructional guidance to ensure that students are learning and applying the **skills of historical analysis**, such as being an active listener, looking at events and issues from various perspectives, analyzing primary and secondary sources, evaluating, and developing arguments, and citing evidence in support of one’s opinion both orally and in writing. Finally, the suggested student activities will encourage students to wrestle with complex texts and ideas, including the important and transcendent themes associated with the study of history, such as liberty, democracy, self-government, truth and citizenship.

In short, Curriculum Frameworks will be issued to further enrich and clarify the concepts set forth in the *Virginia Standards for History and Social Science*.

Organization and Prescribed Order of History and Social Science Courses

Historically, Virginia has offered flexibility around the grades at which some of these “courses” are taught; in this configuration, the draft standards are presented in the Board of Education’s recommended grade level sequence.

(K – 3)

Standards are organized into the four core strands of social studies: history, geography, civics and economics.

- The **history** strand comprises three “sub-strands”:
 - an overview of ancient world history,
 - an overview of early American history, and
 - a third strand that offers opportunities for students to hear/read about—or conduct other research about—the lives of the people associated with the historical eras studied at each grade level.

In grade three, two ancient civilizations are covered, Greece and Rome, because of their influence on America’s founding, so a fourth standard offers the suggested names for further research.

- The **geography** strand entails the study of both basic geographic skills and specific geography standards that align with and enhance students’ understanding of the history taught at that grade.
- The **civics** strand builds knowledge of citizenship and patriotism in a way that aligns with history content for grade three, coinciding with the study of the founding of the United States. The grade three standards emphasize the establishment of the U.S. Constitution. They include specific expectations for students’ knowledge of how the U.S. government is structured (the three branches of government), and confirms their nascent understanding of the basic rights and responsibilities of U.S. citizenship, which has been building since kindergarten.
- In the **economics** strand, students in K – 3 acquire an understanding of the most basic principles of economics on which the 6 – 12 standards will build.

(4 – 6)

Standards for grades 6 – 12 proceed in an integrated way, focused on the following aspects of American history:

- Grade Four: Virginia Studies, chronological story of the history of Virginia
- Grade Five: U.S. History I, America’s history from its earliest days to the Civil War
- Grade Six: U.S. History II, the story of the America from the Civil War – present

(7 – 8)

Students in grades seven and eight refocus their attention on three strands of social studies content in preparation for a more in-depth look at world and American history in grades 9 – 12:

- Grade Seven: Civics and Economics

- Grade Eight: World Geography

The concentrated treatment of these important aspects of social studies prepares students for the rigors of the high school standards.

(9 – 12)

In grades nine – twelve, students trace closely the causes, course of events, and effects of the most essential aspects of world and American history, culminating in one last immersion in American government, solidifying students' knowledge of the rights and obligations of U.S. citizenship.

- Grade Nine: World History I, Prehistoric Era to 1500 CE
- Grade Ten: World History II, 1500 CE to the Present
- Grade Eleven: Virginia and U.S. History
- Grade Twelve: Virginia and U.S. Government