

Virginia and United States Government

Standards for Virginia and United States Government define the knowledge that enables citizens to participate effectively in civic and economic life. Students will examine fundamental constitutional principles, the rights and responsibilities of citizenship, the political culture, the policy-making process at each level of government, and the operation of the United States market economy. The standards identify the personal character traits that facilitate thoughtful and effective participation in the civic life of an increasingly diverse democratic society.

Civic education also must emphasize the intellectual skills required for responsible citizenship. Students will practice these skills as they extend their understanding of the essential knowledge defined by the standards for Virginia and United States Government.

- GOVT.1 The student will demonstrate mastery of the social studies skills responsible citizenship requires, including the ability to
- analyze primary and secondary source documents;
 - create and interpret maps, diagrams, tables, charts, graphs, and spreadsheets;
 - analyze political cartoons, political advertisements, pictures, and other graphic media;
 - distinguish between relevant and irrelevant information;
 - evaluate information for accuracy, separating fact from opinion;
 - identify a problem, weigh the expected costs and benefits and possible consequences of proposed solutions, and recommend solutions, using a decision-making model;
 - select and defend positions in writing, discussion, and debate.
- GOVT.2 The student will demonstrate knowledge of the political philosophies that shaped the development of Virginia and United States constitutional government by
- describing the development of Athenian democracy and the Roman republic;
 - explaining the influence of the Magna Carta, the English Petition of Rights, and the English Bill of Rights;
 - examining the writings of Hobbes, Locke, and Montesquieu;
 - explaining the guarantee of the “rights of Englishmen” set forth in the charters of the Virginia Company of London;
 - analyzing the natural rights philosophies expressed in the Declaration of Independence;
 - examining George Mason’s Virginia Declaration of Rights, Thomas Jefferson’s Virginia Statute for Religious Freedom, and James Madison’s leadership role in securing adoption of the Bill of Rights by the First Congress.
- GOVT.3 The student will demonstrate knowledge of the concepts of democracy by
- recognizing the fundamental worth and dignity of the individual;
 - recognizing the equality of all citizens under the law;
 - recognizing majority rule and minority rights;
 - recognizing the necessity of compromise;
 - recognizing the freedom of the individual.
- GOVT.4 The student will demonstrate knowledge of the Constitution of the United States by
- examining the ratification debates and *The Federalist*;
 - identifying the purposes for government stated in the Preamble;
 - examining the fundamental principles upon which the Constitution of the United States is based, including the rule of law, consent of the governed, limited government, separation of powers, and federalism;
 - illustrating the structure of the national government outlined in Article I, Article II, and Article III;
 - describing the amendment process.

- GOVT.5 The student will demonstrate knowledge of the federal system described in the Constitution of the United States by
- explaining the relationship of the state governments to the national government;
 - describing the extent to which power is shared;
 - identifying the powers denied state and national governments;
 - examining the ongoing debate that focuses on the balance of power between state and national governments.
- GOVT.6 The student will demonstrate knowledge of local, state, and national elections by
- describing the organization, role, and constituencies of political parties;
 - describing the nomination and election process;
 - examining campaign funding and spending;
 - analyzing the influence of media coverage, campaign advertising, public opinion polls, and Internet-based communications on elections;
 - examining the impact of reapportionment and redistricting on elections;
 - identifying how amendments extend the right to vote;
 - analyzing voter turnout;
 - evaluating the degree to which interest groups influence political life;
 - participating in simulations of local, state, and/or national elections.
- GOVT.7 The student will demonstrate knowledge of the organization and powers of the national government by
- examining the legislative, executive, and judicial branches;
 - analyzing the relationships among the three branches in a system of checks and balances;
 - examining the ways individuals and groups exert influence on the national government.
- GOVT.8 The student will demonstrate knowledge of the organization and powers of the state and local governments described in the Constitution of Virginia by
- examining the legislative, executive, and judicial branches;
 - examining the structure and powers of local governments: county, city, and town;
 - analyzing the relationship between state and local governments and the roles of regional authorities, governing boards, and commissions;
 - examining the ways individuals and groups exert influence on state and local governments;
 - evaluating the effectiveness of citizen efforts to influence decisions of state and local governments by examining historical or contemporary events.
- GOVT.9 The student will demonstrate knowledge of the process by which public policy is made by
- examining different perspectives on the role of government;
 - describing how the national government influences the public agenda and shapes public policy;
 - describing how the state and local governments influence the public agenda and shape public policy;
 - describing the process by which policy is implemented by the bureaucracy at each level;
 - analyzing how individuals, interest groups, and the media influence public policy;
 - formulating and practicing a course of action to address local and/or state issues.
- GOVT.10 The student will demonstrate knowledge of the operation of the federal judiciary by
- describing the organization, jurisdiction, and proceedings of federal courts;
 - examining how John Marshall established the Supreme Court as an independent, co-equal branch of government through his opinion in *Marbury v. Madison*;
 - describing how the Supreme Court decides cases;
 - comparing the philosophies of judicial activism and judicial restraint;
 - evaluating how the judiciary influences public policy by delineating the power of government and safeguarding the rights of the individual.

- GOVT.11 The student will demonstrate knowledge of civil liberties and civil rights by
- examining the Bill of Rights, with emphasis on First Amendment freedoms;
 - analyzing due process of law expressed in the 5th and 14th Amendments;
 - explaining selective incorporation of the Bill of Rights;
 - exploring the balance between individual liberties and the public interest;
 - explaining every citizen's right to be treated equally under the law.
- GOVT.12 The student will demonstrate knowledge of the role of the United States in a changing world by
- describing the responsibilities of the national government for foreign policy and national security;
 - assessing the role played by national interest in shaping foreign policy and promoting world peace;
 - examining the relationship of Virginia and the United States to the global economy;
 - examining recent foreign policy and international trade initiatives since 1980.
- GOVT.13 The student will demonstrate knowledge of how governments and economies in Mexico, the United Kingdom, and the People's Republic of China compare with the government and the economy in the United States by
- describing the distribution of governmental power;
 - explaining the relationship between the legislative and executive branches;
 - comparing the extent of participation in the political process;
 - comparing the degrees of government involvement in the economies.
- GOVT.14 The student will demonstrate knowledge of economic systems by
- identifying the basic economic questions encountered by all economic systems;
 - comparing the characteristics of traditional, free market, command, and mixed economies, as described by Adam Smith and Karl Marx;
 - evaluating the impact of the government's role in the economy on individual economic freedoms;
 - explaining the relationship between economic freedom and political freedom;
 - examining productivity and the standard of living as measured by key economic indicators.
- GOVT.15 The student will demonstrate knowledge of the United States market economy by
- assessing the importance of entrepreneurship, the profit motive, and economic independence to the promotion of economic growth;
 - comparing types of business organizations;
 - describing the factors of production;
 - explaining the interaction of supply and demand;
 - illustrating the circular flow of economic activity;
 - analyzing global economic trends and the relationship of Virginia and the United States to the global economy.
- GOVT.16 The student will demonstrate knowledge of the role of government in the Virginia and United States economies by
- analyzing the impact of fiscal and monetary policies on the economy;
 - describing the creation of government-provided goods and services that are not readily produced by the market;
 - examining environmental issues, property rights, contracts, consumer rights, labor-management relations, and competition in the marketplace;
 - understanding the types and purposes of taxation.

- GOVT.17 The student will demonstrate knowledge of personal character traits that facilitate thoughtful and effective participation in civic life by
- a) practicing trustworthiness and honesty;
 - b) practicing courtesy and respect for the rights of others;
 - c) practicing responsibility, accountability, and self-reliance;
 - d) practicing respect for the law;
 - e) practicing patriotism;
 - f) practicing financial responsibility.
- GOVT.18 The student will understand that thoughtful and effective participation in civic life is characterized by
- a) obeying the law and paying taxes;
 - b) serving as a juror;
 - c) participating in the political process;
 - d) performing public service;
 - e) keeping informed about current issues;
 - f) respecting differing opinions in a diverse society;
 - g) practicing personal and fiscal responsibility.
- GOVT.19 The student will explain the meaning of citizenship in the United States and how it relates to American civic life by
- a) explaining how citizenship confers full membership in the American constitutional system;
 - b) recognizing that American citizenship is defined by shared political and civic beliefs and values;
 - c) describing how Americans are citizens of their locality, state, and nation;
 - d) recognizing that noncitizens can become citizens.