



ELEMENTARY SOCIAL STUDIES



UTAH CORE STATE STANDARDS
for
SOCIAL STUDIES

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by the
Utah State Board of Education

Utah State Board of Education
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Utah Elementary Social Studies Standards

Elementary students are deeply curious and full of questions. They may ask, “How did people build those things?” or “Why can’t countries seem to get along?” or even “How can I make a difference in the world?” One place they can find answers is in social studies. Social Studies is the study of the physical world and our place in it, which involves oral traditions, biographies, dances, artifacts, writings and original documents, and other aspects of culture that comprise the record of human life.

Effective social studies instruction in the elementary classroom encourages this inherent curiosity of young people. A firm grounding in rich and engaging content knowledge about history, geography, civics, and economics lifts learning for all students. This rich content knowledge — coupled with essential skills development — helps students deepen their understanding of the world around them. This deeper understanding will also help reach a central overarching goal of effective social studies instruction: to help young people develop civic competence including the ability to make informed decisions for the public good.

Developing civic competence is one of the fundamental purposes of public schools. The Utah State Board of Education’s [vision statement](#) strives for the civic engagement of students, as well as civic education. Utah [statute](#) defines civic education as “the cultivation of informed, responsible participation in political life by competent citizens committed to the fundamental values and principles of representative democracy in Utah and the United States.” A thorough study of American history and government is an essential component of responsible citizenship.

The future progress of our communities, state, nation, and world rests upon the preparation of young people to collaboratively and deliberately address problems, defend their own rights and liberties — as well as the rights and liberties of others — and to balance personal preferences with the common good. *E pluribus unum*, or “out of many one,” emphasizes the idea that a varied and diverse people contribute to a unifying national identity. This rich phrase adds depth and understanding to our complex national history. Students are led to enquire about the character and talents of all Americans, which in turn promotes a greater understanding about their own individual contributions and the value they add to this nation.

Social studies offers the ideal venue to nurture civic virtue, consider current issues, practice acting civilly toward others, build a civic identity, bolster historical awareness of governmental structures, and cultivate global awareness. These skills, habits, and qualities of character will better prepare students to recognize and accept responsibility for preserving and defending the liberties secured by the Constitution.

To reach these ends, students should have ample opportunities to:

- Engage in deliberative, collaborative, and civil dialogue regarding historical and current issues.
- Apply knowledge of governmental structure, historic concepts, geographic interrelationships, and economic principles to analyze and explain current events.
- Identify local, state, national, or international issues; consider solutions and understand who best can address the needs; and share their ideas with appropriate public and/or private stakeholders.
- Develop and demonstrate the values that sustain America’s constitutional democratic republic, such as open-mindedness, engagement, honesty, problem-solving, responsibility, diligence, resilience, empathy, self-control, respect for the beliefs of others, and cooperation, as well as its foundational principles, such as limited government, separation of state and federal governance, and free-market economy.
- Engage in dialogue regarding American exceptionalism in the sense of the special character of the United States as a free nation based on democratic ideals and personal liberty.

Civic competence requires an awareness of self and others. Social studies provides the underpinnings for civic awareness and action and exposes the history and wonders of cultures. Disciplines as varied as history, geography, economics, and civics provide clearer vision as students interpret, analyze, and make sense of the world. Access to and use of primary and secondary sources are foundational to understanding historical events. Ideas and concepts central to the purpose of public education are also central to social studies, among them the notion of the common good, the value of self-rule and self-determination, the dignity and necessity of honest labor, respect for parents, home, and family, the rights and responsibilities we humans share, and the interconnectedness of human endeavor. With their application of democratic processes, personal responsibility, and life skills, students will be prepared to protect the freedoms guaranteed by our Constitution, improving their lives and the lives of all members of society.

The Organization of the Elementary Social Studies Standards

Utah standards are organized into **strands**, which represent significant areas of learning within content areas. Depending on the core area or grade level, these strands may be designated by time periods, thematic principles, modes of practice, or other organizing principles.

Within each strand are **standards**. A standard is an articulation of the demonstrated proficiency to be obtained. A standard represents an essential element of the learning that is expected. While some standards within a strand may be more comprehensive than others, all standards are essential for mastery.

Compelling questions have been included for possible use by teachers to support and reinforce the essential role of inquiry in social studies.

The Elementary Social Studies Standards use a modified “expanding environments” approach to social studies. This approach includes, each year, studies in history, geography, economics, civics, and United States history. As the grades progress, the focus of study expands, moving from classroom and neighborhood to the local community, the state, the nation, and the world. Basic civic virtues and components of United States history are built upon the foundations set the previous year. This allows for direct application of principles included in the [Utah Constitution](#) and Utah code. The core expectations deepen and expand, as appropriate, for each corresponding grade level.

Many exemplary lists of historical figures are included in the standards. Some lists are meant to be inclusive of specific historical figures as to create an equitable knowledge base of historical events for Utah’s school children. Other standards open the door to exploration and research of exemplary figures who exhibit excellence in music, science, government, religion, economics, or other areas articulated in the standards.

In **kindergarten**, social studies focuses on helping students learn about the world around them and what traits can be attributed to good citizenship. The Kindergarten Standards build on the [Early Learning Social Studies Standards](#) by helping students extend their understanding of the social structures and norms that create a community and their role as an active participant in that community.

In **first grade**, social studies expands students’ understanding of community to include their state and nation while they continue to consider their own role and begin to consider the roles of others in those communities. Students are further introduced to the idea of history — what it means and how it is shaped. Basic geographical concepts and skills are introduced, as well as basic economic principles.

In **second grade**, students consider continuity and change over time in their own community, the state, and the nation. They are introduced to chronology and timelines, as well as the concept of government. They will consider rights and responsibilities, conflict resolution, and respecting differences as they learn about celebrations, cultural events, and traditions of diverse people. Emphasis begins to be placed on the significance of geographical features and their effect on where and how people live. Map use and construction will build on the basics of geography that were learned in previous grades.

In **third grade**, students will be introduced to the United States Constitution. They will also learn about culture and community, focusing on their own local Utah community’s heritage as well as learning about the history, geography, governmental and economic structures, and cultures of other communities. They will study the interrelationships between physical geography and cultural development. They will also begin to learn about representative government and their personal civic responsibility in the classroom, community, and country.

In **fourth grade**, students continue to focus on the four essential social studies disciplines and apply them to their study of Utah. Students learn about significant events in Utah history, noting how successive cultural interactions have shaped the

story of the land now called Utah. Students will learn about the physical geography of Utah, and how the geography of Utah affects human life, including economic development. Fourth graders will also deepen their understanding of civics as they learn more about rights and responsibilities in Utah and how governments in Utah are organized. Inquiry into current events will help students make connections between the past and the present.

In **fifth grade**, the study of the United States is the focus. Students will explore significant eras in United States history — eras that paint in broad terms some of the significant themes of the story of America. They will also continue their study of geography, economics, and civics. Foundational principles of government that were learned in previous grades have prepared students for the depth and rigor of the Fifth Grade Standards, including understanding the role of limited government while articulating the purposes of state and federal governments. There is neither an intention nor a possibility of successful “coverage” of all of United States history and geography or all of the social, economic, and political movements that have helped create the story of America. Rather, students should “discover” and “uncover” this story. As students develop an understanding of key events relating to the basic chronology of United States history, the nation’s geography, and its economic history, they will be building a foundation that will serve them well in the years to come. Primary source documents and literature that recount the stories of people of exemplary character will help students understand their own place in the continuing chronicle of America.

In **sixth grade**, the focus of the standards expands to look at world history and culture. Knowledge and skills gained in the preceding grades will prepare students for an introductory survey of world history and culture. Students will learn about regions of the world and the societies that have formed there, including their systems of governance, religion, the rights and responsibilities they held, how their societies have changed and continued over time, and how these regions are interconnected economically and geographically.

A chronological framework across grade levels helps reinforce the essential understandings of time, continuity, and change, and is intended to help build a conceptual scaffold for future study. Students will compare institutions common to all societies such as government, education, and religious institutions. Relevance is reinforced by connecting the past to current issues facing the world, as well as to potential opportunities for solutions.

Excitement, wonder, inquiry, and delight are central to meaningful learning in social studies. Social studies should be engaging and intriguing for all students and provide ample opportunities to make important life-long connections between the past, present, and future. Students who appreciate the sacrifices that have been made in the past and understand the challenges that lie ahead can make better decisions in the present.

The most important goal of Elementary Social Studies is an informed and well-lived life, in which students recognize and accept responsibility for preserving and defending the blessings of liberty inherited from prior generations and secured by the United States Constitution.

SECOND GRADE

SECOND GRADE STRAND 1: HISTORY

Students use historical thinking skills to explore continuity and change in their community, Utah, and the United States.

Compelling Questions:

- What is history, and what lessons can we learn by studying history?
 - What criteria should be used to determine the significance of historical events?
 - Why are historical events often interpreted differently through different points of view?
 - How has your personal and family history helped influence who you are?
 - Why do historians look at multiple primary sources to interpret historical events?
- **Standard 2.1.1:** Use primary sources (for example, artifacts and documents such as interviews, photographs, newspapers, speakers, stories, songs) to document the chronology of important events in their personal, family, school, local, or broader community history (including three significant events).
 - **Standard 2.1.2:** Use primary sources to identify how their community has changed or remained the same over time, and make inferences about the reasons why.
 - **Standard 2.1.3:** Summarize key ideas included in the Declaration of Independence (for example, purpose of government, equality, representative government, limited government, rule of law, natural rights, common good).
 - **Standard 2.1.4** Retell the histories of key people and events connected to state and national symbols, landmarks, and essential documents (for example, Thomas Jefferson and the Declaration of Independence, Francis Scott Key and The Star Spangled Banner, Abraham Lincoln and the Lincoln Memorial, Theodore Roosevelt and Woodrow Wilson and national parks, Utah pioneers and Utah’s nickname and motto).
 - **Standard 2.1.5** Identify the achievements of significant Americans, including

those from local and other diverse perspectives, and explain their importance.

SECOND GRADE STRAND 2: GEOGRAPHY

Students develop an understanding of the relationship between people and their physical environment using geographic tools, technology, and map skills.

Compelling Questions:

- Why do people use maps?
 - How is learning to read a map similar to and different from learning to read a story?
 - What are different ways our natural environment helps meet human needs of living, working, and playing?
 - What relationships do you, your family, and your community have with the vegetation, animal life, and physical features of your region?
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- **Standard 2.2.1:** Locate and identify the poles, equator, continents, oceans, the United States, Utah, and their town or city. Identify and name the states that border Utah and the countries that border the United States.
 - **Standard 2.2.2:** Interpret and construct physical maps using the title, key, symbols, 8-point compass rose, cardinal directions, and alphanumeric grids.
 - **Standard 2.2.3:** Identify examples of major geographical features in their local region, state, and country and their significance for the people who live there.
 - **Standard 2.2.4:** Describe how location, climate, and physical features affect where people live and work, and how communities modify the environment to meet their needs over time (for example, irrigation, dams, reservoirs, roads, buildings, bridges).
 - **Standard 2.2.5:** Describe and give examples of interdependent relationships between vegetation, animal life, geographic features, and people specific to a local region (for example, irrigation, water conservation, farming, helping neighbors, ranching, providing vegetation that supports pollinators, protection of endangered animals).
 - **Standard 2.2.6:** Identify natural resources, and cite ways people show stewardship through responsible use, conservation, protection, and replenishment.

- **Standard 2.2.7:** On a map of the world, locate where their families or other families in the community historically came from. With support, curate and share information about the traditional food, cultural customs, recreation, religion, and music of that country and/or region.

SECOND GRADE STRAND 3: **CIVICS**

Students are introduced to the concept of government. Students learn about the rights and responsibilities of citizenship, explain how people must work together to resolve conflict, and understand the importance of respecting differences.

Compelling Questions:

- What are the benefits and responsibilities of being good citizens?
 - How do classrooms, communities, and families work together to resolve conflicts they face?
 - What are the traits of effective leaders?
 - How do people decide who governs us? Why is it important for citizens to learn about candidates and to vote?
- **Standard 2.3.1:** Define the essential qualities of good community members (for example, honesty, integrity, morality, civility, duty, honor, service, respect, and obedience to law).
 - **Standard 2.3.2:** Describe the rights and responsibilities of citizens in the United States and Utah.
 - **Standard 2.3.3:** Provide examples of ways in which responsible community members have worked together to resolve conflicts, solve problems, and create unity within their community.
 - **Standard 2.3.4:** Consider why it is necessary for cities and towns to have governments, and describe ways local representative government promotes the general welfare of their community (for example, water, sewer, garbage pick-up, road and trail maintenance, public schools).
 - **Standard 2.3.5:** Identify current leaders (for example, family, school, community, governor, national leaders) and their responsibilities. Discuss the traits of effective leaders.
 - **Standard 2.3.6:** Identify celebrations and state and national holidays that remember and honor people and events in the history of Utah and the United States.

SECOND GRADE STRAND 4: **ECONOMICS**

Students develop an understanding of basic economic concepts necessary to make informed individual and family decisions. Students use basic economic principles to explain how businesses supply goods and services to consumers.

Compelling Questions:

- What is money used for, and how could a student earn it?
 - What are goods, and what are services?
 - What resources affect business choices?
 - What are the different ways goods arrive in our homes?
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- **Standard 2.4.1:** Explain the benefits of personal savings.
 - **Standard 2.4.2:** Explain how scarcity of resources and opportunity cost require people to make choices to satisfy wants and needs.
 - **Standard 2.4.3:** Describe and compare a variety of services provided by local economic institutions, including businesses and non-profit organizations.
 - **Standard 2.4.4:** Describe how people can be both producers and consumers of local goods and services.
 - **Standard 2.4.5:** Identify the specialized work necessary to manufacture, transport, and market goods and services.