

COLLEGE, CAREER & CIVIC LIFE C3 FRAMEWORK FOR SOCIAL STUDIES STATE STANDARDS



Guidance for Enhancing the Rigor of K-12 Civics, Economics, Geography, and History

The College, Career, and Civic Life (C3) Framework for Social Studies State Standards: Guidance for Enhancing the Rigor of K-12 Civics, Economics, Geography, and History is the product of a collaboration among the following fifteen professional organizations committed to the advancement of social studies education:

American Bar Association
American Historical Association
Association of American Geographers
Campaign for the Civic Mission of Schools
Center for Civic Education
Constitutional Rights Foundation Chicago
Constitutional Rights Foundation USA
Council for Economic Education
National Council for Geographic Education
National Council for History Education
National Council for the Social Studies
National Geographic Society
National History Day
Street Law, Inc.
World History Association

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What Is Not Covered in the C3 Framework

The C3 Framework is intended to serve as a resource for states to consider as they upgrade their existing state social studies standards. The Framework provides guidance on the key concepts and skills students should develop through a robust social studies program of study, but intentionally does not address all of the elements states will need to consider in developing and upgrading standards. There are three main areas not addressed by the framework:

- **Content Necessary for a Rigorous Social Studies Program.** The C3 Framework focuses on the concepts that underlie a rich program of social studies education. The foundational concepts in Dimension 2 outline the scope of the disciplinary knowledge and tools associated with civics, economics, geography, and history. References are made to a range of ideas, such as the U.S. Constitution, economic scarcity, geographical modeling, and chronological sequences. However, the particulars of curriculum and instructional content—such as how a bill becomes a law or the difference between a map and a globe—are important decisions each state needs to make in the development of local social studies standards.
- **Other Disciplines Beyond Civics, Economics, Geography, and History** The disciplines represented in the C3 Framework are not the only ones relevant to a rich social studies curriculum. Other disciplines, such as anthropology, psychology, and sociology, while not covered in the main body of the C3 Framework, are important lenses for understanding the human experience (see Appendices B, C, and D). Anthropology is the scientific study of humans, past and present; psychology is the scientific study of the mind and behavior; and sociology is the scientific study of the social lives of people, groups and societies. All have countless applications to everyday life. Indeed, the study of the behavioral and social sciences enhances student preparation for college, careers, and civic life by promoting critical thinking, inquiry, problem-solving, evidence-based reasoning and communication

skills, as well as multi-cultural and global understandings, the ability to work with diverse groups, and a deep sense of personal and social responsibility (American Anthropological Association, 2013; American Psychological Association, 2011; American Sociological Association 2009).³

The behavioral and social sciences align well to the C3 Framework, which focuses on the four core social studies disciplines, but some are not included in the body of the framework. These behavioral and social sciences are most frequently taught at the high school level, though efforts are underway to better integrate behavioral and social science concepts in the K-8 age bands. The C3 Framework has been constructed as a K-12 Framework offering specific guidance across the grade bands of K-2, 3-5, 6-8, and 9-12. The tough decision was made early in the development of this framework to focus only on the four federally defined core social studies areas (i.e., civics, economics, geography, and history) to streamline the development process and produce a concise document.

The exclusion of some behavioral and social sciences from the main body of this document should not be seen as minimizing the importance of these other disciplines in a robust social studies curriculum. To that extent, professional organizations affiliated with these areas have been consulted and have created discipline-specific resources to align to this framework document. For example,

Appendices B and C were created by the American Psychological Association and American Sociological Association to align with Dimension 2 as well as other aspects of the C3 Framework. Appendix D is a parallel companion document created by the American Anthropological Association. These supporting documents should be seen as an extension of this framework, as complementary materials that will further the intention of preparing students for civic life. We encourage all readers to refer to and use these additional resources.

- **The Different Abilities Children Bring to their Schooling.** The C3 Framework is largely silent on the different abilities children bring to their schooling. The C3 Indicators and K-12 Pathways individually and together describe the concepts and skills students develop in a rich, ambitious program of studies. Some students will need far more assistance and support than others in reaching the aims of each Dimension. All children deserve the opportunity to learn. To be successful, students will need varying degrees of scaffolding to support their learning. Smart, thoughtful, and imaginative teachers are widely recognized as key to powerful learning experiences; for English language learners, students with special needs, and struggling readers and writers, such teachers are invaluable.

³ The detailed reference information for works cited can be found in the References section on page 92 below.

YOUNG PEOPLE need strong tools for, and methods of, clear and disciplined thinking in order to traverse successfully **the worlds of college, career, and civic life.**