



Civics & American Government - Unit 1 - Foundations of American Democracy

Unit Focus

The first unit establishes the overarching mission and foundation for the Civics and American Government course. Students will identify a significant contemporary issue of personal interest which they wish to investigate throughout the course.

Concepts of power, influence, and control are inseparable from the study of government. Understanding both the source and legitimacy of power will help the student understand many of the foundational concepts of the American Constitutional Republic. To inform their exploration, students will study the early philosophers and the different theories on how power is allocated in a government and also where the legitimacy of power is based. Students will connect this concept to their selected issue being followed throughout the course, examining the people, groups, and government organizations that may have power, influence, or control relative to their issue, as well as whether these individuals should be in control of this issue.

Continuing with the theme of power, students will then look at various trends and events leading to the Declaration of Independence and American Revolution. This study will take place from multiple perspectives, considering both the viewpoints of the Patriots and Loyalists and their determination as to how to move towards the establishment of a new, independent nation. Students will journey through this process, understanding that the ineffectiveness of the Articles of Confederation would require "Constitutional compromises" from the powerful elite meeting together for a summer in Philadelphia. Much of what would come from these compromises represent not only a particular demographic perspective, but also a view of the ideological divide between Federalists and Antifederalists.

Stage 1: Desired Results - Key Understandings

Standard(s)	Transfer	
<p>C3 Framework for Social Studies State Standards Social Studies: 10</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Explain how a question reflects an enduring issue in the field. (D1.1.9-12.) <p>Common Core History/Social Studies: 11-12</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Cite specific textual evidence to support analysis of primary and secondary sources, connecting insights gained from specific details to an understanding of the text as a whole. (CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.11-12.1) Conduct short as well as more sustained research projects to answer a question (including a self-generated question) or solve a problem; narrow or broaden the inquiry when appropriate; synthesize multiple sources on the subject, demonstrating understanding of the subject under investigation. (CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.WHST.11-12.7) <p>Connecticut Goals and Standards Social Studies: 11</p>	<p><i>Students will be able to independently use their learning to...</i></p> <p>T1 Pose and pursue question(s) to better understand an issue and draw conclusions or seek patterns based on a synthesis of evidence</p> <p>T2 Apply historical knowledge to develop connections to other eras/situations or provide insight into a contemporary issue</p> <p>T3 Evaluate diverse sources and points of view to determine what really happened</p>	
	Meaning	
	Understanding(s)	Essential Question(s)
	<p><i>Students will understand that...</i></p> <p>U1 Students are historians, investigating and interpreting the past from a variety of perspectives.</p> <p>U2 Historians use evidence and reasoning to draw conclusions about probable causes and</p>	<p><i>Students will keep considering...</i></p> <p>Q1 What is the purpose of government? How do we balance personal freedoms and the common good?</p> <p>Q2 How are human rights understood, interpreted, and applied throughout place and time?</p>

Stage 1: Desired Results - Key Understandings

- Explain points of agreement and disagreement experts have about interpretations and applications of disciplinary concepts and ideas associated with a compelling question. (INQ.9–12.2)
- Analyze historical, contemporary and emerging means of changing societies, promoting the common good, and protecting rights. (CIV.9–12.17)
- Evaluate citizens’ and institutions’ effectiveness in addressing social and political problems at the local, state, tribal, national and/or international level. (CIV.9–12.5)

National Council for the Social Studies (NCSS) Standards

Social Studies: K-12

- explain the purpose of government; (NCSS.VI.b)

Madison Public Schools Profile of a Graduate

- Inquiry: Posing, pursuing, and refining significant questions to deepen understanding about a topic or issue. (POG.1.1)
- Analyzing: Examining information/data/ evidence from multiple sources to identify possible underlying assumptions, patterns, and relationships in order to make inferences. (POG.1.2)

effects, recognizing that these are multiple and complex.
U3 Humans beings have basic needs and rights.
U4 Rules, laws, and processes help people make decisions on issues to balance individual freedoms and common good.

Q3 How does power impact the function of government?
Q4 How did this event occur? Why did this event occur?
Q5 How do people and events of the past influence our understanding of ourselves and our world today?

Acquisition of Knowledge and Skill

Knowledge

Students will know...
K1 The Qualifications and requirements of US Citizenship
K2 The government philosophies of Locke, Rousseau, Hobbes, Montesquieu
K3 The key events leading to American Revolution
K4 The significance of the Declaration of Independence
K5 The successes and failures of the Articles of Confederation
K6 The difficulty and importance of constitutional compromises
K7 The role played by Anti-federalists, as well as the impact of minority groups today
K8 Vocabulary: state of nature, natural rights, liberties, social contract, Popular Sovereignty, confederation, Constitution, ratification, federalism, republic

Skill(s)

Students will be skilled at...
S1 explaining points of agreement, disagreement, and interpretations
S2 evaluating problem-solving techniques
S3 analyzing personal perspectives and how it shapes history
S4 analyzing multiple causes and effects
S5 citing textual evidence to support analysis
S6 analyzing the meaning of key terms in a text