# Grade 8 Social Studies Enrichment

**Unit Title: Unit 1: Foundations of Democracy & Citizenship (Inquiries 1-2)**

## Stage 1: Desired Results

**Standards & Indicators:**

**6.3.8.CivicsPI.1** Evaluate, take, and defend a position on why government is necessary, and the purposes government should serve.

**6.3.8.CivicsPD.3** Construct a claim as to why it is important for democracy that individuals are informed by facts, aware of diverse viewpoints, and willing to take action on public issues.

**6.1.8.CivicsDP.3.a** Use primary and secondary sources to assess whether or not the ideals found in the Declaration of Independence were fulfilled for women, African Americans, and Native Americans during this time period.

**6.1.8.HistoryUP.3.a** Use primary sources as evidence to explain why the Declaration of Independence was written and how its key principles evolved to become unifying ideas of American democracy.

**Career Readiness, Life Literacies and Key Skills**

| Standard | Performance Expectations | Core Ideas |
|---|---|---|
| 9.4.8.DC.1 | Analyze the resource citations in online materials for proper use. | Detailed examples exist to illustrate crediting others when incorporating their digital artifacts in one's own work. |
| 9.4.8.DC.2 | Provide appropriate citation and attribution elements when creating media products. | |
| 9.4.8.TL.3 | Select appropriate tools to organize and present information digitally | Some digital tools are appropriate for gathering, organizing, analyzing, and presenting information, while others are appropriate for creating text, visualizations, and models. |

**Central Idea/Enduring Understanding:**

- The United States system of government is designed to realize the ideals of liberty, democracy, limited government, equality under the law and of opportunity, justice, and property rights.
- Historical events and developments are shaped by social, political, cultural, technological, and economic factors.

**Essential/Guiding Question:**

**Content Based:**

1. What are the foundational ideals and responsibilities of citizenship in a democracy?
2. How do the core ideals of the Declaration of Independence shape our democracy today?

**DBQ/Inquiry-Based Guideline Questions:**

What Types of Citizen Does a Democracy Need? (IQ1)

The Ideals of the Declaration: Which Is Most Important? (IQ2)

**Content:**

- Why governments exist and what citizens owe them in return.
- Models of civic participation, from voting and jury duty to organizing and advocacy.
- The Declaration's core ideals: life, liberty, the pursuit of happiness, equality, and consent of the governed.
- Historical and current examples of citizens acting in personally responsible, participatory, or justice-oriented ways.
- How consistently the Declaration's ideals applied to different groups at the founding and afterward.

**Skills(Objectives):**

- Analyze models of civic participation and evaluate their importance to a healthy democracy.
- Sourcing and contextualizing historical documents and principles.
- Corroborating multiple perspectives to evaluate how principles are realized for different groups.
- Constructing an evidence-based argument ranking the importance of democratic ideals (CER).

**Interdisciplinary Connections:**

ELA/Writing: Students practice claim-writing, evidence integration, and structured written reflection.

Character Education: Evaluating the moral responsibilities of a citizen within a community.

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## Stage 2: Assessment Evidence

**Performance Task(s):**

- Inquiry 1 Scaffolded CER: A claim about the type of citizen a democracy needs most, supported by evidence.
- Inquiry 2 Ranking CER: Students rank the Declaration's ideals by present-day importance and defend with evidence from two documents.

**Other Evidence:**

**Product**: Single-paragraph Claim/Evidence/Reasoning (CER).

**Student Does:** States a clear claim, cites 1–2 documents, and explains the reasoning that connects them.

**Teacher Scaffolds:** Provides sentence stems, color-coded CER paragraph frames, and guided document annotation.

## Stage 3: Learning Plan

**Learning Opportunities/Strategies:**

**DBQ/Inquiry Based Learning Opportunities & Strategies - Early Phase:**

- DBQ Project Online - Mini-Qs in Civics: "What Types of Citizen Does a Democracy Need?"
- DBQ Project Online - Mini-Qs in Civics: "The Ideals of the Declaration: Which Is Most Important?"
- Sourcing and contextualization practice through guided close reading and collaborative document annotation.
- Introducing the consistent six-step Inquiry Instructional Arc to build analytical routine.

**DBQ/Inquiry-Based Classroom Strategies:**

- Four-corners opening position (personally responsible vs. participatory vs. justice-oriented vs. other) followed by Think/Pair/Share (Inquiry 1).
- Human-graph ranking activity before and after document analysis (Inquiry 2).

**Resources:**

**Social Studies Resources:**

- iCivics simulations and background materials; Library of Congress and National Archives primary source collections; Newsela and Discovery Education leveled text sets.

LGBTQ and Disabilities Resources:

- LGBTQ-Inclusive Lesson & Resources by Garden State Equality and Make it Better for Youth
- LGBTQ+ Books

DEI Educational Resources:

- Learning for Justice
- GLSEN Educator Resources
- Supporting LGBTQIA Youth Resource List
- Respect Ability: Fighting Stigmas, Advancing Opportunities
- NJDOE Diversity, Equity & Inclusion Educational Resources

**Differentiation** *Please note: Teachers who have students with 504 plans that require curricular accommodations are to refer to Struggling and/or Special Needs Section for differentiation

| High-Achieving Students | On Grade Level Students | Struggling Students | Special Needs/ELL |
|---|---|---|---|
| Provide opportunities for greater independence in document analysis and inquiry.<br><br>Include more complex or additional primary sources that offer conflicting perspectives.<br><br>Encourage students to develop their own supporting inquiry questions.<br><br>Require students to evaluate source | Provide a structured set of primary and secondary sources aligned to the inquiry question.<br><br>Model sourcing, contextualization, corroboration, and close reading before students practice independently.<br><br>Use graphic organizers and evidence trackers to help students | Maintain the same essential inquiry question while increasing accessibility and support.<br><br>Chunk longer documents into shorter, manageable sections.<br><br>Provide modified or adapted texts when appropriate while preserving the document's central | Any student requiring further accommodations and/or modifications will have them individually listed in their 504 Plan or IEP. These might include, but are not limited to: breaking assignments into smaller tasks, giving directions through several channels (auditory, visual, kinesthetic, model), and/or small group instruction for reading/writing<br><br>ELL supports should include, but are not limited to, the following::<br>Extended time<br>Provide visual aids<br>Repeated directions<br>Differentiate based on proficiency |

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| credibility, bias, purpose, and limitations more deeply.<br><br>Ask students to identify and address counterclaims and alternative interpretations.<br><br>Allow students to independently select and organize the strongest evidence for their argument.<br><br>Reduce reliance on graphic organizers, sentence stems, and teacher-created annotations.<br><br>Provide opportunities for Socratic seminars, debates, and student-led discussions.<br><br>Challenge students to make connections across multiple historical events, time periods, or civic issues.<br><br>Offer extension opportunities that require additional research or synthesis beyond the provided DBQ documents. | organize claims and supporting evidence.<br><br>Provide guiding questions that gradually decrease as students become more independent.<br><br>Use partner and small-group document analysis before independent analysis.<br><br>Provide models of strong claims, CER paragraphs, thesis statements, and DBQ responses.<br><br>Teach students how to distinguish between strong and weak evidence.<br><br>Incorporate structured discussions and debates before writing.<br><br>Provide opportunities for peer review and teacher conferencing.<br><br>Gradually remove scaffolds throughout the year as students demonstrate mastery of inquiry skills. | meaning and historical perspective.<br><br>Use visual sources, maps, political cartoons, photographs, and artifacts alongside written documents.<br><br>Preteach essential historical vocabulary and provide student-friendly definitions.<br><br>Highlight or guide students toward important sections of documents when necessary.<br><br>Use guided annotation, teacher think-alouds, and document analysis modeling.<br><br>Provide sentence stems for claims, evidence, reasoning, sourcing, and counterclaims.<br><br>Use color-coded CER/DBQ organizers to visually separate claim, evidence, and reasoning.<br><br>Allow collaborative or teacher-led small-group document analysis before independent work.<br><br>Provide text-to-speech/audio versions and other accommodations as appropriate.<br><br>Break larger DBQs into smaller checkpoints: analyze → claim → evidence | Provide word banks<br>Allow for translators, dictionaries |

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| | | → reasoning → paragraph → essay.<br><br>Provide frequent checks for understanding and individual feedback.<br><br>Gradually fade scaffolds as students demonstrate greater independence. | |

**Unit Title: Unit 2: The Constitution & Structure of Government (Inquiries 3-4)**

## Stage 1: Desired Results

**Standards & Indicators:**

**6.3.8.CivicsPR.6** Seek the perspectives of multiple stakeholders with diverse points of view regarding a budget issue and take a position on proposed policy.

**6.1.8.CivicsPI.3.b** Evaluate the effectiveness of the fundamental principles of the Constitution (i.e., separation of powers, checks and balances, federalism, limited government) in establishing a federal government that allows for growth and change over time.

**6.3.8.CivicsPR.2** Evaluate the effectiveness of the fundamental principles of the Constitution in establishing a federal government that allows for growth and change over time.

**Career Readiness, Life Literacies and Key Skills**

| Standard | Performance Expectations | Core Ideas |
|---|---|---|
| 9.4.8.DC.1 | Analyze the resource citations in online materials for proper use. | Detailed examples exist to illustrate crediting others when incorporating their digital artifacts in one's own work. |
| 9.4.8.DC.2 | Provide appropriate citation and attribution elements when creating media products. | |
| 9.4.8.TL.3 | Select appropriate tools to organize and present information digitally | Some digital tools are appropriate for gathering, organizing, analyzing, and presenting information, while others are appropriate for creating text, visualizations, and models. |

**Central Idea/Enduring Understanding:**

- The United States system of government is designed to realize the ideals of liberty, democracy, limited government, equality under the law and of opportunity, justice, and property rights.

**Essential/Guiding Question:**

**Content Based:**

1. How does the federal government allocate public funds to meet the purposes of the Constitution?
2. How does the Constitution build guardrails to protect against tyranny?

**DBQ/Inquiry-Based Guideline Questions:**

The Preamble and the Federal Budget: Are We Slicing the Pie Correctly? (IQ3)

How Did the Constitution Guard Against Tyranny? (IQ4)

**Content:**

- The Preamble's six stated purposes of government.
- How current federal budget spending is categorized, visualized, and distributed.
- Separation of powers among the legislative, executive, and judicial

**Skills(Objectives):**

- Analyze and interpret visual federal budget/spending data charts.
- Evaluate the effectiveness of Separation of Powers, Checks and Balances, and Federalism in preventing tyranny.
- Synthesize data and constitutional text to make a

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branches.
- Specific checks-and-balances examples (veto, override, judicial review, confirmation power).
- Federalism and limited government as constitutional safeguards against centralized power.

written claim about budget priorities.
- Construct a short constructed response supported by textual and quantitative evidence.

**Interdisciplinary Connections:**
Mathematics/Data Analysis: Interpreting, comparing, and analyzing federal spending pie charts and bar graphs.
Civics & Economics: Connecting governmental values and purposes with economic resource allocation.

## Stage 2: Assessment Evidence

**Performance Task(s):**
- Inquiry 3 Mini evidence-based response connecting a Preamble purpose to a specific budget priority, using spending data as evidence.
- Inquiry 4 Short constructed response identifying and explaining the single safeguard against tyranny the student finds most effective, with textual evidence.

**Other Evidence:**
**DBQ/Inquiry-Based Evidence**

**Product:** Short constructed response using 2–3 documents.

**Student Does:** Writes a defensible claim and organizes evidence into a structured, multi-sentence response.

**Teacher Scaffolds:** Provides pre-selected documents, detailed graphic organizers, and paragraph/sentence models.

**recommended anchor DBQ assessments (full essays)*

## Stage 3: Learning Plan

**Learning Opportunities/Strategies:**
**DBQ/Inquiry Based Learning Opportunities & Strategies - Building:**
- DBQ Project Online - Mini-Qs in Civics: "The Preamble and the Federal Budget: Are We Slicing the Pie Correctly?"
- DBQ Project Online - Mini-Qs in Civics: "How Did the Constitution Guard Against Tyranny?"
- Analyzing and interpreting raw spending data; aligning fiscal decisions with constitutional principles.
- Exploration of constitutional structures using primary source text and historical commentary.

**DBQ/Inquiry-Based Classroom Strategies:**
- Stakeholder role cards (e.g., defense, education, healthcare) followed by a structured class budget priority deliberation (Inquiry 3).
- Socratic seminar on which constitutional safeguard is most essential to modern liberty, followed by independent writing (Inquiry 4).

**Resources:**
**Social Studies Resources:**
- iCivics (Preamble and Branch Power simulations), Library of Congress and National Archives collections, Newsela.

LGBTQ and Disabilities Resources:
- LGBTQ-Inclusive Lesson & Resources by Garden State Equality and Make it Better for Youth
- LGBTQ+ Books

DEI Educational Resources:
- Learning for Justice
- GLSEN Educator Resources
- Supporting LGBTQIA Youth Resource List
- Respect Ability: Fighting Stigmas, Advancing Opportunities
- NJDOE Diversity, Equity & Inclusion Educational Resources

**Differentiation** *Please note: Teachers who have students with 504 plans that require curricular accommodations are to refer to Struggling and/or Special Needs Section for differentiation

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| High-Achieving Students | On Grade Level Students | Struggling Students | Special Needs/ELL |
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| Provide opportunities for greater independence in document analysis and inquiry.<br><br>Include more complex or additional primary sources that offer conflicting perspectives.<br><br>Encourage students to develop their own supporting inquiry questions.<br><br>Require students to evaluate source credibility, bias, purpose, and limitations more deeply.<br><br>Ask students to identify and address counterclaims and alternative interpretations.<br><br>Allow students to independently select and organize the strongest evidence for their argument.<br><br>Reduce reliance on graphic organizers, sentence stems, and teacher-created annotations.<br><br>Provide opportunities for Socratic seminars, debates, and student-led discussions.<br><br>Challenge students to make connections across multiple historical events, time periods, or civic issues.<br><br>Offer extension opportunities that require additional research or synthesis beyond the provided DBQ | Provide a structured set of primary and secondary sources aligned to the inquiry question.<br><br>Model sourcing, contextualization, corroboration, and close reading before students practice independently.<br><br>Use graphic organizers and evidence trackers to help students organize claims and supporting evidence.<br><br>Provide guiding questions that gradually decrease as students become more independent.<br><br>Use partner and small-group document analysis before independent analysis.<br><br>Provide models of strong claims, CER paragraphs, thesis statements, and DBQ responses.<br><br>Teach students how to distinguish between strong and weak evidence.<br><br>Incorporate structured discussions and debates before writing.<br><br>Provide opportunities for peer review and teacher conferencing.<br><br>Gradually remove | Maintain the same essential inquiry question while increasing accessibility and support.<br><br>Chunk longer documents into shorter, manageable sections.<br><br>Provide modified or adapted texts when appropriate while preserving the document's central meaning and historical perspective.<br><br>Use visual sources, maps, political cartoons, photographs, and artifacts alongside written documents.<br><br>Preteach essential historical vocabulary and provide student-friendly definitions.<br><br>Highlight or guide students toward important sections of documents when necessary.<br><br>Use guided annotation, teacher think-alouds, and document analysis modeling.<br><br>Provide sentence stems for claims, evidence, reasoning, sourcing, and counterclaims.<br><br>Use color-coded CER/DBQ organizers to visually separate | Any student requiring further accommodations and/or modifications will have them individually listed in their 504 Plan or IEP. These might include, but are not limited to: breaking assignments into smaller tasks, giving directions through several channels (auditory, visual, kinesthetic, model), and/or small group instruction for reading/writing<br><br>ELL supports should include, but are not limited to, the following::<br>Extended time<br>Provide visual aids<br>Repeated directions<br>Differentiate based on proficiency<br>Provide word banks<br>Allow for translators, dictionaries |

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| documents. | scaffolds throughout the year as students demonstrate mastery of inquiry skills. | claim, evidence, and reasoning.<br><br>Allow collaborative or teacher-led small-group document analysis before independent work.<br><br>Provide text-to-speech/audio versions and other accommodations as appropriate.<br><br>Break larger DBQs into smaller checkpoints: analyze → claim → evidence → reasoning → paragraph → essay.<br><br>Provide frequent checks for understanding and individual feedback.<br><br>Gradually fade scaffolds as students demonstrate greater independence. | |

**Unit Title: Unit 3: Rights, Liberties & Justice (Inquiries 5-7)**

## Stage 1: Desired Results

**Standards & Indicators:**

**6.3.8.CivicsDP.2** Make a claim based on evidence to determine the extent and the limitations of First Amendment rights (e.g., U.S. Supreme Court decisions).
**6.3.8.CivicsDP.3** Use historical case studies and current events to explain why due process is essential for the protection of individual rights and the maintenance of limited government.
**6.3.8.CivicsPR.5** Engage in simulated democratic processes (e.g., legislative hearings, judicial proceedings, elections) to understand how conflicting points of view are addressed in a democratic society.
**6.3.8.CivicsPR.1** Analyze primary sources to explain how democratic ideas in the United States developed from the historical experiences of ancient societies, England, and the North American colonies.

**Career Readiness, Life Literacies and Key Skills**

| Standard | Performance Expectations | Core Ideas |
|---|---|---|
| 9.4.8.DC.1 | Analyze the resource citations in online materials for proper use. | Detailed examples exist to illustrate crediting others when incorporating their digital artifacts in one's own work. |
| 9.4.8.DC.2 | Provide appropriate citation and attribution elements when creating media products. | |

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| 9.4.8.TL.3 | Select appropriate tools to organize and present information digitally | Some digital tools are appropriate for gathering, organizing, analyzing, and presenting information, while others are appropriate for creating text, visualizations, and models. |

**Central Idea/Enduring Understanding:**

- Fundamental rights are derived from the inherent worth of each individual and include civil, political, social, economic, and cultural rights.
- Historical contexts and events shaped and continue to shape people's perspectives.

**Essential/Guiding Question:**

**Content Based:**

- Where should the limits of student speech and expression be drawn in the digital age?
- How does due process, specifically the Fourth Amendment, protect individual rights against government overreach?
- Does the American jury system still serve the cause of justice effectively?

**DBQ/Inquiry-Based Guideline Questions:**

- Should Schools Be Allowed to Limit Students' Online Speech? (IQ5)
- Search and Seizure: Did the Government Go Too Far? (IQ6)
- Is the American Jury System Still a Good Idea? (IQ7)

**Content:**

- The First Amendment's protection of speech and its established limits in school settings (Tinker v. Des Moines).
- How social media and off-campus digital speech complicate school authority.
- Fourth Amendment protections against unreasonable searches and the unique 'reasonable suspicion' standard for school searches (New Jersey v. T.L.O.).
- The Sixth and Seventh Amendment guarantees jury trials, jury selection mechanics, and contemporary critiques regarding representativeness, bias, and cost.

**Skills(Objectives):**

- Evaluate the extent and limitations of First Amendment speech rights using historical and contemporary Supreme Court cases.
- Apply constitutional standards of due process and Fourth Amendment reasonableness to real-world school-based search scenarios.
- Analyze and corroborate competing arguments and critiques of the American jury system.
- Participate in structured debates and construct evidence-based written arguments taking a stand on civil rights.

**Interdisciplinary Connections:**

Legal Studies / Civics: Analyzing constitutional case law, understanding judicial precedents, and evaluating legal procedures.
Oral Communication: Developing persuasive arguments, active listening, and evidence-based rebuttals in structured debates.

## Stage 2: Assessment Evidence

**Performance Task(s):**

- Inquiry 5 CER: A claim taking a position on where school authority over online student speech should end, citing at least one document.
- Inquiry 6 Short constructed response: Evaluating whether a specific search scenario met the reasonable-suspicion standard under New Jersey v. T.L.O.
- Inquiry 7 Structured debate & short written argument: Synthesizing arguments to take a position on whether the jury system still

**Other Evidence:**

**DBQ/Inquiry-Based Evidence**

**Product:** CER or structured debate argument.

**Student Does:** Analyzes sources with higher independence, cross-checks multiple accounts, and begins to integrate and address counter-evidence.

**Teacher Scaffolds:** Transitioning from fill-in templates to shared checklists, writing rubrics, and brief individual writing conferences.

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serves justice well.

## Stage 3: Learning Plan

**Learning Opportunities/Strategies:**

**DBQ/Inquiry Based Learning Opportunities & Strategies - Developing:**

- DBQ Project Online - Mini-Qs in Civics: "Should Schools Be Allowed to Limit Students' Online Speech?"
- DBQ Project Online - Mini-Qs in Civics: "Search and Seizure: Did the Government Go Too Far?"
- DBQ Project Online - Mini-Qs in Civics: "Is the American Jury System Still a Good Idea?"
- Independent document analysis, sourcing, and corroborating legal briefs with contemporary news accounts.
- Simulating legal and democratic processes through student-led debate and judicial simulation.

**DBQ/Inquiry-Based Classroom Strategies:**

- Philosophical Chairs on a specific controversial student-speech scenario (Inquiry 5).
- Evidence-sorting activity (reasonable vs. unreasonable) followed by structured Think/Pair/Share (Inquiry 6).
- Structured debate (keep vs. reform vs. replace the jury system) followed by individual written position (Inquiry 7).

**Resources:**

**Social Studies Resources:**

- iCivics (Bill of Rights and Courtroom games), Library of Congress, National Archives, PBS LearningMedia.

LGBTQ and Disabilities Resources:

- LGBTQ-Inclusive Lesson & Resources by Garden State Equality and Make it Better for Youth
- LGBTQ+ Books

DEI Educational Resources:

- Learning for Justice
- GLSEN Educator Resources
- Supporting LGBTQIA Youth Resource List
- Respect Ability: Fighting Stigmas, Advancing Opportunities
- NJDOE Diversity, Equity & Inclusion Educational Resources

**Differentiation** *Please note: Teachers who have students with 504 plans that require curricular accommodations are to refer to Struggling and/or Special Needs Section for differentiation

| High-Achieving Students | On Grade Level Students | Struggling Students | Special Needs/ELL |
|---|---|---|---|
| Provide opportunities for greater independence in document analysis and inquiry.<br><br>Include more complex or additional primary sources that offer conflicting perspectives.<br><br>Encourage students to develop their own supporting inquiry questions.<br><br>Require students to evaluate source credibility, bias, purpose, and limitations more deeply. | Provide a structured set of primary and secondary sources aligned to the inquiry question.<br><br>Model sourcing, contextualization, corroboration, and close reading before students practice independently.<br><br>Use graphic organizers and evidence trackers to help students organize claims and supporting evidence. | Maintain the same essential inquiry question while increasing accessibility and support.<br><br>Chunk longer documents into shorter, manageable sections.<br><br>Provide modified or adapted texts when appropriate while preserving the document's central meaning and historical perspective. | Any student requiring further accommodations and/or modifications will have them individually listed in their 504 Plan or IEP. These might include, but are not limited to: breaking assignments into smaller tasks, giving directions through several channels (auditory, visual, kinesthetic, model), and/or small group instruction for reading/writing<br><br>ELL supports should include, but are not limited to, the following::<br>Extended time<br>Provide visual aids<br>Repeated directions<br>Differentiate based on proficiency<br>Provide word banks<br>Allow for translators, dictionaries |

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| Ask students to identify and address counterclaims and alternative interpretations.<br><br>Allow students to independently select and organize the strongest evidence for their argument.<br><br>Reduce reliance on graphic organizers, sentence stems, and teacher-created annotations.<br><br>Provide opportunities for Socratic seminars, debates, and student-led discussions.<br><br>Challenge students to make connections across multiple historical events, time periods, or civic issues.<br><br>Offer extension opportunities that require additional research or synthesis beyond the provided DBQ documents. | Provide guiding questions that gradually decrease as students become more independent.<br><br>Use partner and small-group document analysis before independent analysis.<br><br>Provide models of strong claims, CER paragraphs, thesis statements, and DBQ responses.<br><br>Teach students how to distinguish between strong and weak evidence.<br><br>Incorporate structured discussions and debates before writing.<br><br>Provide opportunities for peer review and teacher conferencing.<br><br>Gradually remove scaffolds throughout the year as students demonstrate mastery of inquiry skills. | Use visual sources, maps, political cartoons, photographs, and artifacts alongside written documents.<br><br>Preteach essential historical vocabulary and provide student-friendly definitions.<br><br>Highlight or guide students toward important sections of documents when necessary.<br><br>Use guided annotation, teacher think-alouds, and document analysis modeling.<br><br>Provide sentence stems for claims, evidence, reasoning, sourcing, and counterclaims.<br><br>Use color-coded CER/DBQ organizers to visually separate claim, evidence, and reasoning.<br><br>Allow collaborative or teacher-led small-group document analysis before independent work.<br><br>Provide text-to-speech/audio versions and other accommodations as appropriate.<br><br>Break larger DBQs into smaller checkpoints: analyze → claim → evidence → reasoning → paragraph → essay. | |

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| | | Provide frequent checks for understanding and individual feedback.<br><br>Gradually fade scaffolds as students demonstrate greater independence. | |

**Unit Title: Unit 4: Elections, Media & Civic Participation (Inquiries 8-9)**

## Stage 1: Desired Results

**Standards & Indicators:**

**6.3.8.CivicsPD.1** Deliberate on a public issue affecting an upcoming election, consider opposing arguments, and develop a reasoned conclusion.
**6.3.8.CivicsPD.3** Construct a claim as to why it is important for democracy that individuals are informed by facts, aware of diverse viewpoints, and willing to take action on public issues.
**6.3.8.CivicsPI.3** Use a variety of sources from multiple perspectives to examine the role of individuals, political parties, interest groups, and the media in a local or global issue.
**6.3.8.CivicsPI.2** Evaluate the extent to which different forms of government reflect the history and values of various societies.
**6.3.8.CivicsPR.3** Take a position on an issue in which fundamental ideals and principles are in conflict (e.g., liberty, equality).
**9.4.8.IML.2** Identify specific examples of distortion, exaggeration, or misrepresentation of information.
**9.4.8.IML.6** Identify subtle and overt messages based on the method of communication.
**9.4.8.IML.9** Distinguish between ethical and unethical uses of information and media.

**Career Readiness, Life Literacies and Key Skills**

| Standard | Performance Expectations | Core Ideas |
|---|---|---|
| 9.4.8.DC.1 | Analyze the resource citations in online materials for proper use. | Detailed examples exist to illustrate crediting others when incorporating their digital artifacts in one's own work. |
| 9.4.8.DC.2 | Provide appropriate citation and attribution elements when creating media products. | |
| 9.4.8.TL.3 | Select appropriate tools to organize and present information digitally | Some digital tools are appropriate for gathering, organizing, analyzing, and presenting information, while others are appropriate for creating text, visualizations, and models. |

**Central Idea/Enduring Understanding:**

- Historical events and developments are shaped by social, political, cultural, technological, and economic factors.
- Historical contexts and events shaped and continue to shape people's perspectives.

**Essential/Guiding Question:**

**Content Based:**

- Would compulsory voting strengthen or weaken American democracy?
- How do media and political propaganda influence voters during campaigns?
- Should the Electoral College be kept, reformed, or abolished?

**DBQ/Inquiry-Based Guideline Questions:**
Should Americans Be Required to Vote? (IQ8)
Campaign Propaganda: Which Strategies Would You Use? (IQ9)

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**Content:**
- Voter turnout trends in the United States over time and across different demographics.
- How compulsory voting works in countries like Australia, and the balance of liberty vs. civic duty.
- Persuasive campaign techniques (e.g., bandwagon, fear, glittering generalities) in historical and modern propaganda.
- The constitutional structure, history, and mechanics of the Electoral College, and proposed alternatives.

**Skills(Objectives):**
- Analyze quantitative voter turnout and historical election data.
- Identify and dissect examples of media bias, exaggeration, distortion, or propaganda in campaign artifacts.
- Deliberate on complex, value-conflicting electoral policy questions and formulate independent conclusions.
- Plan, structure, and write a detailed, independent argument defending a position on constitutional reform.

**Interdisciplinary Connections:**
Media Literacy / English: Deconstructing propaganda, analyzing bias, and evaluating persuasive rhetoric across multiple media formats.
Social Sciences: Applying political science concepts, statistical analysis of voter data, and democratic theory.

## Stage 2: Assessment Evidence

**Performance Task(s):**
- Inquiry 8 CER: A claim-based response on whether compulsory voting strengthens or weakens American democracy.
- Inquiry 9 Media analysis response: Dissecting persuasion strategies in a campaign poster or ad and evaluating its ethical standards.
- Inquiry 10 Independent short argument: High-level independent argument taking a position on keeping, reforming, or abolishing the Electoral College.

**Other Evidence:**
**DBQ/Inquiry-Based Evidence**

**Product:** Independent short argument (capstone product).

**Student Does:** Independently drafts a multi-sentence argument with minimal structures, incorporating evidence and address of counterclaims.

**Teacher Scaffolds:** Peer feedback models using shared rubrics and brief targeted revision conferencing.

**recommended anchor DBQ assessments (full essays).*

## Stage 3: Learning Plan

**Learning Opportunities/Strategies:**
**DBQ/Inquiry Based Learning Opportunities & Strategies - Developing:**
- DBQ Project Online - Mini-Qs in Civics: "Should Americans Be Required to Vote?"
- DBQ Project Online - Mini-Qs in Civics: "Campaign Propaganda: Which Strategies Would You Use?"
- Independent synthesis of statistical turnout and historical election data; deep media analysis of multi-era artifacts.
- Formulating, vetting, and peer-evaluating complex policy and constitutional arguments with minimal teacher scaffolding.

**DBQ/Inquiry-Based Classroom Strategies:**
- Four-corners opening position on compulsory voting, followed by small-group turnout data deliberation (Inquiry 8).
- Gallery walk of campaign posters,

**Resources:**
**Social Studies Resources:**
- iCivics (Electoral College and campaign simulations), Library of Congress, National Archives, PBS LearningMedia.

LGBTQ and Disabilities Resources:
- LGBTQ-Inclusive Lesson & Resources by Garden State Equality and Make it Better for Youth
- LGBTQ+ Books

DEI Educational Resources:
- Learning for Justice
- GLSEN Educator Resources
- Supporting LGBTQIA Youth Resource List
- Respect Ability: Fighting Stigmas, Advancing Opportunities
- NJDOE Diversity, Equity & Inclusion Educational Resources

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| cartoons, and digital ads, annotating persuasive techniques (Inquiry 9). | |

**Differentiation** *Please note: Teachers who have students with 504 plans that require curricular accommodations are to refer to Struggling and/or Special Needs Section for differentiation

| High-Achieving Students | On Grade Level Students | Struggling Students | Special Needs/ELL |
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| Provide opportunities for greater independence in document analysis and inquiry.<br><br>Include more complex or additional primary sources that offer conflicting perspectives.<br><br>Encourage students to develop their own supporting inquiry questions.<br><br>Require students to evaluate source credibility, bias, purpose, and limitations more deeply.<br><br>Ask students to identify and address counterclaims and alternative interpretations.<br><br>Allow students to independently select and organize the strongest evidence for their argument.<br><br>Reduce reliance on graphic organizers, sentence stems, and teacher-created annotations.<br><br>Provide opportunities for Socratic seminars, debates, and student-led discussions.<br><br>Challenge students to make connections across multiple historical events, time periods, or civic issues. | Provide a structured set of primary and secondary sources aligned to the inquiry question.<br><br>Model sourcing, contextualization, corroboration, and close reading before students practice independently.<br><br>Use graphic organizers and evidence trackers to help students organize claims and supporting evidence.<br><br>Provide guiding questions that gradually decrease as students become more independent.<br><br>Use partner and small-group document analysis before independent analysis.<br><br>Provide models of strong claims, CER paragraphs, thesis statements, and DBQ responses.<br><br>Teach students how to distinguish between strong and weak evidence.<br><br>Incorporate structured discussions and debates before writing. | Maintain the same essential inquiry question while increasing accessibility and support.<br><br>Chunk longer documents into shorter, manageable sections.<br><br>Provide modified or adapted texts when appropriate while preserving the document's central meaning and historical perspective.<br><br>Use visual sources, maps, political cartoons, photographs, and artifacts alongside written documents.<br><br>Preteach essential historical vocabulary and provide student-friendly definitions.<br><br>Highlight or guide students toward important sections of documents when necessary.<br><br>Use guided annotation, teacher think-alouds, and document analysis modeling.<br><br>Provide sentence stems for claims, evidence, reasoning, sourcing, and | Any student requiring further accommodations and/or modifications will have them individually listed in their 504 Plan or IEP. These might include, but are not limited to: breaking assignments into smaller tasks, giving directions through several channels (auditory, visual, kinesthetic, model), and/or small group instruction for reading/writing<br><br>ELL supports should include, but are not limited to, the following::<br>Extended time<br>Provide visual aids<br>Repeated directions<br>Differentiate based on proficiency<br>Provide word banks<br>Allow for translators, dictionaries |

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| Offer extension opportunities that require additional research or synthesis beyond the provided DBQ documents. | Provide opportunities for peer review and teacher conferencing.<br><br>Gradually remove scaffolds throughout the year as students demonstrate mastery of inquiry skills. | counterclaims.<br><br>Use color-coded CER/DBQ organizers to visually separate claim, evidence, and reasoning.<br><br>Allow collaborative or teacher-led small-group document analysis before independent work.<br><br>Provide text-to-speech/audio versions and other accommodations as appropriate.<br><br>Break larger DBQs into smaller checkpoints: analyze → claim → evidence → reasoning → paragraph → essay.<br><br>Provide frequent checks for understanding and individual feedback.<br><br>Gradually fade scaffolds as students demonstrate greater independence. | |

## Pacing Guide

| Content | Resources | Standards |
|---|---|---|
| **Unit 1** · Foundations of Democracy & Citizenship *(7 Days)* | | |
| 1. Inquiry 1: What Types of Citizen Does a Democracy Need? *(3 Days)*<br>2. Debates why governments exist, what citizens owe them, and models of civic participation (personally responsible, participatory, or justice-oriented).<br>3. Writing product: Scaffolded | 1. DBQ Project Mini-Q: *"What Types of Citizen Does a Democracy Need?"* (civic duty excerpts, participation models, real-world examples).<br>2. *Newsela* leveled readings. | ● 6.3.8.CivicsPI.1 – Evaluate, take, and defend a position on why government is necessary, and the purposes government should serve *(Inquiry 1)*.<br>● 6.3.8.CivicsPD.3 – Construct a claim as to why it is important for democracy that individuals are informed by |

# Grade 8 Social Studies Enrichment

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| single-paragraph CER with sentence stems. | | facts, aware of diverse viewpoints, and willing to take action on public issues *(Inquiry 1)*.<br>● 6.1.8.CivicsDP.3.a – Use primary and secondary sources to assess whether or not the ideals found in the Declaration of Independence were fulfilled for women, African Americans, and Native Americans during this time period *(Inquiry 2)*.<br>● 6.1.8.HistoryUP.3.a – Use primary sources as evidence to explain why the Declaration of Independence was written and how its key principles evolved to become unifying ideas of American democracy *(Inquiry 2)* |
| ● Inquiry 2: The Ideals of the Declaration: Which Is Most Important? *(4 Days)*<br>● Investigates core ideals (life, liberty, pursuit of happiness, equality, consent of the governed) and whether they were fulfilled for women, African Americans, and Native Americans.<br>● Writing product: Ranking CER using two sources. | ● DBQ Project Mini-Q: *"What Types of Citizen Does a Democracy Need?"* (civic duty excerpts, participation models, real-world examples).<br>● *Newsela* leveled readings | |
| **Unit 2 ·** The Constitution & Structure of Government *(8 Days)* | | |
| 1. Inquiry 3: The Preamble and the Federal Budget: Are We Slicing the Pie Correctly? *(4 Days)*<br>2. Explores the Preamble's six goals and compares them to actual federal budget allocation categories and competing priorities.<br>3. Writing product: Mini evidence-based response connecting Preamble goals | ● DBQ Project Mini-Q: *"The Preamble and the Federal Budget: Are We Slicing the Pie Correctly?"* (Preamble text, current federal spending graphs).<br>● Supplemental current events resources (*PBS LearningMedia*). | 1. 6.3.8.CivicsPR.6 – Seek the perspectives of multiple stakeholders with diverse points of view regarding a budget issue and take a position on proposed policy *(Inquiry 3)*.<br>2. 6.1.8.CivicsPI.3.b – Evaluate the effectiveness of the fundamental principles of the Constitution (i.e., separation of powers, checks and balances, federalism, limited government) in establishing a federal government that allows for growth and change over time *(Inquiries 3 & 4)*.<br>3. 6.3.8.CivicsPR.2 – Evaluate the effectiveness of the fundamental principles of the Constitution in establishing a federal government that allows for growth and change over time *(Inquiry 4)* |
| ● Inquiry 4: How Did the Constitution Guard Against Tyranny? *(4 Days)*<br>● Examines checks and balances, separation of powers, federalism, and limited government.<br>● Writing product: Short constructed response defending the most effective safeguard. | ● DBQ Project Mini-Q: *"How Did the Constitution Guard Against Tyranny?"* (U.S. Constitution excerpts, Federalist Papers Nos. 47 and 51).<br>● *iCivics* interactive branch games. | |
| **Unit 3 ·** Rights, Liberties & Justice *(12 Days)* | | |
| ● Inquiry 5: Should Schools Be Allowed to Limit Students' Online Speech? *(4 Days)*<br>● Analyzes First Amendment | ● DBQ Project Mini-Q: *"Should Schools Be Allowed to Limit Students' Online Speech?"* (key student-speech case | ● 6.3.8.CivicsDP.2 – Make a claim based on evidence to determine the extent and the limitations of First |

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| speech protections, *Tinker v. Des Moines* (substantial disruption standard), and modern social media complications.<br>● Writing product: CER defining limits of school authority over online speech | law, school policy examples).<br>● *Newsela* civil liberties text sets. | Amendment rights *(Inquiry 5)*.<br>● 6.3.8.CivicsDP.3 – Use historical case studies and current events to explain why due process is essential for the protection of individual rights and the maintenance of limited government *(Inquiry 6)*.<br>● 6.3.8.CivicsPR.5 – Engage in simulated democratic processes to understand how conflicting points of view are addressed in a democratic society *(Inquiry 7)*.<br>● 6.3.8.CivicsPR.1 – Analyze primary sources to explain how democratic ideas in the United States developed from the historical experiences of ancient societies, England, and the North American colonies *(Inquiry 7)* |
| ● Inquiry 6: Search and Seizure: Did the Government Go Too Far? *(4 Days)*<br>● Investigates Fourth Amendment search requirements, school-level "reasonable suspicion" standards (*New Jersey v. T.L.O.*), and due process protections.<br>● Writing product: Constructed response evaluating reasonableness of search scenarios. | ● DBQ Project Mini-Q: *"Search and Seizure: Did the Government Go Too Far?"* (Fourth Amendment text, school search legal precedents). | |
| **Unit 3** ·Unit 4: Elections, Media & Civic Participation (13 days) | | |
| ● Inquiry 8: Should Americans Be Required to Vote? *(4 Days*<br>● Compares U.S. voter turnout data against compulsory-voting nations (e.g., Australia) and weighs civic duty against individual liberty.<br>● Writing product: CER supported by global turnout statistics. | ● DBQ Project Mini-Q: *"Should Americans Be Required to Vote?"* (U.S. election turnout history, Australian voting guidelines).<br>● *iCivics* voting simulations | ● 6.3.8.CivicsPD.1 – Deliberate on a public issue affecting an upcoming election, consider opposing arguments, and develop a reasoned conclusion *(Inquiry 8)*.<br>● 6.3.8.CivicsPD.3 – Construct a claim as to why it is important for democracy that individuals are informed by facts, aware of diverse viewpoints, and willing to take action on public issues *(Inquiry 8)*. |
| ● Inquiry 9: Campaign Propaganda: Which Strategies Would You Use? *(4 Days)*<br>● Teaches common persuasion/propaganda strategies (bandwagon, fear appeals, glittering generalities), analyzing both historical political cartoons and modern social media campaign ads. | ● DBQ Project Mini-Q: *"Campaign Propaganda: Which Strategies Would You Use?"* (campaign posters, political cartoons, commercials).<br>● Supplemental media literacy resources (*PBS LearningMedia)* | |

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| • Writing product: Ethical evaluation and media analysis | | • 6.3.8.CivicsPI.3 – Use a variety of sources from multiple perspectives to examine the role of individuals, political parties, interest groups, and the media in a local or global issue *(Inquiry 9)*.<br>• 9.4.8.IML.2 – Identify specific examples of distortion, exaggeration, or misrepresentation of information *(Inquiry 9)*.<br>• 9.4.8.IML.6 – Identify subtle and overt messages based on the method of communication *(Inquiry 9)*.<br>• 9.4.8.IML.9 – Distinguish between ethical and unethical uses of information and media *(Inquiry 9)*.<br>• 6.3.8.CivicsPI.2 – Evaluate the extent to which different forms of government reflect the history and values of various societies *(Inquiry 10)*.<br>• 6.3.8.CivicsPR.3 – Take a position on an issue in which fundamental ideals and principles are in conflict *(Inquiry 10)*. |