

SOCIAL STUDIES COURSE DESCRIPTION GOVERNMENT

In Government, the focus is on the principles and beliefs upon which the United States was founded and on the structure, function, and powers of government at the national, state, and local levels. This course is the culmination of the civic and governmental content and concepts studied from Kindergarten through required secondary courses. Students learn major political ideas and forms of government in history. A significant focus of the course is on the U.S. Constitution, its underlying principles and ideas, and the form of government it created. Students analyze major concepts of republicanism, federalism, checks and balances, separation of powers, popular sovereignty, and individual rights and compare the U.S. system of government with other political systems. Students identify the role of government in the U.S. free enterprise system and examine the strategic importance of places in the United States. Students analyze the impact of individuals, political parties, interest groups, and the media on the American political system, evaluate the importance of voluntary individual participation in a democratic society, and analyze the rights guaranteed by the U.S. Constitution. Students examine the relationship between governmental policies and the culture of the United States. Students identify examples of government policies that encourage scientific research and use critical thinking skills to create a product on a contemporary government issue.

To support the teaching of the essential knowledge and skills, the use of a variety of rich primary and secondary source material such as the complete text of the U.S. Constitution; selected Federalist Papers; landmark cases of the U.S. Supreme Court; biographies, autobiographies, and memoirs; speeches and letters; and periodicals that feature analyses of political issues and events is encouraged. Selections may include excerpts from John Locke's *Two Treatises of Government*, *Federalist 51*, and *Miranda v. Arizona*.

The eight strands of the essential of the essential knowledge and skills for social studies are intended to be integrated for instructional purposes. Skills listed in the geography and social studies skills strands should be incorporated into the teaching of all essential knowledge and skills for social studies. A greater depth of understanding of complex content material can be attained when integrated social studies content from the various disciplines and critical-thinking skills are taught together.

Throughout social studies in Kindergarten –Grade 12, students build a foundation in history; geography; economic; government; citizenship; culture; science, technology, and society; and social studies skills. The content, as appropriate for the grade level or course, enables students to understand the importance of patriotism, function in a free enterprise society, and appreciate the basic democratic values of our state and nation as referenced in the Texas Education Code, 28.002 (h).