



Alaska Content Standards—Government and Citizenship

What Citizens Need to Know About Government

addresses select Alaska Content Standards—Government and Citizenship for the government and citizenship component of the curriculum, grades 9-12.



Introduction:

In 1993, Alaskans embarked on a campaign to bring higher standards and accountability to their public school system. The cornerstone of this effort was the development of content standards in ten core subject areas. The standards represent what Alaskans want students to know and be able to do as a result of their public schooling.

This booklet presents the content standards and their associated key elements for English/Language Arts, Mathematics, Science, History, Geography, Government and Citizenship, Skills for a Healthy Life, Arts, World Languages, and Technology.

During 1994 and 1995, the Alaska State Board of Education adopted these standards and key elements as voluntary guidelines for Alaska's schools.

Scores of Alaskans--educators, parents, business people, and professionals, from all areas of the state--worked together to develop and refine the standards. Before adopting them, the Board of Education heard comments from hundreds of other Alaskans about what they liked and disliked in the standards.

Even before the last set of standards was adopted in December, 1995, teams of educators were working on curriculum frameworks, plans for how to teach the new standards and how to integrate them into the classroom. Another team examined assessment issues, answering the critical question: "How will we know if students are reaching the standards?"

These standards are already defining the way Alaska approaches education issues. The focus has shifted from what goes into our education system to what comes out of it. The standards will accomplish three primary goals:

- Standards will give students and teachers a clear and challenging target.
- Standards will help focus energy and resources on the bottom line: student achievement.
- Standards will give all of us a tool for judging how well our students are learning and how well our schools are performing.

Government and Citizenship

A. A student should know and understand how societies define authority, rights, and responsibilities through a governmental process.

A student who meets the content standard should:

1. understand the necessity and purpose of government;
2. understand the meaning of fundamental ideas, including equality, authority, power, freedom, justice, privacy, property, responsibility, and sovereignty;
3. understand how nations organize their governments; and
4. compare and contrast how different societies have governed themselves over time and in different places.

- *Chapter 1 explores the necessity and purpose of government. The way nations organize their governments are identified and the different ways societies have governed themselves over time and in different places are highlighted. Different types of government structures—command, custom and consent—are identified. Historical and contemporary examples of various government systems, such as the British Parliament and tribal governments are included and links are provided to the British Parliament Web site and the Web sites of various tribal governments for more information. Fundamental ideas, such as equality, authority, power, freedom, justice, property, responsibility and sovereignty are discussed. Important political philosophers, such as John Locke and Jean Jacques Rousseau, are highlighted and links are included to their biographies and the complete texts of their most influential works.*
- *Chapter 9 explains the meaning of fundamental ideas like equality, freedom and justice in the context of the Bill of Rights and minority rights. The civil rights movement is highlighted and links are available to the biographies of influential civil rights activists like Rosa Parks and Martin Luther King, Jr. Important Supreme Court cases that have had an impact on the fundamental ideas of equality and justice are discussed and links are provided to the complete texts of such important Supreme Court decisions as **Brown v. Board of Education** and **Miranda v. Arizona**. Issues associated with privacy rights of citizens are also explored in this chapter.*

B. A student should understand the constitutional foundations of the American political system and the democratic ideals of this nation.

A student who meets the content standard should:

1. understand the ideals of this nation as expressed in the Declaration of Independence, the United States Constitution, and the Bill of Rights;

2. recognize American heritage and culture, including the republican form of government, capitalism, free enterprise system, patriotism, strong family units, and freedom of religion.
3. understand the United States Constitution, including separation of powers, the executive, legislative, and judicial branches of government, majority rule, and minority rights;
4. know how power is shared in the United States' constitutional government at the federal, state, and local levels;
5. understand the importance of individuals, public opinion, media, political parties, associations, and groups in forming and carrying out public policy;
6. recognize the significance of diversity in the American political system;
7. distinguish between constitution-based ideals and the reality of American political and social life;
8. understand the place of law in the American political system; and
9. recognize the role of dissent in the American political system.

- *Chapter 1 explores the ideals of the nation expressed in the Declaration of Independence and other major historical political documents. American heritage and culture including the republican form of government, capitalism and the free enterprise system is highlighted. The historic roots of these concepts are traced and links are provided to the complete texts of such historic documents as the Magna Carta and the English Bill of Rights. Important political philosophers like Thomas Hobbes and Adam Smith are discussed and links are provided to their biographies and the complete texts of their most influential works. Related articles and Web sites examine other ideals of American democracy like patriotism.*
- *Chapter 2 describes how power is shared in the United States both within the three branches of the federal government and among the federal and state governments. Concepts like separation of powers and checks and balances are defined. The debates over the concepts of federalism at the Constitutional Convention are presented and links are provided to primary documents, such as the Federalist Papers and the response of the anti-Federalists.*
- *Chapter 3 explains how the U.S. Constitution defines the structure and ideals of the U.S. government. Key terms, such as separation of powers, loose constructionists and strict constructionists, are defined. The divisions of power among the three branches of the federal government are highlighted. The ideals of the U.S. Constitution are presented and the concept of civil liberties is explored. The changing interpretation of the Constitution and civil liberties is addressed and the impact of the War on Terrorism on civil liberties is cited as an example. A link is included to the complete text of the U.S. Constitution and related articles and Web sites present opposing views on civil liberty issues.*

- *Chapter 4 discusses the role of the president and the executive branch of the federal government. The powers and restrictions of the presidency are explored and concepts like veto and impeachment are defined. Links are provided to biographies of all previous U.S. presidents and a link is also available to the Web site of the White House for current information on the role and agenda of the president. Related articles and Web sites also highlight the current agenda of the president and important speeches of the president and vice-president are included.*
- *Chapter 5 highlights the role of the president's cabinet in advising the president and overseeing the various departments that form the executive branch of the government. Web links are included to all cabinet departments, including the Department of Homeland Security and the Department of Defense.*
- *Chapter 6 describes the role of Congress. Powers and restrictions of the Congress are explained, as are the procedures of Congress. Web links are included to both the House of Representatives and the Senate. Links are also available to all congressional committees. Related articles and Web sites identify current issues being debated in Congress.*
- *Chapter 7 examines the judicial branch of the government and the place of law in the American political system. Key concepts and terms like judicial review and original jurisdiction are defined. The differences between civil and criminal litigation are highlighted. Links are provided to the Web sites of the U.S. Supreme Court and many lower courts. Links are also included to the complete texts of important Supreme Court Decisions, such as Marbury v. Madison and Bush v. Gore.*
- *Chapter 9 identifies the ideals of the nation as expressed in the Bill of Rights. Disparities between the ideals of the nation and the realities of American political and social life are explored in the context of the civil rights movement. Concepts like freedom of religion, minority rights and the role of dissent are explored. Links to biographies of influential civil rights figures like Martin Luther King, Jr. and Rosa Parks are provided. Important Supreme Court decisions that impacted the interpretation of the Bill of Rights and minority rights, such as the Dred Scott decision and Brown v. Board of Education, are highlighted and links are available to the complete texts of these and other Supreme Court decisions.*
- *Chapter 10 discusses the role of state governments in the U.S. federal system. The relationships between the various state governments and the federal government are described and concepts like reserved powers and concurrent powers are defined. A link is included to a Web page that provides access to all state government Web sites for more specific information on the various state governments.*

- *Chapter 11 explores the role of local governments in the U.S. federal system. The relationships among the local, state and federal governments are addressed. A link is available to a Web page that provides access to all local government Web sites for more information on local issues.*
- *Chapter 13 discusses the importance of individuals, public opinion, media and associations and groups, such as lobbyists and political action committees (PACs) in forming and carrying out public policy. Key concepts and terms like propaganda and straw polls are defined. Related articles and Web sites present opposing views on ways to reform the lobbying process of government.*
- *Chapter 16 describes the importance of political parties and individuals in forming and carrying out public policy. The role of individuals in the political party process is explored. Terms, such as platform and primary, are defined. Web links are available to all major U.S. political parties, including the Democratic Party, the Republican Party, the Reform Party and the Green Party.*

C. A student should understand the character of government of the state.

A student who meets the content standard should:

1. understand the various forms of the state's local governments and the agencies and commissions that influence students' lives and property;
2. accept responsibility for protecting and enhancing the quality of life in the state through the political and governmental processes;
3. understand the Constitution of Alaska and sec. 4 of the Alaska Statehood Act, which is know as the Statehood Compact;
4. understand the importance of the historical and current roles of Alaska Native communities;
5. understand the Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act and its impact on the state;
6. understand the importance of the multicultural nature of the state;
7. understand the obligations that land and resource ownership place on the residents and government of the state; and
8. identify the roles and relationships among the federal, tribal, and state governments and understand the responsibilities and limits of the roles and relationships.

- *Chapter 1 identifies the structure of tribal governments. Links to related articles and Web sites discuss the unique relationships among federal, tribal and state governments. Links are also provided to various tribal government Web sites for more information on issues affecting Native Americans.*
- *Chapter 9 explores issues associated with minority rights in the United States. The U.S. relationship with tribal governments is cited as an example and the Alaska Statehood Act and the Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act are discussed. Web links are available to the complete texts of these documents.*

- *Chapter 10 describes the role of state governments in the federal system. The relationship between the state and federal government is explored. A link is available to a Web site that provides access to all state government Web pages, including Alaska, for more information on issues being addressed by the various state governments.*
- *Chapter 11 examines the role of local governments. The relationships among the federal, state and local governments are explored. A link is available to a Web site that provides access to all local government Web pages for more information on issues being addressed by the various local governments around the country, including Alaska. An activity in the Educator's Guide for this chapter encourages students to get involved in their community through identifying an issue of importance and writing their mayor or city council member about that issue.*

D. A student should understand the role of the United States in international affairs.

A student who meets the content standard should:

1. analyze how domestic politics, the principles of the United States Constitution, foreign policy, and economics affect relations with other countries;
2. evaluate circumstances in which the United States has politically influenced other nations and how other nations have influenced the politics and society of the United States;
3. exercise political participation by discussing public issues, building consensus, becoming involved in political parties and political campaigns, and voting;
4. understand the purpose and function of international government and non-governmental organizations in the world today; and
5. analyze the causes, consequences, and possible solutions to current international issues.

- *Chapter 15 explains how citizens participate in the political process through voting. Voting trends are identified and the importance of individual participation in the voting process is stressed. Related articles and Web sites identify issues and individuals being voted on in the current election cycle, to better educate students on the issues.*
- *Chapter 16 describes how individuals can exercise political participation through membership in political parties and involvement in political campaigns. Links are provided to the Web sites of all the major U.S. political parties, including the Democratic Party, the Republican Party, the Reform Party and the Green Party.*

- Chapter 28 explores foreign policy and the United States' involvement with nations around the world. Topics include, decision-making, presidential and congressional powers, cultural exchange, and international organizations. America's role in a modern changing world is also discussed. Links are provided to Web sites of international organizations that the U.S. participates in, such as the United Nations, the North Atlantic Treaty Organization and the North American Free Trade Agreement. Related articles identify current foreign policy issues and explore the causes, consequences and possible solutions to current international issues. An activity for this chapter in the Educator's Guide involves students working together in role-playing scenarios that encourage political participation by discussing public issues and building consensus.

E. A student should have the knowledge and skills necessary to participate effectively as an informed and responsible citizen.

A student who meets the content standard should:

1. know the important characteristics of citizenship.
2. recognize that it is important for citizens to fulfill their public responsibilities;
3. exercise political participation by discussing public issues, building consensus, becoming involved in political parties and political campaigns, and voting;
4. establish, explain, and apply criteria useful in evaluating rules and laws;
5. establish, explain, and apply criteria useful in selecting political leaders;
6. recognize the value of community service; and
7. implement ways of solving problems and resolving conflict.

- Chapter 14 examines the rights and responsibilities of citizenship. The importance of public responsibilities is explained and involvement in community services is stressed. Web links are provided to community service volunteer organizations like AmeriCorps and USA Freedom Corps.

- Chapter 15 explains how citizens participate in the political process through voting. Voting trends are identified and the importance of individual participation in the voting process is stressed. Related articles and Web sites identify issues and individuals being voted on in the current election cycle, to better educate students on the issues.

- Chapter 16 describes how individuals can exercise political participation through membership in political parties and involvement in political campaigns. Links are provided to the Web sites of all the major U.S. political parties, including the Democratic Party, the Republican Party, the Reform Party and the Green Party.

- Related articles and Web sites linked to every chapter identify current public policy issues and provide information necessary for evaluating rules and laws and selecting political leaders.

- *Learning Tools worksheets linked to every chapter helps students learn how to evaluate data and issues so they can apply criteria useful in evaluating rules and laws and selecting political leaders. Learning Tools include: Understanding Basic Knowledge, Problem Solving, Analyzing Graphs and Charts, and Map Skills. The Learning Tools worksheets can be used in conjunction with the text, related articles, Web sites or other textbooks and can be completed online and E-mailed directly to the instructor or downloaded and completed offline.*
- *Activities are suggested in the Educator's Guide for every chapter. These activities require students to apply the knowledge they gained in the respective chapters. Some activities require group participation while other activities require community involvement. Solving problems and resolving conflicts are emphasized.*

F. A student should understand the economies of the United States and the state and their relationship to the global economy.

A student who meets the content standard should:

1. understand how the government and the economy interrelate through regulations, incentives, and taxation;
2. be aware that economic systems determine how resources are used to produce and distribute goods and services;
3. compare alternative economic systems;
4. understand the role of price in resource allocation;
5. understand the basic concepts of supply and demand, the market system, and profit;
6. understand the role of economic institutions in the United States, including the Federal Reserve Board, trade unions, banks, investors, and the stock market;
7. understand the role of self-interest, incentives, property rights, competition, and corporate responsibility in the market economy;
8. understand the indicators of an economy's performance, including gross domestic product, inflation, and the unemployment rate;
9. understand those features of the economy of the state that make it unique, including the importance of natural resources, government ownership and management of resources, Alaska Native regional corporations, the Alaska Permanent Fund Corporation, the Alaska Housing Finance Corporation, and the Alaska Industrial Development and Export Authority; and
10. understand how international trade works.

G. A student should understand the impact of economic choices and participate effectively in the local, state, national, and global economies.

A student who meets the content standard should:

1. apply economic principles to actual world situations;

2. understand that choices are made because resources are scarce;
3. identify and compare the costs and benefits when making choices;
4. make informed choices on economic issues;
5. understand how jobs are created and their role in the economy;
6. understand that wages and productivity depend on investment in physical and human capital; and
7. understand that economic choices influence public and private institutional decisions.

- *Chapter 1 identifies the economic and political philosophers that influenced the thoughts of the founders of the United States. Economic philosophers like Adam Smith are highlighted and links are available to biographies and the complete texts of influential works, such as **The Wealth of Nations**.*
- *Chapter 8 describes the role of the federal bureaucracy and explains how regulations are created to protect American consumers. The role of such organizations as the Food and Drug Administration and the Occupational Health and Safety Administration are discussed and links are provided to the Web sites of the cabinet departments that oversee these agencies.*
- *Chapter 12 explains how the government is funded through taxation. Different sources of revenue for local, state and the federal government are identified. Key concepts and terms like deficit and tariff duties are defined. A Web link is provided to the Internal Revenue Service for information on current U.S. tax policy.*
- *Chapter 24 describes the relationship between government and business. Key concepts and terms like laissez-faire and monopoly are defined. The impact of international trade is explored and a link is included to the Web site of the North American Free Trade Agreement. Issues related to competition and corporate responsibilities are addressed and the government's response to the 2002 corporate scandals that forced Enron and WorldCom into bankruptcy is discussed.*
- *Chapter 25 discusses the government's role in the labor market. Related articles and Web sites describe how the government addresses issues like unemployment and discrimination in the workplace.*
- *Chapter 28 explores the U.S. role in the international economic community. U.S. participation in international economic organizations are described and Web links are provided to such organizations as the World Trade Organization, the International Monetary Fund and the Group of Eight.*
- *More economic issues are addressed in Interactive Citizenship's book **What Citizens Need to Know About Economics**.*