

District of Columbia Public Schools Content Standards



In SIRS' study of the District of Columbia Public Schools Content Standards, we see a direct correlation between the goals and objectives that are emphasized and the framework upon which SIRS Interactive Citizenship has been developed. SIRS Interactive Citizenship content emphasizes the generalizations and concepts that act as the framework for understanding democratic political institutions and their emergence throughout history, while the Discovery and Inquiry activities and related chapter lessons exemplify our commitment to critical thinking skills.

What Citizens Need to Know About Government, addresses the expectations for American Government and presents a framework for understanding America's ongoing struggle to realize the ideals of the Declaration of Independence and the U.S. Constitution and each citizen's role in this democracy. Through this framework, students are able to connect the past to the present as well as appreciate universal historical themes and dilemmas by accessing primary sources such as, biographies, documents, diaries, letters, legends and speeches and links to related articles and web sites while focusing on the basic concepts of government. Thus, students develop the higher order thinking skills deemed necessary by the District of Columbia Public Schools Content Standards.

<http://www.k12.dc.us/dcps/curriculum/curriculum_frame.html> [2002, February 11]



District of Columbia Public Schools
correlation with
What Citizens Need to Know About Government



American Government

Authority, Responsibility and Power

Content Standard 1: Students explain forms of authority in government and other institutions and describe responsible and irresponsible exercise of both authority and power.

Performance Standards

The student:

- compares and contrasts the location of power, the organization, and the structure of at least three contemporary political-economic systems in the world;
- analyzes and describes uses of governmental authority to alter social conditions, such as labor laws, legalized union organizing, collective bargaining, and democratic voting in workplaces;
- explains the spread of democratic and constitutional government in the 20th century along with obstacles to its advance.

- *Chapter 6, The Congress and Chapter 4, The Cabinet, provide information on elected and appointed officials.*
- *Chapter 4, The Presidency, provides examples of abuse of office and power and the historical effects of the public responses to each.*

The Founding Documents

Content Standard 2: Students will demonstrate an understanding of the contents and history of founding documents of the United States.

The student:

- identifies authors and other key figures in drafting and signing the Declaration of Independence, and in drafting and ratifying the U.S. Constitution;
- describes influences of the founding documents on other declarations of rights and constitution since 1789;
- constructs essays on how human rights are secured in specific places;
- explains the circumstances in which each of the founding documents was written and the basic content of each document;

- explains how founding documents will impact individual needs and the establishment of laws during the early 21st century.

- *Chapter 1 discusses the Declaration of Independence and the concerns of its authors.*
- *Chapter 2 examines the Federalist and anti-Federalist positions. A link to the Federalist Papers allows students to read each of these documents.*
- *Chapter 3 examines the Constitution.*
- *Chapter 9 explores the Bill of Rights and the unending struggle for civil rights.*

Principles and Practices

Content Standard 3: Students describe how the United States government functions at the local, state, national and international levels.

- identifies examples of fundamental American political principles contained in the U.S. Constitution, Declaration of Independence, and Federalist Papers;
- compares American political principles of government and law developed by European political thinkers (e.g., Locke, Hobbes, Montesquieu, Rousseau, and Blackstone);
- analyzes political and legal issues in contemporary American society and how Supreme Court decisions have affected these issues;
- explains the significance of the Supreme Court in interpreting and analyzing the Constitution in cases and controversies;
- evaluates primary source documents (e.g., Magna Carta, English Bill of Rights; Mayflower Compact, Constitutions of the United States and individual states and other countries).

- *From Chapter 1, students can read the Declaration of Independence.*
- *From Chapter 2, students can read the Federalist Papers.*
- *From Chapter 3, students can read the U.S. Constitution.*
- *Chapter 1 looks at the ideas of the 18th century philosophers who influenced the founding fathers' concepts of government. Students can access the writings of Locke, Hobbes, Montesquieu, and Rousseau.*
- *Chapter 2 examines William Blackstone's contribution to the concept of law.*
- *Chapter 7 discusses the Supreme Court and contains a link to the court's web site. Students can read landmark Supreme Court decisions from this chapter as well as from Chapter 9, The Bill of Rights and Minority Rights.*
- *Chapter 1 contains links to the Mayflower Compact and The English Bill of Rights.*
- *From Chapter 10, students can access state Constitutions.*

Citizenship

Content Standard 4: Students demonstrate an understanding of the rights and duties of citizens and principles of equal rights for all.

The student:

- applies knowledge of democratic principles, political history, and citizens' rights to constructing plausible solutions to problems in the community;
- models good citizenship and demonstrates appreciation for the democratic values and traditions that are an integral part of the American character;
- participates in community projects and/or international relief efforts.

- Chapter 14 examines the rights and responsibilities of citizenship.

Forms of Government

Content Standard 5: Students study, compare, contrast and analyze diverse forms of government.

The student:

- compares the United States constitutional system with forms of democracy that developed in ancient Greece and Rome, England and the American colonies;
- differentiates the United States political system from those of major democratic and authoritarian nations;
- evaluates the legitimacy of various governments;
- applies the definition of "government" to the current administration and management of public affairs and policies of the United States.

- Chapter 16 discusses Greek and Roman concepts of government and contains links to the writings of Plato and Aristotle.
- Chapter 1 contains historical and contemporary examples of differing political systems.