

Pennsylvania Academic Standards for Civics and Government



The Pennsylvania Academic Standards for Civics and Government is based on the philosophy that all students should understand the underlying principles of the American republican form of government. They should understand the principles inherent in the Declaration of Independence and U.S. Constitution. Four basic areas of study are:

- ❖ Principles and Documents of Government
- ❖ Rights and Responsibilities of Citizenship
- ❖ How Government Works
- ❖ How International Relationships Function

In SIRS' study of the Pennsylvania Academic Standards for Civics and Government, 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 Grade 12 Civics and 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 Pennsylvania Academic Standards for Civics and Government .

<<http://www.pde.psu.edu/standard/civics.pdf>> [2001, December 27]



Pennsylvania Academic Standards for Civic and Government
correlation with
What Citizens Need to Know About Government



Grade 12

5.1. Principles and Documents of Government

5.1.12.

- A. Analyze the major arguments advanced for the necessity of government.
- B. Analyze the sources, purposes and functions of law.
- C. Evaluate the importance of the principles and ideals in civic life.
- D. Analyze the principles and ideals that shape the government of Pennsylvania and apply them to the government.
 - The Charter of 1681
 - Charter of Privileges
 - PA Constitution, its revisions and Amendments
- E. Analyze the principles and ideals that shape the United States and apply them to its documents of government.
- F. Analyze and assess the rights of the people as listed in the Pennsylvania Constitution and the Constitution of the United States.
- G. Analyze and interpret the role of the United States Flag in civil disobedience and in patriotic activities.
- H. Analyze the competing positions held by the framers of the basic documents of government of Pennsylvania and United States.
- I. Analyze historical examples of the importance of the rule of law and of the sources, purposes and functions of law.
- J. Analyze how the law promotes the common good by protecting individual rights.
- K. Analyze the roles of symbols and holidays in society.
- L. Analyze Pennsylvania and United States court decisions that have effected principles and ideals of government in civic life.
 - Civil rights
 - Commerce
 - Judicial review
 - Federal supremacy
- M. Evaluate and analyze the importance of significant speeches and writings in civic life.

- *Chapter 1 provides an explanation of why government is important and how it affects everyone's life. Students may gain insight into the necessity of government by reading a document written by Abraham Lincoln concerning his thoughts on the object of government. They may also read Locke's "Two Treatises of Government" and Montesquieu's "Spirit of Laws."*
- *From a related source in Chapter 3, students may access primary sources such as the Charter of 1681 and Charter of Privileges, from the Avalon Project web site.*
- *From Chapter 10, students can access the Pennsylvania Constitution.*
- *Students may read the Declaration of Independence, Articles of Confederation (Chapter 1), and U.S. Constitution (Chapter 3).*
- *From Chapter 1, students may access USHistory.org to research topics such as the U.S. flag.*
- *Chapter 2 examines the thoughts and positions founding fathers held on the structure of government. Students can also read the Federalist Papers.*
- *Chapter 9, The Bill of Rights and Minority Rights, provides the history of the Bill of Rights. Students can read about the Constitutional Amendments that guarantee individual and civil rights.*
- *Chapter 9 contains links to Supreme Court decisions involving civil rights issues. Cases range from the Dred Scott Decision of 1857 to the 1989 decision in Texas v. Johnson.*
- *From Chapter 10, students may access Pennsylvania Legal Matters to learn about their state's court decisions.*

5.2 Rights and Responsibilities of Citizenship

5.2.12.

- A. Evaluate an individual's civic rights, responsibilities and duties in systems of government.
- B. Compare and evaluate the participatory role of citizens' rights and responsibilities.
- C. Analyze the triggers of conflict in society and techniques to resolve them.
- D. Evaluate the roles of political leadership and public service in a constitutional democracy.
- E. Analyze how participating in civic and political life leads to the attainment of individual and public goals.
 - Referendum
 - Recall
 - Petition
- F. Analyze the role of law for the protection of individual rights and for the common good.
- G. Explain the responsibility and process to register a vote and evaluate the importance of knowledge to competent and responsible participation in civic life.

- *Chapter 9 details the unending struggle for civil rights.*
- *Chapter 14 defines the rights and responsibilities of citizenship.*
- *From Chapter 6, The Congress, students can link to the House of Representatives and Senate web sites where they can learn about individual Congressional leaders, committees, and legislative actions.*
- *Chapter 15 examines the voting process and explains what is meant by referendum, recall, and petition.*

5.3 How Government Works

- A. Analyze and evaluate the structure, organization and operation of the local, state, and national governments including domestic and national policy-making.
- B. Analyze the responsibilities and powers of the national government.
- C. Summarize how a bill becomes a law on a federal, state, and local level and evaluate the process.
- D. Interpret how independent government agencies create, regulate and enforce regulations.
- E. Analyze the roles of political parties in election campaigns.
- F. Analyze elements of the election process.

- Voter Registration
- Primary Elections
- Caucuses
- National Conventions
- General Elections
- Electoral college

- G. Analyze judicial protection of individual rights and due process.
- H. Evaluate the impact of interest groups on the political process.
- I. Evaluate how and why government should raise money to pay for its operation and services.
- J. Evaluate the role of media on political life in the United States and explain the role of the media in setting the public agenda.
- K. Evaluate the strengths and weaknesses of various systems of government.

- Autocracy
- Democracy
- Oligarchy

- *Chapter 2 focuses on the structure of the federal government.*
- *Chapters 4 and 5 examine the Executive Branch. The office of the President and his Cabinet are covered in detail. Links to the White House web site and cabinet level departments allow students to gather timely information.*
- *Chapter 6 examines the House of Representatives and the Senate. Students learn the structure and functions of each.*
- *Chapter 7 examines the judiciary with an emphasis on the federal court system and Supreme Court.*

- *Chapter 10 focuses on the structure and functions of state government.*
- *Chapter 11 describes local governments and how various jurisdictions are determined.*
- *Chapter 16 examines the political party structure. Students can access the web pages of the Republican, Democratic, Libertarian and Green Parties.*
- *Chapter 15 examines the electoral process. A link to the Electoral College web site is available.*
- *Chapter 13 closely examines the impact the media, lobbies, pressure groups and PACS have on elected officials and the public agenda.*
- *Chapter 1 compares various systems of government. Historical and contemporary examples of autocracy, democracy, and oligarchy are provided.*

5.4 How International Relationships Function

- A. Analyze the United States' interaction with nations and governmental groups in world events.
- B. Analyze the impact of economic, technological or cultural developments on the government of the United States and the governments of other nations.
- C. Analyze how the United States' policy interests and historic policy positions have changed over time.
 - Past
 - Present
 - Future
- D. Evaluate the development and implementation of foreign policy.
- E. Analyze the purposes and functions of international organizations.
 - Governmental (e.g., NATO), World Court, OAS)
 - Non-governmental (e.g., International Red Cross, Amnesty International, World Council of Churches)

- *Chapter 27 focuses on national defense and Chapter 28 focuses on foreign policy. Students can learn how the U.S. interacts with other nations on economic, political, and cultural levels. Foreign policy and national defense issues are explored and students can trace their evolution from the War of 1812 to the present day War on Terrorism.*
- *International organizations such as NATO and The World Court are found in Chapter 28.*
- *Non-governmental organizations such as the International Red Cross and Catholic Relief Charities can be accessed via a link in Chapter 21.*