

ASSESSMENT AND EXERCISE SPECIFICATIONS

NATIONAL ASSESSMENT OF EDUCATIONAL PROGRESS (NAEP) IN CIVICS

**Used for the 1998, 2006, and 2010
NAEP Civics Assessments**

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INTRODUCTION

The acquisition of a body of knowledge in civics and government and the use of intellectual and participatory skills are essential for informed, responsible participation in political life by competent citizens committed to the fundamental values and principles of American constitutional democracy. It is important, therefore, to know whether our young people understand the civic principles on which our nation was founded and by which it has been guided.

The National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) civics assessment will measure what students know and can do in civics, both the comprehension that students have acquired in formal civics courses, as well as the civic knowledge, intellectual, and participatory skills embodied in other subject areas and outside of school. Also, the assessment will cover how well students understand the ideals and the fundamental values and principles on which American constitutional democracy is based. Because certain civic dispositions or traits of public and private character are essential to the vitality of constitutional democracy and civil society, students' knowledge of them and their importance will be assessed. The assessment, however, will not include questions related to students' personal values or dispositions.

The assessment will test students' knowledge of civics using a variety of stimulus materials, including text, graphics, data, charts, photographs, and authentic source materials. Different response modes will be combined with stimuli in developing items. The response modes will include single correct option multiple-choice items and constructed response items. Constructed response items will consist of questions requiring short written responses and questions requiring extended written responses. The following pages present detailed specifications for the overall assessment and for the exercises.

An Item Writers' Guide setting forth basic rules for good item construction for all item formats is to be provided by the test development contractor. The Guide should include criteria for developing items using a combination of response modes and stimulus materials, and must conform to the specifications set forth in this document, the National Assessment Governing Board Policy on Cognitive Item Development and Review, and any formatting requirements of NAEP.

This document is divided into two sections, Assessment Specifications and Exercise Specifications. The Assessment Specifications provide an overall description of the assessment instruments: the distribution of exercises over the content and cognitive components of the assessment, the allocation of testing time, the review process and criteria, the scoring of the assessment, and recommendations for following trend lines in civics assessment. The Exercise Specifications detail the construction of each type of exercise: the general characteristics of exercise development, the preliminary achievement level descriptions, the exercise format

specifications, and the content specifications. Specific content for the assessment is detailed in content outlines for each grade level, four, eight, and twelve, and is found in Appendix A. Specific information regarding the intellectual skills is found in Appendix B, regarding the participatory skills, Appendix C, and that which regards civic dispositions is found in Appendix D.

ASSESSMENT SPECIFICATIONS

Assessment Construction

Components of the Assessment

Civic education is central to American education and to the well-being of American constitutional democracy. Civic education also is important to civil society—that historically essential sector of society composed of non-governmental voluntary, community, fraternal organizations, clubs, and religious institutions. Sustained and systematic attention to civics, government, and civil society in the K-12 curriculum enables students to build on the knowledge they acquire in each successive grade. Therefore, students' understanding of civic life, politics and government should increase both in scope and depth as they progress through the elementary, middle, and high schools. In addition, their command of essential intellectual and participatory skills should continue to develop as they move toward the assumption of the full rights and responsibilities of citizenship.

The 1998 framework for the National Assessment of Educational Progress in civics has three interrelated components: **knowledge**, **intellectual** and **participatory skills**, and **civic dispositions**. Taken together, these components should form the essential elements of civic education in the United States. Development of a NAEP assessment of student achievement in civics, therefore, should fully reflect the need to evaluate students' command of these three components of civic education.

The **knowledge component** is embodied in the form of five significant and enduring questions. As students progress through school, their knowledge of the issues posed by each question deepens, such that eighth and twelfth graders would be expected to have a greater understanding of topics than fourth graders. The five questions are:

- I. What are civic life, politics, and government?
- II. What are the foundations of the American political system?
- III. How does the government established by the Constitution embody the purposes, values, and principles of American democracy?
- IV. What is the relationship of the United States to other nations and to world affairs?
- V. What are the roles of citizens in American democracy?

The **intellectual and participatory skills component** of civic education involve the use of knowledge to think and act effectively and in a reasoned manner in response to the challenges of civic life in a constitutional democracy. Intellectual skills enable students to learn and apply civic

knowledge in the many and varied roles of citizens. These skills help citizens identify, describe, explain, and analyze information and arguments, and evaluate, take, and defend positions on public policies. Participatory skills enable citizens to monitor and influence public and civic life by working with others, clearly articulating ideas and interests, building coalitions, seeking consensus, negotiating compromise, and managing conflict.

The third component of this framework, **civic dispositions**, refers to the inclinations or “habits of the heart,” as Tocqueville called them, that pervade all aspects of citizenship. In a constitutional democracy, these dispositions pertain to the rights and responsibilities of individuals in society and to the advancement of the ideals of the political community and civil society. They include the dispositions to become an independent member of society; respect individual worth and human dignity; assume the personal, political, and economic responsibilities of a citizen; abide by the “rules of the game,” such as accepting the legitimate decisions of the majority while protecting the rights of the minority; participate in civic affairs in an informed, thoughtful, and effective manner; and promote the healthy functioning of American constitutional democracy.

The acquisition of knowledge and skills and the development of civic dispositions take place within a variety of contexts. Those of the home, school, community, state, nation, and the world are especially important in civic education. They constitute the primary arenas in which citizens acquire knowledge and skills as well as put their knowledge and skills into practice.

The distribution of exercises across the components will be described in terms of “proportion of the exercise pool,” but such proportions are not intended to refer simply to the proportions of the total number of exercises in a given category. Simple proportions of exercises are problematic because single exercises may vary widely in the amount of time they require and the amount of information they yield (especially across, but also within, formats). Therefore, in this document, specifications of “proportion of the exercise pool” correspond to proportion of total student time at a particular grade level that would be required if the entire grade-level pool could be administered to a single individual, tempered by the understanding that the statistical efficiency of different exercise formats may vary. It should not be taken to refer strictly to numbers of exercises in different categories.

Knowledge

It is important that all students have an opportunity to consider the essential questions about government and civil society that continue to challenge thoughtful people. Although there are various ways of phrasing these questions, this specifications document follows the *National Standards for Civics and Government* in organizing them in five major categories.

What follows is a general description, expressed in the form of questions, of the five broad content areas that are to be assessed. A detailed summary of the content for each area by grade

can be found in Appendix A.

I. What Are Civic Life, Politics, and Government?

Citizens need to understand civic life, politics, government, and civil society so that they can make informed judgments about what government should and should not do, how they are to live their lives together, and how they can support the proper use of authority or combat the abuse of political power.

Civic life is the public life of citizens concerned with affairs of the community and nation as contrasted with private or personal life, which is devoted to the pursuit of private and personal satisfactions. *Politics* is a process by which people reach collective decisions that are generally regarded as binding and enforced as common policy. *Government* may be described as the formal institutions and processes of a politically organized society with authority to make, enforce, and interpret laws and other binding rules about matters of common interest and concern, such as society's order, security, and prosperity. The term government also refers to the group of people, acting in formal political institutions at national, state, and local levels, who exercise decision-making power or enforce laws and regulations. Some parts of government, such as Congress, state legislatures, and city councils make laws; other parts, including federal, state, and local agencies such as taxation authorities and police, enforce laws; and still others, such as federal and state courts, interpret laws and other rules. *Civil society* refers to voluntary non-governmental political, social, and economic activity. Among the many non-governmental actors who make up civil society are groups such as parent-teacher and professional associations, labor unions, religious organizations, and youth groups. The governmental and non-governmental realms sometimes overlap. Thus, one of the responsibilities of citizens is to distinguish the appropriate and inappropriate influence of one upon the other.

At the early elementary level, students may begin to understand government and civil society by analogy with the governance of the family and school. As they progress through school, their knowledge and understanding of civic life, politics, and government should increase and deepen.

II. What Are the Foundations of the American Political System?

The American political system is based upon the values and principles of constitutional democracy expressed in such fundamental American documents as the Declaration of Independence, the U.S. Constitution including the Bill of Rights, the Virginia Statute for Religious Freedom, the *Federalist Papers*, and Antifederalist writings. Other documents which express and elaborate upon the values and principles of the founding documents include the Seneca Falls Declaration of Sentiments and Resolutions, Martin Luther King's *Letter from Birmingham City Jail*, and landmark U.S. Supreme Court decisions. Such fundamental expressions of American principles and values are important for students to understand for

several reasons. First, Americans are a people bound together by the ideals, values, and principles they share rather than by kinship, ethnicity, or religion, which are ties that bind some other nations of the world. Second, Americans' ideals, values, and principles have shaped their political institutions and affected their political processes. Third, the ideals, values, and principles set forth in the nation's core documents are criteria which Americans use to judge the means and ends of government, as well as those of the myriad groups and organizations which are part of civil society. Finally, understanding of fundamental principles provides the basis for a reasoned commitment to the ideals, values, and principles of American constitutional democracy.

The values and principles of American constitutional democracy are sometimes in conflict, and their very meaning and application are often disputed. For example, although most Americans agree that the idea of equality is an important value, they may disagree about what priority it should be given in comparison with another value, such as liberty. And they may disagree on the meaning of equality when it is applied to a specific situation.

In addition, disparities have always existed between the realities of daily life and the ideals of American constitutional democracy. Citizens should thus be encouraged to consider that while the history of the United States has been marked by continuing attempts to narrow the gap between the nation's ideals and reality, it has also achieved a wide degree of consensus as to what those ideals are and what that reality ought to be. It is on the basis of these ideals that Americans have united in political movements to abolish slavery, extend the franchise, remove legal support for segregation, and provide equality of opportunity. Citizens should be familiar with historical and contemporary efforts in which Americans have joined forces to work toward the achievement of their shared ideals.

Americans, however, realize that the United States is not Utopia, nor is a constitutional democracy utopian. Rather, a constitutional democracy is a way of allowing the competing ideas, values, goals, and interests of people, individually or in groups, to compete with one another in a peaceful manner. A constitutional democracy affords its citizens means of reconciling their differences and their competing visions of truth without resorting to violence or oppression.

Students in the early grades should become acquainted with the basic values and principles which are the foundation of the American political system. Their knowledge and understanding should increase as they progress through middle and high school.

III. How Does the Government Established by the Constitution Embody the Purposes, Values, and Principles of American Democracy?

The system of government established by the Constitution has resulted in limited government and a complex dispersal of powers. As a result, Americans live under the jurisdiction of national,

state, and local governments, all of whose powers and responsibilities are separated and shared among different branches and agencies. Each of these governments—national, state, and local—affects directly the daily lives of all Americans: their security, their opportunities, their standard of living, and the taxes they pay.

The Framers of the Constitution saw this complex system as a principal means of limiting the power of government. Multiple levels of government provide numerous opportunities for citizens to participate in their own governance. The system also reflects the principle of popular sovereignty, enables citizens to hold their governments accountable, and helps to ensure the protection of the rights of individuals. Citizens who understand the justification for this system of limited, dispersed, and shared power and its design are able to evaluate, monitor, and influence it more effectively.

To understand the impact of the various levels of government on their daily lives, the lives of their communities, and the welfare of the nation as a whole, students need to understand how local, state, and national governments are organized, what they do, and how they interact.

IV. What Is the Relationship of the United States to Other Nations and to World Affairs?

The United States does not exist in isolation; it is part of an interconnected world in whose development it has played and continues to play an important role. The American political tradition, including the ideas expressed in the Declaration of Independence, the U.S. Constitution, and the Bill of Rights, has had a profound influence abroad. The nation's democratic ideals and the benefits of its open society have drawn the attention and inspired the hopes of people worldwide. In addition, the United States has exerted extensive economic, technological, and cultural influence on other nations. At the same time, the United States and its citizens have been deeply influenced by the institutions and practices of other countries and the cultures of other peoples.

To make judgments about the role of the United States in the world today and what course American foreign policy should take, citizens need to understand the major elements of international relations and how world affairs affect their own lives and the security and well-being of their communities, states, and nation. They also need to comprehend how commerce, travel, communications, and the international economy bring them into increasing relationships with people everywhere.

In elementary and middle schools, students should acquire basic knowledge of the relationship of the United States to other nations and to world affairs. In senior high school, students should develop a more sophisticated understanding of the behavior of the United States, other nations, and international organizations in the world arena.

V. What Are the Roles of Citizens in American Democracy?

Citizenship in American constitutional democracy differs from membership in authoritarian or totalitarian regimes. In the United States, each citizen is a full and equal member of a self-governing community and is endowed with fundamental rights and entrusted with responsibilities. Among those responsibilities is seeing that the rights of other individuals are respected. It also is a fundamental responsibility of citizens to see that government serves the purposes for which it was created and that it does not abuse the power which the people have delegated to it. For instance, the Declaration of Independence proclaims the primary purpose of government: "That to secure these Rights (Life, Liberty, and the Pursuit of Happiness) governments are instituted among Men." Further, the Preamble of the U.S. Constitution says that the purposes of government are to "establish Justice, insure domestic Tranquility, provide for the common defense, promote the general Welfare, and secure the Blessings of Liberty." Citizens are responsible for holding their government accountable to these purposes it was created to serve.

Citizens should understand that through their involvement in civic life and non-governmental organizations, they can help to improve the quality of life in their neighborhoods, communities, and nation. They also should understand that if they want their voices to be heard, they must become active participants in the political process. Although elections, campaigns, and voting are at the center of democratic institutions, citizens should be aware that beyond electoral politics there are many other participatory opportunities available to them. Furthermore, the attainment of individual and public goals and participation in political life tend to go hand-in-hand. The maintenance and improvement of American constitutional democracy is dependent upon the informed, effective, and responsible participation of its citizens.

All students should have a foundation of knowledge that includes understanding of all of the five questions described above, but the emphasis should differ according to grade level. Table 1 shows the intended distribution of the total item pool across the content areas for each of the three grades to be assessed.

Table 1 - Distribution of Exercise Pool Across Areas of Civic Knowledge: Grades Four, Eight, and Twelve

Grade	Questions				
	I What are civic life, politics and government?	II What are the foundations of the American political system?	III How does the government established by the Constitution embody the purposes, values, and principles of American democracy?	IV What is the relationship of the United States to other nations and to world affairs?	V What are the roles of citizens in American democracy?
Grade 4	25%	20%	15%	10%	30%
Grade 8	15%	25%	25%	15%	20%
Grade 12	10%	20%	25%	20%	25%

The percentage distribution found in Table 1 reflects both instructional practices in many schools across the nation, as well as the relative attention accorded to each overarching question in the assessment at each grade level.

Intellectual Skills

If citizens are to exercise their rights and discharge their responsibilities as members of self-governing communities, they not only need to acquire a body of knowledge about civic life, politics, and government; they also need to acquire relevant intellectual and participatory skills. Unfortunately, the importance of helping all students develop skills essential for effective and responsible citizenship is not always fully appreciated. Thanks to new insight into teaching and learning, however, much more is known about how children develop skills, acquire knowledge, and deepen their understandings. Something we understand now is that learning is “domain specific.” For each subject area, cognitive strategies are defined in terms of the concepts of the field. As a result, intellectual skills germane to the field of civics and government, as in other areas, cannot be learned in isolation. Knowledge of the content or subject matter of civics and government is necessary for example, to cast an intelligent vote, to understand public issues, or to interact with others to solve public problems.

Intellectual skills essential for informed, effective, and responsible citizenship encompass a broad range. They include identifying, describing, explaining, analyzing, and evaluating, taking, and defending positions on public issues. It is important to note that all of the skills listed above can require higher order thinking. For example, a student may be asked to identify a landmark decision of the U.S. Supreme Court as well as the criteria used by the Court as the basis for its

opinion, or perhaps, to describe the judicial process. Students can and should begin in the earliest grades to acquire the intellectual skills requisite for informed, effective, and responsible citizenship. They should continue to develop those skills as they proceed through the middle grades and high school.

Table 2 shows the recommended grade level distribution of the total item pool across the cognitive dimension for grades four, eight, and twelve.

Table 2 - Distribution of Exercise Pool Across Intellectual Skills: Grades Four, Eight, and Twelve			
Grade	Intellectual Skills		
	Identifying/ Describing	Explaining and Analyzing	Evaluating, Taking, and Defending a Position
Grade 4	40%	30%	30%
Grade 8	35%	35%	30%
Grade 12	25%	40%	35%

Participatory Skills

In addition to assessing the content knowledge and intellectual skills essential to the informed, effective, and responsible citizen of a constitutional democracy, attention needs to be given to the development of participatory skills. Participatory skills can be grouped into three large categories: interacting, monitoring, and influencing. Interacting involves, for example, working in small groups or committees, building coalitions, using electronic resources to obtain or exchange information or opinions, performing school or community services, and deliberating on public issues. Monitoring can be described, for example, as listening to fellow citizens on the proceedings of public bodies, questioning public officials, following public issues in the media, attending public meetings and hearings, and interviewing people knowledgeable about civic affairs. Voting, writing, speaking, petitioning, and taking an active role in civic or political groups all are examples of influencing.

Students can and should begin in the earliest grades to acquire the participatory skills requisite for informed, effective, and responsible citizenship. Direct measurement of participatory skills, such as participating in school governance or attending a public meeting, is beyond the scope of this assessment, as is surveying students' opinions of them. However, test exercises will be developed to test students' knowledge of these skills and understanding of their appropriate use. In developing the civics assessment exercise pool, approximately 10 to 15 percent of the tasks

should relate to students' knowledge and understanding of participatory skills.

Civic Dispositions

Civic dispositions are traits of public and private character which are essential to the preservation and improvement of American constitutional democracy. Civic dispositions develop slowly over time as a result of what one learns and experiences in the home, school, community, and organizations of civil society. These dispositions include becoming an independent member of society; assuming the personal, political, and economic responsibilities of a citizen; respecting individual worth and human dignity; participating in civic affairs in an informed, thoughtful and effective manner; and promoting the healthy functioning of American constitutional democracy.

The scope of this assessment does not include the measurement of student attitudes or opinions, but rather students' understanding of the role and importance of these dispositions in our system will be measured. In no way will students' attitudes be measured, nor will their families' positions or activities on political issues be addressed.

In the civics assessment exercise pool, approximately 10 to 15 percent of the testing time at each grade level will be devoted to questions related to civic dispositions, usually in conjunction with knowledge and intellectual skills. For example, students may be asked to describe the importance of considering the rights and interests of others and of participating in civic affairs in an informed, thoughtful and civil manner.

Context

Context refers to the arenas in which civic knowledge is acquired, civic skills are employed, and civic dispositions are developed. Contexts in which students learn about civics include the home, school, community, state, nation, and world. These contexts should be taken into account in any assessment of civic knowledge. Learning and applying civic knowledge and skills begins in the home and with early social interaction among friends, relatives, and members of the community. This learning process continues in school as children interact with peers, teachers, school staff members, and administrators, and learn about rules, accepted behaviors, and basic democratic and constitutional principles and values. All of these contexts provide a venue for students to learn about the formal and informal processes of government and civil society.

In developing assessment exercises, the emphasis allotted to differing contexts varies by grade level. At all levels, a balance should be sought between instances involving formal governmental structure and functions and the less formal manifestations of the organizations and relationships which constitute civil society.

Allocation of Testing Time

The total examination time (length of test sitting) for each student will be 50 minutes, broken up into two blocks of 25 minutes duration.

Review Process and Criteria

Civics Expert Review

In order to ensure the development of exercises (items) that adequately represent the content domain and exhibit proper psychometric characteristics, as well as to construct an item pool that will facilitate assessment scoring relative to the three achievement levels, it is important that review by recognized experts in the field, competent in test construction and relevant content areas of civics and government, be incorporated during the assessment development process. Therefore, the development, field testing, and selection of the assessment items will be monitored by an item development panel consisting of the Civics Consensus Planning and Steering Committees, and teachers, civics educators, and other subject area experts. To ensure congruence between the Framework and Specifications, and the civics item pool, policy of the National Assessment Governing Board requires that a minimum of 20 percent of the item development panel be comprised of consensus committee members.

After the test items have been developed, the item development panel will review the item pool at each grade level to judge the items for congruence with the Framework and the Specifications document on criteria such as grade level appropriateness, technical accuracy, content validity, variety of item format, and appropriateness of classification labels that reference the items to the assessment dimensions they purport to measure. In addition, reviewers will insure that the item pool is balanced with respect to both the content and cognitive components, and that it is representative of the essential ideas in content described in the achievement level definitions.

Exercises will be reviewed again after field testing as part of the process of selecting the items that will appear in the operational assessment. Exercises with poor discrimination parameters will be considered for elimination at this point, and any items that statistical evaluation reveals to be technically flawed will be dropped. However, items will not be eliminated *solely* because of their level of difficulty. A comprehensive range of item difficulties is to be maintained, and items will not be ruled out because they are too easy or too hard. Such items that appear otherwise technically sound may be retained if necessary to assure balance and coverage with respect to content and cognitive components.

Bias Review

All items will be first screened for evidence of cultural or ideological bias, or lack of ethnic and

gender sensitivity or political balance, and will be subjected to Differential Item Functioning (DIF) analyses following accepted psychometric practices. Following such analyses, items flagged as potentially biased will be carefully reviewed. If after close scrutiny an item appears to be a valid measure of appropriate civic content, and if no plausible explanation for the DIF is apparent, the item may be retained if necessary to maintain balance and coverage with respect to content and cognitive components. In accordance with NAEP law, the National Assessment Governing Board has final approval authority over all cognitive items. The Board's Review for bias and appropriateness takes place prior to field testing, and again after the field test stage prior to the operational assessment.

Scoring

General Criteria

The assessment will be designed to facilitate reporting using *quantitative scales* and *narrative descriptions* of typical exercise solutions by students.

Quantitative scales will be defined *within*, not across, age/grade levels. An overall posterior score distribution will be estimated for each student, and the distribution of plausible values will be reported in accordance with standard NAEP procedures. There will be a set of anchor items given to grades four and eight, and to grades eight and twelve, and sufficient exercises will be included in the assessment to assure the precision necessary to report results on five separate content subscales for the nation as a whole to the extent that such subscales are reliable and meaningful.

For reporting of subgroup performance, it may be necessary to form weighted composites of these subscales. If such a combination of scale scores is used, reports of overall score distributions should make clear that they are composites of separate subscales.

Exercise Types

Every exercise (item) is composed of a kind of stimulus and a type of response. Acceptable stimuli include text, graphic material, pictorial material, and any combination of the above. Response modes include multiple-choice and written open-ended (both short answer and extended response). All of the stimuli and response modes should be combined for use in the development of the above scores and scales.

Scoring of Constructed Response Exercises

Recommendations for scoring student responses to open-ended questions are consistent with current practices in NAEP. Scoring rubrics for short answer exercises should consist of a three-

point scale, with specific criteria provided for responses at each score level. Extended open-ended exercises should be scored using a four-point scale to obtain more in-depth information from these longer, more complex student responses.

Scoring protocols (rubrics) should be created for constructed response items (which include both short and extended response written exercises) as the exercises are being developed. After the civics items have been field tested, the scoring rubrics should be refined based on actual student responses. Scores should be assigned within the rubrics of complex items to reflect the quality of the responses, and each point on the scoring rubric should contain specific criteria for the desired response at each level. That is, scoring rubrics must adhere to the requirements for knowledge and skills as defined in the civics assessment content outline for each grade level, and there must be a very tight match between the demands of the test question and the criteria contained in the scoring rubric.

Test exercises must be designed so that the components to be scored are quite evident. Requirements of each test question should communicate clearly to students what is being asked and how, in general, their responses will be evaluated. Criteria should be distinctly defined so that raters will understand clearly how to evaluate the student responses. Finally, each score point in the rubric should be sufficiently differentiated to allow raters to apply the various points on the scale consistently. An appropriate IRT model for polytomous exercise response data should be used in scoring the open-ended items to accommodate a range of possible scores, e.g., 0 to 4, rather than just assigning a right or wrong score.

Score Reporting

No method of reporting of NAEP results has been optimal for all purposes. Consequently, multiple methods of reporting results should be investigated. In particular, as stated above, (scale) scores (and/or percentages) should be supplemented with narrative descriptions for individual illustrative items or clusters of items. Detailed recommendations for reporting are presented in a separate document entitled *Recommendations on Reporting*.

Recommendations for Trend Assessment

Although the new framework for the 1998 NAEP civics assessment differs substantially from the one used in 1988, the Steering and Planning Committees strongly recommend that the 1998 assessment include a trend component. Given the ten-year lapse in assessing civics, the project committees agreed that a small-scale, cost-effective trend component would provide invaluable information on students' knowledge of civics to policymakers, educators, and the general public.

An effective design for assessing change in student performance between 1988 and 1998 would involve administering one or two intact blocks (15 minute sets) of items from the 1988 NAEP

civics assessment to a subsample of students in each grade. This design would permit analyses on the percentage of items students answered correctly in 1988 compared to ten years later. This trend design also would yield comparative information on particular questions or items of special interest to civics educators and policymakers. For example, one could examine whether students knew more or less about some aspect of the U.S. Constitution, based upon item-specific results. Further details regarding the design, analyses, reporting, and other features of the trend component will be resolved by the National Assessment Governing Board, Educational Testing Service (ETS), the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES), and the NAEP grantee.

EXERCISE SPECIFICATIONS

General Characteristics of Exercise Development

All exercises should test only the content included in the detailed content specifications. Exercises should focus on the key concepts, principles, and skills at the appropriate grade level and should avoid testing obscure or esoteric material. In addition, the item pool should be developed in such a way as to ensure that the content described in the achievement level definitions given below is reflected at each grade level.

Preliminary Achievement Level Descriptions

Achievement levels describe how well students should perform on the knowledge and skills measured by the assessment. The levels define appropriate expectations of student performance in civics at grades four, eight, and twelve as measured by NAEP. Three achievement levels—**Basic**, **Proficient**, and **Advanced**—have been established by the National Assessment Governing Board for each grade level and every assessment area.

Basic denotes partial mastery of the knowledge and skills, but performance that is fundamental for adequate work in grades four, eight, and twelve. **Proficient** represents solid academic performance and competency over challenging subject matter. **Advanced** performance on this assessment represents performance that is equal to that expected of top students in other industrialized nations—the ability to think critically about civics issues and to integrate knowledge and skills in problem solving situations. Item writers should avail themselves of the state assessment materials assembled by the Planning and Steering Committees in order to familiarize themselves with expectations held for advanced students elsewhere.

The following achievement level descriptions are solely illustrative and only sample the content for the three grade levels. Furthermore, the achievement levels are cumulative in nature; each incorporates the expectations listed in the preceding levels. Thus, students at the proficient level should be able to do what is expected of students at the basic level and more, while students at the advanced level should be able to do what is expected of students at the proficient level and more. Also, students at the eighth grade basic level should be able to do what is expected of students at the fourth grade advanced level and more, while students at the twelfth grade basic level should be able to do all that is expected of students at the eighth grade advanced level and more.

Fourth Grade Basic

Students should be able to:

- Explain what government is and describe what governments do
- Explain the purposes of rules and laws in the school and the community
- Recognize the difference between power and authority
- Explain that Americans are united by commonly held values, principles, and beliefs
- Describe the many forms of diversity in American society
- Identify peaceful means for managing conflict
- Describe important services that local, state, and national governments provide
- Recognize the U.S. Constitution as the basis for American government
- Explain that the world is divided into many nations
- Explain how and why laws can provide order, predictability, and security
- Explain the importance of limited government
- Define what a citizen is
- Distinguish between rights and responsibilities of citizens
- Identify ways students can participate in the governance of their school and community
- Identify the qualities of a good leader, choose a classroom or school leaders, and defend their choice
- Explain which level of government they should contact to express their opinions or to get help with specific problems

Fourth Grade Proficient

Students should be able to do what is expected of students at the fourth grade basic level and to do the following:

- Explain the importance of government in the classroom, school, community, and state
- Assess the strengths and weaknesses of a school rule or a law
- Explain how the rule of law protects individual rights and the common good
- Explain how politics helps people make decisions about the ways they live together
- Explain ways groups in schools and communities can manage conflict peacefully
- Explain what the national government is and what it does
- Explain how holidays and symbols (e.g. flag, Statue of Liberty) reflect common American values
- Evaluate, take, and defend a position on why it is important for people to participate in government
- Identify heads of the executive branches of their local, state, and national governments
- Describe ways in which nations interact with one another and try to resolve problems
- Explain that students are citizens of their classroom, community, state, and nation
- Describe the rights and responsibilities of a citizen

Fourth Grade Advanced

Students should be able to do what is expected of students at the fourth grade proficient level, and to do the following:

- Explain the meaning of citizenship in the United States
- Evaluate, take, and defend positions on the purposes government should serve
- Explain sources of authority
- Describe how government makes it possible for people to work together to accomplish goals they could not achieve alone
- Identify the costs and benefits of unity and diversity
- Explain why it is important that citizens hold in common the values and principles expressed in the nation's core documents
- Explain ways in which citizens can monitor their governments and why it is important for them to do so
- Explain how nations benefit when they resolve conflicts peacefully
- Evaluate, take, and defend a position on why fulfilling one's civic responsibilities is important
- Evaluate, take, and defend a position on an issue involving a conflict between individual rights and the common good
- Explain the major difference between limited and unlimited government

Eighth Grade Basic

Students should be able to do what is expected of students at the fourth grade advanced level, and to do the following:

- Distinguish between a subject and a citizen
- Explain the meaning of citizenship in the United States
- Identify and describe the essential characteristics of government, politics, the rule of law, and constitutions
- Evaluate competing ideas about the purposes of government
- Describe the major characteristics of systems of shared powers and of parliamentary systems
- Explain the advantages and disadvantages of confederal, federal, and unitary systems of government
- Identify and describe fundamental principles and values in core American documents of the founding era such as the Declaration of Independence and the U.S. Constitution, including the Bill of Rights and other amendments
- Explain which level of government they should contact to express their opinions or to get help with specific problems
- Explain the costs and benefits of unity and diversity using contemporary and historical examples

- Explain the function of elections, political parties, and interest groups in a democratic society
- Identify major principles of American constitutional government, such as federalism, separation of powers, checks and balances, government by consent of the governed, and individual rights
- Explain why it is important that citizens hold in common the values and principles expressed in the nation's core documents
- Identify major governmental and non-governmental international organizations and their functions
- Evaluate, take, and defend positions on the importance of certain dispositions or traits of character for enhancing citizenship
- Explain how the political process provides opportunities for citizens to influence government
- Identify the personal, political, and economic rights and responsibilities of citizens and explain their importance
- Describe how the world is divided into nation-states

Eighth Grade Proficient

Students should be able to do what is expected of students at the eighth grade basic level and to do the following:

- Describe and explain the essential characteristics of limited and unlimited government and representative democracy
- Distinguish between government and civil society
- Explain how and why powers are divided and shared between the national and state governments
- Identify discrepancies between the ideals expressed in the nation's core documents and reality and ways in which those discrepancies have been addressed in the past and how our constitutional democracy can be improved today by individual and collective participation
- Identify, describe, and explain fundamental ideas in the nation's core documents of the founding era and core documents of subsequent periods in U.S. history which pertain to the development of the country's constitutional democracy
- Explain how and why legislative, executive, and judicial powers are distributed, shared, and limited
- Identify and explain the significance of historical experience and of geographical, social, and economic factors that have helped to shape American society, e.g., the absence of a titled nobility or inherited caste system, religious freedom, large-scale immigration, universal public education, social, economic and geographic mobility, a market economy
- Explain the importance for themselves, their communities, and the nation of the

fundamental values and principles of American constitutional democracy, e.g., individual rights, the common good, justice, liberty, equality of opportunity, truth, patriotism

- Make informed judgements about what government should do and should not do
- Explain the importance of the rule of law
- Explain how and why the U.S. Constitution establishes and limits the powers of government
- Explain the conditions under which constitutional government flourishes
- Explain how the U.S. has influenced other nations and how other nations have influenced the American political process and society
- Explain the effects of significant political, demographic, and environmental developments and trends in the world
- Explain how citizens can interact with one another and how they can monitor and influence their government

Eighth Grade Advanced

Students should be able to do what is expected of students at the eighth grade proficient level, and to do the following:

- Compare, contrast, and evaluate alternative ways of organizing constitutional governments
- Identify, explain, and evaluate historical and contemporary efforts to narrow discrepancies between American ideals and realities
- Explain why civil society is important to the maintenance of limited government
- Evaluate ways conflicts can be resolved in a peaceful manner that respects individual rights and promotes the common good
- Explain how law is used to achieve the purposes of American constitutional government, such as maintaining order and protecting the rights of individuals
- Explain how U.S. foreign policy is made and the means by which it is carried out
- Explain reasons for and consequences of the breakdown of order among nation-states
- Explain the relationship between participation in civic life and the attainment of personal and public goals
- Evaluate, take, and defend positions on issues in which fundamental values and principles are in conflict, such as liberty and equality, individual rights and the common good, and majority rule and minority rights
- Explain how citizens can monitor and influence local, state, and national government
- Evaluate, take, and defend positions regarding traits of public and private character which promote the healthy functioning of American constitutional democracy

Twelfth Grade Basic

Students should be able to do what is expected of students at the eighth grade advanced level, and to do the following:

- Explain the meaning of citizenship in the United States
- Evaluate, take, and defend positions on issues regarding the criteria used for naturalization
- Identify and explain the essential characteristics of civic life, nation-state, government and politics, and the place of law in American society
- Explain and evaluate civil society as a prerequisite of limited government
- Describe the fundamental ideas of American constitutional government and explain their importance
- Evaluate, take, and defend positions on issues relating to public policy
- Evaluate sources of information related to public policy issues
- Identify the principal foreign policy positions of the United States and describe their significance
- Describe the purposes and functions of major governmental and non-governmental organizations
- Explain the reasons for and the consequences of the breakdown of order among nation-states, including consequences which are important in the students' own lives
- Explain why civic dispositions that incline citizens to public affairs are important in a constitutional democracy
- Describe the many ways in which citizens can interact, monitor, and influence public policy and why it is important for them to do so

Twelfth Grade Proficient

Students should be able to do what is expected of students at the twelfth grade basic level and to do the following:

- Evaluate the place of law in American society as it relates to the protection of individual rights and the promotion of the common good
- Explain the value of constitutions both as devices for preserving core values and principles and as vehicles for change and for resolving social issues
- Describe the character of American political conflict and explain factors that usually tend to prevent it or lower its intensity, e.g., shared respect for the Constitution and its principles, concept of a loyal opposition, acceptance of majority rule tempered by respect for minority rights, recourse to the legal system to manage conflicts
- Evaluate the purposes and operation of international organizations
- Evaluate the roles played by political parties and elections in a democracy

- Evaluate, take, and defend positions on issues relating to public policy in which fundamental values and principles are in conflict
- Evaluate, take, and defend positions on foreign policy issues in light of American national interests, values, and principles
- Evaluate ways and means that citizens can monitor and influence local, state, and national governments

Twelfth Grade Advanced

Students should be able to do what is expected of students at the twelfth grade proficient level, and to do the following:

- Describe the characteristics and predict the probable consequences of alternative electoral and political systems
- Describe the major characteristics of parliamentary systems and systems based on shared powers among the three branches of government
- Compare the advantages and disadvantages of confederal, federal, and unitary systems of government
- Assess the costs and benefits of alternative forms of constitutional democracy
- Describe how domestic and foreign policies are made and carried out
- Compare the distinctive characteristics of American society and its political culture with that of other countries
- Evaluate, take, and defend positions on current foreign policy issues in light of American national interests, values, and principles
- Explain how citizens interact and monitor public policy and how they can work individually and collectively to influence public policy
- Evaluate historical and contemporary political communication using such criteria as logical validity, factual accuracy, and emotional appeal
- Identify, explain, and evaluate historical and contemporary efforts to narrow the gap between American ideals and reality through individual, social, and political action
- Evaluate, take, and defend positions about the functions of political leadership and the importance of public service in American democracy
- Explain and evaluate ethical dilemmas that might confront political leaders

Exercise Format Specifications

For the 1998 NAEP civics assessment, each exercise will contain a specific stimulus selected from a variety of materials, and one of three response modes.

Stimulus Materials

In the development of all types of test items, it is important to control the stimulus tightly. Item

developers must formulate clearly in their own minds the nature of the task to be performed by the examinee (i.e., the kind of operation the student is intended to carry out), define the materials on which the operation is to be carried out, and incorporate into the exercise a clear statement of the task to be performed. This statement must include the situation or setting the students are to be given and what they are to do.

The area of civics provides an exciting array of materials upon which to base the assessment tasks. Where possible, a wide variety of authentic stimulus materials should be used that are appropriate (understandable) at each of the grade levels. In addition, careful consideration should be given to the amount and level of reading material presented in the test questions. Material related to current events should be as up-to-date as possible to ensure relevance. Not all stimulus material need be printed in the test booklet. For example, students may be asked questions about a separate document such as a sample ballot, a draft bill, or the lyrics of a song.

To represent the dynamic, engaging nature of civics, the assessment should include many test questions related to non-text-based stimulus material. As with the written stimuli, these graphic or pictorial materials may be printed in the test booklet or be included as separate hands-on information for students. Some extended response questions may require students to consider several related stimulus materials, combining both text and non-text formats. For example, students may be asked to take a position regarding a community planning issue after examining a map and reading about the proposed change.

It is as important for the item writers to consider the amount of data projected by a particular stimulus, as it is to select the appropriate type of stimulus. Therefore Table 3 provides guidelines for selecting stimulus materials that can appropriately be used at each grade level. The examples in Table 3 are meant to be illustrative, rather than exhaustive.

Table 3 - Guidelines for Selecting Stimulus Materials for Each Grade Level		
Grade	Stimulus Type	
	Text-Based Material	Graphic/Pictorial Material
Four	<p style="text-align: center;">60%</p> Core documents, e.g., the Pledge of Allegiance Appropriate letters to the editor Letters, diaries, journals School rules/laws Excerpts from newspaper articles and periodicals published for students Excerpts from children's literature Pro/con arguments Hypothetical cases	<p style="text-align: center;">40%</p> Photographs, illustrations, drawings, cartoons related to civics Videos Pictorial representations Simple bar graphs Pie charts (with limited data) Posters Poll/survey results
Eight	<p style="text-align: center;">65%</p> Material used in 4th grade, and: Core documents, e.g., Declaration of Independence, and U.S. Constitution Historical and hypothetical cases Section of telephone books - local and state government Recall petitions Driver's license applications Laws and regulations Debates and arguments Jury duty forms Tax forms Song lyrics	<p style="text-align: center;">35%</p> Material used in 4th grade, and: Poll/survey results Editorial cartoons Tables Campaign slogans Safety and anti-discrimination posters Zoning notices Sample ballots Census data
Twelve	<p style="text-align: center;">65%</p> Material used in 8th grade, and: Core documents, e.g., U.S. Constitution, the Federalist Papers Landmark decisions Samples of legislation Voter registration forms Subpoenas, jury instructions, oaths of office Initiative and recall petitions Naturalization applications Excerpts from political party platforms Draft registration forms Lobbyist registration forms Ethics disclosure forms	<p style="text-align: center;">35%</p> Material used in 8th grade, and: Tax bills Maps of congressional districts Budget summaries Poll/survey instruments

Exercise Formats

The 1998 NAEP civics assessment will consist of three exercise formats: multiple-choice exercises, short answer open-ended exercises, and extended response open-ended exercises.

Multiple-choice exercises will be of the conventional single correct option format with four options. Short written answer items require a response varying in length from one or two words or phrases to several sentences, while extended response items require the student to write one or more paragraphs. Given the scope of objectives, the recommended percentages of total student time to be spent on multiple-choice and open-ended exercises is described, by grade, in Table 4.

Table 4 - Recommended Percentages, by Grade, of Total Student Time to Be Spent on Multiple-Choice and Open-Ended Exercises			
Grade	Exercise Type		
	Multiple-Choice	Short Answer	Extended Response
Four	60%	30%	10%
Eight	60%	30%	10%
Twelve	60%	30%	10%

To avoid an exercise-format effect, it is desirable to use all formats to test each of the content areas being measured. To ensure a more authentic assessment for students, there should be a combination of exercise response formats in each individual test booklet. In order to prevent students from becoming confused when faced with multiple item formats, clear directions must be given at the beginning of each test booklet. In addition, at the beginning of the assessment, students should be guided through relevant sample item formats by the test administrators using carefully scripted directions.

It is important for item developers to keep in mind that all of the exercise formats—multiple-choice, short answer open-ended items, and extended response open-ended items—can be constructed to require higher order thinking skills, and that all of the intellectual skills require higher order thinking, as well. Therefore, all of the exercise formats suggested can and should be used to measure the entire range of intellectual skills.

Multiple-Choice Items

Good multiple-choice items can be constructed to probe students' ability to analyze and evaluate facts and concepts in civics, and to assess their intellectual and participatory skill levels, as well as to probe recall and comprehension. Both stand-alone multiple-choice questions and a series of questions related to stimulus selections are acceptable. The stand-alone multiple-choice question format may consist of a short phrase or sentence followed by four response options. In addition, stand-alone multiple-choice questions may require students to read a brief excerpt or quotation, interpret a chart, or evaluate the significance of a document. Other appropriate uses of multiple-

choice items include a series of several test questions related to a particular stimulus selection, such as a political cartoon, a table of election results, or other material.

Multiple-choice items have the following requirements for item options:

- There must be only one clearly identifiable correct option for each question; if valid arguments can be made for more than one option, the item is unacceptable.
- The correct option must be a concise answer that will satisfy any qualified judge as being an adequate short answer to the question. The response must not answer more than the stem question asks.
- Distractors should be plausible and homogeneous. Options that are obviously wrong or nonsensical effectively reduce the number of possible correct answers and, thus, reduce the validity of the item. Sources of good distractors include common misinterpretations and errors in reasoning, statements that are true but that are not correct answers to the questions posed in the item stems, statements that are either too broad or too narrow to be correct, and carefully worded incorrect statements that may sound plausible to the uncritical thinker.
- Distractors must be written with as much care and precision as the correct option so that all alternatives are equally attractive to a student who guesses. Each option should be a separate and distinctly different response to the stem. Responses should not overlap or include other responses. "All of these," or "None of these," should never be used as an option.
- Both the stem and the options should be as brief and straightforward as possible. All options should be parallel in point of view and grammatical structure and similar in length. The stem should include any words that otherwise would have to be repeated in each option.
- Where extensive stimulus materials are used, several multiple-choice items should be used to keep reading time to a minimum.
- Stimulus materials should avoid teaching students content before the assessment exercises assess it.

Constructed Response Exercises

Constructed response exercises, or open-ended items requiring written responses, can provide insights into students' abilities to communicate about civics. Specifically, these items can be used to probe students' abilities to explain and describe their civics knowledge, analyze their understanding of events and phenomena, and evaluate their reasoning and ability to take and defend a position of a public or private situation, and/or a real life problem. Short answer tasks may require students to provide a short descriptive phrase, several sentences, or other similar response to answer a question. Extended response tasks may ask students to write a couple of paragraphs or more, develop a chart to evaluate the advantages and disadvantages of a certain course of action, respond to an argument citing appropriate evidence, or assess the costs and benefits of alternatives. For example, at the twelfth grade level, an exercise could be devised that provides pro/con arguments regarding proposed legislation and then asks students to evaluate the arguments and take and defend a position for or against the proposed measure.

These exercises—written short answer and written extended response—will require hand scoring with trained raters using *a priori* scoring protocols. The stimulus for all items should be defined to identify the elements that constitute a satisfactory response, indicating to the student in general how the exercise will be scored. All response modes can be used for all three grades.

Content Specifications

The Content Specifications contain detailed definitions, by grade level, of all the content to be assessed in the five content areas, as well as detailed definitions of the intellectual and participatory skills to be assessed, and of the civic dispositions.

Knowledge

Allowable content for the 1998 NAEP civics assessment is presented, by grade level, in the content outline in Appendix A. The overall content outline is identical across all of the grades: a Roman numeral denotes the content area question, capital letters demarcate the topics, Arabic numerals are used to number the educational objectives, and lower-case letters denote specific examples for the educational objectives. The topics, subtopics, and educational objectives may differ from grade to grade. Even though within-grade scaling is to be used, there will be a set of anchor items given to grades four and eight, and to grades eight and twelve. Figure 1 summarizes the topics for each of the five content areas by grade.

Figure 1: Organizing Questions and Content Summary for NAEP Civics Assessment

I. WHAT ARE CIVIC LIFE, POLITICS, AND GOVERNMENT?		
Grade 4	Grade 8	Grade 12
<p>Definition of government</p> <p>Difference between power and authority</p> <p>Necessity and purposes of government</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Make, carry out, and enforce laws ▪ Manage conflicts ▪ Provide for the defense of the nation <p>Importance of rules and laws</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Purposes of rules and laws ▪ Evaluating rules and laws <p>Major difference between limited government and unlimited government</p>	<p>Definition of civic life, politics, government, and civil society</p> <p>Difference between power and authority</p> <p>Necessity and purposes of politics and government</p> <p>Limited and unlimited governments</p> <p>The rule of law</p> <p>Purposes and uses of constitutions</p> <p>Conditions under which constitutional governments flourish</p> <p>Alternative ways of organizing constitutional governments</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Shared powers and parliamentary systems ▪ Confederal, federal, and unitary systems 	<p>Definition of civic life, politics, constitutional government, and civil society</p> <p>Difference between power and authority</p> <p>Necessity and purposes of politics and government</p> <p>Limited and unlimited governments</p> <p>The rule of law</p> <p>Civil society and limited government</p> <p>Relationship of limited government to political and economic freedom</p> <p>Purposes and uses of constitutions</p> <p>Conditions under which constitutional government flourishes</p> <p>Alternative ways of organizing constitutional governments</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Shared powers and parliamentary systems ▪ Confederal, federal, and unitary systems <p>Obligations of representatives in constitutional governments</p>

Figure 1 (cont.): Organizing Questions and Content Summary for NAEP Civics Assessment

II. WHAT ARE THE FOUNDATIONS OF THE AMERICAN POLITICAL SYSTEM?		
Grade 4	Grade 8	Grade 12
<p>Fundamental values and principles</p> <p>Distinctive characteristics of American society</p> <p>Unity and diversity in American society</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Ideals of American democracy ▪ American identity ▪ Costs and benefits of unity and diversity <p>Prevention and management of conflicts</p>	<p>American idea of constitutional government</p> <p>Distinctive characteristics of American society</p> <p>Role of voluntarism in American life</p> <p>Unity and diversity in American society</p> <p>Character of American political conflict</p> <p>Fundamental values and principles of American constitutional democracy</p> <p>Conflicts among values and principles in American political and social life</p> <p>Disparities between ideals and reality in American political and social life</p>	<p>American idea of constitutional government</p> <p>Distinctive characteristics of American society</p> <p>Role of voluntarism in American life</p> <p>Role of organized groups in political life</p> <p>Unity and diversity in American society</p> <p>Character of American political conflict</p> <p>Influence of classical liberalism and republicanism on American constitutional democracy</p> <p>Fundamental values and principles of American constitutional democracy</p> <p>Conflicts among values and principles in American political and social life</p> <p>Disparities between ideals and reality in American political and social life</p>

Figure 1 (cont.): Organizing Questions and Content Summary for NAEP Civics Assessment

III. HOW DOES THE GOVERNMENT ESTABLISHED BY THE CONSTITUTION EMBODY THE PURPOSES, VALUES, AND PRINCIPLES OF AMERICAN DEMOCRACY?		
Grade 4	Grade 8	Grade 12
<p>Meaning and importance of the United States Constitution</p> <p>Major responsibilities and services of state governments</p> <p>Major responsibilities and services of local governments</p> <p>Key leaders in local, state, and national governments</p> <p>Contacting public officials and agencies</p>	<p>Distributing, sharing, and limiting powers of the national government</p> <p>Major responsibilities of national government for domestic and foreign policy</p> <p>The federal system</p> <p>Organization and major responsibilities of state and local governments</p> <p>Financing government through taxation</p> <p>Law in American society</p> <p>Political communication</p> <p>Political parties, interest groups, and campaigns</p> <p>Voting and elections</p> <p>Civil society: nongovernmental associations and groups</p> <p>Forming and carrying out public policy</p> <p>Leaders in local, state, and national governments: how to monitor and influence them</p>	<p>Distributing governmental power and preventing its abuse</p> <p>Major responsibilities of the national government</p> <p>Constitutional status and major responsibilities of state and local governments</p> <p>Financing government through taxation</p> <p>Law in American society and protection of individual rights</p> <p>The public agenda</p> <p>Political communication: television, radio, press, and political persuasion</p> <p>Political parties, interest groups, campaigns, and elections</p> <p>Public opinion and behavior of the electorate</p> <p>Civil society: nongovernmental associations and groups</p> <p>Forming and carrying out public policy</p> <p>Leaders in local, state, and national governments: how to monitor and influence them</p>

Figure 1 (cont.): Organizing Questions and Content Summary for NAEP Civics Assessment

IV. WHAT IS THE RELATIONSHIP OF THE UNITED STATES TO OTHER NATIONS AND TO WORLD AFFAIRS?		
Grade 4	Grade 8	Grade 12
<p>The concept of nation</p> <p>Interaction among nations</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ trade ▪ diplomacy ▪ cultural context ▪ treaties and agreements ▪ military force <p>Importance of peaceful resolution of international conflicts</p>	<p>Nation-states</p> <p>Interaction among nation-states</p> <p>United States relations with other nation-states</p> <p>Major governmental and non-governmental international organizations</p> <p>Impact of the American concept of democracy and individual rights on the world</p> <p>The influence of other nations on American politics and society</p> <p>Effects of significant world political, demographic, and environmental developments and trends on the United States</p>	<p>Nation-states</p> <p>Interaction among nation-states</p> <p>The breakdown of order among nation-states</p> <p>Making and implementing United States foreign policy</p> <p>Ends and means of United States foreign policy</p> <p>Major foreign policy positions of the United States</p> <p>The influence of other nations on American politics and society</p> <p>Impact of the American concept of democracy and individual rights on the world</p> <p>Effects of significant world political, demographic, and environmental developments and trends on the United States</p> <p>United States and major governmental and non-governmental international organizations</p>

Figure 1 (cont.): Organizing Questions and Content Summary for NAEP Civics Assessment

V. WHAT ARE THE ROLES OF CITIZENS IN AMERICAN DEMOCRACY?		
Grade 4	Grade 8	Grade 12
<p>Meaning of citizenship; becoming a citizen</p> <p>Important rights of citizens</p> <p>Personal and civic responsibilities</p> <p>Civic dispositions that foster</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Individual independence ▪ Respect for human dignity ▪ Assumption of personal, political, and economic responsibilities ▪ Participation in civic affairs ▪ Healthy functioning of American constitutional democracy <p>Opportunities for civic participation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Discussing public issues ▪ Communicating with public officials and agencies ▪ Voting ▪ Attending meetings of governing bodies <p>Importance of political leadership and public service</p> <p>Criteria for selecting leaders</p>	<p>Difference between a subject and a nation</p> <p>Meaning of citizenship; becoming a citizen</p> <p>Personal, political, and economic rights</p> <p>Scope and limits of rights</p> <p>Personal and civic responsibilities</p> <p>Civic dispositions that foster</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Individual independence ▪ Respect for human dignity ▪ Assumption of personal, political, and economic responsibilities ▪ Participation in civic affairs ▪ Healthy functioning of American constitutional democracy <p>Opportunities for civic participation</p> <p>Criteria for selecting leaders</p> <p>Importance of political leadership and public service</p>	<p>Meaning of citizenship; becoming a citizen</p> <p>Personal, political, and economic rights</p> <p>Relationships among personal, political, and economic rights</p> <p>Scope and limits of rights</p> <p>Personal and civic responsibilities</p> <p>Relationship between politics and the attainment of individual and public goals</p> <p>Difference between political and social participation</p> <p>Civic dispositions that foster</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Individual independence ▪ Respect for human dignity ▪ Assumption of personal, political, and economic responsibilities ▪ Participation in civic affairs ▪ Healthy functioning of American constitutional democracy <p>Opportunities for civic participation</p> <p>Criteria for selecting leaders</p> <p>Importance of political leadership and public service</p>

Intellectual Skills

Intellectual skills, sometimes called critical or higher order thinking skills, germane to the field of civics and government cannot be taught in isolation; knowledge of the content or subject matter of civics and government is necessary, for example, to cast an intelligent vote, to understand public issues, or to join with others to solve public problems. Students can and should begin in the earliest grades to acquire the intellectual and participatory skills requisite for informed, effective, and responsible citizenship. They should continue to develop those skills as they proceed through the middle grades and high school.

The intellectual skills essential for informed, effective, and responsible citizenship can be categorized as identifying, describing, explaining, analyzing, and evaluating, taking, and defending positions on public issues. Item developers can and should use the entire range of exercise formats (multiple-choice, short answer open-ended items, and extended response open-ended items) to assess the entire range of intellectual skills.

Identifying and Describing

Identifying means to give the meaning or significance of things that are tangible (e.g., such as one's legislative representative) or intangible (e.g., concepts such as justice). To identify something may involve being able to distinguish it from something else; to classify or catalog something with similar items, or, in some cases, to determine its origin. **Describing** means to give a verbal or written account of an item's basic attributes or characteristics; describing may refer to tangible or intangible processes, institutions, functions, purposes, or qualities.

Explaining and Analyzing

Explaining means to identify, describe, clarify, or interpret something. One may explain, for example, the causes of events, the meaning or significance of events and ideas, or the reasons for various acts or positions. **Analyzing** means to break something down into its constituent parts in order to clarify its meaning or significance. One may analyze, for example, the causes of events, the components and consequences of ideas, or social, political, or economic processes and institutions.

Evaluating, Taking, and Defending Positions

These are skills required for citizens to assess issues on the public agenda, to make judgments about their views on the issues, and to discuss their assessments with others in public or private. **Evaluating positions** is to use criteria or standards to make judgments about the strengths and weaknesses of positions on issues, goals promoted by the position, or means advocated to attain

those goals. **Taking a position** refers to using criteria or standards to arrive at a position one can support by selecting from existing positions or creating a novel one. **Defending a position** refers to advancing arguments and offering evidence in favor of one's position and responding to or taking into account arguments opposed to one's position.

Figure 2 gives an illustrative summary of the intellectual skills to be assessed. A more complete description of this summary, with illustrative examples for each skill, is found in Appendix B.

Figure 2: NAEP Civics Assessment—Intellectual Skills

IDENTIFYING AND DESCRIBING	EXPLAINING AND ANALYZING	EVALUATING, TAKING, AND DEFENDING A POSITION
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Defining key terms ■ Making distinctions ■ Identifying individuals, symbols, institutions ■ Identifying-ideas and concepts ■ Identifying emotional language and symbols ■ Describing functions and processes ■ Determining origins ■ Describing attributes or characteristics ■ Classifying by attributes ■ Describing trends 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Explaining how something works ■ Explaining causes and effects of events and phenomena ■ Comparing and contrasting ■ Analyzing reasons for acts, occurrences, and trends ■ Distinguishing between fact and opinion ■ Distinguishing between means and ends ■ Clarifying meaning and relationships ■ Clarifying responsibilities ■ Interpreting the meaning or significance of events, ideas, and phenomena 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Identifying strengths and weaknesses ■ Challenging <i>ad hominem</i> arguments ■ Questioning the validity of arguments, data, and analogies ■ Citing evidence in support or rejection of ideas, positions ■ Predicting probable consequences ■ Critiquing means and ends ■ Assessing costs and benefits of alternatives ■ Choosing a position from existing alternatives ■ Creating a novel position ■ Defending a position ■ Responding to opposing arguments

Participatory Skills

Certain participatory skills also are specific to the domain of civics and government. Effective and responsible citizenship in a constitutional democracy demands more than knowing and thinking; responsible citizens are expected to participate in the governance of their communities, states, and nation, as well as in the governance of the groups or associations to which they belong. Students can and should begin in the earliest grades to acquire the participatory skills requisite for informed, effective, and responsible citizenship. They should continue to develop those skills as they proceed through the middle grades and high school.

Direct measurement of participatory skills and determining students' opinions of them is beyond the scope of this assessment. In developing test exercises to assess students' knowledge of these skills and understanding of their appropriate use, items may be developed to ascertain students' ability to identify these skills, recognize their purpose, explain how to use them, or specify how best to achieve desired results by using particular skills.

Participatory skills essential for informed, effective, and responsible citizenship can be categorized as interacting, monitoring, and influencing.

Interacting

Interacting pertains to the skills citizens need to communicate and to work cooperatively with others. To interact is to be responsive to one's fellow citizens. It is to question, to answer, and to deliberate with civility, as well as to build coalitions and to manage conflict in a fair, peaceful manner.

Monitoring

Monitoring politics and government refers to the skills citizens need to track the handling of issues by the political process and by government. Monitoring the performance of government and the course of public affairs is essential, if citizens are to participate intelligently.

Influencing

Influencing refers to the skills required to affect the processes of politics and governance, both formal government and informal processes of governance in the community

Figure 3 gives an illustrative summary of the participatory skills to be assessed. A more complete description of this summary, with illustrative examples for each skill, is found in Appendix C.

Figure 3: NAEP Civics Assessment—Participatory Skills

INTERACTING	MONITORING	INFLUENCING
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Working in small groups and committees ■ Listening ■ Questioning to clarify information, points of view ■ Discussing public affairs ■ Participating in civic and interest groups ■ Building coalitions, enlisting support of other like-minded groups ■ Managing conflicts: mediating, negotiating, compromising, seeking consensus, adjudicating ■ Performing school and community service, serving as a representative or elected leader ■ Using print and electronic resources to acquire and exchange information 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Listening to fellow citizens, to public proceedings ■ Discussing public affairs ■ Tracking public issues in the media ■ Researching public issues ■ Gathering information from government officials and agencies, interest groups, civic organizations ■ Attending public meetings and hearings ■ Interviewing people knowledgeable about civic issues ■ Questioning public officials, experts, and others to elicit information, fix responsibility ■ Using print and electronic resources to acquire and exchange information 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Voting ■ Representing one's own or a group's interests ■ Petitioning ■ Writing letters, op ed pieces, broadsides, pamphlets ■ Speaking and testifying before public bodies ■ Participating in civic organizations, political parties, or interest groups ■ Supporting and opposing candidates or positions on public issues ■ Using computer networks to advance points of view on public affairs

Civic Dispositions

Civic dispositions develop slowly over time as a result of what one learns and experiences in the home, school, community, and organizations of civil society. From those experiences should come the understanding that American constitutional democracy requires the responsible self-governance of each individual; one cannot exist without the other. Traits of private character such as moral responsibility, self-discipline, and respect for individual worth and human dignity are essential to the well-being of the American nation, society, and constitutional democracy.

American constitutional democracy cannot accomplish its purposes, moreover, unless its citizens are inclined to participate thoughtfully in public affairs and civic life. Traits of public character, such as public spiritedness, civility, respect for law, critical mindedness, and a willingness to listen, negotiate, and compromise are indispensable for the nation's well-being.

Civic dispositions, or traits of public and private character, help an individual become an effective and responsible participant in the political system. It is important for students to examine these dispositions, and be aware of their utility and how they may contribute to the health of American democracy. The scope of this assessment does not include the measurement of student attitudes or opinions, but rather students' understanding of the role and importance of these dispositions in our system will be measured. In no way will students' attitudes be measured, nor will their families' positions or activities on political issues be addressed.

Civic dispositions will be assessed at each grade level usually in conjunction with knowledge and intellectual skills. Direct measurement of civic dispositions is beyond the scope of this assessment. In developing test exercises to test students' knowledge of these dispositions and understanding of their necessity, items may be developed to ascertain students' ability to identify these dispositions, recognize their importance, and understand what actions are involved in and stem from particular dispositions. For example, a question may measure students' knowledge of how to monitor the adherence of political leaders and governmental agencies to constitutional principles and why it is important to do so.

This assessment focuses on five civic dispositions which contribute to the political efficacy of the individual to the healthy functioning of the political system and to the common good, as can be seen in Figure 4. A more complete description of the dispositions, with illustrative examples, is found in Appendix D.

Figure 4: NAEP Civics Assessment—Civics Dispositions

Civic dispositions* or traits of private and public character important to the preservation and improvement of American constitutional democracy:

- Becoming an independent member of society
- Respecting individual worth and human dignity
- Assuming the personal, political, and economic responsibilities of a citizen
- Participating in civic affairs in an informed, thoughtful, and effective manner
- Promoting the healthy functioning of American constitutional democracy

* Measured in terms of students' understanding of their nature and importance

Context

Context refers to the arenas in which civic knowledge is acquired, civic skills are employed, and civic dispositions are developed. Contexts in which students learn about civics include the home, school, community, state, nation, and world. All of these contexts provide a venue for students to learn about the formal and informal processes of government and civil society.

In the course of their civic education, students should learn that in our federal system authority and responsibility are divided and shared by local, state, and national governments. Students also should become conversant with systems of governance in other nations as well as with the impact of world affairs on their own lives, communities, and nation.

The American political system provides citizens with numerous opportunities for choice and participation. The formal institutions and processes of government such as political parties, campaigns, and elections are important avenues for civic action. Yet equally important avenues are the many associations and groups that constitute civil society, ranging from school clubs to community-based groups to national and international non-governmental organizations.

In developing assessment exercises, the emphasis allotted to differing contexts varies by grade level. At grade four, the home, school, community, and state may receive greater emphasis but national and international contexts should be included. Political socialization studies have confirmed repeatedly that young children are more likely to know a national leader than they are those in their state or community. In the U.S., most young children are aware that a president is the nation's elected leader and that symbols such as the flag represent their nation. Young

children are also aware of major national and international events, thanks to the ubiquitousness of television. In grades eight and twelve, the context should include a broader understanding of the state and nation, as well as of international affairs. At all levels, a balance should be sought between instances involving formal governmental structure and functions and the less formal manifestations of the organizations and relationships which constitute civil society.

APPENDIX A

Fourth Grade Content Outline

I. WHAT ARE CIVIC LIFE, POLITICS, AND GOVERNMENT?

Note: Understanding what government does may be initiated in early grades by having students look at the governance of the family and school as compared to the governance of the larger community and the nation. In the family, for example, parents make rules governing the behavior of their children. They also are responsible for enforcing these rules and for settling disputes when conflicts arise about them. In schools, teachers and administrators make, carry out, and enforce rules and laws and manage disputes about them. Students may be aware of a variety of current events outside their own local environment that could be used effectively to develop understanding of government. The cognitive abilities of fourth grade students, however, means their comprehension of these events may be unsophisticated.

A. Definition of government

1. Describe government in terms of the people and groups who make, apply, and enforce rules and laws for others in their family, school, community, state, and nation who manage disputes about them
2. Identify individuals who have the authority to make, apply, and enforce rules and laws, e.g.,
 - a. adult family members
 - b. teachers, principals, and school boards
 - c. city councils and mayors
 - d. governors and state legislatures
 - e. president
3. Compare and contrast types of rules, laws, and governance found in family, school, community, state, and nation
4. Analyze why a particular rule or law exists, e.g., a rule in school, a law restricting speed in a school zone

B. Difference between power and authority

Note: Authority may be understood, at the elementary level, as the right of people in certain positions, such as parent, guardian, teacher, police officer, or president, to direct or control others. In the case of parents, authority comes from law and custom. People in other positions of authority gain the right to direct or control others by being appointed or elected. Students at an early age can understand that the person employed as a teacher has the right to teach the class and control the behavior of the students in it. A crossing guard has the right to control traffic and pedestrians. That right comes from laws that establish the position and describe the duties persons taking the position must fulfill. Those laws were made by others in positions of authority, such as legislators, selected by the people to represent them.

1. Describe power without authority as the ability to direct or control something or someone
2. Describe authority as power that is given to people by custom, law, election or appointment
3. Identify examples of authority in family, school, community, and nation, e.g., the authority of teachers and administrators to make rules for schools, the authority of a crossing guard to direct traffic, the authority of the president to command the armed forces
4. Identify examples of power without authority, e.g., a neighborhood bully forcing younger children to give up their lunch money, a robber holding up a bank
5. Distinguish between power and authority in the family, classroom, and community

C. Necessity and purposes of government

Note: An understanding of the basic things governments do may be developed by an examination of how schools and local communities make, carry out, enforce, and manage conflicts over rules and laws. Understanding at the school and community level provides a basis for understanding how similar functions of government are carried out at state and national levels.

1. Explain why government is necessary using examples from the classroom, school, community, state, and nation, and the basic purposes of government in the United States
 - a. to make laws that establish schools, provide health services, and require licenses for drivers
 - b. to carry out laws that provide for crossing guards at schools, build and maintain highways, conduct immunization programs
 - c. to enforce laws that require people to obey traffic, health, child labor, and sanitation laws
 - d. to manage conflicts so that disputes between people can be settled peacefully
 - e. to provide for the defense of the nation
2. Explain that the basic purposes of government in the United States are to protect the rights of individuals and to promote the common good
3. Explain that government makes it possible for people working together to accomplish goals they could not achieve alone

D. Importance of rules and laws

1. Explain the purposes of rules and laws and why they are important in the classroom, school, community, state, and nation
 - a. compare and contrast rules and laws for the behavior in school and community, e.g., attend school and do homework, raise one's hand and be recognized before speaking in class, respect other peoples' privacy and property
 - b. compare and contrast rules and laws for order and security in school and community, e.g., rules that require people to take turns, traffic laws that require people to drive on the right side of the street, laws that protect people from others who want to harm them or take their property
 - c. explain that rules and laws protect rights, provide benefits, and assign responsibilities, e.g.,
 1. examples of protecting rights are: laws that protect people's right to practice whatever religion they wish to, laws that provide equal opportunities for all students to get a free, public education
 2. examples of providing benefits are: laws that provide for schools, health services, public transportation, highways and airports
 3. examples of assigning responsibilities are: laws that require people to pay taxes or to perform military service in times of national emergency
 - d. distinguish between rights and responsibilities, e.g., freedom of speech vs. quietly walking out of the building for a fire drill
2. Predict probable consequences when rules and laws are absent from the classroom, school, community, state, nation
 - a. the strong may take advantage of the weak and act in their own selfish interests
 - b. people may become disorderly or violent and threaten others' lives, liberty, and property
 - c. people would feel insecure, unable to plan for the future, or to predict how others would behave, e.g., if there were no traffic laws, people could not predict on which side of the road cars would drive or that drivers would stop at red lights
3. Evaluate rules and laws

- a. identify and apply criteria useful in evaluating rules and laws to assess the strengths and weaknesses of a school rule or a community or state law, e.g.,
 1. well designed to achieve its purposes
 2. understandable, i.e., clearly written; purposes are explicit
 3. possible to follow, i.e., does not demand the impossible
 4. fair, i.e., not biased against or for any individual or group
 5. designed to protect individual rights
- b. draft a school rule that meets these criteria

E. Major differences between limited and unlimited government

1. Explain that in a limited government, everyone, including people in positions of authority, must obey the laws
2. Give examples of laws that limit the power of people in authority, e.g.,
 - a. laws that prohibit governments from discriminating against people because of their religious or political beliefs
 - b. laws that prevent parents from abusing their children
 - c. laws that require teachers to treat all students fairly
3. Explain that an unlimited government is one in which there are no effective controls over the powers of its rulers, e.g., dictatorship, absolute monarchy

II. WHAT ARE THE FOUNDATIONS OF THE AMERICAN POLITICAL SYSTEM?

Note: Fourth grade students should understand that they are citizens of a nation and that many nations exist and interact in this world, but should NOT be expected to be knowledgeable about details and functions of national government.

A. Fundamental values and principles

1. Explain the importance for themselves, their school, their community, and their nation of each of the following fundamental values of American constitutional democracy as expressed in the nation's core documents:
 - a. individual rights to life, liberty, property, and the pursuit of happiness
 - b. justice
 - c. equality of opportunity and equal protection of the law
 - d. promotion of the common good
 - e. consent of the governed

2. Explain the importance for themselves, their school, their community, and their nation of each of the following fundamental principles of American constitutional democracy:
 - a. ultimate authority lies in the people
 - b. the power of rulers is limited by law
 - c. people exercise their authority directly by voting for or against certain rules, laws, or candidates as well as by voting in community or town meetings
 - d. people exercise their authority indirectly through representatives they elect to make, apply, and enforce laws and to manage disputes about them
 - e. decisions are based on majority rule, but minority rights are protected

3. Explain that fundamental values and principles of American constitutional democracy are expressed in documents such as the Declaration of Independence, Preamble to the United States Constitution, the Bill of Rights, Pledge of Allegiance, speeches, songs, and stories

Note: A general agreement on the values and principles of American democracy provides a basis for people to come together to manage their differences and to promote the ideals upon which the nation is founded—the protection of the rights of the individual and the promotion of the common good. Students must learn that in order to protect their own rights, they must be responsible for supporting the rights of others, even those with whom they may disagree or dislike. To provide a safe and healthy community, all must agree to work together. This may mean merely refraining from littering or writing graffiti or it may mean volunteering for school or community service. It may also mean working with others to get new laws passed that will benefit themselves and their community.

B. Distinctive characteristics of American society

1. Identify and describe some important beliefs commonly held by Americans about themselves and their government
 - a. Importance of the individual
 1. a primary purpose of government is to protect the rights of the individual to life, liberty, property, and the pursuit of happiness
 2. another important purpose of government is to promote the common good, e.g., individual student's disruption of class is prevented or halted so the entire class can continue learning
 3. individuals have the right to differ about politics, religion, or any other matter

4. individuals have the right to express their views without fear of being punished by their peers or their government
 5. the vote of one individual counts as much as another's
- b. Importance of the school, community, and state
 1. everyone should be concerned about the well-being of his or her school, community, and state
 2. people should try to improve the quality of life in their schools, communities, and states
 3. people should help others who are less fortunate than they and assist them in times of need, emergency, or natural disaster
 - c. Importance of equality of opportunity and equal protection of the law
 1. defend a position that everyone has a right to equal opportunity in education, employment, housing, or to equal access to public facilities such as parks and playgrounds
 2. defend a position that everyone has a right to participate in political life by expressing their opinions and trying to persuade others; all citizens more than 18 years of age have the right to vote; citizens who meet age and other qualifications have the right to seek public office
 3. defend a position that everyone has the right to be treated equally in the eyes of the law
 - d. Importance of respect for the law
 1. everyone, including government officials, must obey the law
 2. people have the right to work together to see that laws they consider unfair or unwise are changed by peaceful means
 - e. Importance of education
 1. education is essential for informed and effective citizenship
 2. education is important for earning a living
 - f. Importance of work
 1. work is important to a person's independence and self-esteem
 2. work is important to the well-being of the family, community, state, and nation
 3. all honest work is worthy of respect
 - g. Importance of voluntarism
 1. volunteering is a source of individual satisfaction and fulfillment which results from helping others in their family, schools, communities, state, nation, and the world
2. Evaluate, take, and defend a position in support of one of the beliefs held by Americans about themselves and their government

C. Unity and diversity in American society

1. Unity

- a. Explain the concept of importance of Americans sharing and supporting certain values, principles, and beliefs -- "many communities, one nation"
- b. Explain that Americans are united by the values, principles, and beliefs they share rather than by ethnicity, race, religion, class, language, or national origin
- c. Interpret the meaning and significance of symbols used to depict Americans' shared values, principles, and beliefs, e.g., the flag, Statue of Liberty, Uncle Sam, Great Seal, national monuments, national anthem, oaths of office (e.g., of the president or mayor), and mottoes such as *E Pluribus Unum*
- d. Interpret the meaning and significance of holidays Americans celebrate to show how they reflect their shared values, principles, and beliefs, e.g., Presidents' Day, Memorial Day, the Fourth of July, Labor Day, Thanksgiving, Veterans Day, Martin Luther King, Jr.'s birthday

2. Diversity

- a. Explain the meaning of the word diversity and give several examples, e.g., cultural, ethnic, racial, religious, class, linguistic diversity, diversity of opinion, gender, national origin
- b. Explain why there is so much diversity in the United States
- c. Explain the benefits of diversity, e.g., it
 1. fosters a variety of viewpoints, new ideas, and fresh ways of looking at and solving problems
 2. provides people with choices in the arts, music, literature, and sports
 3. helps people to appreciate cultural traditions and practices other than their own
- d. Describe some of the costs of diversity
 1. people sometimes discriminate unfairly against others on the basis of their age, religious beliefs, race, or disability
 2. members of different groups misunderstand each other and conflicts may arise

D. Prevention and management of conflicts

1. Explain why it is important to manage conflicts in a peaceful manner

2. Identify means of peacefully managing conflict fairly
3. Explain how some of the following civic dispositions contribute to the prevention and management of conflict: self-discipline, civility, respect for the rights of other individuals, open-mindedness, negotiation, compromise, and compassion

III. HOW DOES THE GOVERNMENT ESTABLISHED BY THE CONSTITUTION EMBODY THE PURPOSES, VALUES, AND PRINCIPLES OF AMERICAN DEMOCRACY?

Note: Americans should learn at an early age that government is their servant, not their master. It exists to protect their rights and to promote the common good. The Constitution of the United States sets forth these purposes and it provides a basis for understanding the fundamental ideas underlying government and evaluating its actions.

A. The meaning and importance of the United States Constitution

1. Explain that the United States Constitution is a written document
2. Explain that the United States Constitution sets forth the basic purposes of American government, basic rights, and the common good
3. Explain that the United States Constitution establishes how the American government is organized

B. Major responsibilities and services of state governments

1. Explain that the United States has fifty state governments
2. Describe the major responsibilities of each branch of their state government
 - a. legislative branch—makes state laws
 - b. executive branch—carries out and enforces laws
 - c. judicial branch—interprets laws and manages conflicts about the law
3. Describe important services that state governments provide, e.g., education, law enforcement, health services and hospitals, roads and highways, public welfare
4. Describe how state government officials are chosen, e.g., elections, appointment

5. Explain how people can participate in state government, e.g., being informed and taking part in discussions of state issues, voting, volunteering their services, holding public office, serving on governing committees and commissions, writing a letter expressing their opinion on an issue
6. Explain why it is important that people participate in their state government, e.g., to protect their rights and promote the common welfare, to improve the quality of life in their community, to gain personal satisfaction, to prevent officials from abusing their power
7. Explain how state government services are paid for, e.g., taxes on sales and on individual and business income, fees for using parks and toll roads, license fees

C. Major responsibilities and services of local governments

1. Explain that states have many local governments
2. Describe services commonly and primarily provided by local governments
 - a. public safety, e.g., police, fire, street lighting services
 - b. public utilities, e.g., water, gas, electricity
 - c. transportation, e.g., streets, highways, bus or subway systems, airports, harbors
 - d. education and recreation, e.g., schools, libraries, museums, parks, sports facilities
3. Explain how local government services are paid for, e.g., property, sales, and other taxes; money from state and national governments
4. Describe how local government officials are chosen, e.g., election, appointment
5. Explain how people can participate in local government, e.g., being informed and taking part in discussions of local issues, voting, volunteering their services, holding public office, serving on governing committees and commissions, writing a letter expressing their opinion on an issue
6. Explain why it is important that people participate in their local government, e.g., to protect their rights and promote the common good, to improve the quality of life in their community, to gain personal satisfaction, to prevent officials from abusing their power

D. Key leaders in local, state, and national government

1. Name the persons representing them at state and national levels in the legislative branches of government, e.g., representatives and senators in their state legislature and in Congress
2. Name the persons representing them at the executive branches of government, e.g., mayor, governor, president

E. Contacting public officials and agencies

1. Explain how they can contact their representatives
2. Explain which level of government they should contact to express their opinions, or to get help on specific problems
 - a. crime
 - b. the environment
 - c. recreational opportunities in schools and parks
 - d. street lights
 - e. trash in the streets or vacant lots
 - f. stray or wild animals
 - g. abandoned cars
 - h. missing persons

IV. WHAT IS THE RELATIONSHIP OF THE UNITED STATES TO OTHER NATIONS AND TO WORLD AFFAIRS?

A. Concept of a nation

1. Explain that the world is divided into different nations which interact with one another
2. Describe that a nation consists of its people, territory, laws, and government
3. Explain that nations have different kinds of government (e.g. monarchy, democracy, dictatorship)
4. Recognize that there is no organization that serves as a world government
5. Identify the fact that the United States is a nation that interacts with other nations

B. Interaction among nations

1. Explain how nations interact through
 - a. trade, e.g., buying and selling manufactured and agricultural goods
 - b. diplomacy, e.g., representatives of nations meeting, trying to find ways to solve problems peacefully
 - c. cultural contacts, e.g., tours of musical groups; exchanges of students and teachers; art exhibits
 - d. treaties and agreements, e.g., agreements to cooperate to protect the environment
 - e. use of the military, e.g., war, peacekeeping
2. Explain some reasons why there are conflicts among nations, e.g., aggression, land disputes, religious and ethnic differences, scarce resources, misuses of power

C. Importance of peaceful resolution of international conflicts

1. Explain how nations benefit when they try to resolve problems peacefully, e.g., promoting trade to improve peoples' standard of living, promoting peace to save human lives, protecting the environment, exchanging medical and scientific knowledge, exchanging students and teachers

V. WHAT ARE THE ROLES OF THE CITIZEN IN AMERICAN DEMOCRACY?

A. Meaning of citizenship; becoming a citizen

1. Explain that people become citizens of the United States by birth or naturalization
2. Define a citizen as a person who has special rights (e.g., the right to vote and to hold public office), and certain responsibilities, (e.g., voting, serving on juries)
3. Recognize that there are persons living in the United States who are not citizens
4. Explain that both citizens and non-citizens are required to obey the law, pay taxes, and are afforded protection under the Constitution

B. Important rights of citizens

Note: The term "citizen" is used in a broad, encompassing sense. For example, students are citizens of their classroom and of their school. They also are citizens of their neighborhood and community. Many of the rights, responsibilities, and citizenship activities apply to all residents of the United States and its territories, not only to natural-born or naturalized citizens.

1. Identify the following types of rights and explain their importance
 - a. personal rights, e.g., to associate with whomever one pleases, live where one chooses, practice the religion of one's choice, travel freely and return to the United States, emigrate
 - b. political rights, e.g., to vote, speak freely and criticize the government, join organizations that try to influence government policies, join a political party, seek and hold public office
 - c. economic rights, e.g., to own property, choose one's work, change employment, join a labor union, establish a business

C. Personal and civic responsibilities

1. Identify such responsibilities as the following and explain their importance
 - a. personal responsibilities, e.g., taking care of themselves, accepting responsibility for the consequences of their actions, taking advantage of the opportunity to be educated, supporting their families
 - b. civic responsibilities, e.g., obeying the law, respecting the rights of others, being informed and attentive to the needs of their community, paying attention to how well their elected leaders are doing their jobs, communicating with their representatives in their school, local, state, and national governments, voting, paying taxes, serving on juries, serving in the armed forces
2. Compare and contrast individual rights with individual responsibilities

D. Civic dispositions

1. Explain the importance of the following dispositions
 - a. individual responsibility—fulfilling one's responsibilities to family, friends, and others in one's community and nation
 - b. self-discipline/self-governance—obeying reasonable rules and laws voluntarily and not requiring others to force one to do so

- c. civility—treating other people with respect regardless of whether or not one likes them or agrees with their viewpoints, being willing to listen to other points of view, not being insulting when arguing with others
- d. respect for the rights of other individuals—respect for the right of other people to hold and express their own opinions, respect for their right to a voice in their government
- e. honesty—telling the truth
- f. respect for the law—willingness to abide by laws, even though one may not be in complete agreement with every law
- g. open mindedness—willingness to consider other points of view
- h. critical mindedness—the inclination to question the truth of various positions, including one’s own
- i. negotiation and compromise—willingness to try to come to agreement with those with whom one may differ, when it is reasonable and morally justifiable
- j. persistence—willingness to attempt again and again to accomplish a worthwhile goal
- k. civic mindedness—concern for the well-being of one’s community and nation
- l. compassion—concern for the well-being of others, especially for the less fortunate
- m. patriotism—loyalty to the values and principles underlying American constitutional democracy

E. Opportunities for civic participation

1. Identify ways people can monitor and influence the decisions and actions of the government
 - a. reading about public issues, watching television news programs
 - b. discussing public issues
 - c. communicating with public officials
 - d. voting
 - e. attending meetings of governing agencies, e.g., city council, school board
 - f. circulating and signing petitions
2. Identify individuals or groups who monitor and influence the decisions and actions of their local, state, tribal, and national governments, e.g., the media, labor unions, P.T.A., Chamber of Commerce, taxpayer associations, civilian review boards

3. Explain why it is important for citizens to monitor the actions of their governments, e.g., student council, city council

F. Importance of political leadership and public service

1. Describe what political leaders do and why leadership is necessary in a democracy
2. Identify opportunities for leadership and public service in their own classroom, school, community, state, and nation
3. Explain the importance of individuals working cooperatively with their elected leaders

G. Criteria for selecting leaders

1. Identify qualities leaders should have, such as
 - a. respect for the rights of others
 - b. ability to work with others
 - c. reliability or dependability
 - d. courage
 - e. honesty
 - f. ability to be fair
 - g. intelligence
 - h. willingness to work hard
 - i. special knowledge or skills
2. Defend a choice of class or school leader in terms of qualities of leadership exhibited by the candidate

Eighth Grade Content Outline

I. WHAT ARE CIVIC LIFE, POLITICS, AND GOVERNMENT?

A. What is civic life? What is politics? What is government? Why are government and politics necessary? What purposes should government serve?

1. Explain the meaning of the terms civic life, politics, and government
 - a. define and distinguish between private life and civic life
 1. private life concerns the personal life of the individual, e.g., being with family and friends, joining clubs or teams, practicing one's religious beliefs, earning money
 2. civic life concerns taking part in the governance of the school, community, tribe, state, or nation, e.g., helping to find solutions to problems, helping to make rules and laws, serving as elected leaders
 - b. describe politics as the ways people whose ideas may differ reach agreements that are generally regarded as binding on the group, e.g., presenting information and evidence, stating arguments, negotiating, compromising, voting
 - c. describe government as the people and institutions with authority to make, carry out, enforce laws, and manage disputes about law
 1. define authority as the right, legitimized by custom, law, consent, or principles of morality, to use power to direct or control people
 2. identify institutions with authority to direct or control the behavior of members of a society, e.g., a school board, city council, state legislature, courts, Congress
 3. define power without authority as power that is not legitimized by custom, law, consent, or principles of morality
 4. identify examples of the exercise of power without authority, e.g., a street gang, a military junta, a self-proclaimed dictatorship
2. Evaluate, take, and defend positions on why government is necessary and what purposes government should serve
 - a. explain major ideas about why government is necessary, e.g.,
 1. people's lives, liberty, and property would be insecure without government, e.g., there would be no laws to control people's behavior, the strong might take advantage of the weak

2. individuals by themselves cannot do many of the things they can do collectively, e.g., create a system of highways, provide armed forces for the security of the nation, make and enforce laws
- b. evaluate competing ideas about the purposes government should serve, e.g.,
 1. protecting individual rights
 2. promoting the common good
 3. providing economic security
 4. molding the character of citizens
 5. furthering the interests of a particular class or group
 6. promoting a particular religion

B. What are the essential characteristics of limited and unlimited government?

1. Describe the essential characteristics of limited and unlimited governments
 - a. limited governments have established and respected restraints on their power, e.g.,
 1. constitutional governments—governments characterized by legal limits on political power
 - b. unlimited governments are those in which there are no effective means of restraining their power, e.g.
 1. authoritarian systems—governments in which political power is concentrated in one person or a small group, and individuals and groups are subordinated to that power
 2. totalitarian systems—modern forms of extreme authoritarianism in which the government attempts to control every aspect of the lives of individuals and prohibits independent associations
2. Identify historical and contemporary examples of limited and unlimited governments and justify their classification, e.g.,
 - a. limited governments—United States, Great Britain, Botswana, Japan, Israel, Chile
 - b. unlimited governments—Nazi Germany, Imperial Japan, Spain under Franco, Cuba under Castro, Iraq under Hussein, Iran
3. Explain that civil society consists of freely-formed voluntary political, social, and economic associations, e.g., professional and business associations and social and fraternal clubs.

4. Explain that civil society, by providing for independent centered of power and influence, is essential to maintain limited government.
5. Explain the importance of the rule of law for the protection of individual rights and the common good
 - a. explain the difference between the rule of law and the “rule of men”
 - b. explain how the rule of law can be used to restrict the actions of private citizens and government officials alike in order to protect the rights of individuals and to promote the common good
 - c. explain the consequences of the absence of a rule of law, e.g.,
 1. anarchy
 2. arbitrary and capricious rule
 3. absence of predictability
 4. disregard for established and fair procedures

C. What are the nature and purposes of constitutions?

1. Explain alternative uses of the term “constitution” and distinguish between governments with a constitution and a constitutional government
 - a. distinguish among the following uses of the term “constitution”
 1. constitution as a description of a form of government
 2. constitution as a document
 3. constitution as a higher law limiting the powers of government, i.e., a constitutional or limited government
 - b. identify historical and contemporary nations with constitutions that in reality do not limit power, e.g., former Soviet Union, Nazi Germany, Iraq under Saddam Hussein
 - c. identify historical and contemporary nations with constitutions that in reality do limit power, e.g., United States, United Kingdom, Germany, Japan, Botswana, Chile
 - d. explain that a government with a constitution but with no effective ways to enforce its limitations is not a constitutional government
2. Explain the various uses of and the purposes served by constitutions
 - a. explain how constitutions
 1. set forth the purposes of government
 2. describe the way a government is organized and how power is allocated
 3. define the relationship between a people and their government

- b. describe historical and contemporary examples of how constitutions have been used to promote the interests of a particular group, class, religion, or political party, e.g., the People's Republic of China, Mexico, the former Soviet Union
 - c. describe historical and contemporary examples of how constitutions have been used to protect individual rights and promote the common good, e.g., United States Constitution "Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, (First Amendment) ...," "The right of citizens of the United States to vote shall not be denied...on account of sex (Nineteenth Amendment)"
3. Explain those conditions that are essential for the flourishing of constitutional government
- a. explain the importance of establishing and maintaining conditions that help constitutional government to flourish such as
 - 1. a citizenry that
 - i. is educated and enjoys a reasonable standard of living
 - ii. understands and supports the constitution and its values and principles
 - iii. willingly assumes the responsibilities of citizenship
 - iv. insists that government officials respect limitations the constitution places on their authority
 - 2. persons serving in government who
 - i. understand and support the constitution and its values and principles
 - ii. respect limitations the constitution places on their authority

D. What are alternative ways of organizing constitutional governments?

- 1. Describe the major characteristics of systems of shared powers and of parliamentary systems
 - a. describe the major characteristics of systems of shared powers, e.g., in the United States
 - 1. the president and members of the Cabinet cannot be members of Congress
 - 2. powers are separated among branches, each branch has primary responsibility for certain functions, e.g., legislative, executive, and judicial
 - 3. each branch also shares the powers and functions of the other branches, e.g.,
 - i. Congress may pass laws, but the president may veto them

- ii. the president nominates certain public officials, but the Senate needs to approve them
 - iii. Congress may pass laws, but the Supreme Court may declare them unconstitutional
 - b. describe the major characteristics of parliamentary systems, e.g., in the United Kingdom
 - 1. authority is held by a legislature called Parliament
 - 2. the political party or parties that can form a majority in Parliament choose the prime minister
 - 3. the prime minister chooses members of Parliament to serve in the cabinet
 - 4. the prime minister and members of the cabinet must all be members of the legislature—Parliament
 - 5. the prime minister and cabinet direct the administration of the government
 - 6. the prime minister and cabinet may be replaced by Parliament if a majority vote “no confidence” in the government
- 2. Explain the advantages and disadvantages of confederal, federal, and unitary systems of government
 - a. define confederal, federal, and unitary systems of government
 - 1. confederal system—a system of government in which sovereign states delegate powers to a national government for specific purposes
 - 2. federal system—a system in which power is divided and shared between national and state governments
 - 3. unitary system—a system in which all power is concentrated in a central government; state and local governments can exercise only those powers given to them by the central government
 - b. identify examples of confederal, federal, and unitary systems in the history of the United States, e.g.
 - 1. confederal system—the United States under the Articles of Confederation and the Confederate States of America
 - 2. federal system—the government of the United States
 - 3. unitary system—state governments of the United States
 - c. explain the major advantages and disadvantages of confederal, federal, and unitary systems

II. WHAT ARE THE FOUNDATIONS OF THE AMERICAN POLITICAL SYSTEM?

A. What is the American idea of constitutional government?

Note: An important purpose of the Constitution is to separate and limit the powers of government so that the basic liberties of the people are not infringed. The Bill of Rights was added to the Constitution to clarify and strengthen limitations on the powers of the national government, and it has become central to the American idea of constitutional government. Citizens must understand the importance of the fundamental ideas of American constitutional government to develop a reasoned commitment to them, as well as to use them as criteria to evaluate their own behavior and the behavior of government officials.

1. Explain the essential ideas of American constitutional government
 - a. explain essential ideas of American constitutional government as expressed in the Declaration of Independence, the Constitution, and other writings, e.g.,
 1. the people are sovereign; they are the ultimate source of power
 2. the Constitution is a higher law that authorizes a government of limited powers
 3. the purposes of government, as stated in the Preamble to the Constitution, are to
 - i. form a more perfect union
 - ii. establish justice
 - iii. insure domestic tranquility
 - iv. provide for the common defense
 - v. promote the general welfare
 - vi. secure the blessings of liberty to ourselves and our posterity
 - b. explain how the following provisions of the United States Constitution give government the power it needs to fulfill the purposes for which it was established
 1. delegated or enumerated powers, e.g., to lay and collect taxes, to make treaties, to decide cases and controversies between two or more states (Articles I, II & III)
 2. the general welfare provision (Article I, Section 8)
 3. the necessary and proper clause (Article I, Section 8, Clause 18)
 - c. explain the means of limiting the powers of government under the United States Constitution
 1. separation and sharing of powers
 2. checks and balances
 3. Bill of Rights

- d. explain how specific provisions of the United States Constitution, including the Bill of Rights, limit the powers of government in order to protect the rights of individuals, e.g., habeas corpus; trial by jury; ex post facto; freedom of religion, speech, press, and assembly; equal protection of the law; due process of law; right to counsel
- e. evaluate, take, and defend positions on current issues involving constitutional protection of individual rights, such as
 - 1. limits on speech, e.g., “hate speech,” advertising, libel and slander, “fighting words”
 - 2. separation of church and state, e.g., school vouchers, prayer in public schools
 - 3. cruel and unusual punishment, e.g., death penalty
 - 4. search and seizure, e.g., warrantless searches
 - 5. privacy, e.g., fingerprinting of children, national identification cards, wiretapping, DNA banks

B. What are the distinctive characteristics of American society?

Note: A belief in social equality and a democratic way of life has fostered voluntarism, another prominent characteristic of Americans. The American tradition of voluntarism emerged from the colonists' dependence on one another during the early settlement period, was enhanced by the influence of a frontier, and was encouraged by Americans' religious beliefs. This propensity for voluntarism has continued to the present day and has given rise to questions that citizens need to address: Is it advantageous for society that certain functions, such as education and social welfare, be performed by voluntary associations? By government? Or should both have a role? Would American society be harmed if the propensity to voluntarism declined? Recognition of the many forms of diversity in American society—ethnicity, race, religion, class, language, gender, or national origin—embraced in a constitutional system, is a prerequisite to making judgments about the benefits diversity offers and the challenges it poses.

- 1. Identify and explain the importance of historical experience and geographic, social, and economic factors that have helped to shape American society
 - a. explain important factors that have helped shape American society
 - 1. absence of a nobility or an inherited caste system
 - 2. religious freedom
 - 3. the Judeo-Christian ethic
 - 4. a history of slavery
 - 5. relative geographic isolation
 - 6. abundance of land and widespread ownership of property
 - 7. social, economic, and geographic mobility
 - 8. effects of a frontier
 - 9. large scale immigration
 - 10. diversity of the population

11. individualism
12. work ethic
13. market economy
14. relative social equality
15. universal public education

2. Evaluate, take, and defend positions on the importance of voluntarism in American society
 - a. explain factors that have inclined Americans toward voluntarism, e.g., colonial conditions, frontier traditions, religious beliefs
 - b. identify services that religious, charitable, and civic groups provide in their own community, e.g., health, child, and elderly care; disaster relief; counseling; tutoring; basic needs such as food, clothing, shelter
 - c. identify opportunities for individuals to volunteer in their own schools and communities
3. Evaluate, take, and defend positions on the costs and benefits of diversity in American life
 - a. identify the many forms of diversity in American society, e.g., regional, linguistic, racial, religious, ethnic, socioeconomic
 - b. explain how diversity can be desirable and beneficial, e.g., increases choice, fosters a variety of viewpoints, encourages cultural creativity
 - c. explain why conflicts have arisen from diversity, using historical and contemporary examples, e.g., North/South conflict; conflict about land, suffrage, and other rights of Native Americans; Catholic/Protestant conflicts in the nineteenth century; conflict about civil rights of minorities and women; present day ethnic conflict in urban settings
 - d. evaluate ways conflicts about diversity can be resolved in a peaceful manner that respects individual rights and promotes the common good

C. What is American political culture?

1. Explain American identity and the importance of shared political values and principles to American society
 - a. explain that an American's political identity stems from belief in and allegiance to shared political values and principles rather than from ethnicity, race, religion, class, birth language, or national origin, which determine identity in many other nations

- b. identify basic values and principles Americans share as set forth in such documents as the Declaration of Independence, the United States Constitution, the Gettysburg Address
 - c. explain why it is important to the individual and society that Americans understand and act on their shared political values and principles
2. Describe the character of American political conflict and explain factors that usually prevent violence or that lower its intensity
- a. describe political conflict in the United States both historically and at present, such as conflict about
 - 1. geographic and sectional interests
 - 2. slavery and indentured servitude
 - 3. national origins
 - 4. extending the franchise
 - 5. extending civil rights to all Americans
 - 6. the role of religion in American public life
 - 7. engaging in wars
 - b. explain some of the reasons why political conflict in the United States, with notable exceptions such as the Civil War, labor unrest, civil rights struggles, and the opposition to the war in Vietnam generally has been less divisive than in many other nations. These include
 - 1. a shared respect for the Constitution and its principles
 - 2. a sense of unity within diversity
 - 3. many opportunities to influence government and to participate in it
 - 4. willingness to relinquish power when voted out of office
 - 5. acceptance of the idea of majority rule tempered by a respect for minority rights
 - 6. willingness to use the legal system to manage conflicts
 - 7. availability of land and abundance of natural resources
 - 8. a relatively high standard of living
 - 9. opportunities to improve one's economic condition
 - 10. opportunities for free, public education

D. What values and principles are basic to American constitutional democracy?

- 1. Explain the meaning and importance of the fundamental values and principles of American constitutional democracy
 - a. identify fundamental values and principles as expressed in
 - 1. basic documents, e.g., Declaration of Independence and United States Constitution

2. significant political speeches and writings, e.g., *The Federalist*, Washington's Farewell Address, Lincoln's Gettysburg Address, King's "I Have a Dream" speech
 3. individual and group actions that embody fundamental values and principles, e.g., suffrage and civil rights movements
- b. explain the meaning and importance of each of the following values considered to be fundamental to American public life
1. individual rights: life, liberty, property, and the pursuit of happiness
 2. the common or public good
 3. justice
 4. equality of opportunity and equal protection of the law
 5. promotion of the common good
 6. consent of the governed
- c. explain the meaning and importance of the following fundamental principles of American constitutional democracy
1. popular sovereignty—the concept that ultimate political authority rests with the people who create and can alter or abolish governments
 2. constitutional government which includes
 - i. the rule of law
 - ii. representative institutions
 - iii. shared powers
 - iv. checks and balances
 - v. individual rights
 - vi. separation of church and state
 - vii. federalism
 - viii. civilian control of the military
2. Evaluate, take, and defend positions on issues in which fundamental values and principles in American political and social life are in conflict
- a. describe conflicts among fundamental values and principles and give historical and contemporary examples of these conflicts, such as
1. conflicts between liberty and equality, e.g., liberty to exclude others from private clubs and the right of individuals to be treated equally
 2. conflicts between individual rights and the common good, e.g., liberty to smoke in public places and protection of the health of other persons
- b. explain why people may agree on values or principles in the abstract but disagree when they are applied to specific issues

1. agreement on the value of freedom of expression but disagreement about the extent to which expression of unpopular and offensive views should be tolerated, e.g., neo-Nazi demonstrations, racial slurs, profanity, lyrics that advocate violence, flag burning
 2. agreement on the value of equality but disagreement about affirmative action programs
3. Evaluate, take, and defend positions on issues concerning ways and means to reduce disparities between American ideals and realities in American political and social life
- a. identify some important American ideals, e.g., liberty and justice for all, an informed citizenry, civic virtue or concern for the common good, respect for the rights of others
 - b. explain the importance of ideals as goals, even if they are not fully achieved
 - c. explain, using historical and contemporary examples, discrepancies between American ideals and the realities of political and social life in the United States, e.g., the ideal of equal justice for all and the reality that the poor may not have equal access to the judicial system.
 - d. describe historical and contemporary efforts to reduce discrepancies between ideals and the reality of American public life, e.g., abolition, suffrage, and civil rights movements
 - e. explain ways in which discrepancies between reality and the ideals of American constitutional democracy can be reduced by
 1. individual action
 2. social action
 3. political action

III. HOW DOES THE GOVERNMENT ESTABLISHED BY THE CONSTITUTION EMBODY THE PURPOSES, VALUES, AND PRINCIPLES OF AMERICAN DEMOCRACY?

A. How are power and responsibility distributed, shared, and limited in the government established by the United States Constitution?

Note: Citizens who understand the reasons for this system of dispersed power and its design are able to evaluate, monitor, and influence it more effectively.

1. Explain how the powers of the national government are distributed, shared, and limited

- a. explain how the three opening words of the Preamble to the Constitution, “We the People...,” embody the principle of the people as sovereign—the ultimate source of authority
- b. explain how legislative, executive, and judicial powers are distributed and shared among the three branches of the national government
 1. legislative power—although primary legislative power lies with Congress, it is shared with the other branches, e.g., the executive branch can submit bills for consideration and can establish regulations, the Supreme Court can interpret laws and can declare them unconstitutional
 2. executive power—although primary executive power is with the executive branch, it is shared by the other branches, e.g., congressional committees have authority to review actions of the executive branch, the Senate must approve appointments and ratify treaties, the Supreme Court can review actions of the executive branch and declare them unconstitutional
 3. judicial power—although primary judicial power is with the federal judiciary, it is shared with other branches, e.g., the president appoints federal judges, the Senate can approve or refuse to confirm federal court appointees, the executive branch can hold administrative hearings on compliance with regulations and laws, Congress can “overturn” a Supreme Court interpretation of a law by amending it
- c. explain how each branch of government can check the powers of the other branches
 1. legislative branch has the power to
 - i. establish committees to oversee activities of the executive branch
 - ii. impeach the president, other members of the executive branch, and federal judges
 - iii. pass laws over the president’s veto by two-thirds majority vote of both Houses
 - iv. disapprove appointments made by the president
 - v. propose amendments to the United States Constitution
 2. executive branch has the power to
 - i. veto laws passed by Congress
 - ii. nominate members of the federal judiciary
 3. judicial branch has the power to
 - i. overrule decisions made by lower courts
 - ii. declare laws made by Congress to be unconstitutional

iii. declare actions of the executive branch to be unconstitutional

2. Explain how and why powers are distributed and shared between national and state governments in the federal system
 - a. identify the major parts of the federal system
 1. national government
 2. state governments
 3. other governmental units, e.g., District of Columbia; American tribal governments; territories of Puerto Rico, Guam, American Samoa; Virgin Islands
 - b. describe how some powers are shared between the national and state governments, e.g., power to tax, borrow money, regulate voting
 - c. describe functions commonly and primarily exercised by state governments, e.g., education, law enforcement, health and hospitals, roads and highways
 - d. identify powers prohibited to state governments by the United States Constitution, e.g., coining money, conducting foreign relations, interfering with interstate commerce, raising an army and declaring war (Article I, Section 10)
 - e. explain how and why the United States Constitution provides that laws of the national government and treaties are the supreme law of the land
 - f. explain that the 10th Amendment reserves powers not granted to the national government to the states and to the people
 - g. explain how the distribution and sharing of power between the national and state governments increases opportunities for citizens to participate and to hold their governments accountable

B. What does the national government do?

Note: To understand the impact of the political process on their daily lives and the lives of their communities, citizens need to understand how the national government functions. To deliberate with other citizens about political action and to influence governmental actions that affect their lives, citizens need to know the allocation of responsibilities among various components of government and where and how decisions are made.

1. Explain the major responsibilities of the national government for domestic and foreign policy
 - a. identify historical and contemporary examples of important domestic policies, e.g., civil rights laws, child labor laws, minimum wage laws, Aid to Families with Dependent Children, Social Security
 - b. explain how and why domestic policies affect their own lives

- c. identify historical and contemporary examples of important foreign policies, e.g., Monroe Doctrine, Marshall Plan, containment of communism, immigration acts, foreign aid, arms control, promoting democracy and human rights throughout the world
 - d. explain how and why foreign policies affect their own lives
2. Explain the necessity of taxes and the purposes for which taxes are used (financing government)
- a. explain why taxation is necessary to pay for government
 - b. identify provisions of the United States Constitution that authorize the national government to collect taxes, i.e., Article I, Sections 7 and 8; Sixteenth Amendment

C. How are state and local governments organized and what do they do?

1. Explain why states have constitutions, their purposes, and the relationship of state constitutions to the federal constitution
- a. explain that their state has a constitution because the United States is a federal system
 - b. identify major purposes of the constitution of the state in which they live
 - c. identify and explain the basic similarities and differences between their state constitution and the United States Constitution
 - d. explain why state constitutions and state governments cannot violate the United States Constitution
 - e. explain how citizens can change their state constitution and cite examples of changes
2. Describe the organization and major responsibilities of state and local governments
- a. identify major responsibilities of their state and local governments, e.g., education, welfare, streets and roads, parks, recreation, and law enforcement
 - b. describe the organization of their state and local governments, e.g., legislative, executive, and judicial functions at state and local levels
 - c. identify major sources of revenue for state and local governments, e.g., property, sales, and income taxes; fees and licenses; taxes on corporations and businesses; borrowing
 - d. explain why state and local governments have an important effect on their own lives

D. Who represents you in local, state, and national governments?

1. Identify their representatives in the legislative branches as well as the heads of the executive branches of their local, state, and national governments
 - a. name the persons representing them at state and national levels in the legislative branches of government, i.e., representatives and senators in their state legislature and in Congress
 - b. name the persons representing them at local, state, and national levels in the executive branches of government, e.g., mayor, governor, president
 - c. explain how they can contact their representatives and when and why it is important to do so
 - d. explain which level of government they should contact to express their opinions or to get help on specific problems, e.g., opinions about a curfew for persons under sixteen years of age, an increase in state sales tax, aid to another country; problems with street lights, driver's license, federal income taxes

E. What is the place of law in the American constitutional system?

Note: The rule of law operates within a framework provided by the United States Constitution. It establishes limits on both those who govern and the governed, making possible a system of ordered liberty which protects the basic rights of citizens and promotes the common good. Understanding the place of law enhances citizens' capacity to evaluate the operation of the legal system and proposals for improvement.

1. Explain the importance of law in the American constitutional system
 - a. explain the importance of the rule of law in
 1. establishing limits on both those who govern and the governed
 2. protecting individual rights
 3. promoting the common good
 - b. describe historical and contemporary examples of the rule of law, e.g., *Marbury v. Madison*, *Brown v. Board of Education*, *U.S. v. Nixon*
 - c. identify principal varieties of law, e.g., constitutional, criminal, civil
 - d. explain how the principal varieties of law protect individual rights and promote the common good
2. Explain and apply criteria useful in evaluating rules and laws
 - a. identify the strengths and weaknesses of a rule or law by determining if it is
 1. well designed to achieve its purposes
 2. understandable, i.e., clearly written, its requirements are explicit
 3. possible to follow, i.e., does not demand the impossible

4. fair, i.e., not biased against or for any individual or group
 5. designed to protect individual rights and to promote the common good
 - b. reproduce an existing law to be evaluated
 - c. draft rules for their schools or communities that meet the criteria for a good or well-constructed rule or law
3. Evaluate, take, and defend positions on current issues regarding judicial protection of individual rights
- a. explain the basic concept of due process of law, i.e., government must use fair procedures to gather information and make decisions in order to protect the rights of individuals and the interests of society
 - b. explain the importance to individuals and to society of major due process protections
 1. habeas corpus
 2. presumption of innocence
 3. fair notice
 4. impartial tribunal
 5. speedy and public trials
 6. right to counsel
 7. trial by jury
 8. right against self-incrimination
 9. protection against double jeopardy
 10. right of appeal
 - c. explain why due process rights in administrative and legislative procedures are essential for the protection of individual rights and the maintenance of limited government, e.g., the right to adequate notice of a hearing that may affect one's interests, the right to counsel in legislative hearings
 - d. describe alternative means of conflict management and evaluate their advantages and disadvantages, e.g., negotiation, mediation, arbitration, and litigation
 - e. evaluate arguments about current issues regarding judicial protection of the rights of individuals

F. How does the American political system provide for choice and opportunities for participation?

1. Explain what is meant by the public agenda and how it is set
 - a. explain that the public agenda consists of those matters that occupy public attention at any particular time, e.g., crime, health care, education, economic growth, child care, environment

- b. describe how the public agenda is shaped by political leaders, interest groups, the media, state and federal courts, individual citizens
 - c. explain how individuals can help to shape the public agenda, e.g., by joining interest groups or political parties, by making presentations at public meetings, by writing letters to government officials and to newspapers

- 2. Evaluate, take, and defend positions on the influence of political communication and the media on American political life
 - a. explain the importance of freedom of the press to informed participation in the political system
 - b. evaluate the influence of television, radio, the press, newsletters, and emerging means of electronic communication on American politics
 - c. explain how Congress, the president, the Supreme Court, and state and local public officials use the media to communicate with the citizenry
 - d. explain how citizens can evaluate information and arguments received from various sources so that they can make reasonable choices on public issues and among candidates for political office
 - e. evaluate opportunities the media provide for individuals to monitor actions of their government, e.g., televised broadcasts of proceedings of governmental agencies, such as Congress and the courts, press conferences held by public officials
 - f. evaluate opportunities the media provide for individuals to communicate their concerns and positions on current issues, e.g., letters to the editor, talk shows, "op-ed pages," public opinion polls

- 3. Explain how political parties, campaigns, and elections provide opportunities for citizens to participate in the political process
 - a. describe the role of political parties
 - b. describe various kinds of elections, e.g., primary and general, local and state, congressional, presidential, recall
 - c. explain ways individuals can participate in political parties, campaigns, and elections

- 4. Explain how interest groups provide opportunities for citizens to participate in the political process.
 - a. evaluate the historical roles of prominent associations and groups in local, state, or national politics, e.g., abolitionists, suffragists, labor unions, agricultural, business, and professional organizations, civil rights groups, religious organizations

- b. evaluate the contemporary roles of prominent associations and groups in local, state, or national politics, e.g., AFL-CIO, National Education Association, Chamber of Commerce, Common Cause, League of Women Voters, American Medical Association, National Rifle Association, Greenpeace, National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP), Public Citizen, World Wildlife Federation, American Legion, Farm Bureau
 - c. explain how and why Americans become members of associations and groups
 - d. explain how individuals can participate in the political process through membership in associations and groups
5. Explain how public policy is formed and carried out at local, state, and national levels and what roles individuals can play in the process
- a. clarify public policy and identify examples at local, state, and national levels
 - b. describe how public policies are formed and implemented
 - c. explain how citizens can monitor and influence the formation and implementation of public policies
 - d. explain why conflicts about values, principles, and interests may make agreement difficult or impossible on certain issues of public policy, e.g., affirmative action, gun control, environmental protection, capital punishment, equal rights

IV. WHAT IS THE RELATIONSHIP OF THE UNITED STATES TO OTHER NATIONS AND TO WORLD AFFAIRS?

A. How is the world organized politically?

- 1. Explain nation-states and how the world is organized politically
 - a. describe how the world is divided into nation-states that claim sovereignty over a defined territory and jurisdiction over everyone within it
 - b. explain why there is no political organization at the international level with power comparable to that of the nation-state
- 2. Explain how nation-states interact with each other
 - a. describe the most important means nation-states use to interact with one another
 - 1. trade
 - 2. diplomacy
 - 3. treaties and agreements

- 4. humanitarian aid
 - 5. economic incentives and sanctions
 - 6. military force and the threat of force
 - b. explain reasons for the breakdown of order among nation-states, e.g., conflicts about national interests, ethnicity, and religion; competition for resources and territory; absence of effective means to enforce international law
 - c. explain the consequences of the breakdown of order among nation-states
 - d. explain why and how the breakdown of order among nation-states can affect their own lives
3. Explain how United States foreign policy is made and the means by which it is carried out
- a. explain the most important powers the United States Constitution gives to the Congress, president, and federal judiciary in foreign affairs
 - 1. Congress—can declare war, approve treaties (Senate), raise and support armies, and provide a navy (Article I, Section 8)
 - 2. president—is Commander in Chief, can make treaties and appoint ambassadors (Article II)
 - 3. federal judiciary—can decide cases affecting treaties and ambassadors, and those involving treason (Article III)
 - b. describe various means used to attain the ends of United States foreign policy, e.g., diplomacy; economic, military, and humanitarian aid; treaties; trade agreements; incentives; sanctions; military intervention; covert action
 - c. identify important current foreign policy issues and evaluate the means the United States is using to deal with them
4. Explain the role of major international organizations in the world today
- a. describe the purposes and functions of major governmental international organizations, e.g., UN
 - b. describe the purposes and functions of major nongovernmental international organizations, e.g., International Red Cross

B. How has the United States influenced other nations and how have other nations influenced the American political process and society?

- 1. Describe the impact and influence of the American concept of democracy and individual rights on other nations

- a. describe the impact on other nations of the American Revolution and of the values and principles expressed in the Declaration of Independence and the United States Constitution, including the Bill of Rights
 - b. evaluate the influence American ideas about rights have had on other nations and international organizations, e.g., French Revolution; democracy movements in Eastern Europe, People's Republic of China, Latin America, South Africa; United Nations Charter; Universal Declaration of Human Rights
2. Explain the effects of significant political, demographic, and environmental developments and trends in the world
- a. describe the impact of current political developments in the world on the United States, e.g., conflicts within and among other nations, efforts to establish democratic governments
 - b. describe the impact of major demographic trends on the United States, e.g., population growth, increase in immigration and refugees
 - c. describe environmental conditions that affect the United States, e.g., depletion of natural resources, destruction of animal habitats, depletion of fishing grounds, air and water pollution
3. Describe the impact on the United States of other nations' ideas and culture

V. WHAT ARE THE ROLES OF THE CITIZEN IN AMERICAN DEMOCRACY?

A. What is citizenship?

1. Explain the meaning of American citizenship
- a. explain the important characteristics of citizenship in the United States. Specifically, citizenship
 - 1. is legally recognized membership in a self-governing community
 - 2. confers full membership in a self-governing community—there are no degrees of citizenship or of legally tolerated states of inferior citizenship in the United States
 - 3. confers equal rights under the law
 - 4. is not dependent on inherited, involuntary groupings such as race, gender, or ethnicity
 - 5. confers certain rights and privileges, e.g., the right to vote, to hold public office, to serve on juries
 - b. explain that Americans are citizens of both their state and the United States

2. Explain how one becomes a citizen of the United States
 - a. explain that anyone born in the United States is a U.S. citizen
 - b. explain the distinction between citizens and noncitizens (aliens)
 - c. describe the process by which noncitizens may become citizens
 - d. compare naturalization in the United States with that of other nations
 - e. evaluate the criteria established by law that are used for admission to citizenship in the United States
 1. residence in the United States for five years
 2. ability to read, write, and speak English
 3. proof of good moral character
 4. knowledge of the history of the United States
 5. knowledge of and support for the values and principles of American constitutional democracy

B. What are the rights of citizens?

1. Evaluate, take, and defend positions on issues involving personal rights
 - a. identify personal rights, e.g., freedom of conscience, freedom to marry whom one chooses, to have children, to associate with whomever one pleases, to live where one chooses, to travel freely, to emigrate
 - b. identify the major documentary sources of personal rights, e.g., Declaration of Independence, United States Constitution, including the Bill of Rights, state constitutions
 - c. explain the importance to the individual and to society of such personal rights as
 1. freedom of conscience and religion
 2. freedom of expression and association
 3. freedom of movement and residence
 4. privacy
 - d. identify and evaluate contemporary issues that involve personal rights, e.g., restricting membership in private organizations, school prayer, dress codes, curfews, sexual harassment, the right to refuse medical care
2. Evaluate, take, and defend positions on issues involving political rights
 - a. identify political rights, e.g., the right to vote, petition, assembly, freedom of press
 - b. explain the meaning of political rights as distinguished from personal rights, e.g., the right of free speech for political discussion as distinct from the right of free speech to express personal tastes and interests, the right to register to vote as distinct from the right to live where one chooses

- c. identify major statements of political rights in documents such as the Declaration of Independence, United States Constitution, including the Bill of Rights, state constitutions, and civil rights legislation
 - d. explain the importance to the individual and society of such political rights as
 - 1. freedom of speech, press, assembly, and petition
 - 2. right to vote and to seek public office
 - e. identify and evaluate contemporary issues that involve political rights, e.g., hate speech, fair trial, free press
3. Evaluate, take, and defend positions on issues involving economic rights
- a. identify important economic rights, e.g., the right to own property, choose one's work, change employment, join a labor union, establish a business
 - b. analyze statements of economic rights in the United States Constitution, e.g., requirement of just compensation, contracts, copyright, patents
 - c. defend the importance to the individual and to society of such economic rights as the right to
 - 1. acquire, use, transfer, and dispose of property
 - 2. choose one's work, change employment
 - 3. join labor unions and professional associations
 - 4. establish and operate a business
 - 5. copyright and patent
 - 6. enter into lawful contracts
 - d. identify and evaluate contemporary economic issues, e.g., employment, welfare, social security, minimum wage, health care, equal pay for equal work, freedom of contract, economic growth, balanced budgets
4. Evaluate, take, and defend positions on issues regarding the proper scope and limits of rights
- a. explain what is meant by the "scope and limits" of a right, e.g., the scope of one's right to free speech in the United States is extensive and protects almost all forms of political expression; the right to free speech, however, can be limited if and when that speech seriously harms or endangers others
 - b. explain the argument that all rights have limits
 - c. explain criteria commonly used in determining what limits should be placed on specific rights, e.g.,
 - 1. clear and present danger rule
 - 2. compelling government interest test

3. national security
4. libel or slander
5. public safety
6. equal opportunity
- d. identify and evaluate positions on a contemporary conflict between rights, e.g., right to a fair trial and right to a free press, right to privacy and right to freedom of expression
- e. identify and evaluate positions on a contemporary conflict between rights and other social values and interests, e.g., the right of the public to know what their government is doing versus the need for national security, the right to property versus the protection of the environment

C. What are the responsibilities of citizens?

1. Evaluate, take, and defend positions on the importance of personal responsibilities to the individual and to society
 - a. evaluate the importance of commonly held personal responsibilities, such as
 1. taking care of one's self
 2. supporting one's family
 3. accepting responsibility for the consequences of one's actions
 4. adhering to moral principles
 5. considering the rights and interests of others
 6. behaving in a civil manner
 - b. identify and evaluate contemporary issues that involve personal responsibilities, e.g., failure to provide adequate support or care for one's children, cheating on examinations, lack of concern for the less fortunate
2. Evaluate, take, and defend positions on the importance of civic responsibilities to the individual and society
 - a. evaluate the importance of commonly held civic responsibilities, such as
 1. obeying the law
 2. paying taxes
 3. respecting the rights of others
 4. being informed and attentive to public issues
 5. monitoring political leaders and governmental agencies and taking appropriate action if their adherence to constitutional principles is lacking
 6. deciding whether and how to vote
 7. participating in civic groups

- 8. performing public service
- 9. serving as a juror
- 10. serving in the armed forces
- b. explain the meaning of civic responsibilities as distinguished from personal responsibilities
- c. evaluate when their responsibilities as Americans require that their personal rights and interests be subordinated to the public good
- d. evaluate the importance for the individual and society of fulfilling civic responsibilities
- e. identify and evaluate contemporary issues that involve civic responsibilities, e.g., low voter participation, avoidance of jury duty, failure to be informed about public issues

D. What dispositions or traits of character are important to the preservation and improvement of American constitutional democracy?

- 1. Evaluate, take, and defend positions on the importance of certain dispositions or traits of character for enhancing citizen effectiveness and promoting the healthy functioning of American constitutional democracy, to themselves and to American society
 - a. explain the importance to the individual and society of the following dispositions or traits of character
 - 1. individual responsibility—fulfilling the moral and legal obligations of membership in society
 - 2. self-discipline/self-governance—adhering voluntarily to self-imposed standards of behavior rather than requiring the imposition of external controls
 - 3. civility—treating other persons respectfully, regardless of whether or not one agrees with their viewpoints; being willing to listen to other points of view; avoiding hostile, abusive, emotional, and illogical arguments
 - 4. courage—the strength to stand up for one’s convictions when conscience demands
 - 5. respect for the rights of other individuals—having respect for others’ right to an equal voice in government, to be equal in the eyes of the law, to hold and advocate diverse ideas, and to join in associations to advance their views
 - 6. respect for law—willingness to abide by laws, even though one may not be in complete agreement with every law; willingness to work through peaceful, legal means to change laws which are thought to be unwise or unjust
 - 7. honesty—willingness to seek and express the truth

8. open mindedness—considering others' points of view
9. critical mindedness—having the inclination to question the validity of various positions, including one's own
10. negotiation and compromise—making an effort to come to agreement with those with whom one may differ, when it is reasonable and morally justifiable to do so
11. persistence—being willing to attempt again and again to accomplish worthwhile goals
12. civic mindedness—paying attention to and having concern for public affairs
13. compassion—having concern for the well-being of others, especially for the less fortunate
14. patriotism—being loyal to the values and principles underlying American constitutional democracy, as distinguished from jingoism and chauvinism

E. How can citizens take part in civic life?

1. Explain the relationship between participating in civic and political life and the attainment of individual and public goals
 - a. identify examples of their own individual goals and explain how their participation in civic and political life can help to attain them, e.g., living in a safe and orderly neighborhood, obtaining a good education, living in a healthy environment
 - b. identify examples of public goals and explain how participation in civic and political life can help to attain them, e.g., increasing the safety of the community, improving local transportation facilities, providing opportunities for education and recreation
2. Explain the difference between political and social participation
 - a. explain what distinguishes political from social participation, e.g., participating in a campaign to change laws regulating the care of children as opposed to volunteering to care for children
 - b. explain the importance of both political and social participation to American constitutional democracy
 - c. identify opportunities in their own community for both political and social participation
3. Describe forms of political participation—the means by which Americans can monitor and influence politics and government

- a. explain how Americans can use the following means to monitor and influence politics and government at local, state, and national—levels
 1. voting
 2. becoming informed about public issues
 3. discussing public issues
 4. communicating with public officials
 5. joining political parties, interest groups, and other organizations that attempt to influence public policy and elections
 6. attending meetings of governing bodies
 7. working in campaigns
 8. taking part in peaceful demonstration
 9. circulating and signing petitions
 10. contributing money to political parties or causes
 - b. describe historical and current examples of citizen movements seeking to promote individual rights and the common good, e.g., abolition, suffrage, tax fairness, environmental and civil rights movements
 - c. explain what civil disobedience is, how it differs from other forms of protest, what its consequences might be, and circumstances under which it might be justified
 - d. explain why becoming knowledgeable about public affairs and the values and principles of American constitutional democracy and communicating that knowledge to others is a form of political participation
4. Explain the importance of political leadership and public service in a constitutional democracy
- a. describe personal qualities necessary for political leadership
 - b. explain the functions of political leadership and why leadership is a vital necessity in a constitutional democracy
 - c. explain and evaluate ethical dilemmas that might confront political leaders
 - d. identify opportunities for political leadership in their own school, community, state, and the nation
 - e. explain the importance of individuals working cooperatively with their elected leaders
 - f. evaluate the role of “the loyal opposition” in a constitutional democracy
 - g. explain the importance of public service in a constitutional democracy
 - h. identify opportunities for public service in their own school, community, state and the nation
 - i. identify career opportunities in public service

5. Explain the importance of knowledge to competent and responsible participation in American democracy
 - a. explain why becoming knowledgeable about public affairs and the values and principles of American constitutional democracy and communicating that knowledge to others is an important form of participation
 - b. explain how awareness of the nature of American constitutional democracy may give citizens the ability to reaffirm or change fundamental constitutional values
 - c. evaluate the claim that constitutional democracy requires the participation of an attentive, knowledgeable, and competent citizenry

Twelfth Grade Content Outline

I. WHAT ARE CIVIC LIFE, POLITICS, AND GOVERNMENT?

A. What is civic life? What is politics? What is government? Why are government and politics necessary? What purposes should government serve?

1. Explain the meaning of the terms “civic life,” “politics,” and “government”
 - a. distinguish between civic life—the public life of the citizen concerned with the affairs of the community and nation—and private life—the personal life of the individual devoted to the pursuit of private interests
 - b. describe politics as the process by which a group of people, whose opinions or interests might be divergent
 1. reach collective decisions that are generally regarded as binding on the group and enforced as common policy
 2. seek the power to influence decisions about such matters as how their government will manage the distribution of resources and ensure public safety
 3. accomplish goals they could not realize as individuals
 - c. describe government as the formal institutions with the authority to make and implement binding decisions about such matters as the distribution of resources, the allocation of benefits and burdens, and the management of conflicts
 1. define political authority, identify its sources and functions, and differentiate between authority and power without authority
 2. identify examples of formal institutions with the authority to control and direct the behavior of those in a society, e.g., tribal councils, courts, monarchies, democratic legislatures
2. Explain the major arguments advanced for the necessity of politics and government
 - a. explain why politics is found wherever people gather together, i.e., it is a process by which a group of people reach collective decisions generally regarded as binding on the group and enforced as common policy
 - b. explain several major arguments for the necessity of politics and government, e.g., because human beings
 1. cannot fulfill their potential without politics and government
 2. are sinful or deprived by nature
 3. would be insecure or endangered without government

4. working collectively can accomplish goals and solve problems they could not achieve alone
 - c. describe historical and contemporary examples of how governments have reflected these major arguments
3. Evaluate, take, and defend positions on competing ideas regarding the purposes of politics and government and their implications for the individual and society
 - a. explain competing ideas about the purposes of politics and government, e.g.,
 1. improving the moral character of citizens
 2. furthering the interests of a particular class or ethnic group
 3. achieving a religious vision
 4. glorifying the state
 5. promoting individual security and public order
 6. enhancing economic prosperity
 7. protecting individual rights
 8. promoting the common good
 9. providing for a nation's security
 - b. describe historical and contemporary examples of governments which serve these purposes
 - c. explain how the purposes served by a government affect relationships between the individual and government and between government and society as a whole, e.g., the purpose of promoting a religious vision of what society should be like may require a government to restrict individual thought and actions and place strict controls on the whole of society

B. What are the essential characteristics of limited and unlimited government?

1. Explain the essential characteristics of limited and unlimited governments
 - a. describe the essential characteristics of limited and unlimited governments
 1. limited governments have established and respected restraints on their power, e.g.,
 - i. constitutional government—governments characterized by legal limits on political power
 2. unlimited governments are those in which there are no regularized and effective means of restraining their power, i.e.,

- i. authoritarian systems—governments in which political power is concentrated in one person or a small group, and individuals and groups are subordinated to that power
 - ii. totalitarian systems—modern forms of extreme authoritarianism in which the government attempts to control every aspect of the lives of individuals and prohibits independent associations
 - b. identify major historical and contemporary examples of limited and unlimited governments and explain their classification, e.g.,
 - 1. limited governments—United States, Great Britain, Japan, Israel
 - 2. unlimited governments—Nazi Germany, Imperial Japan, Spain under Franco, Argentina under Peron, Iraq under Hussein, Iran
- 2. Evaluate, take, and defend positions on the importance of the rule of law and on the sources, purposes, and functions of law
 - a. explain the difference between the rule of law and the “rule of men”
 - b. explain why the rule of law means more than simply having laws
 - c. explain alternative ideas about the sources of law, e.g., custom, Supreme Being, sovereigns, legislatures
 - d. identify different varieties of law, e.g., divine law, natural law, common law, statute law, international law
 - e. explain alternative ideas about the purposes and functions of law such as
 - 1. regulating relationships among people and between people and their government
 - 2. providing order, predictability, security, and established procedures for the management of conflict
 - 3. specifying the allocation of rights and responsibilities and of benefits and burdens
 - 4. providing the ultimate source of authority in a political community
 - 5. regulating social and economic relationships in civil society
 - f. explain how the rule of law can be used to restrict the actions of private citizens and government officials alike in order to protect the rights of individuals and to promote the common good
- 3. Explain and evaluate the argument that civil society is a prerequisite of limited government

- a. define civil society as the sphere of voluntary personal, social, and economic relationships and organizations that, although limited by law, is not part of government, e.g., family, friendships, membership in nongovernmental organizations, participation in unions and business enterprises
 - b. explain how civil society provides opportunities for individuals to associate for social, cultural, religious, economic, and political purposes
 - c. explain how civil society makes it possible for people individually or in association with others to bring their influence to bear on government in ways other than voting and elections
 - d. describe the historical role of religion in the development of a private sphere of life
 - e. explain, using historical and contemporary examples, how the resources of civil society have been used to maintain limited government
 - f. compare the relationships between government and civil society in constitutional democracies and in authoritarian and totalitarian regimes using historical and contemporary examples
4. Explain and evaluate competing ideas regarding the relationship between political and economic freedoms
- a. identify essential political freedoms, e.g., freedom of religion, speech, press, and assembly
 - b. identify essential economic freedoms, e.g., freedom to enter into contracts, choose one's own employment, own and dispose of property, engage in business enterprises
 - c. explain competing ideas about the relationship between political and economic freedoms, e.g., that political freedom is more important than economic freedom, that political and economic freedom are inseparable
 - d. explain how political and economic freedoms serve to limit governmental power
 - e. evaluate the argument that limited government is essential to the protection of political and economic freedoms

C. What are the nature and purposes of constitutions?

- 1. Explain different uses of the term "constitution" and distinguish between governments with a constitution and a constitutional government
 - a. distinguish among the following uses of the term "constitution"
 - 1. a document or collection of documents

2. a written document augmented over time by custom, legislation, and court decisions
 3. a description of a form of government
 4. a higher law that limits the powers of government, i.e., a constitutional (or limited) government
- b. distinguish between governments with a constitution and constitutional (limited) government
 - c. identify historical and contemporary examples of nations that have had constitutions that do not limit power, e.g., Nazi Germany, the former Soviet Union, and the People's Republic of China; distinguish them from nations that have constitutional governments, e.g., Germany, United Kingdom, Japan, United States
2. Explain the various purposes served by constitutions
 - a. explain how constitutions set forth the structure of government, give the government power, and establish the relationship between the people and their government
 - b. explain how constitutions may limit government's power in order to protect individual rights and promote the common good; give historical and contemporary examples
 - c. explain how constitutions may embody the core values and principles of a political system and provide a reference point for citizens to use in evaluating the actions of their government
 - d. describe historical and contemporary instances of how constitutions have been disregarded or used to promote the interests of a particular group, class, faction, or a government itself, e.g., slavery, exclusion of women from the body politic, prohibition of competing political parties
 - e. explain how constitutions can be vehicles for change and for resolving political, economic, and social issues, e.g., the Fourteenth Amendment
 - f. explain how constitutions can be devices for preserving core values and principles of a society, e.g., prohibition of religious tests for public office, protection of private property by the United States Constitution
3. Evaluate, take, and defend positions on what conditions contribute to the establishment and maintenance of constitutional government
 - a. explain the social, economic, and political conditions that may foster constitutional government

- b. evaluate the claim that the formal establishment of a government under a constitution is not of itself sufficient to maintain liberty
- c. evaluate the reasons why some nations have been successful in establishing constitutional government, while others have not, e.g., post-World War II Germany, Japan (successes); Nigeria, Kenya, Argentina under Peron (failures) *[Note to item writer: If these examples are to be used, information about these situations needs to be elaborated in the stem of the question.]*
- d. identify the most important responsibilities individual citizens and people serving in government should assume to insure the preservation and improvement of constitutional government

D. What are alternative ways of organizing constitutional governments?

- 1. Describe the major characteristics of systems of shared powers and of parliamentary systems
 - a. describe the major characteristics of systems of shared powers, e.g., in the United States and Brazil
 - 1. powers are separated among branches; each branch has primary responsibility for certain functions, e.g., legislative, executive, and judicial
 - 2. each branch also shares some of the powers and functions of the other branches, e.g.,
 - i. legislatures may pass laws, but the executive may veto them
 - ii. the executive nominates certain public officials, but the legislature must approve them
 - iii. legislatures may pass laws, but in many countries the judiciary may declare them unconstitutional
 - b. describe the major characteristics of parliamentary systems, e.g., in the United Kingdom and Israel
 - 1. authority is held by a legislature called Parliament
 - 2. members of Parliament are chosen in general elections, but they lose their positions at any time the government “falls” (resigns) and new elections are held
 - 3. prime minister and cabinet may be replaced by Parliament if a majority votes “no confidence” in the government
 - 4. the political party or parties that form a majority in Parliament choose the prime minister
 - 5. the prime minister and members of the Cabinet must all be members of the legislature—Parliament

- c. identify historical and contemporary examples of parliamentary systems and systems of shared powers
 - d. evaluate the various ways power is distributed, shared, and limited in systems of shared powers and parliamentary systems in terms of such criteria as effectiveness, prevention of the abuse of power, responsiveness to popular will, stability
 - e. evaluate the relative advantages and disadvantages of systems of shared powers and parliamentary systems in terms of the purposes of constitutional government
2. Explain the advantages and disadvantages of federal, confederal, and unitary systems of government
- a. define confederal, federal, and unitary systems of government
 - 1. confederal system—a system of government in which sovereign states delegate powers to a central government for specific purposes, e.g., mutual defense against foreign enemies
 - 2. federal system—a system in which a national government shares powers with state governments, but the national government may act directly on individuals within the states, e.g., national government may require individuals to pay income taxes
 - 3. unitary system—a system in which all power is concentrated in a central government; state and local governments can exercise only those powers given to them by the central government
 - b. identify historical and contemporary examples of confederal, federal, and unitary systems
 - c. evaluate the various ways power is distributed, shared, and limited in confederal, federal, and unitary systems in terms of such criteria as effectiveness, prevention of the abuse of power, responsiveness to popular will, stability
 - d. explain the relative advantages and disadvantages of confederal, federal, and unitary systems in terms of the purposes of constitutional government
3. Evaluate, take, and defend positions on how well alternative forms of representation serve the purposes of constitutional government
- a. explain the major arguments for and against representative government as distinguished from direct popular rule
 - b. describe common bases upon which representation is or has been established, e.g.,
 - 1. geographic areas

2. citizenship
3. social class or caste
4. age, sex, or property
5. religion, race, and ethnicity
- c. evaluate differing bases of electoral systems, e.g.,
 1. winner-take-all systems (i.e., single member districts)
 2. proportional systems
- d. evaluate differing theories of representation, e.g., the theory that the foremost obligation of a representative is to promote the interests of
 1. a particular constituency
 2. the society as a whole

II. WHAT ARE THE FOUNDATIONS OF THE AMERICAN POLITICAL SYSTEM?

A. What is the American idea of constitutional government?

1. Explain the central ideas of American constitutional government and their history
 - a. describe major historical events that led to the creation of limited government in the United States, e.g.,
 1. Magna Carta (1215), common law, and the Bill of Rights (1689) in England
 2. colonial experience, Declaration of Independence (1776), Articles of Confederation (1781), state constitutions and charters, United States Constitution (1787), Bill of Rights (1791) in the United States
 - b. explain the importance of the central ideas of the natural rights philosophy in the creation of American constitutional government, e.g., that all persons have the right to life, liberty, property, and the pursuit of happiness just because they are human beings; that the major purpose of government is to protect those rights
 - c. explain the major ideas about republican government which influenced the development of the United States Constitution, e.g., the concept of representative government, the importance of civic virtue or concern for the common good
 - d. explain the central ideas of American constitutional government such as
 1. popular sovereignty, i.e., the people as the ultimate source of the power to create, alter, or abolish governments

2. the necessity for a written constitution to set forth the organization of government and to grant and distribute its powers, e.g., among different branches of the national government, between the national government and the states, and between the people and the government
3. the Constitution as a “higher law” that authorizes and legitimizes an “energetic” and effective government of limited powers
4. the Constitution as legitimizing majority rule in certain key areas of decision making, while limiting the power of these majorities in order to protect the rights of individuals
- e. explain how various provisions of the Constitution and principles of the constitutional system are devices to insure an effective government that will not exceed its limits
- f. explain how the design of the institutions of government and the federal system channels and limits governmental power in order to serve the purposes of American constitutional democracy

2. Explain the extent to which Americans have internalized the values and principles of the Constitution and attempted to make its ideals realities
 - a. explain ways in which belief in limited government has influenced American society
 - b. explain ways in which the Constitution has encouraged Americans to engage in commercial and other productive activities
 - c. explain how major features of the Constitution, such as federalism and the Bill of Rights, have helped to shape American society
 - d. describe, giving historical and contemporary examples, how Americans have attempted to make the values and principles of the Constitution a reality

B. What are the distinctive characteristics of American society?

1. Explain how the following characteristics tend to distinguish American society from most other societies
 - a. explain important factors that have helped shape American society, such as
 1. absence of a nobility or an inherited caste system
 2. religious freedom
 3. a history of slavery
 4. the Judeo-Christian ethic
 5. relative geographic isolation
 6. abundance of land and widespread ownership of property
 7. social, economic, and geographic mobility

8. effects of a frontier
 9. large scale immigration
 10. diversity of the population
 11. individualism
 12. work ethic
 13. market economy
 14. relative social equality
 15. universal public education
- b. compare the distinctive characteristics of American society with those of other countries
2. Evaluate, take, and defend positions on the importance of voluntarism in American society
 - a. explain factors that have inclined Americans toward voluntarism, e.g., colonial conditions, the Puritan ethic, frontier traditions, religious beliefs
 - b. describe the role of voluntary associations in performing functions usually associated with government, such as providing social welfare and education; give historical and contemporary examples
 - c. describe the extent of voluntarism in American society compared to other countries
 - d. explain the relationship of voluntarism to Americans' ideas about limited government
 - e. evaluate arguments regarding what responsibilities properly belong to individuals or to groups and to the private sector or to the government and how these responsibilities should be shared by the private sector and government
 3. Evaluate, take, and defend positions on the contemporary role of organized groups in American social and political life
 - a. identify examples of organized groups and discuss their historical and contemporary role in local, state, and national politics, e.g., unions, professional organizations; religious, charitable, service, and civic groups, veterans groups
 - b. describe and evaluate the role of organized groups in performing functions usually associated with government, such as providing social welfare and education
 4. Evaluate, take and defend positions on issues regarding diversity in American life
 - a. identify the many forms of diversity found in American society, e.g., racial, religious, ethnic, socioeconomic, regional, linguistic

- b. explain the impact on American politics, both historically and at present, of the racial, religious, socioeconomic, regional, ethnic, and linguistic diversity of American society
- c. explain alternative ideas about the function and value of unity and diversity in American life both historically and at present
- d. describe issues that have arisen from diversity and explain the means by which some may be managed and explain why some conflicts may persist unabated
- e. explain the importance of adhering to constitutional values and principles in managing conflicts over unity and diversity

C. What is American political culture?

1. Explain the importance of shared political and civic beliefs and values to the maintenance of constitutional democracy in an increasingly diverse American society
 - a. explain that shared political and civic beliefs and values define an American citizen rather than ethnicity, race, religion, class, language, gender, or national origin
 - b. explain the shared ideas and values of American political culture as set forth in
 1. basic documents such as the Declaration of Independence, the United States Constitution and Bill of Rights
 2. other sources such as The Federalist and Anti-federalist writings, the Declaration of Sentiments of the Seneca Falls Convention of 1848, Abraham Lincoln’s “Gettysburg Address,” Woodrow Wilson’s “Fourteen Points,” Franklin Roosevelt’s “Four Freedoms,” Martin Luther King’s “Letter from the Birmingham Jail,” and landmark decisions of the Supreme Court of the United States [*Note: questions about these documents should emphasize interpretation of the document as it relates to the heading*]
 - c. describe beliefs common to American political culture, such as the belief in equality of opportunity; mistrust of power, as well as high expectations of what elected officials and government should do; the need to admit to faults or shortcomings in one’s society; and the belief that one can individually and through collective effort alleviate social, economic, or political problems
2. Describe the character of American political conflict and explain factors that usually tend to prevent it or lower its intensity

- a. describe political conflict in the United States both historically and at present, such as conflict about
 1. geographic or sectional interests
 2. slavery and indentured servitude
 3. national origins
 4. extending the franchise
 5. extending civil rights to all Americans
 6. the role of religion in American public life
 7. the rights of organized labor
 8. the role of government in regulating business
 9. engaging in wars
- b. explain some of the reasons why political conflict in the United States, with notable exceptions such as the Civil War, nineteenth century labor unrest, the 1950s and 1960s civil rights struggles, and the opposition to the war in Vietnam, has generally been less divisive than in many other nations. These include
 1. a shared respect for the Constitution and its principles
 2. the existence of many opportunities to influence government and to participate in it
 3. the concept of a loyal opposition
 4. willingness to relinquish power when voted out of office
 5. acceptance of majority rule tempered by respect for minority rights
 6. recourse to the legal system to manage conflicts
 7. availability of land and abundance of natural resources
 8. a relatively high standard of living
 9. opportunities to improve one's economic condition
 10. opportunities for free, public education
 11. a sense of unity within diversity
- c. explain the ways in which universal public education and the existence of a popular culture that crosses class boundaries have tended to reduce the intensity of political conflict by creating common ground among diverse groups

D. What values and principles are basic to American constitutional democracy?

1. Explain the meaning of the terms "liberal" and "democracy" in the phrase "liberal democracy"
 - a. explain that the term "liberal" is derived from "liberty" and refers to a form of government in which individual rights and freedoms are protected

1. explain that the term “liberal” has its historical roots in the ideas of liberalism that emerged in the seventeenth century and developed during the eighteenth-century Enlightenment
 2. explain the relationship between liberalism and the Protestant Reformation and the rise of market economies and free enterprise
 3. explain that the central idea of liberalism is a belief that the individual has rights which exist independently of government and which ought to be protected by and against government
 4. explain the difference between the use of the term “liberal” when it is referring to the American form of government and the use of the terms “liberal” and “conservative” in referring to positions on the spectrum of American politics
- b. explain that the term “democracy” is derived from the Greek word for “rule by the people”
1. explain that the central focus of democracy is that the people are the source of authority for government and how that idea is related to free elections and widespread participation
 2. explain the difference between the use of the term “democratic” to refer to the American form of government and the use of the term to refer to the Democratic Party in the United States
- c. explain how the basic premises of liberalism and democracy are joined in the Declaration of Independence, where they are stated as “self-evident Truths,” i.e.,
1. “all men are created equal”
 2. “they are endowed...with certain unalienable rights”
 3. governments are artificial—they “are instituted among men”
 4. people have a right to create a government to protect their rights
 5. governments are established for the limited purposes of securing individual rights
 6. authority is derived from consent of the governed
 7. people have the right to alter or abolish government when it fails to fulfill its purposes
2. Explain how and why ideas of classical republicanism are reflected in the values and principles of American constitutional democracy
- a. define a “republic” as a state in which the citizenry as a whole is considered sovereign but which is governed by elected representatives rather than directly by the people, as in direct democracy

- b. explain major ideas of republicanism, i.e.,
 - 1. government of a republic seeks the public or common good rather than the good of a particular group or class of society
 - 2. “civic virtue” of citizens is essential; civic virtue means that citizens put the public or common good above their private interests
 - c. explain how ideas of classical republicanism are reflected in the United States Constitution, e.g., in the Preamble, the guarantee to the states of a “republican form of government” in (Article IV, Section 4) provisions for the election of representatives to the Congress in Article I, Section 2 and the Seventeenth Amendment
 - d. explain the difference between the use of the term “republican” to refer to the American form of government and the use of the term to refer to the Republican Party in the United States
 - e. explain why classical republicanism and liberalism are potentially in conflict, e.g., the primary purpose of government—promotion of the public or common good vs. protection of individual rights
 - f. evaluate, take, and defend positions on the importance of civic virtue for American democracy today
3. Evaluate, take, and defend positions on what the fundamental values and principles of American political life are and their importance to the maintenance of constitutional democracy
- a. explain the importance to constitutional democracy of the following values which are widely considered to be fundamental to American civic life
 - 1. individual rights, i.e., life, liberty, property, and the pursuit of happiness
 - 2. the public or common good
 - 3. justice
 - 4. equality of opportunity and equal protection of the law
 - 5. consent of the governed
 - b. explain the importance to constitutional democracy of the following principles widely considered to be fundamental to American constitutional democracy
 - 1. popular sovereignty—the concept that ultimate political authority rests with the people who create and can alter or abolish governments
 - 2. constitutional government, including
 - i. rule of law
 - ii. representative institutions
 - iii. separated and shared powers

- iv. checks and balances
 - v. individual rights
 - vi. separation of church and state
 - vii. federalism
 - viii. civilian control of the military
 - c. identify the fundamental values and principles expressed in basic documents, significant political speeches and writings, and the individual and group actions that embody them
 - d. explain how the institutions of government reflect fundamental values and principles, e.g., justice, equality, the common good, popular sovereignty, checks and balances
 - e. explain the interdependence among certain values and principles, e.g., liberty and equality
 - f. explain the significance of fundamental values and principles for the individual and society
4. Evaluate, take, and defend positions on issues in which fundamental values and principles may be in conflict
- a. describe historical and contemporary issues which involve conflicts among fundamental values and principles and explain how these conflicts might be resolved
 - 1. liberty and equality
 - 2. liberty and authority
 - 3. individual rights and the common good
 - b. explain why people may agree on values or principles in the abstract but disagree when they are applied to specific issues, e.g., the right to life and capital punishment
5. Evaluate, take, and defend positions about issues concerning the disparities between American ideals and realities
- a. explain the importance of Americans' establishing ideals in political life and their insistence on comparing current practices with these ideals
 - b. explain, using historical and contemporary examples, discrepancies between American ideals and the realities of American social and political life, e.g., the ideal of equal opportunity and the reality of unfair discrimination
 - c. describe historical and contemporary efforts to reduce discrepancies between ideals and reality in American public life, e.g., abolitionists; suffrage, labor and civil rights movements; civil rights legislation and enforcement

- d. explain ways in which discrepancies between reality and the ideals of American constitutional democracy can be reduced by
 1. individual action
 2. social action
 3. political action

III. HOW DOES THE GOVERNMENT ESTABLISHED BY THE CONSTITUTION EMBODY THE PURPOSES, VALUES, AND PRINCIPLES OF AMERICAN DEMOCRACY?

A. How are power and responsibility distributed, shared, and limited in the government established by the United States Constitution?

1. Explain how the United States Constitution grants and distributes power to national and state government and how it seeks to prevent the abuse of power
 - a. explain how the overall design and specific features of the Constitution are intended to
 1. aggregate power at different levels to allow government to be responsive and effective, e.g., powers granted to Congress in Article I, Section 8
 2. disperse power among different levels of government to reduce chances of its abuse, protect individual rights, and promote the common good
 3. balance and check powers to prevent their abuse, e.g., separated institutions with shared powers, provisions for veto and impeachment, federalism, judicial review, separation of church and state, subordination of the military to civilian control, the Bill of Rights
2. Evaluate, take, and defend positions on issues regarding the distribution of powers and responsibilities within the federal system
 - a. explain why the Framers adopted a federal system in which power and responsibility are divided and shared between a national government having certain nationwide responsibilities, and state governments having state and local responsibilities
 - b. explain how the Constitution's overall design and specific features were intended to place limitations on both national and state governments, e.g., states cannot restrict interstate commerce
 - c. explain how the federal system provides numerous opportunities for citizens to participate through its dispersal of power among and between

1. national, state, and local governments
2. branches and agencies of the national, state, and local governments
- d. explain how the federal system provides numerous opportunities for citizens to hold their governments accountable
- e. explain ways in which federalism is designed to protect individual rights to life, liberty, and property and how it has at times made it possible for states to deny the rights of certain groups, e.g., states' rights and slavery, denial of suffrage to women and minority groups
- f. describe historical conflicts over the respective roles of national and state governments and the importance of the Tenth Amendment
- g. evaluate the respective roles of national and state governments in the contemporary federal system

B. How is the national government organized and what does it do?

1. Evaluate, take, and defend positions on issues regarding the purposes, organization, and functions of the institutions of the national government
 - a. describe the purposes, organization, and functions of the three branches of the national government
 1. legislative, i.e., the Congress, composed of a House of Representatives and a Senate, including their committees and their respective staffs and most prominent auxiliary agencies, e.g., the Congressional Budget Office, Library of Congress
 2. executive, including its most prominent agencies, e.g., State, Defense, Health and Human Services, Justice, Education
 3. judicial, including the Supreme Court of the United States and the federal court system
 4. independent regulatory agencies, e.g., Federal Reserve Board, Food and Drug Administration, Federal Communications Commission
 - b. evaluate the extent to which each branch of the government reflects the people's sovereignty, e.g., Congress legislates on behalf of the people, the president represents the people as a nation, the Supreme Court acts on behalf of the people as a whole when it interprets their Constitution
 - c. explain why certain provisions of the Constitution result in tensions among the three branches of government, e.g., the power of the purse, the power of impeachment, advice and consent, veto power, judicial review

- d. explain how and why beliefs about the purposes and functions of the national government have changed over time
 - e. evaluate the argument that separation of powers, checks and balances, and judicial review tend to slow down the process of making and enforcing laws, thus insuring better outcomes
 - f. evaluate current issues concerning representation, e.g., term limitations, legislative districting, geographical and group representation
2. Evaluate, take, and defend positions on issues regarding the major responsibilities of the national government for domestic and foreign policy
- a. explain the major responsibilities of the national government for domestic policy and how domestic policies affect people's everyday lives and communities
 - b. explain the major responsibilities of the national government for foreign policy and how foreign policies, including trade policy and national security, affect people's everyday lives and communities
 - c. evaluate competing arguments about the proper role of government in major areas of domestic and foreign policy, e.g., health care, education, child care, regulation of business and industry, foreign aid, intervention abroad
3. Evaluate, take, and defend positions on issues regarding how government should raise money to pay for its operations and services
- a. identify major sources of revenue for the national government, e.g., individual income taxes, social insurance receipts (Social Security and Medicare), borrowing, taxes on corporations and businesses, estate and excise taxes
 - b. identify major uses of tax revenues received by the national government, e.g., direct payment to individuals (Social Security, Medicaid, Medicare, Aid to Families with Dependent Children), interstate highways, national defense, interest on the federal debt, national parks
 - c. analyze provisions of the United States Constitution that authorize the national government to collect taxes, i.e., Article I, Sections 7 and 8, Sixteenth Amendment
 - d. explain why there is often a tension between citizens' desire for government services and benefits and their unwillingness to pay taxes for them
 - e. evaluate the equity of various kinds of taxes, such as income taxes, sales taxes, property taxes, etc.

C. How are state and local governments organized and what do they do?

1. Evaluate, take, and defend positions on issues regarding the proper relationship between the national government and the state and local governments
 - a. describe similarities and differences between students' state constitutions and the federal constitution [*Note: because there are 50 state constitutions, test items need to be on a general level*]
 - b. describe the limits the United States Constitution places on the powers of the states, e.g., coining money, prohibitions against impairing interstate commerce, making treaties with foreign governments, restrictions imposed by the Fourteenth Amendment and the Bill of Rights through the process of incorporation
 - c. describe the limits the United States Constitution places on the powers of the national government over state governments, e.g., the national government cannot abolish a state, the Tenth Amendment to the Constitution reserves certain powers to the states
 - d. identify powers most commonly associated with state governments
 1. reserved powers—powers not delegated to the national government or prohibited to states by the United States Constitution, e.g., legislation regarding public safety, marriage and divorce; education; the conduct of elections; chartering regional and local governments; licensing drivers, businesses, and professions
 2. concurrent powers—powers jointly held with the national government, e.g., legislating taxation, regulating trade and industry, borrowing money, maintaining courts, protecting the environment
 - e. evaluate changes that have taken place in the relationship between state and local governments and the national government
 - f. evaluate the argument that state and local governments provide significant opportunities for experimentation and innovation
2. Evaluate, take, and defend positions on issues regarding the relationships between state and local governments and citizen access to those governments
 - a. describe how state and local governments are organized, e.g., the organization of legislative, executive, and judicial functions at state and local levels
 - b. evaluate the relationship between state and local governments

c. explain how the policies of state and local governments provide citizens ways to monitor and influence their actions and hold members of government accountable, e.g., requirements of fair and public notice of meetings, meetings of government agencies must be open to the public, public trials, provision of opportunities for citizens to be heard

3. Identify the major responsibilities of their state and local governments and evaluate how well they are being fulfilled
- a. identify the major responsibilities of state and local governments and explain how those governments affect their lives
 - b. identify the major sources of revenue for state and local governments, e.g., property, sales, and income taxes; fees and licenses; taxes on corporations and businesses; inheritance taxes
 - c. evaluate the equity of major sources of revenue for state and local governments

D. What is the place of law in the American constitutional system?

1. Evaluate, take, and defend positions on the role and importance of law in the American political system
- a. explain why the rule of law has a central place in American society, e.g.,
 1. establishes limits on both those who govern and the governed
 2. makes possible a system of ordered liberty that protects the basic rights of citizens
 3. promotes the common good
 - b. describe historical and contemporary events and practices that illustrate the central place of the rule of law, e.g.,
 1. events, e.g., U.S. Supreme Court cases such as *Marbury v. Madison*, *Brown v. Board of Education*, *U.S. v. Nixon*
 2. practices, e.g., submitting bills to legal counsel to insure congressional compliance with constitutional limitations, higher court review of lower court compliance with the law, executive branch compliance with laws enacted by Congress
 - c. describe historical and contemporary events and practices that illustrate the absence or breakdown of the rule of law, e.g.,
 1. events, e.g., vigilantism in the early West; Ku Klux Klan attacks; urban riots; corruption in government, business, and unions; organized crime
 2. practices, e.g., illegal searches and seizures, bribery, interfering with the right to vote

- d. explain, using historical and contemporary examples, the meaning and significance of the idea of equal protection of the laws for all persons, e.g., the Fourteenth Amendments, Americans with Disabilities Act, equal opportunity legislation
 - e. explain how the individual's rights to life, liberty, and property are protected by the trial and appellate levels of the judicial process and by the principal varieties of law, e.g., constitutional, criminal, and civil law
 - f. evaluate the argument that Americans depend too much on the legal system to solve social, economic, and political problems rather than using other means, such as private negotiations, mediation, and participation in the political process
2. Evaluate, take, and defend positions on current issues regarding the judicial protection of individual rights, e.g.,
- a. due process of law for individuals accused of crimes, e.g., habeas corpus, presumption of innocence, impartial tribunal, trial by jury, right to counsel, right against self-incrimination, protection against double jeopardy, right of appeal
 - b. due process rights in administrative and legislative procedures
 - c. alternative means of conflict resolution, including negotiation, arbitration, mediation, and litigation
 - d. the rights of victims of crime
 - e. the jury system
 - f. the adversary system: its advantages and disadvantages
 - g. the power of judicial review

E. How does the American political system provide for choice and opportunities for participation?

1. Evaluate, take, and defend positions about how the public agenda is set
- a. explain that the "public agenda" consists of those matters that occupy public attention at any particular time, e.g., crime, health care, education, abortion, national debt, environmental protection, international intervention
 - b. describe how the public agenda is shaped by political leaders, political institutions, political parties, interest groups, the media, individual citizens
 - c. explain how individuals can help to shape the public agenda, e.g., joining interest groups or political parties, making presentations at public meetings, writing letters to newspapers and government officials

- d. explain why issues important to some groups and the nation do not become a part of the public agenda
2. Evaluate, take, and defend positions about the role of public opinion in American politics
 - a. explain the concept of public opinion and alternative views of the proper role of public opinion in a democracy
 - b. explain how public opinion is measured, used in public debate, and sometimes can be manipulated
 - c. evaluate ways that government and the media influence public opinion
 - d. evaluate the influence of public opinion on public policy and the behavior of public officials
 3. Evaluate, take, and defend positions on the influence of television, radio, the press, and political persuasion on American political life
 - a. explain the meaning and importance of freedom of the press
 - b. evaluate the role of television, radio, the press, newsletters, and emerging means of communication in American politics
 - c. compare and contrast various forms of political persuasion and discuss the extent to which traditional forms have been replaced by electronic media
 - d. explain how Congress, the president, and state and local public officials use the media to communicate with the citizenry
 - e. evaluate historical and contemporary political communication using such criteria as logical validity, factual accuracy, emotional appeal, distorted evidence, appeals to bias or prejudice, e.g.,
 1. speeches such as Lincoln's "House Divided," Sojourner Truth's "Ain't I a Woman?," Chief Joseph's "I Shall Fight No More Forever," Roosevelt's "Four Freedoms," Martin Luther King Jr.'s "I Have a Dream"
 2. government wartime information programs, campaign advertisements
 3. political cartoons
 4. Evaluate, take, and defend positions about the roles of political parties, campaigns, and elections in American politics
 - a. describe the origins and development of the two-party system in the United States
 - b. evaluate the role of third parties in the United States
 - c. explain how and why American political parties differ from ideological parties in other countries

- d. explain the major characteristics of American political parties, how they vary by locality, and how they reflect the dispersion of power providing citizens numerous opportunities for participation
 - e. describe the role of political parties in channeling public opinion, allowing people to act jointly, nominating candidates, conducting campaigns, and training future leaders
 - f. explain why political parties in the United States are weaker today than they have been at some times in the past
 - g. describe varied types of elections, e.g., primary and general, local and state, congressional and presidential, initiative, referendum, recall
 - h. evaluate the significance of campaigns and elections in the American political system
 - i. evaluate current criticisms of campaigns and proposals for their reform
5. Evaluate, take, and defend positions about the contemporary roles of associations and groups in American politics
- a. identify and explain the historical role of various associations and groups active in American politics, e.g., political organizations, political action committees (PACs), interest groups, voluntary and civic associations, professional organizations, unions, religious groups
 - b. describe, giving historical and contemporary examples, the role of associations and groups in performing functions often performed by government, such as social welfare and education
 - c. describe the contemporary roles of associations and groups in local, state, and national politics
 - d. evaluate the degree to which associations and groups enhance citizen participation in American political life
6. Evaluate, take, and defend positions about the formation and implementation of public policy
- a. describe a current issue of public policy at local, state, or national level
 - 1. identify the major groups interested in that issue and explain their positions
 - 2. identify the points at which citizens can monitor or influence the process of public policy formation
 - 3. explain the processes by which public policy concerning that issue is formed and carried out
 - b. explain why conflicts about values, principles, and interests may make agreement difficult or impossible on certain issues of public policy, e.g., affirmative action, abortion, environment, gun control, capital punishment

IV. WHAT IS THE RELATIONSHIP OF THE UNITED STATES TO OTHER NATIONS AND TO WORLD AFFAIRS?

A. How is the world organized politically?

1. Explain nation-states and how the world is organized politically
 - a. explain the division of the world into nation-states that claim sovereignty over a defined territory and jurisdiction over everyone within it
 - b. explain why there is no political organization at the international level with power comparable to that of the nation-state

2. Explain how nation-states interact with each other
 - a. describe the most important means nation-states use to interact with one another
 1. trade
 2. diplomacy
 3. treaties, agreements
 4. international law
 5. economic incentives and sanctions
 6. military force and the threat of force
 - b. explain common reasons for the breakdown of order among nation-states, e.g., conflicts about national interests, ethnicity, and religion; competition for resources and territory; the absence of effective means to enforce international law
 - c. explain the consequences of the breakdown of order among nation-states
 - d. explain why and how the breakdown of order among nation-states can affect their own lives and the lives of others

3. Evaluate, take, and defend positions on the purposes and functions of international organizations in the world today
 - a. describe the purposes and functions of the major governmental international organizations, e.g., United Nations, NATO, World Court, Organization of American States
 - b. describe the purposes and functions of major nongovernmental international organizations, e.g., World Council of Churches, Roman Catholic Church, International Red Cross, Amnesty International, multinational corporations

B. How do the domestic politics and constitutional principles of the United States affect its relations with the world?

1. Explain the principal foreign policy positions of the United States within an historical context and evaluate their consequences
 - a. explain the significance of principal policies and events in the United States' relations with the world, e.g., the American Revolution, Monroe Doctrine, Mexican and Spanish American Wars, World Wars I and II, formation of the United Nations, Marshall Plan, containment of communism, NATO, Korean and Vietnam Wars, end of the Cold War, interventions in Latin America
 - b. explain how and why the United States assumed the role of world leader after World War II and what its leadership role is in the world today
 - c. evaluate the major foreign policy positions that have characterized the United States' relations with the world, e.g., isolated nation, imperial power, and world leader

2. Evaluate, take, and defend positions about how United States foreign policy is made and the means by which it is carried out
 - a. explain powers the Constitution gives to the president, Congress, and the federal judiciary in foreign affairs and how these powers have been used over time
 - b. describe the process by which United States foreign policy is made, including the roles of federal agencies, domestic interest groups, the public, and the media
 - c. explain the tension between constitutional provisions and the requirements of foreign policy, e.g., the power of Congress to declare war and the need for the president to make expeditious decisions in times of international emergency, the power of the president to make treaties and the need for the Senate to approve them
 - d. describe the various means used to attain the ends of United States foreign policy, such as diplomacy; economic, military and humanitarian aid; treaties; sanctions; military intervention; covert action
 - e. explain how and why domestic politics may impose constraints or obligations on the ways in which the United States acts in the world, e.g., long-standing commitments to certain nations, lobbying efforts of domestic groups, economic needs
 - f. describe ways in which Americans can influence foreign policy

3. Evaluate, take, and defend positions on foreign policy issues in light of American national interests, values, and principles
 - a. explain the idea of the national interest
 - b. evaluate the use of the national interest as a criterion for American foreign policy
 - c. explain the influence of American constitutional values and principles on American foreign policy, e.g., a commitment to the self-determination of nations
 - d. explain possible tensions among American values, principles, and interests as the nation deals with the practical requirements of international politics, e.g., a commitment to human rights and the requirements of national security
 - e. evaluate the current role of the United States in peacemaking and peacekeeping

C. How has the United States influenced other nations, and how have other nations influenced American politics and society?

1. Evaluate, take, and defend positions about the impact of American political ideas on the world
 - a. describe the impact on other nations of the American Revolution and of the values and principles expressed in the Declaration of Independence and the United States Constitution including the Bill of Rights
 - b. describe the influence abroad of American ideas about rights and how the ideas of others about rights have influenced Americans
2. Evaluate, take, and defend positions about the effects of significant international political developments on the United States and other nations
 - a. explain the effects on the United States of significant world political developments, e.g., the French, Russian, and Chinese Revolutions; rise of nationalism; World Wars I and II; decline of colonialism; terrorism; multiplication of nation-states and the proliferation of conflict within them; the emergence of regional organizations such as the European Union and the end of the Cold War
 - b. explain the effects on other nations of significant American political developments, e.g., immigration policies; opposition to communism; promotion of human rights; foreign trade; economic, military, and humanitarian aid
 - c. explain why allegiance to some nation-states is being challenged by competing loyalties, such as those to ethnic, religious, tribal, or linguistic groups

- d. explain why transnational loyalties sometimes supersede loyalty to a nation-state, e.g., Communist International, Islam, Christianity
- 3. Evaluate, take, and defend positions about the effects of significant economic, technological, and cultural developments in the United States and other nations
 - a. describe some of the principal economic, technological, and cultural effects the United States has had on the world, e.g., assembly line manufacturing, research and development in computer technology, popular music, fashion, film, television
 - b. explain the principal effects of developments in other nations on American society and on their own lives
 - 1. economic conditions, e.g., multinational corporations, internationalization of capital, migration of labor, and other effects of an interdependent world economy
 - 2. technological developments, e.g., fax machines, electronic communications networks, jet air travel, personal computers, television, motion pictures
 - 3. cultural developments, e.g., religious movements, resurgence of ethnic consciousness, mass markets, sports
- 4. Evaluate, take, and defend positions about what the response of American governments at all levels should be to world demographic and environmental developments
 - a. describe the impact of major demographic trends on the United States, e.g., population growth, immigration
 - b. describe principal environmental conditions that affect the United States, e.g., economic growth, depletion of natural resources, air and water pollution
 - c. evaluate historical and contemporary responses of the American government to demographic and environmental changes
- 5. Evaluate, take, and defend positions about what the relationship of the United States should be to international organizations
 - a. describe the role of the United States in establishing and maintaining principal international organizations, e.g., UN, UNICEF, GATT, World Bank, NATO, OAS, International Monetary Fund
 - b. evaluate some important bilateral and multilateral agreements to which the United States is signatory, e.g., NAFTA, Helsinki Accord, Antarctic Treaty, Most Favored Nation Agreements
 - c. evaluate the role of the United States in international organizations

V. WHAT ARE THE ROLES OF THE CITIZEN IN AMERICAN DEMOCRACY?

A. What is citizenship?

1. Explain the meaning of citizenship in the United States
 - a. explain the idea that citizenship
 1. is legally recognized membership in a self-governing community
 2. confers full membership in a self-governing community; no degrees of citizenship or legally recognized states of inferior citizenship are tolerated
 3. confers equal rights under the law
 4. is not dependent on inherited, involuntary groupings such as race, ethnicity, or ancestral religion
 5. confers certain rights and privileges, e.g., the right to vote, to hold public office, to serve on juries
 - b. explain that Americans are citizens of both their state and the United States
2. Evaluate, take, and defend positions on issues regarding the criteria used for naturalization
 - a. explain the distinction between citizens and noncitizens (aliens) and the process by which aliens may become citizens
 - b. compare naturalization in the United States with that of other nations
 - c. evaluate the criteria used for admission to citizenship in the United States:
 1. residence in the United States for five years
 2. ability to read, write, and speak English
 3. proof of good moral character
 4. knowledge of the history of the United States
 5. knowledge of and support for the values and principles of American constitutional government

B. What are the rights of citizens?

1. Evaluate, take, and defend positions on issues regarding personal rights
 - a. explain the meaning of personal rights as distinguished from political rights, e.g., the right to privacy or the right to freedom of conscience as distinguished from the political right to peaceably assemble and petition for a redress of grievances

- b. identify major documentary statements of personal rights, e.g., the Declaration of Independence, the Northwest Ordinance, the United States Constitution including the Bill of Rights, state constitutions and bills of rights
 - c. explain the importance to the individual and to society of such personal rights as
 - 1. freedom of thought and conscience
 - 2. privacy and personal autonomy
 - 3. freedom of expression and association
 - 4. freedom of movement and residence
 - 5. right to due process of law and equal protection of the law
 - d. explain how personal rights are secured in American constitutional democracy by such means as the rule of law, checks and balances, an independent judiciary, a vigilant citizenry
 - e. evaluate contemporary issues that involve the question of personal rights, e.g., restricted membership in organizations, school prayer, sexual harassment, refusal of medical care
2. Evaluate, take, and defend positions on issues regarding political rights
- a. explain the meaning of political rights as distinguished from personal rights, e.g., the right of free speech for political discussion as distinct from the right of free speech for expression of one's personal tastes and interests, or the right to register to vote as distinct from the right to live where one chooses
 - b. identify the major documentary statements of political rights—the Declaration of Independence, the Northwest Ordinance, the United States Constitution including the Bill of Rights, state constitutions and bills of rights, civil rights legislation, court decisions
 - c. explain the importance to the individual and society of such political rights as
 - 1. freedom of speech, press, assembly, petition
 - 2. right to vote and run for public office
 - d. explain how political rights are secured by constitutional government and by such means as the rule of law, checks and balances, an independent judiciary, and a vigilant citizenry
 - e. evaluate contemporary issues that involve political rights, e.g., proportional voting, "hate speech," access to classified information, changing the boundaries of congressional and state legislative districts
3. Evaluate, take, and defend positions on issues regarding economic rights

- a. explain the meaning of economic rights as distinguished from personal and political rights, e.g., the right to use money to buy personal property as distinct from the right to donate money for political campaigns
 - b. identify major documentary statements of economic rights—the Declaration of Independence, the United States Constitution including the Bill of Rights, state constitutions and bills of rights, legislation, court decisions, and the common law
 - c. explain the importance to the individual and society of such economic rights as the right to
 1. acquire, use, transfer, and dispose of property
 2. choose one's work, change employment
 3. join labor unions and professional associations
 4. establish and operate a business
 5. copyright and patent
 6. enter into lawful contracts
 - d. explain how economic rights are secured by constitutional government and by such means as the rule of law, checks and balances, an independent judiciary, and a vigilant citizenry
 - e. evaluate the view that economic responsibilities follow from economic rights
 - f. evaluate contemporary economic issues, e.g., economic growth, minimum wages, consumer product safety, taxation, affirmative action, eminent domain, zoning, copyright, patents
4. Evaluate, take, and defend positions on the relationships among personal, political, and economic rights
 - a. explain the relationship between the economic right to acquire, use, transfer, and dispose of property, and political rights
 - b. explain the relationship of economic rights such as the right to choose one's work, to change employment, and to join a labor union and other lawful associations, and political rights
 - c. explain and give examples of situations in which personal, political, or economic rights are in conflict
 - d. evaluate the argument that poverty, unemployment, and urban decay serve to limit both political and economic rights
 - e. evaluate the argument that personal, political, and economic rights reinforce each other
 5. Evaluate, take, and defend positions on issues regarding the proper scope and limits of rights

- a. explain what is meant by the “scope and limits” of a right, e.g., the scope of one’s right to free speech in the United States is extensive and protects almost all forms of political expression; however, the right to free speech can be limited if and when speech seriously harms or endangers others
- b. evaluate the argument that all rights have limits
- c. explain considerations and criteria commonly used in determining what limits should be placed on specific rights, e.g.,
 - 1. clear and present danger
 - 2. compelling government interest
 - 3. national security
 - 4. chilling effect on the exercise of rights
 - 5. libel or slander
 - 6. public safety
 - 7. equal opportunity
- d. evaluate positions on contemporary conflicts between rights, e.g., the right to a fair trial and the right to a free press, the right to privacy and the right to freedom of expression, one person’s right to free speech and another’s right to be heard
- e. evaluate positions on a contemporary conflict between rights and other social values and interests, e.g., the right of the public to know what their government is doing versus the need for national security, the right to property versus the protection of the environment

C. What are the responsibilities of citizens?

- 1. Evaluate, take, and defend positions on issues regarding the personal responsibilities of citizens in American constitutional democracy
 - a. explain the distinction between personal and civic responsibilities, as well as the tensions that may arise between them
 - b. evaluate the importance for the individual and society of
 - 1. taking care of one’s self
 - 2. supporting one’s family and caring for, nurturing, and educating one’s children
 - 3. accepting responsibility for the consequences of one’s actions
 - 4. adhering to moral principles
 - 5. considering the rights and interests of others
 - 6. behaving in a civil manner
- 2. Evaluate, take, and defend positions on issues regarding civic responsibilities of citizens in American constitutional democracy

- a. evaluate the importance of each citizen reflecting on, criticizing, and reaffirming basic constitutional principles
- b. evaluate the importance for the individual and society of
 - 1. obeying the law
 - 2. being informed and attentive to public issues
 - 3. monitoring the adherence of political leaders and governmental agencies to constitutional principles and taking appropriate action if that adherence is lacking
 - 4. assuming leadership when appropriate
 - 5. paying taxes
 - 6. registering to vote and voting knowledgeably on candidates and issues
 - 7. serving as a juror
 - 8. serving in the armed forces
 - 9. performing public service
- c. evaluate whether and when one's obligations as a citizen require that one's personal desires and interests be subordinated to the public good
- d. evaluate whether and when moral obligations or constitutional principles require one to refuse to assume certain civic responsibilities

D. What civic dispositions or traits of private and public character are important to the preservation and improvement of American constitutional democracy?

- 1. Evaluate, take, and defend positions on the importance to American constitutional democracy of dispositions that lead individuals to become independent members of society
 - a. explain the meaning and importance of self-discipline and self-governance—adhering voluntarily to self-imposed standards of behavior rather than requiring the imposition of external controls
 - b. explain the meaning and importance of individual responsibility—fulfilling the moral and legal obligations of membership in society
- 2. Evaluate, take, and defend positions on the importance to American constitutional democracy of dispositions that foster respect for individual worth and human dignity

- a. explain the meaning and importance of respect for the rights and choices of individuals—even beyond the legally enforceable rights guaranteed by the Constitution—such as holding and advocating differing ideas and joining associations to advance their views
 - b. explain the meaning and importance of compassion—concern for the well-being of others

- 3. Evaluate, take, and defend positions on the importance to American constitutional democracy of dispositions that incline citizens to public affairs
 - a. explain the meaning of civic mindedness—what the Founders called civic virtue—or attentiveness to and concern for public affairs
 - b. explain the meaning of patriotism—loyalty to the values and principles underlying American constitutional democracy as distinguished from jingoism and chauvinism

- 4. Evaluate, take, and defend positions on the importance to American constitutional democracy of dispositions that facilitate thoughtful and effective participation in public affairs
 - a. evaluate the usefulness of the following traits in facilitating thoughtful and effective participation in public affairs
 - 1. civility—treating other persons respectfully, regardless of whether or not one agrees with their viewpoints; being willing to listen to other points of view; avoiding hostile, abusive, emotional, and illogical argument
 - 2. respect for the rights of other individuals—having respect for others’ right to an equal voice in government, to be equal in the eyes of the law, to hold and advocate diverse ideas, and to join in associations to advance their views
 - 3. respect for law—willingness to abide by laws, even though one may not be in complete agreement with every law; willingness to work through peaceful, legal means to change laws which one thinks to be unwise or unjust
 - 4. honesty—willingness to seek and express the truth
 - 5. open mindedness—considering others’ points of view
 - 6. critical mindedness—having the inclination to question the validity of various positions, including one’s own
 - 7. negotiation and compromise—making an effort to come to agreement with those with whom one may differ, when it is reasonable and morally justifiable to do so
 - 8. persistence—being willing to attempt again and again to accomplish worthwhile goals

9. civic mindedness—paying attention to and having concern for public affairs
10. compassion—having concern for the well-being of others, especially for the less fortunate
11. patriotism—being loyal to the values and principles underlying American constitutional democracy, as distinguished from jingoism and chauvinism
12. courage—the strength to stand up for one’s convictions, when conscience demands
13. tolerance of ambiguity—the ability to accept uncertainties that arise, e.g., from insufficient knowledge or understanding of complex issues or from tension among fundamental values and principles

E. How can citizens take part in civic life?

1. Evaluate, take and defend positions on the relationship between politics and the attainment of individual and public goals
 - a. explain the relationship of individual participation in the political process to the realization of the fundamental values of American constitutional democracy
 - b. explain the relationship between participation in the political process and the attainment of individual and collective goals
2. Explain the difference between political and social participation
 - a. explain what distinguishes participation in government and political life from nonpolitical participation in civil society and private life, e.g., participating in a campaign to change laws regulating nursing homes as opposed to volunteering to work in a nursing home
 - b. evaluate the importance of both political and social participation to American constitutional democracy
3. Evaluate, take, and defend positions about the means that citizens should use (forms of political participation) to monitor and influence the formation and implementation of public policy
 - a. describe the many ways citizens can participate in the political process at local, state, and national levels
 - b. describe historical and current examples of citizen movements seeking to expand liberty, to insure the equal rights of all citizens, and/or to realize other values fundamental to American constitutional democracy, such as the suffrage and civil rights movements

- c. explain what civil disobedience is, how it differs from other forms of protest, what its consequences might be, and evaluate the circumstances under which it might be justified
 - d. evaluate the importance of voting as a form of political participation
 - e. evaluate the usefulness of other forms of political participation in influencing public policy, e.g., attending political and governmental meetings, filing a legal challenge, demonstrating, contacting public officials, working in campaigns, contributing money to political parties or causes, writing letters, boycotting, community organizing, petitioning, picketing, expressing opinions on talk shows, running for political office
4. Evaluate, take, and defend positions about the functions of leadership (political leadership and careers in public service) in American constitutional democracy
- a. explain the functions of political leadership and why leadership is a vital necessity in American constitutional democracy
 - b. describe various ways one can exercise leadership in public affairs
 - c. describe opportunities for citizens to engage in careers in public service
 - d. describe the personal qualities necessary for political leadership
 - e. explain and evaluate ethical dilemmas that might confront political leaders
5. Explain the importance of knowledge to competent and responsible participation in American democracy
- a. explain why becoming knowledgeable about public affairs and the values and principles of American constitutional democracy and communicating that knowledge to others is an important form of participation
 - b. explain how awareness of the nature of American constitutional democracy may give citizens the ability to reaffirm or change fundamental constitutional values
 - c. evaluate the claim that constitutional democracy requires the participation of an attentive, knowledgeable, and competent citizenry

APPENDIX B

Intellectual Skills

Intellectual skills essential for informed, effective, and responsible citizenship are categorized as *identifying* and *describing*, *explaining* and *analyzing*, and *evaluating*, *taking*, and *defending positions* on public issues. The following lists are intended to be illustrative and not exhaustive in describing the intellectual skills important in the field of civics.

Identifying and Describing

- *Defining key terms*, e.g., constitution, constitutional government, nation-state
- *Making distinctions*, e.g., among branches of government, between forms of government, between civil society and the state, between state and local differences in government institutions, legal systems, and jurisdictional forms
- *Identifying individuals, symbols, institutions*, e.g., significant civic and political leaders, flags and national monuments, federal and state legislatures
- *Identifying ideas and concepts*, e.g., patriotism, majority and minority rights, constitutionalism, civil society, nation-state
- *Identifying emotional language and symbols*, e.g., patriot, hawk, dove; flag, Statue of Liberty
- *Describing functions and processes*, e.g., legislative checks and balances, judicial review, foreign policy formation
- *Describing historical origins*, e.g., of national holidays, sources of democracy, political authority
- *Describing attributes or characteristics*, e.g., of local government, American society, systems of shared powers
- *Classifying by attributes*, e.g., constitutional democracy, authoritarianism, totalitarianism
- *Describing trends*, e.g., participation in politics and civil society, immigration, international influence's on American culture

Explaining and Analyzing

- *Explaining how something works*, e.g., electoral system, system of checks and balances, American federal system
- *Analyzing reasons for acts, occurrences, and trends*, e.g., passage of the 19th Amendment, urban riots, voter interest or apathy
- *Explaining the causes and effects of events and phenomena*, e.g., creation of the Bill of Rights, election of FDR in 1932, high or low voter turnout

- *Analyzing the reasons or motivations for the use of emotional language, e.g., pique public interest, spur action, gain support of sympathy*
- *Comparing and contrasting, e.g., limited and unlimited governments, legislative and judicial functions, shared powers and parliamentary systems*
- *Distinguishing between opinion and fact, e.g., belief that citizens cannot influence public policy vs. available avenues through which citizens can monitor and influence public policy*
- *Distinguishing between means and ends, e.g., between trial by jury and justice, taxation and public safety, foreign aid and national security interests*
- *Clarifying responsibilities, e.g., between personal and public responsibilities, between elected officials and citizens*
- *Interpreting the meaning or significance of events, ideas, phenomena, e.g., ratification of the Constitution, rule of law, impact of immigration*

Evaluating, Taking, and Defending Positions

- *Identifying strengths and weaknesses, e.g., of proposed rules, regulations, or legislation*
- *Challenging ad hominem and other illogical arguments, e.g., name calling, personal attacks, insinuation and innuendo, circular arguments*
- *Evaluating the validity of arguments, analogies, and data, e.g., source of data, omission of data, logical cohesion, circularity of argument; appropriate correspondence of analogies*
- *Citing evidence in support or rejection, e.g., reliability of evidence, relevance of evidence, substantiation or contradiction of two or more kinds of evidence*
- *Predicting probable consequences, e.g., reliability of predictions, degrees of probability, comparability to past instances*
- *Evaluating means and ends, e.g., means not conducive to ends, unethical means and ends, ends that conflict with other desirable ends*
- *Assessing the costs and benefits of alternatives, e.g., numbers of people positively or negatively affected, monetary costs vs. societal value*
- *Choosing a position from existing alternatives, e.g., analyzing existing positions, judging positions using appropriate criteria*
- *Creating a novel position, e.g., extracting best ideas from alternatives, combining elements in unique ways*
- *Defending a position, e.g., consistency with fundamental values and principles, costs outweighed by benefits, best and least objectionable among alternatives*

- *Responding to opposing arguments*, e.g., citing appropriate evidence, countering misstatements or emotive language, pointing out inconsistencies in opposing arguments, accommodating the strengths of different positions, taking into account the best case against one's own position

APPENDIX C

Participatory Skills

Participatory skills essential for informed, effective, and responsible citizenship are categorized as *interacting*, *monitoring*, and *influencing*. The following are intended to be an illustrative and not an exhaustive descriptive listing of essential skills of participation in civic life.

Interacting

- *Working in small groups and committees*, pooling information, exchanging opinions, formulating plans of action
- *Listening*, gaining information, ideas, different perspectives
- *Questioning*, clarifying information or points of view, eliciting facts and opinions
- *Discussing public affairs* in a knowledgeable, responsible, and civil manner in school, with neighbors and friends, in community groups and public forums
- *Participating in associations and interest groups*, promoting ideas, policies, interests
- *Building coalitions*, enlisting the support of like-minded individuals and groups to promote candidates, policies
- *Managing conflicts* through mediation, negotiation, compromise, consensus-building, adjudication
- *Performing school and community service*, serving as a representative or elected leader, organizing a public issues forum, working for one's religious, civic, or charitable organizations
- *Using media resources*, obtaining information, exchanging ideas, advocating public policies
- *Deliberating on public issues*, e.g., health care, employment, environmental concerns
- *Assessing others' arguments and positions* for their validity rather than because of who it is that utters them, remaining calm in the face of opposition
- *Being deliberate in public debates*, e.g., assessing others' arguments and positions for their validity rather than because of who it is that utters them, remaining calm in the face of opposition

Monitoring

- *Listening* attentively to fellow citizens, proceedings of public bodies, media reports
- *Questioning* public officials, experts, and others to elicit information, determine responsibility

- *Holding public officials to account* for using their authority consistently with basic constitutional principles
- *Following public issues in the media*, using a variety of sources, such as television, radio, newspapers, journals, and magazines
- *Researching public issues*, using computer resources, libraries, the telephone, personal contacts, the media
- *Gathering and analyzing information* from government officials and agencies, interest groups, civic organizations
- *Attending public meetings and hearings*, e.g., student councils, city council and school board meetings, briefings by members of county boards of supervisors, state legislatures, and Congress
- *Interviewing* people knowledgeable about civic issues, such as local officials, civil servants, experts in public and private associations, members of college and university faculties
- *Using electronic resources* for acquiring and exchanging information, e.g., the Internet, on-line university services, bulletin boards

Influencing

- *Voting*, e.g., in class, student body, local, state, national, and special elections
- *Informing*, e.g., furnishing factual data to legislators and policy makers
- *Petitioning*, e.g., calling attention of representatives and public officials to grievances and desired changes in public policy, gathering signatures for initiatives or recall
- *Writing*, e.g., letters and “op ed” pieces, broadsides, pamphlets
- *Speaking and testifying before public bodies*, e.g., student body councils, school boards, special districts, state legislatures, Congress
- *Supporting or opposing candidates or positions on public issues*, e.g., contributing time, talent, or money
- *Participating in civic and political groups*, e.g., student government, youth groups, local, state, and national political parties, and ad-hoc advocacy groups
- *Employing the various media to advance points of view on public affairs*, e.g., participating in on-line discussions of public issues, writing newspaper and magazine articles, voicing one’s opinion on radio and television talk shows

APPENDIX D

Civic Dispositions

Civic dispositions which contribute to the political efficacy of the individual, the healthy functioning of the political system, a sense of dignity and worth, and the common good include becoming an independent member of society; assuming the personal, political, and economic responsibilities of a citizen; respecting individual worth and human dignity; participating in civic affairs in an informed, thoughtful and effective manner; and promoting the healthy functioning of American constitutional democracy. The following is an illustrative description of each of these civic dispositions:

- *becoming an independent member of society, e.g.,* adhering voluntarily to self-imposed standards of behavior rather than requiring the imposition of external controls, accepting responsibility for the consequences of one's actions, fulfilling the moral and legal obligations of membership in society
- *assuming the personal, political, and economic responsibilities of a citizen, e.g.,* taking care of one's self, supporting one's family and caring for, nurturing, and educating one's children, being informed about public issues, serving on juries, voting, paying taxes, performing public service
- *respecting individual worth and human dignity, e.g.,* treating everyone with respect, listening to the opinions of others, behaving in a civil manner, considering the rights and interests of others, adhering to the principle of majority rule, respecting the right of the minority to dissent
- *participating in civic affairs in an informed, thoughtful, and effective manner, e.g.,* becoming informed prior to voting or participating in public debate, engaging in civic discourse, assuming leadership when appropriate, evaluating whether and when one's obligation as a citizen requires that one's personal desires and interests be subordinated to the public good, and evaluating whether and when moral obligations or constitutional principles require one to reject certain civic expectations
- *promoting the healthy functioning of American constitutional democracy, e.g.,* being informed and attentive to public issues, learning about and deliberating on the meaning of constitutional principles, monitoring the adherence of political leaders and governmental agencies to constitutional principles and taking appropriate action if that adherence is lacking, working through peaceful, legal means to change laws which are thought to be unwise or unjust.