
History and Social Science *Standards of Learning* for Virginia Public Schools

April 2023



**Board of Education
Commonwealth of Virginia**

History and Social Science Standards of Learning for Virginia Public Schools

Adopted in April 2023 by the Board of Education

Daniel A. Gecker, President
Dr. Tammy Mann, Vice President
Grace Turner Creasey, M. Ed.
Pamela Davis-Vaught
Bill Hansen
Anne B. Holton
Andy Rotherham
Dr. H. Alan Seibert
Dale Sturdifan

Superintendent of Public Instruction

Dr. Lisa Coons

Commonwealth of Virginia
Board of Education
Post Office Box 2120
Richmond, VA 23218-2120

Copyright © 2023
by the
Virginia Department of Education
P. O. Box 2120
Richmond, Virginia 23218-2120
[Virginia Department of Education](https://www.doe.virginia.gov/)

All rights reserved. Reproduction of these materials for instructional purposes in public school classrooms in Virginia is permitted.

Statement of Non-Discrimination

The Virginia Department of Education does not discriminate on the basis of race, sex, color, national origin, religion, sexual orientation, gender identity, age, political affiliation, or against otherwise qualified persons with disabilities. The policy permits appropriate employment preferences for veterans and specifically prohibits discrimination against veterans.

Guiding Principles

Introduction

Virginia's History and Social Science Standards of Learning aim to raise our aspirations for history and social science instruction and restore excellence, curiosity, and excitement around teaching and learning history. The teaching of history should illuminate insights from the past and inspire current and future generations to lead lives that are informed and inspired by those who walked this journey before them.

Expectations For Virginia's Students

Every graduate from Virginia's K–12 schools will possess a robust understanding of the places, people, events, and ideas that comprise the history of Virginia, the United States, and the world. Our students will learn from the rise and fall of civilizations across time, so that we may pursue and maintain government and economic systems that have led to human achievement. The Virginia standards are grounded in the foundational principles and actions of individuals and institutions so that we may learn from them as we strive to maintain our political liberties and personal freedoms and thrive as a nation.

The United States, whose founding history is rooted in Virginia's history, has led the world in political, social, and economic thought and action in ways that fundamentally changed the interactions and expectations of individual citizens with government. Students will know that the Declaration of Independence first stated that “all men are created equal, and that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness.” The standards will recognize the world impact of America's ongoing quest for a “more perfect Union” and the optimism, ideals, and imagery captured by Ronald Reagan's “shining city upon a hill” speech, Abraham Lincoln's second inaugural address, and Frederick Douglas' complicated love for America. Students will know our nation's exceptional strengths, including individual innovation, moral character, ingenuity, and adventure, while learning from terrible periods and actions in direct conflict with these ideals.

Our students will also understand that our history encompasses a broad civilization beyond their neighborhood, Virginia, and the United States. They will learn that humankind has spanned continents, ethnicities, and religions, with common qualities that unite us and differences that enrich our society. The events of our history demonstrate that people have incredible ability to inspire, innovate, and improve lives, and this human story also shows that evil exists, and people are capable of destroying civilizations, communities, and individual lives.

The standards provide an unflinching and fact-based coverage of world, United States, and Virginia history. Students will study the horrors of wars and genocide, including the Holocaust and the ethnic cleansing campaigns that have occurred throughout history and continue today. They will better understand the abhorrent treatment of Indigenous peoples, the indelible stain of slavery, segregation, and racism in the United States and around the world, and the inhumanity and deprivations of totalitarian and communist regimes. Students also will study inspirational moments, including the achievements of Asian, African, Greek, and Roman governments and advancements in engineering, architecture, and art, the European Enlightenment, the American Revolution, the triumph of America's Greatest Generation in World War II, the Marshall Plan, the Civil Rights Movement, the fall of the Berlin Wall, Project Apollo, progress against diseases, and the heroic sacrifice of Flight 93 passengers.

Students will have an in-depth understanding of the good and the bad in world, United States, and Virginia history. The standards will include an appreciation of the attributes and actions that have made America the world's exemplar of freedom, opportunity, and democratic ideals. This comprehensive story of Virginia, the United States, and the world will prepare every student for the rights, opportunities, and responsibilities of Americans. As noted by George Santayana over 100 years ago, "those who cannot remember the past are condemned to repeat it."

Principles

The foundational principles for these History and Social Sciences learning standards include:

- Individual liberty and representative government are cornerstones of the American way of life.
- The Declaration of Independence and the Constitution are remarkable documents that provide the freedoms and framework for our constitutional republic.
- We aspire to live up to the ideals expressed but not fully realized by the Founders for a society that recognizes that all individuals are created equal.
- From thirteen diverse colonies to a unified nation, "E Pluribus Unum" ("Out of Many, One") has always been our strength. Immigrants from around the world continue to come to the United States seeking freedom and opportunity to build a better life and have contributed to our communities and added to the rich history of the United States.
- Free enterprise, property rights, and the rule of law enable an economic system that allocates assets through free markets and competition and fosters innovation, opportunity, and efficiency.
- Centralized government planning in the form of socialism or communist political systems, as well as fascism, totalitarianism, and other forms of government that preference state power or control over individual liberty and consent of the governed, are incompatible with democracy.
- America is both exceptional and imperfect.
- The rights codified in the United States and Virginia constitutions and the Bill of Rights provide for individual freedoms that place a responsibility on current and future generations of Americans to engage in the political process with civility and fulfill their civic obligations.
- Through the ages, civilizations have grown, prospered, and vanished. Every student should understand our Great American Experiment is not guaranteed forever. As Benjamin Franklin warned citizens over 200 years ago, "a republic, if you can keep it."

Implementation of Virginia's History and Social Science Standards

Human history is complex and evolving as new technologies emerge and old stories are uncovered. We update our standards every seven years, because we continue to learn more about the multiple facets of historic events through new discoveries and expanded research.

The virtues and flaws of Virginia, the United States, and other world civilizations will be taught in an objective, factual, and age-appropriate way by balancing fact and inquiry-based learning opportunities. These standards lay out the achievements and progress of our story and where Americans and Virginians have fallen short. Virginia's history and social science education will highlight our shared humanity and the opportunity to work together in our constitutional republic to improve our own lives as well as the lives of our families and communities. The study of history and civics through these standards will provide the foundation for students to be engaged and deeply informed citizens who will continue to strengthen our communities, our economy, and our republic.

The success of Virginia's 2023 History and Social Science standards depends on the sound judgment and strong preparation of teachers and informed engagement by parents and communities. The standards and state-developed curriculum frameworks will serve as guides for best-in-class teaching and learning. While the immense responsibility of defining curriculum and texts used in classrooms across Virginia rests with local school boards, these standards should be implemented in the following ways:

- Students should be exposed to the facts of our past in a content-rich and engaging way, even when those facts are uncomfortable.
- Teachers, whether they are new to the profession or are veteran educators, should utilize these standards in their classrooms as a mechanism to support their content knowledge and the important work they do each day in classrooms as they teach students across the Commonwealth.
- Every local school board has the responsibility to select and fully implement curricula that are aligned with the core History and Social Science standards for every grade level and course.
- The curriculum selected by local school boards should provide a level of guidance, consistency, high quality instructional materials, and professional development so that teachers, especially less experienced teachers, are not *required* to develop materials on their own.
- The Virginia Department of Education will provide our teachers with excellent instructional tools and training so they will be able to teach *all* of our history in an objective, fair, empathetic, nonjudgmental, and developmentally appropriate manner in accordance with Title IV and Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964.
- Teachers must facilitate open and balanced discussions on difficult topics, including discrimination and racism, and present learning opportunities without personal or political bias.
- Teachers should engage students in fact-based, non-ideological, and age-appropriate ways that do not imply students today are culpable for past events. Teachers should not expose students to embarrassment or disparagement or restrict student access to varying points of view.
- Teachers, students, and parents should insist on dignity and respect for each other as part of civil society.
- Parents should have access to all instructional materials utilized in any Virginia public school. Division policies and practices should reflect this commitment.

Background and Context for the History and Social Science Standards Revisions

In 1995, the Virginia Board of Education published Standards of Learning in English, mathematics, science, and history and social science for kindergarten through grade 12. Subsequently, Standards of Learning were developed for all academic content areas. The Standards of Learning are designed to raise the academic achievement for all students in Virginia by providing clear and specific benchmarks at each grade level about what students should know and be able to do.

Pursuant to legislation from the 2000 Virginia General Assembly, the Virginia Board of Education established a seven-year cycle for review of the Standards of Learning. Thus, the 1995 History and Social Science Standards of Learning were reviewed in 2001, 2008, and 2015. The Virginia Department of Education convened review committees in 2021–2022 to review and revise the 2015 History and Social Science Standards of Learning. The feedback of the committees, exceptional work by department staff, and extensive public comment are reflected in these standards.

Curriculum, on the other hand, created at the division or local level, should prescribe a specific sequence of coherent units or modules that combine instructional strategies with resources and a sequence of student activities to help students meet the standards. A locally developed curriculum should specify how resources, instructional strategies, content vocabulary, student activities, formative and summative assessments, and evaluation procedures may be combined into those coherent units.

To assist school divisions with the creation of the local curricula, the Virginia Department of Education will separately issue Curriculum Frameworks for the History and Social Science Standards of Learning. The Curriculum Frameworks will suggest instructional resources (print and non-print), student activities, formative and summative assessment and evaluation materials, and pacing. They will also include scaffolding and differentiation suggestions to help curriculum developers address the needs of struggling learners and those who need challenges. The Curriculum Frameworks will offer important instructional guidance to ensure that students are learning and applying the skills of historical analysis, such as being an active listener, looking at events and issues from various perspectives, analyzing primary and secondary sources, evaluating, and developing arguments, and citing evidence in support of one's opinion both orally and in writing. Finally, the suggested student activities will encourage students to wrestle with complex texts and ideas, including the important and transcendent themes associated with the study of history, such as liberty, democracy, self-government, truth, and citizenship. In short, Curriculum Frameworks will be issued to further enrich and clarify the concepts set forth in the History and Social Science Standards of Learning.

Organization and Prescribed Order of History and Social Science Courses

Historically, Virginia has offered flexibility around the grades at which some of these courses are taught; in this configuration, the standards are presented in the Board of Education's recommended grade level sequence. School divisions are strongly encouraged to adopt this sequence, but it is not required. Local school boards that authorize alternative approaches must ensure that gaps in student learning are avoided, make accommodations for students who transfer from other divisions, and ensure that students satisfy Board-prescribed graduation requirements.

Skills

Preceding the standards at each grade level is a skills standard. The development of these skills at each grade level is important as students develop academically in all content areas. The skills will not be assessed

in isolation; rather, they will be assessed as part of the content in the History and Social Science Standards of Learning.

Grades K–3

Standards are organized into the four core strands of social studies: history, geography, civics, and economics.

- The history strand offers opportunities for students to read, hear, learn about, research, and explore the lives of people and events in the local community, Virginia, the United States, and the world.
- The geography strand entails the study of both basic geographic skills and specific geography standards that align with and enhance students' understanding of the history taught at each grade.
- The civics strand builds students' knowledge of citizenship, patriotism, and the establishment of the Constitution of the United States. The strand includes specific expectations for students' knowledge of how the U.S. government is structured (i.e., the three branches of government) and confirms a nascent understanding of the basic rights and responsibilities of U.S. citizenship.
- In the economics strand, students in grades K–3 acquire an understanding of the most basic principles of economics on which the grades 6–12 standards will build.

Additionally, the students in grades K–3 are introduced to basic history and social science skills.

- Kindergarteners learn about their community and focus on patriotism, citizenship, and history.
- First graders learn about the Commonwealth of Virginia through the lives of changemakers and events in Virginia history. They also learn more about patriotism, civics, and citizenship, develop map skills, and explore basic economic concepts.
- Second graders are introduced to U.S. history through the lives of changemakers and events. They focus on civics education, with an introduction to key aspects of the U.S. constitutional democracy, and learn more about citizenship, patriotism, geography, and economics.
- Third graders study the world by learning about ancient China, Egypt, Rome, Greece, and Mali. They also continue to develop skills and knowledge about maps, civics, and economics.

Grades 4–6

- Grade 4: Virginia Studies, chronological story of the history of Virginia
- Grade 5: United States History to 1865, America's history from its earliest days to the Civil War
- Grade 6: United States History 1865 to the Present, the story of the United States from the Civil War to the present

Grades 7–8

Students refocus their attention on three strands of social studies content in preparation for a more in-depth look at world and American history in grades 9–12.

- Grade 7: Civics and Economics
- Grade 8: World Geography

Grades 9–12

Students trace closely the causes, course of events, and effects of the most essential aspects of world and American history, culminating in one last immersion in U.S. government, solidifying students' knowledge of the rights and obligations of U.S. citizenship.

- Grade 9: World History to 1500 A.D.
- Grade 10: World History 1500 A.D. to the Present
- Grade 11: Virginia and United States History
- Grade 12: Virginia and United States Government

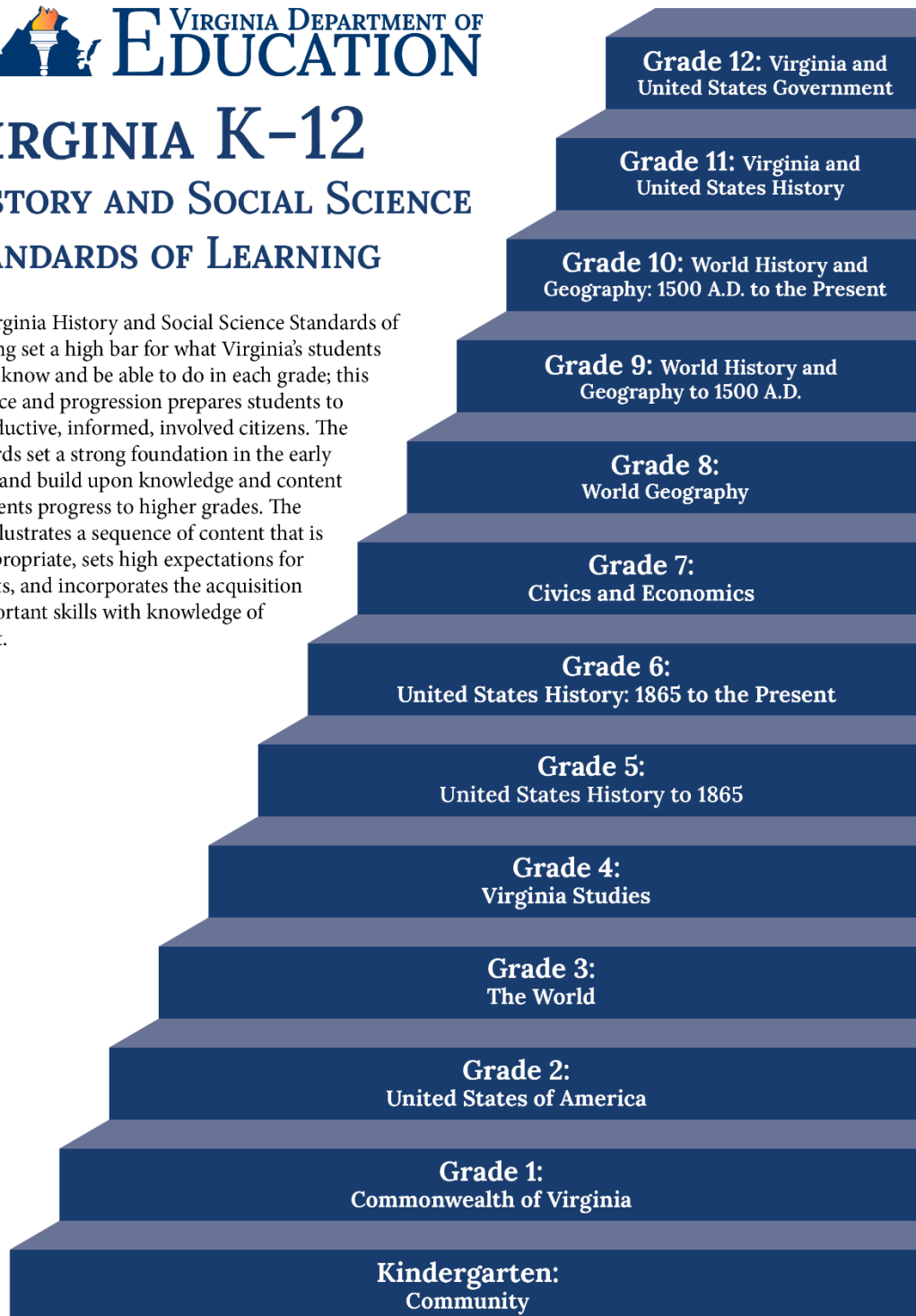


VIRGINIA K-12

HISTORY AND SOCIAL SCIENCE

STANDARDS OF LEARNING

The Virginia History and Social Science Standards of Learning set a high bar for what Virginia's students should know and be able to do in each grade; this sequence and progression prepares students to be productive, informed, involved citizens. The standards set a strong foundation in the early grades and build upon knowledge and content as students progress to higher grades. The chart illustrates a sequence of content that is age appropriate, sets high expectations for students, and incorporates the acquisition of important skills with knowledge of content.



Grade 6: United States History: 1865 to the Present

Students will continue to use skills for historical and geographical analysis as they examine United States history since 1865. The standards for this course relate to the history of the United States from the Reconstruction era to the present. Students will continue to develop and build upon the fundamental concepts and skills in civics, economics, and geography within the context of United States history. Students will use investigation as a foundation to delve into the political, economic, and social challenges facing the nation once it reunited after the Civil War. This foundation provides a pathway to develop an understanding of how the American experience shaped the world's political and economic landscapes.

Skills

Skills USII The student will apply history and social science skills to the content by

- a. synthesizing evidence from information sources including, but not limited to artifacts, primary and secondary sources, charts, graphs, and diagrams to understand events in United States history;
- b. applying geographic skills to determine and predict patterns and trends of people, places, and events;
- c. developing questions, enhancing curiosity, and engaging in critical thinking and analysis;
- d. integrating evidence to construct and analyze timelines, classify events, and distinguish fact from opinion;
- e. comparing and contrasting people, places, events, and historical and political perspectives;
- f. determining and explaining cause-and-effect relationships;
- g. using an economic decision-making model to analyze the costs and benefits and explain the incentives and consequences of a specific choice made in U.S. history;
- h. engaging and communicating as a civil and informed individual with persons with different perspectives; and
- i. developing products that reflect an understanding of content.

Westward Expansion and Its Impact on Indigenous People

- USII.1 The student will apply history and social science skills to examine westward expansion after the mid-19th century by
- a. explaining how technology allowed settlers to adapt to the physical features and climate of the West;
 - b. identifying the motivations for westward expansion;
 - c. examining the impact of policies, legislation, and treaties associated with the growth of the nation; and
 - d. explaining the effect that the growth of the United States had on Indigenous people.

Effects of Reconstruction

- USII.2 The student will apply history and social science skills to understand the ongoing effects of Reconstruction on American life after the mid-19th century by
- a. describing the impact of the assassination of Abraham Lincoln and the political aftermath of the Civil War;
 - b. analyzing the goals and effects of the Reconstruction Amendments, the Freedmen's Bureau, and civil rights policies that changed the meaning of citizenship in the United States;
 - c. describing the legacies of Abraham Lincoln and the Gettysburg Address, Ulysses S. Grant, Robert E. Lee, Hiram Revels, and Frederick Douglass;
 - d. describing the role of Congress and the Supreme Court in specific plans and policies including, but not limited to Lincoln's Ten Percent Plan;

- e. describing the role and motivations of individuals who sought to gain from Reconstruction including, but not limited to formerly enslaved people elected to office during the years right after the Civil War; and
- f. explaining how the 1876 presidential election led to the end of Reconstruction.

Industrialization and Growth

- USII.3 The student will apply history and social science skills to understand how industrialization changed life in rural and urban America after the Civil War by
- a. explaining relationships among natural resources, transportation, and industrial development from 1865;
 - b. explaining the impact of new inventions, the rise of big business, the growth of industry, and the changes to life on American farms in response to industrialization;
 - c. evaluating and explaining the impact of the Progressive Movement on child labor, working conditions, the rise of organized labor, support for eugenics as a social policy, immigration policy, women's suffrage, and the temperance movement;
 - d. explaining the events, factors, and motivations that caused individuals and groups to migrate to the United States towards the end of the 19th century;
 - e. examining the cause-and-effect relationship between rapid population growth and city government services and infrastructure;
 - f. explaining how governmental actions including, but not limited to the Chinese Exclusion Act of 1882, caused harm to Chinese Americans and other immigrants;
 - g. explaining how various groups worked to alleviate the issues facing new immigrants and how immigrants advocated for themselves; and
 - h. describing the technological advances and the broader impact of the 1893 Chicago World's Fair on America's rise as a world leader in innovation, business, and trade.
- USII.4 The student will apply history and social science skills to explain the changing role of the United States from the late 19th century through World War I by
- a. explaining the legacy of Theodore Roosevelt including, but not limited to conservation contributions, progressivism, the building of the Panama Canal, and his role in the Spanish-American War;
 - b. explaining the reasons for and results of the Spanish-American War, including the Roosevelt Corollary to the Monroe Doctrine;
 - c. analyzing the major causes and consequences of World War I and examining the roles of key leaders and groups;
 - d. examining the evolution of warfare tactics and technology including, but not limited to cavalry, air, submarine, chemical, trench warfare, and other technological advancements;
 - e. explaining how the war was a catalyst for the United States gaining international power and expanding its sphere of international influence; and
 - f. examining how post-war sanctions and the failure of the League of Nations set the stage for World War II.
- USII.5 The student will apply history and social science skills to understand the social, political, economic, and technological changes of the early 20th century by
- a. explaining how capitalism and free markets helped foster developments in factory and labor productivity, transportation, and communication and how rural electrification changed American life and the standard of living;
 - b. examining how the rise of communism affected America including, but not limited to the first Red Scare;
 - c. describing the reasons for and impact of the Great Migration;

- d. describing the events and leaders that lead to prohibition, the Women’s Suffrage Movement, and the passage of the Nineteenth Amendment including, but not limited to Susan B. Anthony, Lucy Burns, Elizabeth Cady Stanton, Carrie Chapman Catt, Ida B. Wells-Barnett, and Sojourner Truth;
- e. examining the art, literature, and music of the 1920s and 1930s including, but not limited to the Roaring Twenties and the Harlem Renaissance;
- f. analyzing the causes of the Great Depression and the impact of the Dust Bowl on the lives of Americans;
- g. describing the features, effects, programs, and lasting institutions of Franklin D. Roosevelt’s New Deal;
- h. describing racial segregation, housing discrimination via redlining, the rise of “Jim Crow” laws, Black Codes, and threats of violence including, but not limited to intimidation, lynchings, armed conflicts, suppressed voting rights, and limits on political participation faced by African Americans and other people during post-Reconstruction; and
- i. analyzing events and impacts of African American leaders in response to “Jim Crow” including, but not limited to the formation of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP), strikes, protests, the role of historically black colleges and universities (HBCUs), and the work of leaders like Booker T. Washington, W.E.B. DuBois, Mary White Ovington, and Ida B. Wells-Barnett.

The Second World War and America’s Transformation

- USII.6 The student will apply history and social science skills to understand the major causes and events of World War II and the effects of America’s role by
- a. explaining the rise and spread of fascism and totalitarianism internationally and the policy of appeasement towards Nazi Germany;
 - b. explaining the causes and events that led to American involvement in the war, including the attack on Pearl Harbor;
 - c. locating and describing the major events and turning points of the war in Europe including, but not limited to the allied invasion of Italy, the invasion of Normandy (D-Day), the Battle of the Bulge, and the Battle of Berlin;
 - d. locating and describing the major events and turning points of the war in the Pacific including, but not limited to the Battle of Iwo Jima, the Battle of Midway, and the Battle of Okinawa;
 - e. explaining and evaluating the role of key political and military leaders of the Allies and Axis powers including, but not limited to the United States, Germany, Japan, the Soviet Union, Italy, and Great Britain;
 - f. identifying the roles and sacrifices of U.S. armed forces, including prisoners of war (POWs), women, and segregated units, as well as other notable heroics including, but not limited to the contributions of the Tuskegee Airmen, the 442nd Regimental Combat Team, the Women’s Army Auxiliary Corps, the Women Airforce Service Pilots, the Navajo Code Talkers, and the Bedford Boys;
 - g. evaluating the effects of the war on the home front including, but not limited to women in the workforce, the incarceration of Japanese Americans, rationing, conservation, and war bonds;
 - h. examining the causes and consequences of the Holocaust including, but not limited to Jewish life before the Holocaust, antisemitism, the rise of the Nazi Party, Nuremberg Laws, persecution of Jews and other targeted groups, resistance efforts, the United States’ response, and the Nuremberg Trials; and
 - i. describing the events that led to the surrender of the Axis powers and America’s role in the Allied victory including, but not limited to the Manhattan Project, as well as events that

shaped post-war peace.

The Cold War

- USII.7 The student will apply history and social science skills to understand the transformation of U.S. foreign policy between the end of World War II and the new millennium by
- explaining how key decisions and agreements including, but not limited to the Atlantic Charter, formation of the United Nations, and the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) established international allies;
 - describing the Marshall Plan's objectives for rebuilding Europe, the occupation and reconstruction of Japan, and the emergence of the United States and the Soviet Union as superpowers;
 - describing the differences between a communist nation and a democratic nation including, but not limited to self-governance and economic philosophy;
 - examining the role of the United States in fighting communism and defending freedom during the Cold War including, but not limited to the Berlin Airlift, conflicts in Korea and Vietnam, the roles of John F. Kennedy and Nikita Khrushchev during the Cuban missile crisis, the fall of the Berlin Wall, and the collapse of communism in Eastern Europe; and
 - explaining the collapse of communism in the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe and the end of the Cold War, including the actions of Ronald Reagan and Mikhail Gorbachev.

Late 20th to Early 21st Century

- USII.8 The student will apply history and social science skills to analyze the key changing patterns of society during the second half of the 20th and early 21st centuries by
- examining the contributions of key leaders and events during the Civil Rights Era including, but not limited to Robert Kennedy, Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., Malcolm X, Medgar Evers, John Lewis, Rosa Parks, Ruby Bridges, Jonathan Daniels, Dorothy Height, the Selma march, sit-ins, and boycotts;
 - explaining the significance of urban renewal plans including, but not limited to Jackson Ward in Richmond and Vinegar Hill in Charlottesville;
 - examining key events of the 1960s and 1970s including, but not limited to the Apollo missions, the moon landing, assassinations, the women's movement, the creation of public sector labor unions, the Watergate scandal and Nixon's resignation, and the passing of the Clean Air Act and the Clean Water Act;
 - describing the impact of the baby boom, the changing demographics of the United States, and the ending of the military draft; and
 - describing the protections and provisions of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA);
 - describing the similarities and differences between the objectives of the women's movement of the early and mid-20th century;
 - describing expanded educational and economic opportunities for military veterans, women, and minorities; and
 - describing how the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001, including the heroic sacrifices of Flight 93 passengers, significantly impacted domestic policies, American society, and global perspectives on the war on terror.

Science and Technology: Ongoing Advancement

- USII.9 The student will apply history and social science skills by
- studying the iterative and ongoing advancements in science and technology; and

- b. describing the changes in American culture related to music, art, media, and communication, as well as advancements in American economics related to banking, business, and industry.