

Why Study Social Studies Reflection

Directions: Now individual and quietly read the following text. Make sure to **actively read/annotate** the passage. My suggestion is to annotate reasons for why we study Social Studies in high school.

“People live in the present. They plan for and worry about the future. History, however, is the study of the past. Given all the demands that press in from living in the present and anticipating what is yet to come, why bother with what has been? And why urge many students to study even more history than they are required to?” (Peter Stearns)

Thomas Jefferson and other founders of the republic emphasized that the vitality of a democracy depends upon the education and participation of its citizens. The need for an informed citizenry was the very impetus for the creation of free public education in the United States. If the nation is to develop fully the readiness of its citizenry to carry forward its democratic traditions, it must support progress toward attainment of the vision of powerful social studies teaching and learning.

Our contemporary social studies education consists of four disciplines: history, geography, economics and civics. Taken together, these disciplines are essential to understanding the complexity of the world. They provide the context and understanding of the human experience. They offer the crucial knowledge needed to create a framework for understanding the systems of society. Social studies provide cornerstone skills that are vital to opening doors for a more diverse, competitive workforce, and responsible citizenry. Those skills are critical thinking, self-assessment, reasoning, problem-solving, collaboration, research, and investigation to make connections in new and innovative ways as students progress through social studies education. The knowledge and skills provided through social studies are instrumental to preparing citizens to participate in our democratic society, to understanding the complexity of the world, and to comprehend the interdependencies that influence the present and shape the future. Colorado's social studies standards lay out a blueprint of the essential disciplines necessary to fulfill Jefferson's vision.

History: History prepares students to develop critical thinking skills in an effort to explain the human experience through events of the past. History develops an understanding of perspectives, defines identity and creates insight into how social, political, and economic factors can change, while building inquiry, judgment and decision-making skills. History enhances the ability to read varied sources and develop the skills necessary to analyze, interpret, evaluate, and communicate.

History will help students develop the following skills:

- Understand the nature of historical knowledge as a process of inquiry that examines and analyzes how history is viewed, constructed, and interpreted.
- Analyze historical time periods and patterns of continuity and change, through multiple perspectives, within and among cultures and societies.

Geography: The study of geography creates an informed person with an understanding of spatial perspective and technologies for spatial analysis; and an awareness of the interdependence of the world regions and resources, and how places are connected at the local, national, and global scales. Students understand the complexity and interrelatedness of people, places, and environments. Geography helps students appreciate the dynamic relationships and complexity of the world.

Geography will help students develop the following skills:

- Apply geographic representations and perspectives to analyze human movement, spatial patterns, systems, and the connections and relationships among them.
- Examine the characteristics of places and regions, and the changing nature among geographic and human interactions.

Economics: Economics teaches how society manages its scarce resources, how people make decisions, how people interact in the domestic and international markets, and how forces and trends affect the economy as a whole. Personal financial literacy applies the economic way of thinking to help individuals understand how to manage their own scarce resources using a logical decision-making process of prioritization based on analysis of the costs and benefits of every choice.

Economics will help students develop the following skills:

- Understand the allocation of scarce resources in societies through analysis of individual choice, market interaction, and public policy.
- Apply economic reasoning skills to make informed personal financial decisions (PFL).

Civics: Civics teaches students the complexity of the origins, structure, and functions of governments; the rights, roles, and responsibilities of citizenship; the importance of law; and the skills necessary to participate in all levels of government. Civics is a foundational component of the educational experience and critical to the continued success of our society. A democratic and free society relies on the skills, knowledge, engagement and virtue of its citizens.

Civics will help students develop the following skills:

- Express an understanding of how civic participation affects policy by applying the rights and responsibilities of a citizen.
- Analyze the origins, structures, and functions of governments to evaluate the impact on citizens and the global society.

Name _____

Hour: _____

Why Should Students Take Social Studies?

Directions: Use the reading to answer the following prompts.

1.) Identify 3 statements made in the article that you agree with and explain why you agree with it.

<u>Statement</u>	<u>Explanation of Agreement</u>

2.) Identify 2 statements made in the article that you disagree with & explain why you disagree with it.

<u>Statement Number</u>	<u>Explanation of Agreement</u>

3.) Look at the skills for each of the social studies disciplines. Write down how you have used the skills described in your own life or how it can be useful for when you are an adult.

<u>Discipline</u>	<u>Example of Application of Skills</u>
<u>History</u>	
<u>Geography</u>	

