Citizenship in Action

COURSE LENGTH
(40 Class Periods, 20 weeks)

This elective course in 8th-grade social studies builds a foundation in media literacy to help students navigate today's complex information landscape. Over the course of 4 units, students will explore how digital communication, including the internet and social media, shapes the way information is produced, shared, and received. They will examine how news is constructed, distinguish between reliable sources and misinformation, and identify bias and propaganda across media platforms. Through guided discussions, source analysis, and hands-on activities, students will learn to think critically about what makes information credible and why it matters for understanding current events.

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Unit Plan: 8th Grade Social Studies Elective

Morris School District

Grade Level: 8	Unit 1	Content Area: Social Studies	Theme: Media	Duration: 2-3 weeks
Unit Summary (Enduring Understandings)	*Students will understand that…* This foundational unit introduces students to media literacy as a critical tool for understanding and engaging with current events. Students will learn how news is produced, identify different media outlets, evaluate sources for credibility and bias, and recognize misinformation. The unit prepares students to be thoughtful consumers and producers of news throughout the course. ● **Evaluate the Impact of Digital Communication on How Information Is Shared and Received** ○ Students will examine how the internet, social media, and digital platforms influence the way people access, interpret, and share information. ● **Identify and Analyze Bias and Propaganda in News and Media Sources** ○ Students will develop skills to distinguish between factual reporting and biased or misleading content in various forms of media. ● **Explain the Role of Media in Shaping Public Opinion and Influencing Civic Participation** ○ Students will analyze how media influences beliefs, political attitudes, and civic actions in historical and current contexts.			
Essential Questions	What makes something “newsworthy”? How can we tell if a news source is reliable? Why does bias exist in the media, and how can we recognize it? How can misinformation and fake news impact our understanding of the world?			
Misconceptions	*Students may think that…* ● **If it's online, it must be true**			

	○ Not all information found online is accurate or reliable. Websites, social media posts, and videos can be biased, outdated, or intentionally misleading. It's important to verify information using trusted, fact-based sources. ● **Bias only exists in fake news** ○ Bias can appear even in legitimate news sources. It can show up through word choice, story placement, image use, or the omission of certain facts. Recognizing bias means thinking critically about how stories are presented, not just spotting falsehoods. ● **Media literacy only matters in politics** ○ Media literacy is important in many areas, like health, history, economics, and science, not just politics. Learning to evaluate sources and detect bias helps students make informed decisions in all parts of life.
Transfer	*Students will be able to use what they learn to…* ● critically evaluate information they encounter in daily life—on social media, news websites, and advertisements—to make informed decisions. ● recognize bias and misinformation, helping them become responsible digital citizens who can engage in thoughtful civic dialogue. ● use credible evidence and clear communication to share their ideas and opinions on current issues in both academic and real-world settings.
Important Facts and Key Concepts	*Students will know…* ● **Not all sources of information are equally credible** ○ Students will understand how to evaluate the reliability of different media sources using criteria such as author credentials, evidence, bias, and purpose. ● **Media messages are constructed and influenced by purpose and audience** ○ Students will learn that all media content is created with specific intentions (to inform, entertain, persuade, or profit) and is shaped by the target audience ● **Bias and misinformation can shape public opinion and civic behavior**

	○ Students will recognize how media bias, selective reporting, and misinformation can impact how people think, vote, and engage in social or political issues. ● **News vs. Opinion vs. Entertainment**

New Jersey Student Learning Standards (NJSLS)

NJSLS Social Studies Grade 8

- **6.3.8.CivicsPD.3** – Evaluate the impact of the internet and other forms of digital communication on the dissemination of information
- **6.3.8.CivicsPD.3 –** Evaluate the impact of the internet and other forms of digital communication on the dissemination of information.
- **6.3.8.HistorySE.1 –** Construct an argument to explain how media has influenced public perception of a controversial issue."
- **6.3.8.CivicsPR.4 -** Use evidence and data to support a position on a public policy issue
- **6.1.8.CivicsPI.5.a -** Explain how and why political parties were created and the role they play in government
- **NJSLS.ELA-Literacy: RI.8.8 –** Delineate and evaluate the argument and specific claims in a text, assessing whether the reasoning is sound and the evidence is relevant and sufficient.
- **NJSLS.ELA-Literacy: SL.8.1 –** Engage effectively in a range of collaborative discussions… building on others' ideas and expressing their own clearly.

WIDA Standards for Multilingual Learners

- **ELD Standard 1:** Language for Social and Instructional Purposes (ELD-SI) - ELLs use language to interact socially and to participate in classroom routines and activities across all content areas.
- **ELD Standard 2**: Language for Language Arts (ELD-LA) - ELLs use language to engage with texts, produce writing, and discuss language arts content.

- **ELD Standard 3:** Language for Mathematics (ELD-MA) - ELLs use language to interpret and solve problems, explain reasoning, and work with math concepts.
- **ELD Standard 4**: Language for Science (ELD-SC) - ELLs use language to explore, explain, and model scientific concepts and phenomena.
- **ELD Standard 5**: Language for Social Studies (ELD-SS) - ELLs use language to analyze societies, cultures, historical events, geography, economics, and government.

Standards for Computer Science and Design Thinking

- **8.1.8.DA.5** – Analyze and distinguish between data that is structured and unstructured
- **8.1.8.IC.1** – Evaluate the ways computing impacts social interactions and influences beliefs and practices
- **8.2.8.ED.4** – Investigate a malfunction in a technology system and explore the impact of the malfunction on the product or system design

Standards for Career Readiness, Life Literacies, and Key Skills

- **9.4.8.IML.1** – Critically curate multiple resources to assess the credibility of sources when searching for information.
- **9.4.8.IML.3** – Create a digital representation of gathered information to communicate a real-world problem
- **9.4.8.DC.1** – Analyze the resource citations in online materials for proper use

Assessment Evidence

Students will demonstrate understanding by...

- Formative:
  - Daily news briefings and discussions “What’s in the Headlines?”
  - Students participate in class discussions or debates on media influence, controversial issues, or digital ethics, learning to communicate ideas respectfully and thoughtfully
  - Do Nows

- Checks for understanding
- Think pair share
- Concept mapping
- Compare and contrast graphic organizer
- Quick quiz
- Journal entry
- 5 minute debates

- Benchmark Assessment:
  - Short Constructed Response
  - DBQ Responses
  - Presentations
  - Actively Learn Activities
  - Formal Debates

- Summative:
  - Article quizzes
  - Problem based learning projects
  - Short Constructed Responses
  - Actively Learn Activities

- Alternative:
  - Speech
  - Video project
  - Timeline
  - Podcast
  - Poster
  - Graphic Organizer

Interdisciplinary Connections

Standards for Mathematics: Students will analyze trends in polling data, social media statistics, or climate change coverage. They will also be able to evaluate media claims based on graphs and statistics (e.g., interpreting news charts on economics or

health).

- **8.SP.A.1** – Construct and interpret scatter plots for bivariate measurement data… describe patterns such as clustering, outliers, positive or negative association, linear association, and nonlinear association.
- **8.SP.A.3** – Use the equation of a linear model to solve problems in the context of bivariate measurement data.

Standards for Science: Students will be able to evaluate how media tools (e.g., news apps, social platforms) are designed to influence perception. They will also compare scientific media coverage on climate change, sustainability, or environmental justice.

- **MS-ETS1-1** – Define the criteria and constraints of a design problem… to ensure a successful solution.
- **MS-ESS3-4** – Construct an argument supported by evidence for how increases in human population and per-capita consumption of natural resources impact Earth's systems.

Accommodations and Modifications	
Special Education	• As necessary per student IEP • Seating preferential to instruction or demonstration • Additional time to complete tasks/long-term projects with adjusted due dates • Adjust the number of items student is expected to complete • Limit number of items student is expected to learn at one time • Allow extra time for completion • Pre-teach new vocabulary • Modify projects/provide alternate • Utilize recorded content to reinforce instruction
504	• As necessary per student 504 • Seating preferential to instruction or demonstration • Additional time to complete tasks/long-term projects with adjusted due dates • Chunking large assignments into more manageable piece and components • Adjust number of items student is expected to complete • Limit number of items student is expected to learn at one time

	• Allow extra time for completion • Pre-teach new vocabulary • Modify projects/provide alternate assessments • Utilize recorded content to reinforce instruction
At Risk	• Increased progress monitoring and feedback • Scaffolded instruction and frequent re-teaching • Flexible deadlines or opportunities for redo/make-up work • Focused assignments targeting essential standards • Integration of SEL or executive functioning strategies in instruction
ML	• Bilingual dictionaries or translation tools • Visual supports (charts, maps, labeled diagrams) • Sentence starters or writing frames • Extra time for reading and writing tasks • Simplified language on instructions and assessments • Allowing oral responses instead of written ones • Adjusting reading level and complexity of text • Replacing writing-heavy assignments with visual or oral projects • Focusing on content understanding rather than perfect grammar
Gifted	• Change delivery of content • Include additional curriculum approved learning activities to challenge students (within developmentally appropriate parameters) • Allow students to advance quickly through content onto more advanced material • Independent study or inquiry-based learning opportunities • Flexible grouping with academic peers
Resources	

Unit Plan: 8th Grade Social Studies Elective

Morris School District

[Unit Plan Explanatory Document]
[Scope and Sequence Pacing Document]
Upfront Magazine: Print and digital with online text sets
Various Online resources (procon.org, MSD Databases, online News outlets-FOX, CNN, BBS, AP, etc.)

Grade Level: 8	**Unit 2 Content Area: Social Studies Theme: Civics, Civil Rights, Human Rights Duration: 2-3 weeks**

Unit Summary (Enduring Understandings)	*Students will understand that …*
	• **There is a difference between civil rights, human rights, and citizenship rights.**
	  ○ Students will be able to explain the meanings of civil rights, human rights, and the rights associated with citizenship, and describe how they relate to one another.
	• **Key historical events and movements shaped civil and human rights in the United States.**
	  ○ Students will examine events such as the Civil Rights Movement, the passage of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, and landmark Supreme Court cases like Brown v. Board of Education.
	• **There are roles of local, state, and federal governments in protecting civil and human rights.**
	  ○ Students will describe how different levels of government work to ensure rights are protected and the checks and balances involved.
	• **Current issues relate to civil and human rights in the United States and globally.**
	  ○ Students will investigate and present on a current human or civil rights issue, considering different perspectives and proposed solutions.
	• **It is a civic responsibility to propose actions to support or protect civil and human rights in their community.**

	○ Students will develop a small-scale action plan or campaign to raise awareness or advocate for a civil or human rights issue they care about.
Essential Questions	What roles and responsibilities do citizens have in a democratic society, and how can individuals influence government and public policy? How have individuals and groups fought to expand civil rights and liberties throughout U.S. history? What is the difference between civil rights and human rights, and how are they protected in the United States and globally? How have landmark laws and Supreme Court decisions shaped civil rights in the United States? What challenges still exist in the fight for equal rights, and how can civic engagement address ongoing issues of inequality?
Misconceptions	*Students may think that…* ● **Civil rights and human rights are the same thing.** ○ Human Rights are universal and apply to all people regardless of nationality (e.g. freedom from torture, the right to an education) ○ Civil Rights are granted and protected by a country's laws (e.g. the right to vote, equal protection under the law in the US) ● **Only adults or government officials can protect or advocate for rights** ○ Civic engagement can start at any age. Students can write letters, participate in awareness campaigns, or attend school board meetings ○ Young people have historically played key roles in civil rights movements (e.g. the Children's MArch in Birmingham, 1963) ● **The Constitution guarantees rights equally to everyone from the beginning.** ○ The original Constitution did not guarantee rights to women, enslaved people, or many others ○ Over time, amendments and civil rights legislation (like the 13th, 14th, 15th Amendments and the Civil Rights Act)expanded these rights through struggle and activism

Transfer	*Students will be able to use what they learn to…* ● **Advocate for fairness and justice in their communities.** ○ Students will be able to recognize unfair treatment or violations of rights in their communities and take informed action, such as writing letters, speaking at public forums, or organizing awareness campaigns- to promote justice and equality ● **Engage responsibly in public life.** ○ Students will be able to make informed decisions as active citizens, such as understanding their rights when interacting with government systems, participating in school or local elections, or supporting causes through legal and peaceful means. ● **Analyze news and social issues through a rights-based lens.** ○ Students will be able to critically evaluate current events and media coverage with an understanding of civil and human rights, identifying bias, misinformation, and the impact of policies on different groups of people.
Important Facts and Key Concepts	*Students will know…* ● **The U.S. Constitution and Bill of Rights** ○ The Constitution is the supreme law of the United States and outlines the framework of the federal government. ○ The first ten amendments, known as the Bill of Rights, protect individual freedoms like freedom of speech, religion, and the right to a fair trial. ● **Separation of Powers and Checks and Balances** ○ The government is divided into three branches: Legislative (Congress), Executive (President), and Judicial (Supreme Court). ○ Each branch has powers that check the others, preventing any one branch from becoming too powerful. ● **Civil Rights Movement** ○ A key historical movement, especially in the 1950s–1960s, where Americans—especially African Americans—fought for equal rights under the law. ○ Important figures include Martin Luther King Jr., Rosa Parks, and events like the March on Washington. ● **The Role of Citizens in a Democracy**

	○ Citizens have rights (like voting and free speech) and responsibilities (like obeying laws and serving on juries). ○ Participation in civic life, including voting and staying informed, is essential to a healthy democracy. ● **Universal Human Rights** ○ Human rights are rights every person has simply because they are human, such as the right to life, education, and freedom from torture. ○ These are outlined in documents like the **Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR)**, adopted by the United Nations in 194

New Jersey Student Learning Standards (NJSLS)

NJSLS- Social Studies Standards Grade 8

- **6.1.8.CivicsHR.3.a** – Explain how and why constitutional civil liberties were impacted by acts of government during the Early Republic (e.g., Alien and Sedition Acts).
- **6.1.8.CivicsHR.3.b** – Evaluate the impact of the institution of slavery on the political and economic expansion of the United States.
- **6.1.8.CivicsHR.3.c** – Construct an argument to explain how the expansion of slavery violated human rights and contradicted American ideals.
- **6.1.8.CivicsHR.3.a** – Explain how and why constitutional civil liberties were impacted by acts of government during the Early Republic (e.g., Alien and Sedition Acts).
- **6.1.8.CivicsHR.4.a** – Examine sources from a variety of perspectives to describe efforts to reform education, women's rights, slavery, and other issues during the Antebellum period.
- **6.1.8.CivicsHR.4.a** – Examine sources from a variety of perspectives to describe efforts to reform education, women's rights, slavery, and other issues during the Antebellum period

- **NJSLS.ELA-Literacy.SL1 –**Prepare for and participate effectively in a range of conversations and collaborations with diverse partners, building on others' ideas and expressing their own clearly and persuasively.

WIDA Standards for Multilingual Learners

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- **ELD Standard 5**: Language for Social Studies (ELD-SS) - ELLs use language to analyze societies, cultures, historical events, geography, economics, and government.

Standards for Computer Science and Design Thinking

- **8.1.8.DA.5 –** Test and refine computational models to improve their accuracy.
- **8.2.8.ETW.4 –** Explain how technology can have a positive and negative impact on society.
- **8.1.8.IC.1 –** Evaluate the ways computing impacts social interactions and society as a whole.

Standards for Career Readiness, Life Literacies, and Key Skills

- **9.1.8.CP.4 –** Compare and contrast the role of philanthropy, volunteer service, and charitable contributions in community development and quality of life in a variety of cultures.
- **9.4.8.DC.1 – Digital Citizenship**- Analyze the resource bias that exists on the internet and on digital platforms based on deliberate or algorithmic filtering.
- **9.4.8.CT.3 –** Compare past and present solutions to a local or global problem and create a plan for improvement.

Assessment Evidence

Students will demonstrate understanding by...

- Formative:
  - Daily news briefings and discussions “What’s in the Headlines?”
  - Students participate in class discussions or debates on media influence, controversial issues, or digital ethics, learning to communicate ideas respectfully and thoughtfully
  - Do Nows
  - Checks for understanding
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- Summative:
  - Article quizzes
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- Alternative:
  - Speech
  - Video project
  - Timeline
  - Podcast

- Poster
- Graphic Organizer

Interdisciplinary Connections

Standards for Mathematics: Students will analyze statistical data related to civil rights issues, such as demographic patterns in voting, education access, or income inequality.

- **8.SP.2** – Understand that patterns of association can be seen in bivariate data by displaying scatter plots.
  -
- **8.F.4** – Construct a function to model a linear relationship between two quantities.
  - Model trends in civil rights progress over time, such as increases in voter registration or representation in government.

Standards for Science: Students will consider the impact of environmental inequities on human health as a human rights issue. They also might design community programs or policies promoting equitable access to resources as part of civil rights efforts.

- **MS-LS1-5 –** *Use argument supported by evidence for how environmental and genetic factors influence growth of organisms.*
- **MS-ETS1-2 –** *Evaluate competing design solutions using criteria and constraints.*

Accommodations and Modifications

Special Education	• As necessary per student IEP • Seating preferential to instruction or demonstration • Additional time to complete tasks/long-term projects with adjusted due dates • Adjust the number of items student is expected to complete • Limit number of items student is expected to learn at one time • Allow extra time for completion • Pre-teach new vocabulary • Modify projects/provide alternate • Utilize recorded content to reinforce instruction
504	• As necessary per student 504 • Seating preferential to instruction or demonstration

	• Additional time to complete tasks/long-term projects with adjusted due dates • Chunking large assignments into more manageable piece and components • Adjust number of items student is expected to complete • Limit number of items student is expected to learn at one time • Allow extra time for completion • Pre-teach new vocabulary • Modify projects/provide alternate assessments • Utilize recorded content to reinforce instruction
At Risk	• Increased progress monitoring and feedback • Scaffolded instruction and frequent re-teaching • Flexible deadlines or opportunities for redo/make-up work • Focused assignments targeting essential standards • Integration of SEL or executive functioning strategies in instruction
ML	• Bilingual dictionaries or translation tools • Visual supports (charts, maps, labeled diagrams) • Sentence starters or writing frames • Extra time for reading and writing tasks • Simplified language on instructions and assessments • Allowing oral responses instead of written ones • Adjusting reading level and complexity of text • Replacing writing-heavy assignments with visual or oral projects • Focusing on content understanding rather than perfect grammar
Gifted	• Change delivery of content • Include additional curriculum approved learning activities to challenge students (within developmentally appropriate parameters) • Allow students to advance quickly through content onto more advanced material

	• Independent study or inquiry-based learning opportunities • Flexible grouping with academic peers

Resources
Unit Plan Explanatory Document Scope and Sequence Pacing Document Upfront Magazine: Print and digital with online text sets Various Online resources (procon.org, MSD Databases, online News outlets-FOX, CNN, BBC, AP, etc.)

Grade Level: 8	**Unit 3 Content Area: Social Studies Theme: National/International News/Issues Duration: 2-3 weeks**
Unit Summary (Enduring Understandings)	*Students will understand that…* • The U.S. government addresses and responds to national and international issues, evaluating the effectiveness of these responses in upholding constitutional principles and promoting the common good. • Ongoing national and global events affect citizens' rights and responsibilities, and propose ways individuals and groups can influence public policy and promote social justice. • Different governments (including the U.S.) respond differently to shared global challenges such as climate change, conflict, and migration, identifying strengths and limitations of each approach. • News media from various sources portray national and international events, identifying bias, misinformation, and the role of media in a democratic society. • They can develop informed opinions on public issues.
Essential Questions	How do national and international news events impact people's daily lives and influence public opinion and policy? What responsibilities do individuals have in evaluating the credibility and reliability of news sources? How can analyzing multiple perspectives on a news event lead to a more informed understanding of the issue? What role does the media play in a democracy, and how has it evolved over time?

	How are global issues such as climate change, conflict, and migration reported differently across countries and cultures?
Misconceptions	*Students may think that...* ● **Only adults or politicians can influence national or international issues.** ○ Young people can and do influence public issues through civic engagement—such as raising awareness, organizing campaigns, or participating in peaceful protests. Many historical and current movements have been shaped by youth activism. ● **News sources always report the facts without bias."** ○ While many news organizations aim for accuracy, all media can be influenced by bias. It's important to analyze sources critically, compare multiple viewpoints, and recognize how word choice, images, and framing can shape public perception. ● **International issues don't affect us in the United States."** ○ Events around the world—like wars, climate change, or economic shifts—can have direct effects on the U.S. through things like immigration, trade, national security, and global cooperation. Understanding international news helps us make sense of our own lives and policies.
Transfer	*Students will be able to use what they learn to…* ● critically evaluate news sources and current events to make informed decisions as engaged and responsible citizens. ● identify and advocate for solutions to local, national, and global issues that impact their communities and the world. ● engage in respectful, evidence-based discussions about complex public issues from multiple perspectives.
Important Facts and Key Concepts	*Students will know…* ● **The Structure and Role of Government in Addressing Issues:** ○ Students will understand how local, national, and international governments function and respond to current events, including how policies are made and how citizens can influence decision-making. ● **Media Literacy and Bias Recognition:** ○ Students will know how to identify bias, misinformation, and credible sources in news media, and understand the role of journalism in a democratic society. ● **Interconnectedness of Global Events:**

	○ Students will recognize how events in one part of the world can have economic, political, and social effects globally, including impacts on the United States.

New Jersey Student Learning Standards (NJSLS)

NJSLS- Social Studies Standards

- **6.3.8.CivicsPD.3 –** Construct a claim as to why it is important for democracy that individuals are informed by facts, aware of diverse viewpoints, and willing to take action on public issues.
- **6.3.8.CivicsPR.4 –** Use evidence and quantitative data to propose or defend a public policy related to climate change.
- **6.3.8.CivicsDP.1 –** Identify an issue of inequality, develop multiple solutions, and communicate the best one to an appropriate government body.
- **6.1.8.CivicsPI.5.a –** Describe how the Supreme Court increased the power of the federal government and the impact of Supreme Court decisions on the evolution of civil liberties and civil rights
- **6.3.8.GeoHE.1 –** Engage in simulated democratic processes (e.g., legislative hearings, judicial proceedings, elections) to understand how conflicting points of view are addressed in a democratic society
- **6.3.8.CivicsDP.2 –** Make a claim based on evidence to determine the extent and the limitations of First Amendment rights (e.g., U.S. Supreme Court decisions).
- **6.3.8.CivicsPI.1 –** Evaluate, take, and defend a position on a public issue by considering multiple perspectives and using evidence to support that position
- **6.3.8.CivicsDP.1 –** Identify an issue of inequality, develop multiple solutions, and create an action plan to address the issue
- **NJSLS.ELA-Literacy.RI.8.8** – Delineate and evaluate the argument and specific claims in a text, assessing whether the reasoning is sound and the evidence is relevant and sufficient.
- **NJSLS.ELA-Literacy.W.8.1 –** Write arguments to support claims with clear reasons and relevant evidence.

- **NJSLS.ELA-Literacy.SL.8.1 –** Engage effectively in a range of collaborative discussions (one-on-one, in groups, and teacher-led) with diverse partners on Grade 8 topics, texts, and issues, building on others' ideas and expressing their own clearly.
- **NJSLS.ELA-Literacy.RI.8.1 –** Cite the textual evidence that most strongly supports an analysis of what the text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text.

WIDA Standards for Multilingual Learners

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- **ELD Standard 5**: Language for Social Studies (ELD-SS) - ELLs use language to analyze societies, cultures, historical events, geography, economics, and government.

Standards for Computer Science and Design Thinking

- **8.1.8.DA.1 –** Organize and transform data collected using computational tools to make it more useful and reliable.
- **8.1.8.IC.1 –** Compare the tradeoffs associated with computing technologies that affect people's everyday activities and career options.
- **8.2.8.ED.4 –** Investigate a malfunctioning system and propose improvements to the design to restore functionality or improve performance.

Standards for Career Readiness, Life Literacies, and Key Skills

- **9.4.8.CI.3** – Examine challenges that may exist in the adoption of new ideas (e.g., resistance to change, limited resources,

cultural barriers).

- **9.4.8.IML.5 –** Identify appropriate sources of information for accomplishing a goal (e.g., research, news media, professional journals) and evaluate the credibility of those sources.
- **9.4.8.GCA.1 –** Demonstrate openness to diverse ideas and perspectives through active discussions to achieve a group goal.

Assessment Evidence

Students will demonstrate understanding by...

- Formative:
  - Daily news briefings and discussions “What’s in the Headlines?”
  - Students participate in class discussions or debates on media influence, controversial issues, or digital ethics, learning to communicate ideas respectfully and thoughtfully
  - Do Nows
  - Checks for understanding
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  - Concept mapping
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  - Quick quiz
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  - Formal Debates
- Summative:
  - Article quizzes
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  - Short Constructed Responses

- Actively Learn Activities

- Alternative:
  - Speech
  - Video project
  - Timeline
  - Podcast
  - Poster
  - Graphic Organizer

Interdisciplinary Connections

Standards for Mathematics: Students can analyze global survey results (e.g., public opinion, international health data) presented in media.

8.SP.A.4 – Understand that patterns of association can also be seen in bivariate categorical data by displaying frequencies and relative frequencies in a two-way table

- **8.EE.C.8c** – Solve real-world and mathematical problems leading to two linear equations in two variables.
  - Supports modeling economic, political, or environmental data trends shared in national or international news.

Standards for Science:

- **MS-ESS3-3** – Apply scientific principles to design a method for monitoring and minimizing human impact on the environment
  - Connects to global news topics like climate action, carbon emissions, or ocean plastics

- **MS-ETS1-2** – Evaluate competing design solutions using a systematic process to determine how well they meet the criteria and constraints of the problem.
  - Useful when discussing international responses to humanitarian crises, public health systems, or infrastructure challenges.

Accommodations and Modifications

Special Education	• As necessary per student IEP • Seating preferential to instruction or demonstration • Additional time to complete tasks/long-term projects with adjusted due dates • Adjust the number of items student is expected to complete

	● Limit number of items student is expected to learn at one time ● Allow extra time for completion ● Pre-teach new vocabulary ● Modify projects/provide alternate ● Utilize recorded content to reinforce instruction
504	● As necessary per student 504 ● Seating preferential to instruction or demonstration ● Additional time to complete tasks/long-term projects with adjusted due dates ● Chunking large assignments into more manageable piece and components ● Adjust number of items student is expected to complete ● Limit number of items student is expected to learn at one time ● Allow extra time for completion ● Pre-teach new vocabulary ● Modify projects/provide alternate assessments ● Utilize recorded content to reinforce instruction
At Risk	● Increased progress monitoring and feedback ● Scaffolded instruction and frequent re-teaching ● Flexible deadlines or opportunities for redo/make-up work ● Focused assignments targeting essential standards ● Integration of SEL or executive functioning strategies in instruction
ML	● Bilingual dictionaries or translation tools ● Visual supports (charts, maps, labeled diagrams) ● Sentence starters or writing frames ● Extra time for reading and writing tasks ● Simplified language on instructions and assessments ● Allowing oral responses instead of written ones ● Adjusting reading level and complexity of text

	• Replacing writing-heavy assignments with visual or oral projects • Focusing on content understanding rather than perfect grammar
Gifted	• Change delivery of content • Include additional curriculum approved learning activities to challenge students (within developmentally appropriate parameters) • Allow students to advance quickly through content onto more advanced material • Independent study or inquiry-based learning opportunities • Flexible grouping with academic peers

Resources
Unit Plan Explanatory Document Scope and Sequence Pacing Document Upfront Magazine: Print and digital with online text sets Various Online resources (procon.org, MSD Databases, online News outlets-FOX, CNN, BBC, AP, etc.)

Grade Level: 8	**Unit 4 Content Area: Social Studies Theme: Economics and Technology Duration: 2-3 weeks**
Unit Summary (Enduring Understandings)	*Students will understand that…* • Technological innovations have impacted economic productivity and changed the way people live and work. • Entrepreneurs and inventors contributed to economic growth through innovation and risk-taking. • Industrialization and emerging technologies had an effect on labor systems, urbanization, and the environment. • Economic decision-making is influenced by scarcity, supply and demand, and the use of resources. • Global trade and communication technologies have connected economies and cultures.

Essential Questions	How do economic systems and policies affect individuals, communities, and nations? How has technological innovation shaped economic growth and changed the way people live and work? In what ways can technology both create economic opportunity and contribute to inequality? How do globalization and technological advances connect local economies to the global market? What are the ethical and societal implications of relying on technology in economic decision-making?
Misconceptions	*Students may think that...* ● **"Technology always creates more jobs."** ○ Technology can create new types of jobs, but it can also eliminate others through automation and efficiency, leading to job displacement in certain industries. ● **"Only adults or rich people are involved in the economy."** ○ Everyone participates in the economy—including students—through spending, saving, and using goods and services. Economic choices affect people of all ages and income levels. ● **"The newest technology is always the best or most useful."** ○ Newer doesn't always mean better; the usefulness of a technology depends on how well it solves a problem or meets people's needs, and sometimes older technologies are more practical or reliable.
Transfer	*Students will be able to use what they learn to…* ● **Make informed choices as consumers and future workers.** ○ Students will be able to use their understanding of supply, demand, and economic decision-making to make informed choices as consumers and future workers. ● **Adapt and make responsible decisions in a changing world.** ○ Students will be able to evaluate how technology influences their daily lives and society, helping them adapt to and make responsible decisions in a changing world.

	● **Think creatively and critically in real-world situations.** ○ Students will be able to recognize the role of innovation and entrepreneurship in solving problems, allowing them to think creatively and critically in real-world situations.
Important Facts and Key Concepts	*Students will know…* ● **Economic Systems and Decision-Making** ○ Students will understand how individuals, businesses, and governments make choices about using limited resources (scarcity), and how supply and demand influence prices in a market economy. ● **Impact of Technology on Society and the Economy** ○ Students will know that technological advancements can improve productivity and quality of life but can also lead to job displacement, environmental challenges, and shifts in labor markets. ● **Role of Innovation and Entrepreneurship** ○ Students will understand how inventors and entrepreneurs drive economic growth by creating new products, services, and industries—often taking financial risks to do so.
New Jersey Student Learning Standards (NJSLS)	

NJSLS- Social Studies Standards

- **6.1.8.HistoryCC.4.b** – Analyze how technological innovations affected the status and social class of different groups of people and explain the outcomes that resulted.
- ***6.1.8.EconET.3.b*** – Explain how entrepreneurs take risks to develop new goods and services to start a business.
- **6.1.8.EconET.4.b –** Analyze how technological developments transformed the economy, created international markets, and affected the environment in New Jersey and the nation.
- **6.1.8.EconET.4.a** – Describe the impact of the expansion of agricultural and industrial production on the environment, population movement, and economic growth.
- **6.1.8.EconNM.4.a** – Analyze how events led to the expansion of markets and the development of the American economy.
- **NJSLSA.RH.8.7 –** Integrate visual information (e.g., in charts, graphs, photographs, videos, or maps) with other information in print and digital texts.
- **NJSLSA.W.8.1 -**Write arguments to support claims with clear reasons and relevant evidence.

WIDA Standards for Multilingual Learners

- **WIDA ELD Standard 1:** Language for Social and Instructional Purposes (ELD-SI) - ELLs use language to interact socially and to participate in classroom routines and activities across all content areas.
- **WIDA ELD Standard 2**: Language for Language Arts (ELD-LA) - ELLs use language to engage with texts, produce writing, and discuss language arts content.
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- **WIDA ELD Standard 4**: Language for Science (ELD-SC) - ELLs use language to explore, explain, and model scientific concepts and phenomena.
- **WIDA ELD Standard 5**: Language for Social Studies (ELD-SS) - ELLs use language to analyze societies, cultures,

historical events, geography, economics, and government.

Standards for Computer Science and Design Thinking

- **8.1.8.DA.1 –** Organize and transform data collected using computational tools to make it usable for a specific purpose.
- **8.1.8.IC.1 –** Explain the impact of the digital divide on access to critical information.
- **8.2.8.ETW.4 –** Explain how the development and use of technology influences economic, political, social, and cultural issues.

Standards for Career Readiness, Life Literacies, and Key Skills

- **9.1.8.EG.5 –** Identify sources of economic gain (e.g., employment, entrepreneurship, investments, royalties, inheritances) and explain the impact of each.
- **9.4.8.CT.2 –** Develop multiple solutions to a problem and evaluate the potential effectiveness of each one.
- **9.4.8.IML.3 –**Create a digital visualization (e.g., graph, chart, infographic) to support a claim using evidence during a research project.

Assessment Evidence

Students will demonstrate understanding by...

- Formative:
  - Daily news briefings and discussions “What’s in the Headlines?”
  - Students participate in class discussions or debates on media influence, controversial issues, or digital ethics, learning to communicate ideas respectfully and thoughtfully
  - Do Nows
  - Checks for understanding
  - Think pair share
  - Concept mapping
  - Compare and contrast graphic organizer

- Quick quiz
- Journal entry
- 5 minute debates

- Benchmark Assessment:
  - Short Constructed Response
  - DBQ Responses
  - Presentations
  - Actively Learn Activities
  - Formal Debates

- Summative:
  - Article quizzes
  - Problem based learning projects
  - Short Constructed Responses
  - Actively Learn Activities

- Alternative:
  - Speech
  - Video project
  - Timeline
  - Podcast
  - Poster
  - Graphic Organizer

Interdisciplinary Connections

Standards for Mathematics: These standards connect to analyzing financial data, modeling economic trends, and interpreting technology-related statistics.

- **8.F.B.4** – Construct a function to model a linear relationship between two quantities…
  - Supports modeling economic relationships, such as supply and demand curves or price over time.

- **8.EE.C.8b** – Solve systems of two linear equations graphically, and estimate solutions.
  - Applies to comparing cost models of different technologies or economic projections

- **8.SP.A.2** – Know that straight lines are widely used to model relationships between two quantitative variables…
  - Helps students interpret trends in tech adoption (e.g., smartphone use over time) or economic indicators.

Standards for Science: Students will analyze how science and engineering impact economic growth and technological development.

- **MS-ETS1-1** – Define the criteria and constraints of a design problem with sufficient precision to ensure a successful solution…
  - Connects to real-world technology innovation in the global economy, such as renewable energy or consumer electronics.
- **MS-ETS1-3** – Analyze data from tests to determine similarities and differences among several design solutions.
  - Supports evaluating competing technologies (e.g., electric vehicles vs. hybrid models) and their economic implications
- **MS-PS3-3** – Apply scientific principles to design, construct, and test a device that either minimizes or maximizes thermal energy transfer.
  - Can be used to explore energy-efficient technologies and their economic significance in global markets.

Accommodations and Modifications	
Special Education	• As necessary per student IEP • Seating preferential to instruction or demonstration • Additional time to complete tasks/long-term projects with adjusted due dates • Adjust the number of items student is expected to complete • Limit number of items student is expected to learn at one time • Allow extra time for completion • Pre-teach new vocabulary • Modify projects/provide alternate • Utilize recorded content to reinforce instruction
504	• As necessary per student 504 • Seating preferential to instruction or demonstration • Additional time to complete tasks/long-term projects with adjusted due dates • Chunking large assignments into more manageable piece and components • Adjust number of items student is expected to complete • Limit number of items student is expected to learn at one time • Allow extra time for completion

	• Pre-teach new vocabulary • Modify projects/provide alternate assessments • Utilize recorded content to reinforce instruction
At Risk	• Increased progress monitoring and feedback • Scaffolded instruction and frequent re-teaching • Flexible deadlines or opportunities for redo/make-up work • Focused assignments targeting essential standards • Integration of SEL or executive functioning strategies in instruction
ML	• Bilingual dictionaries or translation tools • Visual supports (charts, maps, labeled diagrams) • Sentence starters or writing frames • Extra time for reading and writing tasks • Simplified language on instructions and assessments • Allowing oral responses instead of written ones • Adjusting reading level and complexity of text • Replacing writing-heavy assignments with visual or oral projects • Focusing on content understanding rather than perfect grammar
Gifted	• Change delivery of content • Include additional curriculum approved learning activities to challenge students (within developmentally appropriate parameters) • Allow students to advance quickly through content onto more advanced material • Independent study or inquiry-based learning opportunities • Flexible grouping with academic peers
Resources	

Unit Plan: 8th Grade Social Studies Elective

Morris School District

Unit Plan Explanatory Document
Scope and Sequence Pacing Document
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Grade Level: 8	**Unit 5 Content Area: Social Studies Theme: Supreme Court and Modern Case Study Duration: 2-3 weeks**
Unit Summary (Enduring Understandings)	*Students will understand that…* • There is a structure, powers, and function of the Supreme Court within the framework of the U.S. Constitution and checks and balances. • Landmark Supreme Court decisions influenced civil rights and liberties in the United States. • They can apply Constitutional Principles to Modern Case Studies. • Different viewpoints exist in a Supreme Court case, including majority and dissenting opinions, and determine how legal reasoning reflects broader societal values. • Evidence from primary and secondary sources can support their opinions on judicial decisions and their implications for democracy and civil society.
Essential Questions	What is the role of the Supreme Court in the United States government, and how does it protect or challenge constitutional rights? How do landmark Supreme Court decisions shape American society and influence future legal interpretations? How can modern Supreme Court cases reflect ongoing social, political, and cultural issues in the U.S.? Why do some Supreme Court decisions remain controversial, and how do differing interpretations of the Constitution contribute to this debate?

	What can the study of a modern Supreme Court case teach us about the balance of power and the evolving nature of justice in the United States?
Misconceptions	*Students may think that...* ● **The Supreme Court makes laws just like Congress.** ○ The Supreme Court does not make laws—it interprets them. Its role is to decide whether laws or government actions are constitutional. Congress creates laws, and the executive branch enforces them. ● **Supreme Court decisions only affect the people involved in the case."** ○ Supreme Court rulings often have a nationwide impact. Landmark decisions can change how laws are applied nationwide, affecting millions of people and shaping public policy for generations. ● **Once the Supreme Court decides a case, it can never be changed.** ○ While Supreme Court decisions set important legal precedents, they can be overturned by future Court rulings or by constitutional amendments. For example, *Plessy v. Ferguson* was later overturned by *Brown v. Board of Education*.
Transfer	*Students will be able to use what they learn to…* ● Students will be able to analyze and evaluate legal and constitutional issues in real-world cases to better understand the impact of the judicial system on everyday life. ● Students will be able to critically assess multiple perspectives in complex legal debates, applying reasoning skills to form and communicate their own informed opinions. ● Students will be able to recognize the ongoing role of the Supreme Court in shaping laws and protecting rights, empowering them to engage as informed and active citizens.
Important Facts and Key Concepts	*Students will know…* ● The Supreme Court is the highest court in the United States, with the power to interpret the Constitution and review laws to ensure they comply with constitutional principles. ● Landmark Supreme Court cases have shaped American society by defining civil rights, liberties, and the balance of powers among government branches.

	• Supreme Court decisions include majority opinions, which set legal precedents, and dissenting opinions, which provide alternative legal reasoning and can influence future cases.

New Jersey Student Learning Standards (NJSLS)

NJSLS- Social Studies Standards

- **6.1.8.CivicsPI.4.a –** Explain how and why landmark decisions of the United States Supreme Court have impacted American life (e.g., Marbury v. Madison, Dred Scott v. Sanford, Plessy v. Ferguson, Brown v. Board of Education, Miranda v. Arizona)
- **6.1.8.CivicsPI.3.d –** Explain how the Constitution protects the rights of individuals and limits the power of government
- **6.1.8.CivicsHR.3.b –** Explain how the United States Constitution addresses equality and protects individual rights, and how amendments have expanded civil rights and liberties over time
- **6.1.8.HistoryCC.4.a –** Explain how and why social, political, and economic issues in the United States changed over time, including the impact of key events and movements
- **6.3.8.CivicsPD.3 –** Critique the effectiveness of the United States government in fulfilling national goals (e.g., liberty, justice, equality) and protecting the rights of individuals
- **6.1.8.CivicsDP.3 –** Analyze how individual rights are protected and the responsibilities of citizenship in the United States
- **6.3.8.CivicsDP.1 –** Evaluate public policies in terms of intended and unintended outcomes, and describe how citizens influence policy-making through different forms of civic participation
- **6.3.8.HistoryUP.1 –** Use a variety of primary and secondary sources to analyze and evaluate events and developments from multiple perspectives and contexts
- **NJSLS.ELA-Literacy.RI.8.8** – Delineate and evaluate the argument and specific claims in a text, assessing whether the reasoning is sound and the evidence is relevant and sufficient.
- **NJSLS.ELA-Literacy.W.8.1 –** Write arguments to support claims with clear reasons and relevant evidence.

- **NJSLS.ELA-Literacy.SL.8.1 –** Engage effectively in a range of collaborative discussions (one-on-one, in groups, and teacher-led) with diverse partners on Grade 8 topics, texts, and issues, building on others' ideas and expressing their own clearly.
- **NJSLS.ELA-Literacy.RI.8.1 –** Cite the textual evidence that most strongly supports an analysis of what the text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the tex

WIDA Standards for Multilingual Learners

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- **WIDA ELD Standard 5**: Language for Social Studies (ELD-SS) - ELLs use language to analyze societies, cultures, historical events, geography, economics, and government.

Standards for Computer Science and Design Thinking

- **8.2.8.ED.1** – *Define a problem, develop possible solutions, and evaluate their effectiveness through prototyping*
- **8.1.8.IC.1 –** *Compare the benefits and challenges of different computing technologies that affect civic engagement and the judicial process.*

Standards for Career Readiness, Life Literacies, and Key Skills

- **9.4.8.CI.3** – Examine challenges that may exist in the adoption of new ideas (e.g., resistance to change, limited resources, cultural barriers).
- **9.4.8.IML.5 –** Identify appropriate sources of information for accomplishing a goal (e.g., research, news media, professional journals) and

evaluate the credibility of those sources.

Assessment Evidence

Students will demonstrate understanding by...

- Formative:
    - Daily news briefings and discussions “What’s in the Headlines?”
    - Students participate in class discussions or debates on media influence, controversial issues, or digital ethics, learning to communicate ideas respectfully and thoughtfully
    - Do Nows
    - Checks for understanding
    - Think pair share
    - Concept mapping
    - Compare and contrast graphic organizer
    - Quick quiz
    - Journal entry
    - 5 minute debates
- Benchmark Assessment:
    - Short Constructed Response
    - DBQ Responses
    - Presentations
    - Actively Learn Activities
    - Formal Debates
- Summative:
    - Article quizzes
    - Problem based learning projects
    - Short Constructed Responses
    - Actively Learn Activities
- Alternative:

- Speech
- Video project
- Timeline
- Podcast
- Poster
- Graphic Organizer

Interdisciplinary Connections

Standards for Mathematics: 8.SP.A.1 – Construct and interpret scatter plots for bivariate measurement data to investigate patterns of association.

- Useful for analyzing demographic data or patterns relevant to legal decisions or case studies

- **8.EE.C.7** – Solve linear equations in one variable.
  - Supports understanding and analyzing quantitative evidence used in court cases or social policy arguments

- **8.SP.A.4** – Understand patterns of association in bivariate categorical data by displaying frequencies in a two-way table.
  - Helps interpret categorical data such as survey results or voting patterns related to legal issues.

Standards for Science:

- **MS-ETS1-4** – Develop a model to generate data for iterative testing and modification of a proposed object, tool, or process.
  - Encourages systematic evaluation of evidence or legal arguments, mirroring iterative decision-making in court rulings

- **MS-ESS3-4** – Construct an argument supported by evidence for how increases in human population and per-capita consumption of natural resources impact Earth's systems.
  - Useful for modern cases involving environmental law or policies that come before the Supreme Court.

- **MS-LS4-3** – Analyze and interpret data from fossil records to provide evidence of evolution and biological change over time.
  - Supports understanding how scientific evidence is used in legal contexts (e.g., expert testimony).

Accommodations and Modifications

Special Education	• As necessary per student IEP

	● Seating preferential to instruction or demonstration ● Additional time to complete tasks/long-term projects with adjusted due dates ● Adjust the number of items student is expected to complete ● Limit number of items student is expected to learn at one time ● Allow extra time for completion ● Pre-teach new vocabulary ● Modify projects/provide alternate ● Utilize recorded content to reinforce instruction
504	● As necessary per student 504 ● Seating preferential to instruction or demonstration ● Additional time to complete tasks/long-term projects with adjusted due dates ● Chunking large assignments into more manageable piece and components ● Adjust number of items student is expected to complete ● Limit number of items student is expected to learn at one time ● Allow extra time for completion ● Pre-teach new vocabulary ● Modify projects/provide alternate assessments ● Utilize recorded content to reinforce instruction
At Risk	● Increased progress monitoring and feedback ● Scaffolded instruction and frequent re-teaching ● Flexible deadlines or opportunities for redo/make-up work ● Focused assignments targeting essential standards ● Integration of SEL or executive functioning strategies in instruction
ML	● Bilingual dictionaries or translation tools ● Visual supports (charts, maps, labeled diagrams) ● Sentence starters or writing frames ● Extra time for reading and writing tasks

	• Simplified language on instructions and assessments • Allowing oral responses instead of written ones • Adjusting reading level and complexity of text • Replacing writing-heavy assignments with visual or oral projects • Focusing on content understanding rather than perfect grammar
Gifted	• Change delivery of content • Include additional curriculum approved learning activities to challenge students (within developmentally appropriate parameters) • Allow students to advance quickly through content onto more advanced material • Independent study or inquiry-based learning opportunities • Flexible grouping with academic peers

Resources

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Grade Level: 8	**Unit 6 Content Area: Social Studies Theme: Environment in the News Duration: 2-3 weeks**
Unit Summary (Enduring Understandings)	*Students will be able to…* • Analyze and evaluate how environmental issues are reported in the news and how these issues impact local, national, and global communities. • Examine the historical development of environmental policies in the United States and how these policies have shaped current environmental debates • Use a variety of news sources to investigate a current environmental issue and assess the credibility and bias of the

	reporting. ● Create and present a multimedia project that proposes a solution to an environmental issue discussed in the news, demonstrating an understanding of civic responsibility and advocacy. ● Compare and contrast the role of government and citizen action in addressing environmental challenges, both historically and in current events.
Essential Questions	How do local, national, and global environmental issues affect communities differently, and what responsibilities do citizens have in responding to these challenges? In what ways do media sources shape public understanding and opinions about environmental issues? How have environmental policies and movements throughout U.S. history influenced current environmental debates? What role do governments, businesses, and individuals play in addressing environmental problems reported in the news? How can students use data, evidence, and multiple perspectives to advocate for solutions to environmental issues in their communities?
Misconceptions	*Students may think that...* ● **"Only scientists and environmentalists need to care about environmental issues.** ○ Environmental issues affect everyone—from air and water quality to natural disasters and food supply. Citizens, lawmakers, and everyday people all play important roles in addressing these challenges through informed choices and civic action. ● **"All news stories about the environment are completely accurate and unbiased."** ○ News sources may present environmental issues with different perspectives or levels of accuracy. It's important to evaluate the credibility of sources, check for bias, and compare multiple viewpoints to get a well-rounded understanding. ● **"Environmental problems only happen in faraway places, not in my community."**

	○ Environmental issues—like pollution, extreme weather, and waste management—can and do affect local communities. Understanding how these issues impact your area helps you become a more informed and engaged citizen.
Transfer	*Students will be able to use what they learn to…* ● **Evaluate environmental news critically to inform their decisions:** ○ Students will be able to evaluate environmental news critically to make informed decisions as responsible consumers and citizens. ● **Recognize the connections between global and local environmental issues:** ○ Students will be able to recognize how local and global environmental issues are connected and take action to support sustainability in their communities ● **Communicate their perspectives on environmental challenges:** ○ Students will be able to communicate their perspectives on environmental challenges using evidence from credible sources to advocate for positive change.
Important Facts and Key Concepts	*Students will know…* ● **Media Literacy and Environmental Reporting** ○ Students will know how to identify bias, credibility, and perspective in news sources reporting on environmental issues. ● **The Role of Government and Policy in Environmental Protection** ○ Students will understand how local, national, and international governments create and enforce environmental laws and regulations, such as the Clean Air Act or the Paris Agreement. ● **The Impact of Human Activity on the Environment** ○ Students will know how industrialization, consumption, and land use contribute to environmental challenges like climate change, pollution, and habitat loss.
New Jersey Student Learning Standards (NJSLS)	

NJSLS- Social Studies Standards

- **6.3.8.CivicsPD.3** – Critique processes used to achieve goals in civic organizations and identify opportunities for individuals to initiate change in their local communities.
- **6.1.8.CivicsPI.5.a** – Explain how and why individuals and groups, including political parties, interest groups, and the press, participate in and influence the political process.
- **6.3.8.HistorySE.1** – Use disciplinary tools to analyze the causes of and responses to selected historical events and developments and evaluate their impact on future events.
- **6.3.8.CivicsPI.1** – Evaluate, take, and defend positions on public policies in school or community settings.
- **6.1.8.CivicsHR.4.a** – Examine the roles of the government and citizen organizations in the expansion of civil rights and liberties.
- **English Language Arts (ELA) RH.6-8.1** – Cite specific textual evidence to support analysis of primary and secondary sources.
- **English Language Arts (ELA) WHST.6-8.2** – Write informative/explanatory texts, including the narration of historical events, scientific procedures/experiments, or technical processes.

WIDA Standards for Multilingual Learners

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- **WIDA ELD Standard 4**: Language for Science (ELD-SC) - ELLs use language to explore, explain, and model scientific concepts and phenomena.
- **WIDA ELD Standard 5**: Language for Social Studies (ELD-SS) - ELLs use language to analyze societies, cultures, historical events,

geography, economics, and government.

Standards for Computer Science and Design Thinking

- **Standard: 8.1.8.DA.1**: Organize and transform data to make it more useful for analysis.
- **Standard: 8.2.8.ETW.4**: Explain how ethical considerations impact the development and use of technologies
- **Standard: 8.1.8.IC.1**: Evaluate the impact of data privacy laws and data security measures on individuals and communities.

Standards for Career Readiness, Life Literacies, and Key Skills

- **Standard 9.1 – Personal Financial Literacy 9.1.8.FI.4:** Explain the importance of understanding the terms and conditions of financial transactions, including associated costs.
- **Standard 9.2 – Career Awareness, Exploration, and Preparation9.2.8.CAP.4:** Evaluate different careers and develop an understanding of the knowledge and skills required for success in those careers.
- **Standard 9.4 – Life Literacies and Key Skills 9.4.8.IML.6:** Identify subtle and overt messages based on the method of communication.

Assessment Evidence

Students will demonstrate understanding by...

- Formative:
  - Daily news briefings and discussions “What’s in the Headlines?”
  - Students participate in class discussions or debates on media influence, controversial issues, or digital ethics, learning to communicate ideas respectfully and thoughtfully
  - Do Nows
  - Checks for understanding
  - Think pair share
  - Concept mapping
  - Compare and contrast graphic organizer
  - Quick quiz

- Journal entry
- 5 minute debates

- Benchmark Assessment:
  - Short Constructed Response
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  - Presentations
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  - Formal Debates

- Summative:
  - Article quizzes
  - Problem based learning projects
  - Short Constructed Responses
  - Actively Learn Activities

- Alternative:
  - Speech
  - Video project
  - Timeline
  - Podcast
  - Poster
  - Graphic Organizer

Interdisciplinary Connections

Standards for Mathematics: (These standards support interpreting environmental data, graphs, and statistical trends reported in news media.)

- **8.SP.A.1** – Construct and interpret scatter plots for bivariate measurement data to investigate patterns of association.
  - Useful for analyzing demographic data or patterns relevant to legal decisions or case studies
- **8.EE.B.5** – Graph proportional relationships, interpreting the unit rate as the slope of the graph.
  - Useful for understanding rates of deforestation, carbon emissions, or resource consumption in news reports.

- **8.SP.A.4** – Understand patterns of association in bivariate categorical data by displaying frequencies in a two-way table.
    - Helps interpret categorical data such as survey results or voting patterns related to legal issues.

Standards for Science: (These standards emphasize understanding human impact on the environment and interpreting scientific evidence in news stories.)

- **MS-ESS3-3** – Apply scientific principles to design a method for monitoring and minimizing human impact on the environment.
    - Connects directly to news coverage on pollution control, climate initiatives, or conservation efforts
- **MS-ESS3-4** – Construct an argument supported by evidence for how increases in human population and per-capita consumption of natural resources impact Earth's systems.
    - Helps students critically evaluate environmental claims in media and discuss sustainability.
- **MS-LS2-5** – Evaluate competing design solutions for maintaining biodiversity and ecosystem services.
    - Useful when exploring environmental controversies or conservation strategies reported in the news.

Accommodations and Modifications	
Special Education	• As necessary per student IEP • Seating preferential to instruction or demonstration • Additional time to complete tasks/long-term projects with adjusted due dates • Adjust the number of items student is expected to complete • Limit number of items student is expected to learn at one time • Allow extra time for completion • Pre-teach new vocabulary • Modify projects/provide alternate • Utilize recorded content to reinforce instruction
504	• As necessary per student 504 • Seating preferential to instruction or demonstration • Additional time to complete tasks/long-term projects with adjusted due dates • Chunking large assignments into more manageable piece and components

	• Adjust number of items student is expected to complete • Limit number of items student is expected to learn at one time • Allow extra time for completion • Pre-teach new vocabulary • Modify projects/provide alternate assessments • Utilize recorded content to reinforce instruction
At Risk	• Increased progress monitoring and feedback • Scaffolded instruction and frequent re-teaching • Flexible deadlines or opportunities for redo/make-up work • Focused assignments targeting essential standards • Integration of SEL or executive functioning strategies in instruction
ML	• Bilingual dictionaries or translation tools • Visual supports (charts, maps, labeled diagrams) • Sentence starters or writing frames • Extra time for reading and writing tasks • Simplified language on instructions and assessments • Allowing oral responses instead of written ones • Adjusting reading level and complexity of text • Replacing writing-heavy assignments with visual or oral projects • Focusing on content understanding rather than perfect grammar
Gifted	• Change delivery of content • Include additional curriculum approved learning activities to challenge students (within developmentally appropriate parameters) • Allow students to advance quickly through content onto more advanced material • Independent study or inquiry-based learning opportunities • Flexible grouping with academic peers

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Unit Plan Explanatory Document Scope and Sequence Pacing Document Upfront Magazine: Print and digital with online text sets Various Online resources (procon.org, MSD Databases, online News outlets-FOX, CNN, BBC, AP, etc.)

Grade Level: 8	**Unit 7 Content Area: Social Studies Theme: Teens and the Community Duration: 2-3 weeks**
Unit Summary (Enduring Understandings)	*Students will be able to…* • **Analyze the role of young people in civic life**, both historically and in the present day, by examining local and national examples of teen activism and community involvement. • **Identify a current community issue and research its causes and effects**, using primary and secondary sources to understand diverse perspectives • **Develop and present a proposal for a local civic action project** that addresses a community need, incorporating evidence, data, and feasible solutions. • **Evaluate how civic participation contributes to community improvement** and reflect on how teens can influence public policy and social change • **Collaborate in groups to design a multimedia presentation or campaign** that raises awareness about a community issue important to teens
Essential Questions	How can teens use civic knowledge and skills to actively participate in and improve their communities?

	What are the rights and responsibilities of teens as members of a democratic society? In what ways have young people historically contributed to social, political, or environmental change in their communities? How do local governments and community organizations address the needs of teens, and how can teens influence these decisions? What tools and strategies can teens use to communicate effectively, organize, and take action on issues that matter to them and their communities?
Misconceptions	*Students may think that...* ● **"Teens can't make a real difference in their communities."** ○ Teens have made major contributions to social change throughout history. From the Civil Rights Movement to modern climate activism, youth voices have led protests, created organizations, and influenced laws. ● **"Civic engagement only means voting, which teens can't do yet."** ○ Civic engagement includes many actions besides voting—like volunteering, attending community meetings, organizing awareness campaigns, and writing to local officials. Teens can be active citizens now. ● **"Community issues are only the responsibility of adults or government leaders."** ○ Everyone in a community shares responsibility for creating positive change. Teens have unique perspectives and can be powerful agents of change when they work together and take initiative.
Transfer	*Students will be able to use what they learn to…*

	• **Recognize and act on issues in their community.**
	  ○ Students will be able to recognize and act on issues that affect their local community by using research, communication, and civic engagement skills to make a positive impact.
	• **Evaluate information from diverse sources.**
	  ○ Students will be able to evaluate information from diverse sources and viewpoints to make informed decisions and advocate for causes they care about.
	• **Collaborate to solve real world problems.**
	  ○ Students will be able to collaborate with others to solve real-world problems, using teamwork, leadership, and critical thinking in both academic and personal contexts.

Important Facts and Key Concepts	*Students will know…* • **Civic participation includes more than just voting** ○ Teens can engage in meaningful civic actions such as volunteering, organizing events, attending public meetings, and raising awareness through social media or campaigns. • **Throughout history, young people have played critical roles in social and political movements**, including the Civil Rights Movement, environmental activism, and gun violence prevention efforts. • **Communities are shaped by the active involvement of their members**, and understanding local issues—like public health, education, or the environment—empowers teens to become informed and engaged citizens.

New Jersey Student Learning Standards (NJSLS)	
NJSLS- Social Studies Standards	

- **6.3.8.CivicsHR.1**: Evaluate the effectiveness of the strategies and techniques used by people and organizations to promote social and political rights
- **6.3.8.CivicsPD.2**: Evaluate the impact of different decisions and actions by individuals and groups on the outcome of a historical or current public policy debate.
- **6.3.8.CivicsPR.4**: Use evidence and quantitative data to propose or defend a public policy.
- **6.1.8.CivicsPI.5.a**: Investigate ways individuals and groups addressed discrimination through social, economic, and political means.
- **6.3.8.CivicsPR.2**: Compare and contrast the responsibilities of a citizen in different civic and political contexts.
- **English Language Arts (ELA) WHST.6-8.1** – Write arguments focused on discipline-specific content.
- **English Language Arts (ELA)RH.6-8.9** – Analyze the relationship between a primary and secondary source on the same topic.

WIDA Standards for Multilingual Learners

- **WIDA ELD Standard 1:** Language for Social and Instructional Purposes (ELD-SI) - ELLs use language to interact socially and to participate in classroom routines and activities across all content areas.
- **WIDA ELD Standard 2**: Language for Language Arts (ELD-LA) - ELLs use language to engage with texts, produce writing, and discuss language arts content.
- **WIDA ELD Standard 3:** Language for Mathematics (ELD-MA) - ELLs use language to interpret and solve problems, explain reasoning, and work with math concepts.
- **WIDA ELD Standard 4**: Language for Science (ELD-SC) - ELLs use language to explore, explain, and model scientific concepts and phenomena.

- **WIDA ELD Standard 5**: Language for Social Studies (ELD-SS) - ELLs use language to analyze societies, cultures, historical events, geography, economics, and government.

Standards for Computer Science and Design Thinking

- **Standard: 8.1.8.DA.1**: Organize and transform data to make it more useful for analysis.
- **Standard: 8.2.8.ETW.4**: Explain how ethical considerations impact the development and use of technologies.
- **Standard: 8.1.8.IC.1**: Evaluate the impact of data privacy laws and data security measures on individuals and communities.

Standards for Career Readiness, Life Literacies, and Key Skills

- **9.2.8.CAP.2– Career Awareness, Exploration, and Preparation:** Develop a plan that includes information about career areas of interest.
- **9.4.8.CI.3 – Life Literacies and Key Skills (Critical Thinking & Collaboration):** Examine challenges that may exist in the adoption of new ideas.
- **9.4.8.IML.5– Life Literacies and Key Skills (Civic Responsibility & Information Literacy):** Compare and contrast how various sources of information (e.g., textbooks, media, peers) address the same topic.

Assessment Evidence

Students will demonstrate understanding by...

- Formative:
  - Daily news briefings and discussions “What’s in the Headlines?”
  - Students participate in class discussions or debates on media influence, controversial issues, or digital ethics, learning to communicate ideas respectfully and thoughtfully
  - Do Nows
  - Checks for understanding

- Think pair share
- Concept mapping
- Compare and contrast graphic organizer
- Quick quiz
- Journal entry
- 5 minute debates

- Benchmark Assessment:
  - Short Constructed Response
  - DBQ Responses
  - Presentations
  - Actively Learn Activities
  - Formal Debates

- Summative:
  - Article quizzes
  - Problem based learning projects
  - Short Constructed Responses
  - Actively Learn Activities

- Alternative:
  - Speech
  - Video project
  - Timeline
  - Podcast
  - Poster
  - Graphic Organizer

Interdisciplinary Connections

Standards for Mathematics:

- **8.SP.1** – Construct and interpret scatter plots for bivariate measurement data…
  - Students could collect and plot data on teen involvement in community activities vs. academic achievement, analyzing patterns or trends.

- **8.SP.3** – Use the equation of a linear model to solve problems in the context of bivariate data…
  - Learners can use real-world statistics about teen volunteerism or employment to model and make predictions about community impact.

- **3. 8.F.5** – Describe qualitatively the functional relationship between two quantities…
  - For example, relate hours spent on community service to reported increases in civic awareness or social well-being.

Standards for Science:

- **MS-ETS1-1** – Define the criteria and constraints of a design problem…
  - Students could design a community improvement project that teens can realistically contribute to, considering resources and social factors.

- **MS-LS2-5** – Evaluate competing design solutions for maintaining biodiversity and ecosystem services.
  - Teens could assess how local environmental issues (e.g., urban gardening, recycling) affect community health and propose solutions.

- **MS-ESS3-3** – Apply scientific principles to design a method for monitoring and minimizing a human impact on the environment.
  - This could involve teen-led citizen science projects that collect and act on local environmental data.

Accommodations and Modifications	
Special Education	• As necessary per student IEP • Seating preferential to instruction or demonstration • Additional time to complete tasks/long-term projects with adjusted due dates • Adjust the number of items student is expected to complete • Limit number of items student is expected to learn at one time • Allow extra time for completion • Pre-teach new vocabulary • Modify projects/provide alternate • Utilize recorded content to reinforce instruction

504	● As necessary per student 504 ● Seating preferential to instruction or demonstration ● Additional time to complete tasks/long-term projects with adjusted due dates ● Chunking large assignments into more manageable piece and components ● Adjust number of items student is expected to complete ● Limit number of items student is expected to learn at one time ● Allow extra time for completion ● Pre-teach new vocabulary ● Modify projects/provide alternate assessments ● Utilize recorded content to reinforce instruction
At Risk	● Increased progress monitoring and feedback ● Scaffolded instruction and frequent re-teaching ● Flexible deadlines or opportunities for redo/make-up work ● Focused assignments targeting essential standards ● Integration of SEL or executive functioning strategies in instruction
ML	● Bilingual dictionaries or translation tools ● Visual supports (charts, maps, labeled diagrams) ● Sentence starters or writing frames ● Extra time for reading and writing tasks ● Simplified language on instructions and assessments ● Allowing oral responses instead of written ones ● Adjusting reading level and complexity of text ● Replacing writing-heavy assignments with visual or oral projects ● Focusing on content understanding rather than perfect grammar
Gifted	● Change delivery of content ● Include additional curriculum approved learning activities to challenge students (within developmentally appropriate parameters)

	• Allow students to advance quickly through content onto more advanced material • Independent study or inquiry-based learning opportunities • Flexible grouping with academic peers

Resources

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