

CCSU Comprehensive Curriculum for Social Studies

Grade 11

“American Government”

Define the Semester:

The purpose of this semester-long required course is to have students develop an understanding of and an appreciation for the role of an informed and active citizen in American democracy. To achieve this, students will overlap their 5th and 8th grade studies of the constitutional era in America and the resulting system of government we have today. Students will pay particular attention to developing an understanding of the philosophical underpinnings of the principles found in the Constitution and how they relate to the concept of limited government. Students will explore the organization and functioning of each of the three branches of the federal government as well as the relationship between the federal government and the states. Students will analyze the rights and freedoms protected under the Constitution, the Bill of Rights, and subsequent amendments, paying particular attention to differences of interpretation. Finally, students will explore the role of the citizen in American democracy, including both rights and responsibilities. Students will develop an understanding and appreciation for the various forms of civic participation, from staying informed, to voting, to working with political parties and/or interest groups.

Define the Units:

Unit 1: The Foundations of American Government

(philosophical and historical underpinnings)

Unit 2: The Institutions of American Government

(the organization and workings of Congress, the Presidency, and the Supreme Court)

Unit 3: The Rights & Freedoms of the American Constitution

(the Constitution, the Bill of Rights, and subsequent amendments)

Unit 4: The Role of the Citizen in American Democracy

(citizenship, participation, voting, political parties and interest groups)

Grade 11, Unit 1: The Foundations of American Government

Students explore the foundations of American democracy by reviewing the major political contributions of the Enlightenment. Careful attention is paid to developing a clear understanding of Natural Rights Philosophy as a basis for modern democratic governments. Students also examine the competing philosophical view of Classical Republicanism, analyzing how these two philosophies both clashed and were reconciled by the framers of the U.S. Constitution. Students will examine the foundational principles that are found in the U.S. Constitution and develop an understanding of their relationship to the concept of limited government. Particular attention will be paid to the development of federalism as an alternative to unitary and confederate governments.

Domains: Civics, Government & Society, History

Overarching Essential Question: What are the philosophical and historical sources of the principles of the United States Constitution?

Inquiry Focus: How can we use a variety of sources and approaches to investigate the foundations of American Government?

Concepts to Emphasize: Declaration of Independence, Articles of the Confederation, Constitution, Sovereignty, Limited Government, Constitutional Government, Federalism

Grade 11, Unit 1: The Foundations of American Government

Domains: Civics, Government & Society, History

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CCSU Power Standards

Power Standard #1 - Inquiry: Students design, conduct, and present research that analyzes and interprets social, environmental, historical, and contemporary contexts in order to generalize understandings of societies and public issues. (Aligns with Vermont Standards: 1.18, 1.19, 1.20, 1.21, 6.1, 6.2, 6.3, 6.6)

Power Standard #2 - History: Students connect the past, present, and future through understanding and interpreting periods of change and continuity in history. (Aligns with Vermont Standards: 6.4, 6.6)

Power Standard #5 – Civics, Government, and Society: Students debate the meaning of citizenship in a democracy, from local, national, and global perspectives and act as informed citizens who demonstrate an understanding of human rights, responsibilities, and political tensions. (Aligns with Vermont Standards: 6.9, 6.10, 6.11, 6.12, 6.14)

Aligns with Vermont Standards	Vermont Grade Cluster Expectations <i>Competency Focus</i>	Enduring Understandings and Essential Questions	CCSU Power Indicators <i>Proficiency Focus</i>
	<p>H&SS9-12: 15 Students show an understanding of various forms of government by...</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>Analyzing</u> the principles in key U.S. and <u>international</u> documents and how they apply to their own lives (e.g., Patriot Act, Universal Declaration of Human Rights). • <u>Identifying and debating issues</u> surrounding the basic principles of American democracy (e.g., individual rights vs. common good, majority rule vs. protection of minority rights). 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Societies develop governments in an effort to protect the natural rights of their citizenry. <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. What are the foundations of the American political system? 	<p>Analyze the philosophical and historical foundations of the American political system. (5a)</p> <p>Explain historical origins of key ideas and concepts. (2a)</p>

Grade 11, Unit 2: The Institutions of American Government

Students explore the major institutions of the federal government. The foundational principles of the separation of powers and checks and balances are explored in further detail as students learn the functions of each institution. Careful attention is paid to an examination of the extent to which the branches are separated by the Constitution. Students analyze the role of Congress as a representative legislative body. An exploration of the powers and limitations of the presidency will help students understand the historical and contemporary issues surrounding this office. Students analyze the independent nature of the judiciary and develop an understanding of how this enhances the system of checks and balances under our Constitution.

Domain: Civics, Government & Society

Overarching Essential Questions: How is the federal government organized under the Constitution and to what extent does this organization promote the common good?

Inquiry Focus: How can we use a variety of sources and approaches to investigate the institutions of American Government?

Concepts to Emphasize: Separation of Powers, Checks and Balances, Judicial Review

Grade 11, Unit 2: The Institutions of American Government

Domains: Civics, Government & Society

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	<p>H&SS9-12: 15 Students show an understanding of various forms of government by...</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>Comparing and evaluating</u> the basic functions, structures and purposes of governments, both past and present (e.g., democracy vs. dictatorship, internal and external protection). 	<p>1. A system of government with divided powers is an attempt to limit the potential for tyranny and oppression.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> How are the powers of government divided under the Constitution? To what extent does the division of powers limit the potential for tyranny and oppression. 	<p>Analyze and evaluate the distribution of power among the institutions of the United States government. (5b)</p>

Grade 11, Unit 3: The Rights & Freedoms of the U.S. Constitution

Students analyze the civil and political rights guaranteed under the U.S. Constitution and the Bill of Rights. A major focus of this unit is on the civil liberties provided under the 1st amendment and the due process rights provided by the 4th through 8th amendments. Students examine various interpretations of these rights (over time and in the present). Students explore the difficult balance that exists between protecting individuals by limiting government and protecting society by limiting the rights of individuals.

Domain: Civics, Government, and Society

Overarching Essential Questions: To what extent does the U.S. Constitution limit the powers of government through the protection of individual rights?

Inquiry Focus: How can we use a variety of sources and approaches to investigate the Rights & Freedoms of American Government?

Concepts to Emphasize: Rights, Bill of Rights, Civil War Amendments

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	<p>H&SS9-12: 15 Students show an understanding of various forms of government by...</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Evaluating how and <u>why</u> rules and laws are created, interpreted, and changed (e.g., evaluating recent decisions by the U.N.). <p>H&SS9-12:14 Students act as citizens by...</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Analyzing and evaluating changes in the <u>interpretation of rights and responsibilities of citizenship over time</u> (e.g., changes in voting age, changes in voting rights for women and African Americans). Discussing <u>why people want to become citizens of the U.S. and/or another country</u> (e.g., Why did Americans emigrate to the Soviet Union during the Depression?). 	<p>1. The powers of government are limited by explicit and implicit statements of rights and freedoms.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> What are the explicit and implicit rights provided in the Constitution? To what extent is the power of government limited by these statements and to what extent are these rights limited? 	<p>Evaluate the extent to which rights and freedoms are guaranteed under the U.S. Constitution. (5c)</p>

Grade 11, Unit 4: The Role of the Citizen in American Democracy

In this unit students will build upon their knowledge of the rights of citizens by exploring the responsibilities that come with citizenship. Students will examine the paths to citizenship and compare and contrast the rights and responsibilities of various classifications of non-citizens. From there students will analyze the role of the citizen in our democracy by exploring the various ways in which citizens participate in their government. Students analyze the role various groups of people (political parties, interest groups) play in influencing government policy. Students explore the various ideologies that drive people to support a particular political party, interest group, or policy and assess where they personally fall on various ideological spectrums at this point in their lives. Finally, students examine the forces that shape our political views and reflect on how the knowledge they have gained from this course will affect their level of participation in the future.

Domain: Civics, Government & Society

Overarching Essential Question: To what extent do/should citizens participate in the political processes of American democracy?

Inquiry Focus: How can we use a variety of sources and approaches to investigate the role of the citizen in American Government?

Concepts to Emphasize: Citizenship, Ideology

Grade 11, Unit 4: The Role of the Citizen in American Democracy

Domain: Civics, Government & Society

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	<p>H&SS9-12: 15 Students show an understanding of various forms of government by...</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Describing how government decisions impact <u>citizens locally, nationally, and internationally</u>. • Defining and analyzing <u>the process</u> for selecting leaders at state, national and international levels (e.g., analyzing pros and cons of the primary process; debating the necessity of the Electoral College). 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The American democratic system of government requires an informed citizenry that actively engages in the political process. <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. What are the roles of the Citizen in American democracy? b. To what extent does democracy function better with knowledgeable and engaged citizens? 	<p>Understand the role of the citizen in American democracy. (5d)</p>

H&SS9-12:14

Students act as citizens by...

- Analyzing and evaluating the issues related to and criteria for U.S. citizenship, past and present (e.g., analyzing the issues surrounding Japanese citizens during WWII).
- Analyzing impacts of people’s actions as members of a global community (e.g., the Kyoto Agreement).
- Demonstrating positive interaction with group members (e.g., working with a group to draft legislation).
- Identifying problems, proposing solutions, considering the effects of the implementing a course of action in the local community, state, nation, or world.
- Explaining and defending one’s own point of view on issues that affect themselves and society, using information gained from reputable sources (e.g., stem cell research, health care issues, and federal budget allocations).
- Explaining, critically evaluating, and defending views that are not one’s own.
- Analyzing ways in which political parties, campaigns, and elections encourage and discourage citizens to participate in the political process (e.g., voter registration drives, use of the Internet, negative campaign ads).
- Illustrating how individuals and groups have brought about change locally, nationally, or internationally (e.g., research the far-reaching effects of Mohandas Ghandi’s beliefs and actions).
- Analyzing how identity stems from beliefs in and allegiance to shared political values and principles, and how these are similar and different to other peoples (e.g., nation building in regions with disparate cultures).
- Establishing rules and/or policies for a group, school, or community, and defending them (e.g., senior privileges, curfews).