

The Ten Themes of the Social Studies Standards

The table below lists and defines the 10 themes of social studies standards that were developed at the national level. Each theme incorporates one or more of the disciplines contributing to social studies content and clearly demonstrate a multi-disciplinary focus.

Theme	Description
Culture	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Human beings create, learn, and adapt culture.Cultures are dynamic systems of beliefs, values, and traditions that exhibit both commonalities and differences.Understanding culture helps us understand ourselves and others.
Time, Continuity, and Change	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Human beings seek to understand their historic roots and to locate themselves in time. Knowing what things were like in the past and how things change and develop helps us answer important questions about our current condition.
People, Places, and Environment	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Today’s students are aware of the world beyond their personal locations. As students study this content, they create their spatial views and geographic perspectives. Social, cultural, economic, and civic demands require such knowledge to make informed and critical decisions about relationships between people and their environment.
Individual Development and Identity	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Personal identity is shaped by one’s culture, by groups, and by institutional influences. Examination of various forms of human behavior enhances understanding of the relationship between social norms and emerging personal identities, the relationships between social processes that influence identity formation, and the ethical principles underlying individual action.
Individuals, Groups, and Institutions	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Institutions exert enormous influence over us. Institutions are organizations that embody and promote the core social values of their members. It is important for students to know how institutions are formed, what controls and influences them, how they control and influence individuals and culture, and how institutions can be maintained or changed.
Power, Authority, and Governance	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Understanding the development of structures of power, authority, and governance and their evolving functions is essential for the emergence of civic competence.
Production, Distribution, and Consumption	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Decisions about exchange, trade, and economic policy and well-being are global in scope. The role of government in policy making varies over time and from place to place. Systematic study of an interdependent world economy and the role of technology in economic decision making is essential.
Science, Technology	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Technology is as old as the first crude tool invented by prehistoric humans. Our modern life would be impossible without technology and the science that

Technology, and Society	supports it. Today's technology forms the basis for many difficult social choices.
Global Connections	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The realities of global interdependence require understanding of the increasingly important and diverse global connections among societies. Persisting and emerging global issues require solutions.
Civic Ideals and Practices	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• All people have a stake in examining civic ideals and practices across time and in diverse societies, as well as in determining how to close the gap between present practices and the ideals on which our democratic republic is based. An understanding of civic ideals and the practice of citizenship is critical to full participation in society.

Source: *Expectations of Excellence: Curriculum Standards for Social Studies*, by the National Council for the Social Studies, 1994 , Washington, DC: National Council for the Social Studies.

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