

READINGTON PUBLIC SCHOOL DISTRICT

Middle School Civics 2022

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I. Purpose and Overview

The Readington Township School District Social Studies Curriculum adheres to the belief that social studies education should foster, for all students, the ability to understand their world and to have an appreciation for the heritage of America with a high degree of literacy in civics, history, economics, and geography. Our curriculum's foundation is a thematic learning model which prepares students to produce and critically consume information in our global society.

II. Rationale

All students receive social studies instruction from Kindergarten through Grade 8. Today's challenges are complex, have global implications, and are connected to people, places, and events of the past. The study of social studies focuses on a deep understanding of concepts that enable students to think critically and systematically about local, regional, national, and global issues. Authentic learning experiences that enable students to apply content knowledge, develop social studies skills, and collaborate with students from around the world prepare students for college, careers, and civic life. The natural integration of technology in social studies education allows students to overcome geographic borders, apply scientific and mathematical analysis to historical questions and contemporary issues, appreciate cultural diversity, and experience events through the examination of primary sources.

III. Goals

This curriculum is linked to the 2020 New Jersey Student Learning Standards for Social Studies. Each unit is connected directly to the Mission and Vision, Performance Expectations, Disciplinary Concepts and Core Ideas, and Practices outlined in this document.

IV. Assessment

Assessment is an essential element of effective instruction and is an ongoing process. Its primary purpose is to provide precise and meaningful data regarding student achievement of intended learning targets. In social studies, there are two facets of learning that are quantitatively and qualitatively assessed: content and skill. The data produced by formative and summative measurement of these aspects of learning is used to build on student successes and adjust instruction to meet individual needs.

Evidence of academic growth can be demonstrated in multiple ways throughout each unit. A variety of assessment formats have been developed, and current academic research is always at the forefront when assessing our students. Assessments include but are not limited to teacher-made tests and quizzes, observations, performance tasks, rubrics, written responses, presentations, investigations and the resulting projects taking informed action, and analysis of primary sources, charts, and diagrams. [Accommodations and modifications](#) are available for those students who demonstrate a need and can be located on the curriculum page of the district website.

V. Pacing Guide for Civics:

	<u>Overview</u>
Unit 1 2 weeks	FOUNDATIONAL CONCEPTS & PRINCIPLES
Unit 2 4 weeks	FOUNDATIONAL DOCUMENTS
Unit 3 3 weeks	THE CONSTITUTION, AMERICAN IDEALS, & THE AMERICAN EXPERIENCE
Unit 4 4 weeks	ROLE OF THE CITIZEN

VI. Units of Study for Civics:

Unit 1 FOUNDATIONAL CONCEPTS & PRINCIPLES	
Overview: The United States of America is unique among nations in that it was founded upon an idea. What unites us as Americans is our shared commitment to those ideas and ideals. Any analysis of the structure of American government requires that students first understand the foundational concepts that are the rationale for a constitutional democracy. This unit will ask students to explore the key concepts and principles upon which the government of the United States was established.	
Desired Results	
Goals: NJSLS Content Statements 6.3 Active Citizenship in the 21st Century: All students will acquire the skills needed to be active, informed citizens who value diversity and promote cultural understanding by working collaboratively to address the challenges that are inherent in living in an interconnected world. NJSLS Social Studies Content Standard Indicators 6.3.8.CivicsHR.1: Construct an argument as to the source of human rights and how they are best protected. 6.3.8.CivicsPI.1: Evaluate, take, and defend a position on why government is necessary, and the purposes government should serve. 6.3.8.CivicsPR.1: Analyze primary sources to explain how democratic ideas in the United States developed from the historical experiences of ancient societies, England and the North American colonies. 6.3.8.CivicsPR.5: 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. NJSLS English Language Arts Content Companion Standards - RH.6-8.4. Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in a text, including vocabulary specific to domains related to history/social studies. - RH.6-8.6. Identify aspects of a text that reveal an author's point of view or purpose (e.g., loaded language, inclusion or avoidance of particular facts). - RH.6-8.10. By the end of grade 8, read and comprehend history/social studies texts in the grades 6-8 text complexity band independently and proficiently.	
Understandings: - Every human being is entitled to certain “natural” rights. - The concept of natural or human rights arises from basic common religious or philosophical concepts about the dignity of each human being. - In a state of nature, the strong would take advantage of the weak. We need a government with the authority to protect individual rights, resolve conflicts and maintain order. - Through the social contract, people give up some of their freedom to the government to preserve order and peace. - A strong commitment to the rule of law has been crucial to efforts to limit the abuse of authority and the arbitrary use of power. - Governments establish and enforce laws to maintain safety and order.	Essential Questions: - How do citizens, civic ideals, and government institutions interact to balance the needs of individuals and the common good? - Why do we need government? - What makes authority legitimate? - Why is “civic virtue” necessary for a democracy to survive? - How does the idea of the “common good” give rise to the social contract? - How can conflicts be resolved peacefully? - How do the three branches of government function at the local and state level in New Jersey? - How well does federalism resolve the competing demands of limiting

• There are many different forms of government that government may take. Some forms of government, such as dictatorships, are based solely on power. • The legitimacy of a government is based on the consent of the governed, the rule of law and the protection of human rights. • Democratic governments work to balance social order and the protection of individual rights.	government power and the need for efficiency in government? • Why is the right to vote critical in a democratic republic?
Vocabulary: • Consent of the governed • Dignity • Due Process • English Bill of Rights • Inalienable • Liberty • Magna Carta • Natural Rights • Rule of Law • Social contract • Authority • Autocracy • Consent of the governed • Democracy • Dictatorship • Government • Individual rights • Monarchy • Oligarchy • Popular Sovereignty • Republic • Rule of Law • State of Nature Students will be able to... • Define natural rights and trace their origins and applications through history • Demonstrate respect for diverse perspectives as a sign of civil discourse • Define and evaluate the efficacy of different forms of government • Apply the concept of civic virtue to keeping American democracy intact	
Learning Activities and Resources	
Core Materials: <i>We The People: The Citizen and the Constitution</i> textbook Learning Activities and Lessons: What are natural/human rights? • NJ Center for Civic Education: What are natural/human rights? • See five-minute video summarizing John Locke’s “revolutionary” ideas about natural rights from the Fraser Institute: Essential John Locke: Natural Freedom and Rights How did the idea of human rights develop? • Youth for Human Rights: The Background of Human Rights Analysis of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights • Universal Declaration of Human Rights • Facing History and Ourselves	

How did Ben Franklin envision us “keeping the republic”?

- [National Constitution Center](#)

What ideas from the classical republics about the need for civic virtue did the Founders adopt?

- [Center for Civic Education: Commitment to the Common Good \(60-sec. podcast\)](#)
- [National Constitution Center: Civic Virtue and Why it Matters \(article\)](#)
- [Center for Civic Education: Common Welfare and Civic Virtue Lesson](#)
- [Center for Civic Education: Civic Virtue Makes Republican Rule Possible \(podcast\)](#)

What is your local government and how can you interact with it?

- Municipalities: [League of Municipalities](#): Local Government in New Jersey
- [County Government](#) provides many services, including parks and social services, based in the 21 counties, led by county commissioners. (Integrate presentations and possible field trip from Readington Township Administrator Richard Sheola

State Government

- NJ Center for Civic Education: [New Jersey’s Powerful Governor](#)
- NJ Center for Civic Education: [New Jersey Legislature](#)
- NJ Center for Civic Education: [New Jersey Judiciary](#)
- [NJ State House Tour](#) and additional [teacher resources](#)
- State House Express - [The Eagleton Institute of Politics](#) offers funding for NJ State House tours by classes
- iCivics: [Court Quest game](#) has students navigate the differences between the state and federal courts

Interdisciplinary Connections

Visual Arts: 2.5.8.R3a. Interpret art by analyzing how the interaction of subject matter, characteristics of form and structure, use of media, art making approaches, and relevant contextual information contributes to understanding messages or ideas and mood conveyed. Activity: Analyze art and architecture in the capitol building rotundas around the country and in Washington DC.

Career Readiness, Life Literacies, and Key Skills

Career Ready Practice: Act as a responsible and contributing community member and employee.

Activity: Using the concept of civic virtue to understand the link between bettering yourself and the community around you.

Career Awareness, Exploration, and Preparation: 9.2.8.CAP.9: Analyze how a variety of activities related to career preparation (e.g., volunteering, apprenticeships, structured learning experiences, dual enrollment, job search, scholarships) impacts post-secondary options. Activity: Using the concept of civic virtue to understand the link between bettering yourself and the community around you.

Life Literacies and Key Skills: 9.4.8.GCA.2: Demonstrate openness to diverse ideas and perspectives through active discussions to achieve a group goal. Activity: Students will facilitate town hall meetings with various guest speakers in order to gain insight into multiple political perspectives.

Computer Science and Design Thinking

Core Idea: People use digital devices and tools to automate the collection, use, and transformation of data. Activity: Analysis of census data and voting-eligible population (VEP) and the voting-age population (VAP) in past elections.

Assessment Evidence	
Formative: • Second Treatise of Government primary source analysis • Systems of government matching and application quiz Summative: • Mock Election: Instill the habit of participating in elections by having students research candidates and vote in the annual New Jersey Mock Election, held each year two weeks prior to election day in November ◦ PHASE I: Research and present candidates and their platforms for various congressional, gubernatorial, or presidential races	Benchmark: • Civics (History and Government) Questions for the Naturalization Test will be given periodically throughout the semester class to ensure students can pass a Citizenship Test by the conclusion of the course. Alternative: • I Side With political parties and philosophy quiz

Eighth Grade Unit 2 FOUNDATIONAL DOCUMENTS	
Overview: This unit examines how the foundational concepts identified in Unit One are articulated in the nation's founding documents and established in the structure of American government. Students will explore the ideals expressed in the Declaration of Independence, providing the background for the next unit's study of how the Declaration inspired generations of Americans to more fully realize its core concepts of liberty, equality, and justice. The United States Constitution and the state constitutions provide the structural framework for limited government and constitutional democracy, and understanding these documents is a crucial component of active citizenship. The unit concludes with an examination of the Bill of Rights and the amendment process as students come to understand that the Constitution is a living document and American democracy is an ongoing experiment requiring their active participation.	
Desired Results	
Goals: NJSLS Content Statement 6.3 Active Citizenship in the 21st Century: All students will acquire the skills needed to be active, informed citizens who value diversity and promote cultural understanding by working collaboratively to address the challenges that are inherent in living in an interconnected world. NJSLS Social Studies Content Standard Indicators • 6.1.8.HistoryUP.3.a: Use primary sources as evidence to explain why the Declaration of Independence was written and how its key principles evolved to become unifying ideas of American democracy. • 6.1.8.Civics.PD.3.a: Cite evidence to determine the role that compromise played in the creation and adoption of the Constitution and Bill of Rights. • 6.3.8.CivicsPR.5: 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. NJSLS English Language Arts Content Companion Standard Indicators • RH.6-8.3. Identify key steps in a text's description of a process related to history/social studies (e.g., how a bill becomes law, how interest rates are raised or lowered).	

- RH.6-8.9. Analyze the relationship between a primary and secondary source on the same topic.
- WHST.6-8.4. Produce clear and coherent writing in which the development, organization, voice, and style are appropriate to task, purpose, and audience.

Understandings:

- The United States Constitution and Bill of Rights were designed to provide a framework for the United States system of government while also protecting individual rights.
- Debates about individual rights, states' rights and federal power shaped the development of the political and economic institutions and practices of the new Republic.
- The Constitution defines the roles and qualifications of the Congress, President, and Supreme Court.
- The guarantees in the Bill of Rights reflect the nation's commitment to personal freedom and to the principle of limited government.

Essential Questions:

- To what extent did the founding documents (Declaration of Independence, Constitution, Bill of Rights) articulate and establish/ensure American ideals?
- What character traits did the Founders expect of their elected and appointed representatives?
- How does the U.S. Constitution organize the government to prevent abuse of authority?
- How do the three branches of government interact: separation of powers vs. checks and balances?
- What is the structure and purpose of each branch of government?
- Why is the amendment process so difficult?

Vocabulary:

- Articles of Confederation
- Checks and balances
- Popular sovereignty
- Separation of Powers
- Bicameral
- Congress
- House of Representatives
- Senate
- Cabinet
- Electoral College
- Electors
- President
- Veto
- Vice-President
- Supreme Court
- Judicial Review
- Amendment
- Bill of Rights
- Ratify

Students will be able to...

- Define the purpose and function of the legislative, executive, and judicial branch
- Demonstrate understanding of the fundamental freedoms and limitations contained within the Bill of Rights
- Argue the merits and shortcomings of the Electoral College
- Analyze landmark Supreme Court cases

Learning Activities and Resources

Core Materials:

We The People: The Citizen and the Constitution textbook

Learning Activities and Lessons:

Why was the Declaration of Independence Written?

- National Archives: [Excerpts from the Declaration of Independence](#)
- [The Argument of the Declaration of Independence](#)
- [Close reading of Declaration](#)

Articles of Confederation

- iCivics Lesson: Wanted: [A Just Right Government](#)
- NEH EDSITEment: [The Road to the Constitutional Convention](#)

Constitution

- iCivics Lesson: [Constitution Day Lesson Plan](#)
- National Constitution Center: [To Sign or Not to Sign?](#)

Three Branches of Government Resources

- [House of Representatives](#)
- [Senate](#)
- [White House](#)
- [Electoral College](#)
- [Supreme Court](#)

Bill of Rights

- iCivics Lesson: [You've Got Rights!](#)

Landmark Supreme Court Cases

- [OYEZ](#)

Interdisciplinary Connections

English Language Arts: NJSLA.W1 Write arguments to support claims in an analysis of substantive topics or texts, using valid reasoning and relevant and sufficient evidence. Activity: Students will construct written arguments involving contemporary debates for each branch of government. Samples include:

- Executive: Electoral college
- Legislative: Divided or unified government
- Judicial: Roles and appointments of Supreme Court justices

Career Readiness, Life Literacies, and Key Skills

Career Ready Practice: Use technology to enhance productivity to increase collaboration and communicate effectively. Activity: Students will analyze [past presidential advertisements](#) in the field of job creation to compare campaign rhetoric through history.

Career Awareness, Exploration, and Preparation: 9.2.8.CAP.18: Explain how personal behavior, appearance, attitudes, and other choices may impact the job application process. Activity: Students will analyze the qualifications of presidential, congressional, and judicial candidates.

Life Literacies and Key Skills: 9.4.8.CT.3: Compare past problem-solving solutions to local, national, or global issues and analyze the factors that led to a positive or negative outcome. Activity: Students will compare their proposed solutions to various local, national, and global issues to those of candidates in each election cycle (current midterms).

Computer Science and Design Thinking	
Core Idea: Society is faced with trade-offs due to the increasing globalization and automation that computing brings. Activity: Students will analyze past presidential advertisements in the field of job creation to compare campaign rhetoric through history.	
Assessment Evidence	
Formative: • The Living Room Candidate political propaganda analysis • Checks and balances simulation • Supreme Court justices panel Summative: • Mock Election: Instill the habit of participating in elections by having students research candidates and vote in the annual New Jersey Mock Election, held each year two weeks prior to election day in November - PHASE 2: Engage in mock debates from the perspective of a candidate. Teachers and students will moderate each debate and prepare questions for the candidates	Benchmark: • Civics (History and Government) Questions for the Naturalization Test will be given periodically throughout the semester class to ensure students can pass a Citizenship Test by the conclusion of the course. Alternative: • ETS Civics module on presidential decision making (laws versus executive orders)

Eighth Grade Unit 3 THE CONSTITUTION, AMERICAN IDEALS, & THE AMERICAN EXPERIENCE	
Overview: The Preamble to the United States Constitution outlines its purposes and ideals in the following language: “We the People of the United States, in Order to form a more perfect Union, establish Justice, insure domestic Tranquility, provide for the common defense, promote the general Welfare, and secure the Blessings of Liberty to ourselves and our Posterity, do ordain and establish this Constitution for the United States...” This unit will investigate the challenges and triumphs of fulfilling our American ideals. The unit will begin with an examination of the goals highlighted in the Preamble of the Constitution. By tracing the preamble through American history, students will assess the effectiveness of our early citizens in meeting the goals of the Constitution. Students will evaluate how each American ideal has grown and expanded to be more inclusive. As we continue to struggle in fulfilling the potential of the American ideals, students will be encouraged to identify additional areas of growth toward a “more perfect union.”	
Desired Results	
Goals: NJSLS Content Statement 6.3 Active Citizenship in the 21st Century: All students will acquire the skills needed to be active, informed citizens who value diversity and promote cultural understanding by working collaboratively to address the challenges that are inherent in living in an interconnected world. NJSLS Social Studies Content Standard Indicators	

- 6.1.8.CivicsPI.3.b and 6.3.8.CivicsPR.2: Evaluate the effectiveness of the fundamental principles of the Constitution (i.e., consent of the governed, rule of law, federalism, limited government, separation of powers, checks and balances and individual rights) in establishing a federal government that allows for growth and change over time.
- 6.3.8.CivicsDP.2: Make a claim based on evidence to determine the extent and limitations of First Amendment Rights (e.g., Supreme Court decisions).
- 6.3.8.CivicsDP.3: Use historical case studies and current events to explain why due process is essential for the protection of individual rights and maintenance of limited government.

NJSLS English Language Arts Content Companion Standard Indicators

- WHST.6-8.8. Gather relevant information from multiple print and digital sources, using search terms effectively; assess the credibility and accuracy of each source; and quote or paraphrase the data and conclusions of others while avoiding plagiarism and following a standard format for citation.
- RH.6-8.7. Integrate visual information (e.g., in charts, graphs, photographs, videos, or maps) with other information in print and digital texts.
- RH.6-8.8. Distinguish among fact, opinion, and reasoned judgment in a text.

Understandings:

- The right to vote, initially granted to a limited segment of the population, has gradually been extended to different groups enhancing the concept of “the consent of the governed”.
- Ensuring the right to vote is an essential component of a successful democracy.
- The desire for “fairness” or “justice” is a primary reason why people are willing to create a government. These concepts are difficult to define precisely. The Constitution and state constitutions establish a court system to help decide questions of justice.
- The right to “due process” is considered one of the most fundamental guarantees of individual rights.
- Democracy places a high value on the right to privacy, which is the basis for many of the more specific protections enshrined in the Bill of Rights.
- Democracies must also balance individual liberty and “the common good”. Debates about how to best achieve this balance is an important element of politics and public policy.

Essential Questions:

- How well has the U.S. met the fundamental principles established in the Constitution?
- What are the opportunities and challenges facing a diverse democracy?
- How do we ensure that people are treated fairly?
- To what extent has the American experience succeeded in achieving the aspiration that “all men (people) are created equal”?
- Should there be limits on freedom of speech or the ability to protest and petition the government? Should there be restrictions on free speech in social media?
- How have relevant court cases about freedom of expression been applied to contemporary events?
- How has social media changed public discourse, and what problems has it created?
- How can we address the spreading of propaganda and lies on social media?

Vocabulary:

- Assembly
- Censorship
- Establishment Clause
- Petition
- Speech
- Press
- Protest
- Religion
- Domestic Tranquility
- Habeas Corpus
- Preamble
- Justice

<i>Students will be able to...</i> • Evaluate how current administrations have upheld the goals established in the Constitution • Articulate how the Constitution improved upon the shortcomings of the Articles of Confederation • Debate and understand limitations for freedoms contained within the Bill of Rights
Learning Activities and Resources
Core Materials: <i>We The People: The Citizen and the Constitution</i> textbook How did the Constitution establish a “more perfect union” than the Articles of Confederation? • iCivics: The Constitution's Cover Letter Lesson DBQuest • Principles of American Democracy video lesson Expansion of franchise to men in 1830s: • C-SPAN Classroom: Video Clip: Who Could Vote in the Early United States? • C-SPAN Classroom: The Expansion of Voting Rights • PBS Learning Media: History of U.S. Voting Rights Things Explained Fifteenth Amendment • PBS Learning Media: The 15th Amendment Challenges the Women's Movement Carrie Chapman Catt • PBS Learning Media: The 15th Amendment and the Battle Over Voting Rights (PBS Learning Media) • History Channel: Sound Smart on the 15th Amendment Women's Suffrage • PBS Learning Media: She Resisted: Seneca Falls Convention The Vote; Strategies of Suffrage The Vote ; She Resisted: Strategies of Suffrage - Remote Worksheet; She Resisted: Strategies of Suffrage - Group Work • iCivics: Women's Suffrage: A Movement in the Right Direction Infographic • C-SPAN Classroom Lesson: Early Women in Congress • Alice Paul Institute: Who Was Alice Paul? • New Jersey Women You Should Know Continued expansion of voting rights • The 26th Amendment • NJ voting requirements What does the 14th Amendment mean by “equal protection under the law”? • PBS Learning Media: The Reconstruction Amendments • NJ Center for Civic Education: What does “equal protection” mean?
Interdisciplinary Connections
Visual and Performing Arts: 1.4.8.Cr2b: Actively contribute ideas and creatively incorporate the ideas of others in existing or original theatrical work, demonstrating mutual respect for self and others and their roles sharing leadership and responsibilities in preparing or devising theatre. Activity: Students will watch reenactments of women's suffragettes and craft their own arguments for the movement.
Career Readiness, Life Literacies, and Key Skills
Career Ready Practice: Consider the environmental, social and economic impacts of decisions. Activity: Students will compare how job opportunities have evolved for marginalized groups through history (women, African Americans, Native Americans).

Career Awareness, Exploration, and Preparation: 9.2.8.CAP.10: Evaluate how careers have evolved regionally, nationally, and globally. Activity: Students will compare how job opportunities have evolved for marginalized groups through history (women, African Americans, Native Americans). Life Literacies and Key Skills: 9.4.8.CI.2: Repurpose an existing resource in an innovative way. Activity: Students will revise and edit the 27 amendments of the Constitution, adding in their own additional amendments based on contemporary issues.	
Computer Science and Design Thinking	
Core Idea: Advancements in computing technology can change individuals' behaviors. Activity: Students will compare the fight for equality in the digital age to movements like women's suffrage, Native American rights, Civil Rights Movement, etc.	
Assessment Evidence	
Formative: - Student oral and written arguments on Mahanoy Area School District v Brandi Levy- The Supreme Court takes on Snapchat - Student oral and written arguments on the Sedition Act Summative: Supreme Court Simulation based on contemporary issue	Benchmark: - Civics (History and Government) Questions for the Naturalization Test will be given periodically throughout the semester class to ensure students can pass a Citizenship Test by the conclusion of the course. Alternative: - ETS Civics module on Supreme Court judicial review

Eighth Grade Unit 4 ROLE OF THE CITIZEN Overview: In addition to civic education content, students require opportunities to develop and practice the skills and dispositions to become active and well-informed supporters of their community. Voting is an important responsibility of citizenship, but students must also learn how to interact with the appropriate levels of government to address matters of public policy that affect their lives and occupations. This unit explores the nature of citizenship and offers questions and strategies to help students develop the skills they will need to be active members and supporters of their communities.
Desired Results
Goals: NJSLS Content Statement 6.3 Active Citizenship in the 21st Century: All students will acquire the skills needed to be active, informed citizens who value diversity and promote cultural understanding by working collaboratively to address the challenges that are inherent in living in an interconnected world. NJSLS Social Studies Content Standard Indicators 6.1.8.CivicsPI.3.c: Distinguish the powers and responsibilities of citizens, political parties, interest groups, and the media in a variety of governmental and nongovernmental contexts. 6.3.8.CivicsPR.7: Compare how ideas become laws at the local, state and national level.

6.3.8.CivicsPI.4: Investigate the role of political, civil, and economic organizations in shaping people's lives and share this information with individuals who might benefit from it.

6.3.8.CivicsPD.1: Deliberate on a public issue affecting an upcoming election, consider opposing arguments and develop a reasoned conclusion.

6.3.8.CivicsPD.2: Propose and defend a position regarding a public policy issue at the appropriate local, state or national level.

6.3.8.CivicsDP.1: Identify an issue of inequality, develop multiple solutions and communicate the best one to an appropriate government body.

6.3.8.CivicsPR.4: Use evidence and quantitative data to propose or defend a public policy related to climate change.

6.3.8.CivicsPR.6: Seek the perspectives of multiple stakeholders with diverse points of view regarding a local budget issue and take a position on proposed policy.

6.3.8.CivicsPR.5: 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.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.

NJSLS English Language Arts Content Companion Standard Indicators

WHST.6-8.7. Conduct short research projects to answer a question (including a self-generated question), drawing on several sources and generating additional related, focused questions that allow for multiple avenues of exploration.

WHST.6-8.9. Draw evidence from informational texts to support analysis, reflection, and research.

Understandings:

- Citizenship is a relationship between an individual and a state to which the individual owes allegiance and in turn is entitled to its protection.
- Each nation determines the conditions under which it will recognize persons as its citizens, and the conditions under which that status will be extended or withdrawn.
- Citizens have additional rights and responsibilities that non-citizens do not possess.
- Decisions made by local and state governments have an impact on our lives.
- Civil society includes media, voluntary organizations and interest groups, which mediate between individuals and government.
- Individuals and civil society can influence public policy outcomes by speaking with their elected representatives and lobbying for change.

Essential Questions:

- How do citizens, civic ideals and government institutions interact to balance the needs of individuals and the common good?
- Who is a citizen?
- How does an immigrant become a citizen?
- What rights and responsibilities does a citizen have that non-citizens (resident aliens) do not have?
- What is public policy?
- How do individuals and institutions of civil society, such as interest groups, influence public policy?
- How can I engage with others to improve my local, state, national and/or global community?
- How can I identify problems that are important to be addressed at the local, state, national and/or global level?
- What can individuals do to help ensure that the American experiment with democracy continues?

Vocabulary:

- Citizenship
- Naturalization
- Civil society
- Interest groups
- Public policy
- Civic engagement

Students will be able to...

- Define citizenship and civic engagement

- Outline the processes by which an individual becomes an American citizen
- Identify a local, state, national or global issue in need of addressing
- Research and report potential solutions to the aforementioned issue
- Identify appropriate interest groups, lawmakers or individuals that could help

Learning Activities and Resources

Core Materials:

- *We The People: The Citizen and the Constitution* textbook
- *We The People: Project Citizen* textbook

First Amendment in Action

- Phone calls, emails, and letters to politicians exercising students' freedom of petition and free speech

What is citizenship? Who is a Citizen? What is Naturalization? What rights and obligations do citizens have?

- iCivics: [Citizen Me](#)
 - Students create a graphic organizer that diagrams citizen rights and responsibilities at different levels of citizenship--home, school, city, state, and nation. They also learn the sources of their rights and responsibilities at each level.
- NJ Center for Civic Education: [What is Citizenship? Who is a Citizen?](#)
- How does an immigrant become a citizen?
 - [U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services: Citizenship and Naturalization in the U.S.](#)

Interdisciplinary Connections

English Language Arts: RI.8.2. Determine a central idea of a text and analyze its development over the course of the text, including its relationship to supporting ideas; provide an objective summary of the text.

Activity: Students will summarize the perspectives of various political leaders by using their campaign websites to ascertain their stances on contemporary issues.

Career Readiness, Life Literacies, and Key Skills

Career Ready Practice: Utilize critical thinking to make sense of problems and persevere in solving them.

Activity: Students will compile a list of relevant stakeholders while researching potential policy action for their selected issue. This will include various career areas of potential interest in their selected field.

Career Awareness, Exploration, and Preparation: 9.2.8.CAP.2: Develop a plan that includes information about career areas of interest.

Activity: Students will compile a list of relevant stakeholders while researching potential policy action for their selected issue. This will include various career areas of potential interest in their selected field.

Life Literacies and Key Skills: 9.4.8.CI.3: Examine challenges that may exist in the adoption of new ideas.

Activity: In learning what makes a good citizen, students will discover that being respectful of and open to new viewpoints is a crucial component of one's civic duty.

Computer Science and Design Thinking

Core Idea: People use digital devices and tools to automate the collection, use, and transformation of data.

Activity: Students will develop an action plan that outlines stakeholders, evidence, and a solutions-based approach to their problem.

Assessment Evidence	
Formative: • <i>We The People: Project Citizen</i> progress checks during proposals, research, annotated bibliography, stakeholder, and data stages Summative: • <i>We The People: Project Citizen</i> take action forum. This task will implement the following two enduring understandings: ◦ A fully researched and analyzed solution to a contemporary public policy issue helps students to develop important literacy, problem-solving and critical thinking skills. ◦ Developing an action plan to have a public policy solution implemented by an appropriate governmental agency develops civic skills and positive civic attitudes.	Benchmark: • Civics (History and Government) Questions for the Naturalization Test will be given periodically throughout the semester class to ensure students can pass a Citizenship Test by the conclusion of the course. Alternative: • Community service proposals