

Guidelines for Content Advisor Feedback on the Social Studies Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills

Please review the current Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills (TEKS) for kindergarten–grade 12 (K-12) social studies and use the following questions to develop feedback for the State Board of Education regarding revisions to the standards.

There is no specific format required for your feedback. When referencing specific portions of the TEKS, please indicate the grade level and/or course and the specific letter/number of the standard to which you are referring, as appropriate, e.g., 2.4.A (Grade 2, knowledge and skills statement (2), student expectation (A)).

GUIDING QUESTIONS

1. The current TEKS are organized in eight strands: history; geography; economics; government; citizenship; culture; science, technology, and society; and social studies skills. Is the current strand framework for the K-12 social studies TEKS appropriate? If not, what recommendations do you have for organizing or structuring the TEKS? **I think the strands work quite well.**
2. Are common social studies themes (e.g., geography, civics, history, etc.) adequately addressed across the K–12 TEKS? If not, what recommendations do you have for revising? **Yes.**
3. Does each grade level and/or course follow a complete and logical development of social studies concepts presented within the grade level/course? If not, what improvements are needed? **Yes, they seem well thought through.**
4. Are the TEKS vertically aligned so that concepts are introduced, elaborated on, and refined across multiple grade levels and students will possess the necessary knowledge and skills to be successful in later grades? If not, what improvements are needed? **The alignment is successful.**
5. A. Do the high school courses sufficiently prepare students for postsecondary success? If not, what recommendations do you have for revising? **Specific recommendations excepted, yes.**

B. Do the elementary and middle school TEKS adequately prepare students for social studies content at the high school level? If not, what recommendations do you have for revising? **Specific recommendations excepted, yes.**
6. Are there topics that should be eliminated or revised because they are not essential or no longer reflect current research or practices within the field? If so, please identify by grade level or course and student expectation number. **I'd question the need for the psychology and sociology courses (113.45 and 113.46), not because they aren't worthwhile, but because they are less important than something which I believe should be there. See answer to question 9.**

7. Are the student expectations clear and specific? If not, please give examples of how the language might be improved.

K-12

Kindergarten: 113.11 (a) (8) It seems premature to me to raise doubts about the fulfillment of American ideals at the kindergarten level. Students at this level aren't yet equipped to engage in such critical analysis. The goal should be the inculcation of the basic ideals, with concern for their realization reserved for later.

Grade One: 113.12 (b) (12) (A) I'd add "courage" to the characteristics of good citizenship listed. Making one's voice heard, particularly from a minority perspective often requires courage.

Grade Two: 113.13 (b) (13) Students should somewhere be asked to *define* science as well. Though the second grade is probably too early given the conceptual sophistication required for this task.

Grade Three: 113.14 (b) (2) (A) There is an assumption here that all communities are formed from the bottom up by people seeking to solve the problems of collective living. That's only a partial truth. Sometimes communities (many governments for instance) have been imposed on people for exploitive purposes. Perhaps a better wording would be "Identify reasons people have *voluntarily* formed communities, including a need for security and laws, religious freedom, and material well-being."

113.14 (b) (11) (B) Excise word "contemporary" since Harriet Tubman isn't "contemporary".

Grade Four: 113.15 (a) (7) (A) In second sentence I'd add after "expressed in that document to" the words "the historical tradition from which it emerged". It's vital that students appreciate that there is a deeper tradition of liberty that extends back through English and Western history.

(8). I'd add "Students are asked to keep in mind the difficulties of fully attaining ideals in real life." And I repeat the injunction in subsequent reiterations of this statement.

Grade Five: 113.16 (b) (3): Add Alexander Hamilton,

(5) (C): Add Theodore Roosevelt, Dwight Eisenhower, and U.S. Marines.

(17) (A): Question: Should we assume that citizens have a "duty" to participate in politics?

Middle School

Grade Six: 113.18 (a) (1) Add “Siberia” to list of regions, since all other populated regions are included.

(b) (5) (A) I’d add “the incidence of disease”.

(10) (C) I’d add “and England”

(13) I’d add as (E) “Discuss the United States’ character as a ‘melting pot’ society.”

(15) I’d add as (E) “How has the diffusion of society from one culture to another contributed to human progress.”

(18) I’d add as (A) “Understand the nature and worldwide significance of the 17th century scientific revolution in Europe”. The other entries should be re-lettered accordingly.

Grade Seven: 113.19

(b.) (17) (B) I’d add “LBJ” to the list.

Grade Eight: 113.20

(b) (4) (B) I’d substitute “Titus Cornelius” (aka “Colonel Tye”) for the obscure “Wentworth Cheswell”. There were many things interesting about Tye. Like many escaped slaves he fought for the British, and, exceptionally, ended up in command of a force of light calvary that consisted of both blacks and whites. He operated in New Jersey as a feared and brilliant tactician ultimately dying of wounds received in combat. Using him as an exemplary figure would raise many interesting questions about how issues like freedom can sometimes cut in unexpected ways.

(6) (A) I’d add “and forbid slavery in the Northwest Territories.”

(8) (A) I’d substitute “Robert Smalls” for “William Carney” (Smalls civil war exploits and post-civil war career was much more consequential than Carney’s. And also “James Farragut” for “Philip Bazaar”. Admiral Farragut, a major Civil War commander, was of Spanish descent.

(22) (B) I’d add “Henry Clay”, “John C. Calhoun”, “Daniel Webster”, the great pre-war Senate triumvirate, and “William Lloyd Garrison”, the most important of all the abolitionists.

(27) I’d add as (D) “Analyze how advances in medicine and public health reduced maternal mortality and childhood deaths, lengthened lifespans, and controlled epidemics.

(27) I'd also add as (E) "Explain how increased agricultural productivity and improved transport improved diets and expand populations."

High School

113.41 (c) (2) (B) Add "The 1960's counterculture, the civil rights movement and Vietnam protests." And after 2008 add "polarization of American Politics".

(5) (B) Add "Carrie Nation" the temperance crusader. It's important to remember the importance of prohibition in the progressive movement.

(7) (B) Add Examine opposition to U.S. entry into World War II, including "The America First Committee".

(7) (D) Add after word "fronts" the following "including the Western European, the Atlantic, the Russian, the Mediterranean, and the Pacific fronts".

(7) (G) Add "WACS" and "WAVES".

(8) (B) Add "Soviet Espionage and internal Communist activity".

(9) (I) Add "and Affirmative action policies".

(10) (D) Add "Talk Radio".

(E) Add "COVID 19"

(13) (C) Add "Argue for and against open border and immigration restriction policies".

(16) (C) Remove "people of Mexican heritage" and replace with "undocumented Mexican nationals in the United States".

(20) (A) Add "Roe v Wade".

(21) (A) Add "patriotism".

113.42 (c) (2) I think the period from 600 – 1450 should be returned to its more traditional name "The Middle Ages" (which is used elsewhere in the standards), and I think 1750-1914 would be better called "The Rise of the West" and 1914 to present "The Age of Global Revolution".

(1) (E) Switch reference to "scientific revolution" to (D) where it more properly belongs. It was mainly a seventeenth century phenomenon that was completed by 1750.

(2) (B) Add "including the creation of states".

(3) (A) Add "with particular emphasis on Israel and Greece".

(4) (F) Change “the Crusades” to “the course of the Crusades” replace “the Hundred Years War” with “economic development and the Great Schism” both of which had more to do with the end of the Middle Ages than “The Hundred years War”.

(H) add “in the Atlantic, the Mediterranean, Africa and the Middle East.”

(8) Add (as A) “Explain how the Scientific Revolution made the Industrial Revolution possible” and re-letter the other items accordingly.

(12) (B) Add “Lenin”, the most consequential revolutionary leader of modern times. (16) Insert as new (C) “How has industrialization and technological progress changed the quality of human life”.

(18) (B) insert “dictatorship” between the words “oligarchy and “limited monarchy”.

(23) (B) Add “Cleopatra”, “The Empress Wu”, “Joan of Arc” and “Catherine the Great” to list.

(26) (E) Add “Ptolemy” and “Al Haytham” two of the very greatest early scientists.

113.44 (c) (1) (B) “Add after Judeo-Christian (especially biblical law)”, “Belief in God-Given Natural Rights”.

(14) Add as (D) “Discuss the arguments for and against non-violent civil disobedience as a means of protest”.

113.50 (c) (3) (B) Add “Emperor Maximillian” and “Benito Juarez”.

Add a new point “C” “Compare the origin and course of the Mexican and the United States independence movements.”

113.51 (c) (1) (C) Add after “Atlantic” the words “and East African”.

(3) (E) Add “William Lloyd Garrison”, who was the most important abolitionist leader.

(F) Add After “the U.S.” the words “and Britain’s”. Britain did more to close down the Atlantic slave trade than any other nation and its policy also took effect in 1808.

(9) (E) I’d replace “mass incarceration”, a term that supposes the American legal system to be aimed at minority imprisonment with “high incarceration rates”, which is more judgmentally neutral. Let the issue be discussed rather than prejudged.

(11) (F) Add at end “such as Clarence Thomas, Thomas Sowell, and Ward Connerly”. Since this is about diverse points of view among African Americans it would be appropriate to identify some of today’s leading African American conservatives.

8. Do you have any recommendations or feedback based on the Fordham report? If so, please explain. **I think some of its criticisms are misplaced. The strands are fine, and I don't think the TEKS overstates the importance of "states' rights" in analyzing the origins of the Civil War.**
9. What other suggestions do you have for ways in which the social studies TEKS can be improved?

To understand the "American achievement" one needs more comparative perspective than TEKS presently provides. One especially needs a sense of what the human condition has been like in most other times and places and the atrocities that have been routinely inflicted on ordinary people. To provide this I'd eliminate the courses on sociology and psychology which can be left to the university level and replace them with a course on "Genocide and Mass Murder" which would review the twentieth century occurrence of these all-too-common crimes, particularly examining their ideological and political causes. Instances would include the Holocaust, the Holodomor, the Great Leap Forward and Chinese Cultural Revolution, "the Rape of Nanking", the Cambodian mass murders, and the Armenian Genocide.