

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

GUIDING QUESTIONS

1. The current TEKS are organized in eight strands: geography; economics; citizenship; government; culture; history; science, technology, and society; and social studies skills. Is the current strand framework for the kindergarten – grade 12 social studies TEKS appropriate? If not, what recommendations do you have for organizing or structuring the TEKS? **Even though I believe that the 8 strands can work effectively with adequate training, I feel that having as many as 8 complicates the message to what should be taught rather than clarifying it. It would be advantageous if we could take this opportunity to narrow the number of strands to history, geography, government, and economics, perhaps with an appendix for the skills section. If we desire to keep the skills strand within the strand package, that will certainly work. I think we will be able to better see our conceptual weaknesses in logical development and chronological development, especially in Texas history and U.S. history.**
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? I certainly think that the history, government, economics, and geography strands as well as the culture, citizenship and science, technology, and society strands are covered quite well in the secondary courses (6 -12). I think the skills strand should be gradually increased in difficulty from K to 12 with more emphasis on discerning quality of sources, bias in sources, and writing. With the amount of fake news in their world today, the students need help in telling truth from fiction. Elementary needs to be beefed up. More Culture and Geography could be added in the earlier grades.**
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? **The courses are well designed as they stand. I do think 6th grade should be modified and not take on the entire world when the students have not been introduced to anything outside of North America yet. I have made many changes to individual TEKS which follow this document. See attachment.**
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?

One of the weaknesses in our TEKS compared to some of the states who scored higher with the Fordham report was the alignment of the skills strand from grade 3 through high school. The skills should progress from cause and effect by 3rd grade to compare and contrast to understanding point of view and bias by 8th grade to evaluate by high school. Writing levels should also progress in sophistication. I think the skills strand should be gradually increased in difficulty from K to 12 with more emphasis on discerning quality of sources, bias in sources, and writing. With the amount of fake news in their world today, the students need help in telling truth from fiction. Please see other recommendations in #7, the Fordham report.

5. Do the high school courses sufficiently prepare students for postsecondary success? If not, what recommendations do you have for revising?
 - A. The five standard courses, geography, world history, U.S. history, government, and economics each sufficiently prepare students for postsecondary success. The electives, Sociology, and Psychology also prepare students quite well for postsecondary students. The TEKS on the rest of the electives look demanding and upper level and should prepare students for postsecondary level.
 - B. The biggest problem, and it is huge, is that social studies is not being taught as often and as thoroughly as it should be in elementary school. Once the Science STAAR test began being administered in the 5th grade, district administrators and principals urged their teachers to spend more time teaching and reviewing the science TEKS which meant less time, much less time would be spent teaching the social studies TEKS. My recommendation is to add a 5th grade STAAR Social Studies test. Then the social studies TEKS will be taught in elementary school.
 - C. The elementary TEKS prepare the students for middle school courses except for the 6th grade world cultures course which is unfortunately the students' first social studies course in middle school. The 6th grade teachers feel as though they are starting at the beginning of social studies knowledge and skills with the students when they enter class in the fall. Their geography skills are lacking and their understanding of anything outside of the United States is zero.

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 and student expectation. **The streamlining process completed in 2018 did an excellent job of making everything in the TEKS worded more clearly. The social studies skills is more relevant today than ever before. Students must be able to apply critical thinking skills to organize and use information acquired from a variety of sources including technology, to analyze information in a variety of ways, to identify bias, and evaluate the validity of a source.**

7. Are the student expectations clear and specific? If not, please give examples of how the language might be improved. **I am happy with the language of the TEKS.**
8. Do you have any recommendations or feedback based of the Fordham report? If so, please explain. **The experts completing the Fordham report complained several times about the strands in the Texas Social Studies Essential Knowledge and Skills not being chronological and therefore, difficult to use. They took points off the score for clarity and organization due to the use of 8 stands. As a coordinator of social studies in a large district, I always set up extra sessions to help the new teachers learn how to use the strands successfully within a unit of study. So, while it irritated me that these experts at Fordham could not see the beauty of how geography TEKS, government TEKS, economics TEKS and history TEKS could all blend quite well together in a unit, I also understand that it can be confusing to a brand new “baby” teacher. Perhaps, we should add an explanatory section at the beginning of the TEKS about how to use the strands. It would definitely help new teachers who go to work in smaller districts where there is no director or coordinator of social studies. Also, the budgets in most districts have been cut; therefore, principals are not sending as many teachers to the state social studies convention where they could pick up these skills of how to use the strands successfully. Please see the attachment for specific recommendations.**
9. What other suggestions do you have for ways in which the social studies TEKS can be improved? **Please see the attachment for specific recommendations.**

	Draft Language	Recommendation	Justification
<p>SE 3.3 Pg. 11</p>	<p>Geography. The student understands places and regions in the United States. The student is expected to:</p>	<p>(A) describe political and economic regions in the United States that result from patterns of human activity; (B) describe regions in the United States based on physical characteristics such as landform, climate, and vegetation; (C) locate on a map important political features such as the five largest cities by population in the United States and the 50 states; and (D) create a map of important physical features such as the Appalachian Mountains, Great Lakes, Mississippi River, Great Plains, and Rocky Mountains.</p>	<p>These student expectations are certainly ones that a third grader can handle and would better prepare them for 4th and 5th grade.</p> <p>Delete existing SEs on pg.11 A, B, C</p>

	Draft Language	Recommendation	Justification
<p>SE 5.13.B pg. 23</p>	<p>Identify examples of representative government in the American colonies, including the Mayflower Compact and the Virginia House of Burgesses.</p>	<p>Identify examples of early governments in the American colonies, including the Mayflower Compact and the Virginia House of Burgesses.</p>	<p>The Mayflower Compact is not an example of representative government. It was an agreement for self-government.</p>

	Draft Language	Recommendation	Justification
SE 5.19 pg. 23	Citizenship. The student understands the fundamental rights of American citizens people guaranteed in the Bill of Rights....	Change the word “citizens” to “people”	The Bill of Rights are guaranteed to all people not just to citizens.

	Draft Language	Recommendation	Justification
SE 5.6 Pg.21	Geography. The student understands the location and characteristics of places and regions of the United States past and present . The student is expected to:	(A) locate places and regions directly related to major eras and turning points in the United States during the 17th, 18th, and 19th centuries; and (B) analyze the effects of physical and human geographic factors such as weather, landforms, waterways, transportation, and communication on major historical events in the United States.	Delete current 5.6. A, B, C, D and add them to 3 rd grade TEKS to beef them up.

	Draft Language	Recommendation	Justification
SE 5. 5. pg. 21	Add	(E) trace various means black voting rights were oppressed from the Civil War to the Voting Rights Act of 1965 (F) describe the rise of Reagan and the New Right, the effects of globalization and the internet, and conflicts over immigration and healthcare in the early 21st century.	There is little mention of civil rights and nothing about the 21 st century.

	Draft Language	Recommendation	Justification
SE 5.14 pg. 23	Government. The student understands important ideas in the Declaration of Independence, the U.S. Constitution, the Bill of Rights, and other important historical documents.	(A) explain the strengths and weaknesses of the Articles of Confederation. (B) explain the purpose, key elements, and the importance of the Declaration of Independence....	Need to add another Student expectation. The Articles of Confederation are not present in the 5 th grade TEKS.

	Draft Language	Recommendation	Justification
SE 4. 7C pg. 16	Add	(C) identify why German immigrant groups came to Texas and where they settled.	There is no mention of the immigration through Indianola at all and none of the Germans, one of Texas’ largest immigration groups.

	Draft Language	Recommendation	Justification
SE 7.9.B pg. 9		(B) explain ways in which geographical factors such as the Galveston Hurricane of 1900, the Dust Bowl, limited water resources, Hurricane Harvey in 2017, the power grid failure in 2020 , and alternative energy sources have affected the political, economic, and social development of Texas.	We should add the two major events which just occurred in Texas to this list.

	Draft Language	Recommendation	Justification
SE 8.19 B pg. 17	Citizenship. The student understands the rights and responsibilities of the citizens of the United States. The student is expected to:	(B) summarize rights guaranteed in the Bill of Rights including the Equal Protection Clause of the Fourteenth Amendment ; and	Add the Equal Protection Clause of the Fourteenth Amendment. It is often not taught and is extremely important. For example, if a Mexican American is found guilty by an Anglo jury, that is illegal and can be overthrown.

	Draft Language	Recommendation	Justification
USH SE 7.F pg. 9	7 (F)	7(F) explain issues affecting the home front, including volunteerism, the purchase of war bonds, Victory Gardens, and opportunities and obstacles for women and ethnic minorities, such as bracero workers ; and	Bracero workers are not addressed anywhere in the TEKS.

	Draft Language	Recommendation	Justification
USH SE 9.B pg. 9	Add	9(B) explain how the Equal Protection Clause of the Fourteenth Amendment protects equality and give one example of how it is often abused by governments.	This is an important part of the 14 th Amendment which is often not taught and is often not followed by local and state governments. Students should know about it.

	Draft Language	Recommendation	Justification
USH SE 9.K pg. 10	Add	9(K) explain why the death of George Floyd in May 2020 brought reform for the police forces across the U.S and how it changed the attitudes of many about the treatment of minorities by the police.	

	Draft Language	Recommendation	Justification
USH SE 12. A pg. 10	12. The student understands the impact of geographic factors on major events. The student is expected to analyze the impact of physical and human geographic factors on the Klondike Gold Rush, the building of the Panama Canal, the Dust Bowl, and the levee failure in New Orleans after Hurricane Katrina.	(A) Explain the difficulty in building the Panama Canal due to its geographic factors and analyze its political impact on the world.	The Panama Canal is critically important to world events in the 20 th century.

	Draft Language	Recommendation	Justification
USH SE 11.D pg. 10	History. The student understands the emerging political, economic, and social issues of the United States from the 1990s into the 21 st century. The student is expected to:	11(D) identify the impact of international events, multinational corporations, government policies, and individuals on the 21 st economy including COVID-19 .	COVID-19 had a great impact on the economy and on government policies.

	Draft Language	Recommendation	Justification
USH SE 18.C pg. 12		18(C) describe the effects of political scandals, including Teapot Dome, the Vietnam War , Watergate, and Bill Clinton’s impeachment, on the views of U.S. citizens concerning trust in the federal government and its leaders; and	The Vietnam War also had a great impact on the trust citizens had the federal government.

	Draft Language	Recommendation	Justification
GOV SE 1. pg. 29	(1) History. The student understands how constitutional government, as developed in America the United States , and expressed in the Declaration of Independence, the Articles of Confederation, and the U.S. Constitution, has been influenced by ideas, people, and historical documents. The student is expected to:	1 (B) identify major intellectual, philosophical, political, and religious traditions that informed the American United States founding, including Judeo-Christian (especially biblical law), English common law and constitutionalism, Enlightenment, and republicanism, as they address issues of liberty, rights, and responsibilities of individuals;	America refers to the entire Western hemisphere. Let's use the more precise term. Could we please find another word other than "informed"? I have looked at that word for over 20 years and wondered why there wasn't a better word for that sentence - perhaps "inspired" or "characterized" or "shaped."

	Draft Language	Recommendation	Justification
GOV SE 1. pg. 29	(1) History. The student understands how constitutional government, as developed in America the United States , and expressed in the Declaration of Independence, the Articles of Confederation, and the U.S. Constitution, has been influenced by ideas, people, and historical documents. The student is expected to:	1 (C) identify the individuals whose principles of laws and government institutions informed the American United States , including those of Moses, William Blackstone, John Locke, and Charles de Montesquieu;	America refers to the entire Western hemisphere. Let's use the more precise term. Could we please find another word other than "informed"? I have looked at that word for over 20 years and wondered why there wasn't a better word for that sentence - perhaps "inspired" or "characterized" or "shaped" or "developed."

	Draft Language	Recommendation	Justification
GOV SE 9 pg. 31	(9) Government. The student understands the processes for filling public offices in the U.S system of government. The student is expected to:	9 (B) debate various ways access to the ballot box can be expanded or be limited legally.	Responses should include gerrymandering, control of hours, fewer places to vote, less accommodations for disabled, fewer days for early voting, etc. The old B and C become C and D.

	Draft Language	Recommendation	Justification
GOV SE 12.H pg. 32	Add	12 (H) explain how the Equal Protection Clause of the Fourteenth Amendment protects equality and give two examples of how it is often abused by governments.	This is an important part of the 14 th Amendment which is often not taught and is often not followed by local and state governments. Students should know about it.