



# 7–12 SOCIAL STUDIES



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UTAH CORE STATE STANDARDS  
*for*  
**SOCIAL STUDIES**

Adopted December 2016  
by the  
Utah State Board of Education

Revised September 2016



The Utah State Board of Education, in January of 1984, established policy requiring the identification of specific core standards to be met by all K–12 students in order to graduate from Utah’s secondary schools. The Utah State Board of Education regularly updates the Utah Core Standards, while parents, teachers, and local school boards continue to control the curriculum choices that reflect local values.

The Utah Core Standards are aligned to scientifically based content standards. They drive high quality instruction through statewide comprehensive expectations for all students. The standards outline essential knowledge, concepts, and skills to be mastered at each grade level or within a critical content area. The standards provide a foundation for ensuring learning within the classroom.

# UNITED STATES HISTORY I

**United States History I** includes events and issues in United States history from the Age of Exploration through Reconstruction, emphasizing the 18th and 19th centuries. Topics include, but are not limited to, American Indian life, European exploration and colonization, the Revolutionary War, constitutional issues, nation building, expansion, the Civil War, and Reconstruction.

The standards can be taught either chronologically or thematically, but are organized into chronological periods. Periodization is an organizational tool historians use to make connections and draw distinctions. Periods are flexible ways of making meaning, and may overlap chronologically.

Students will be expected to demonstrate their understanding of each period’s key historic, geographic, economic, and civic concepts by applying those concepts to complete cognitively rigorous tasks. Whenever possible, students will be expected to make connections between historically significant events and current issues, helping to deepen their understanding of the context and complexity of civic life and preparing them for civic engagement.

## Civic Preparation

Civic engagement is one of the fundamental purposes of education. It is vital that public schools fulfill their civic mission, the preparation of young people for participation in America’s democratic republic. The progress of our communities, state, nation, and world rests upon the preparation of young people to collaboratively and deliberately address problems, to defend their own rights and the rights of others, and to balance personal interests with the common good. Social studies classrooms are the ideal locations to foster civic virtue, consider current issues, learn how to act civilly toward others, build a civic identity, and promote an awareness of global issues. These skills, habits, and qualities of character will prepare students to accept responsibility for preserving and defending their liberties.

To reach these ends, student should have ample opportunities to:

- ] Engage in deliberative, collaborative, and civil dialogue regarding historical and current issues.
- ] Identify local, state, national, or international problems; engage with solutions to these problems; and share their ideas with appropriate public and/or private stakeholders.
- ] Apply knowledge of governmental structure, historical concepts, geographic interrelationships, and economic principles to analyze and explain current events.

- ] Develop and demonstrate values that sustain America’s democratic republic, such as open-mindedness, engagement, honesty, problem-solving, responsibility, diligence, resilience, empathy, self-control, and cooperation.
- ] Engage in dialogue regarding American exceptionalism, in the sense of the special character of the United States as a uniquely free nation based on democratic ideals and personal liberty.

## Foundational Skills of the Social Studies Disciplines

Students should develop skills associated with the disciplines of history, geography, political science, and economics, most notably the ability to construct arguments using the evidence, texts, and tools valued within each discipline. Of particular importance in a United States history course is developing the reading, thinking, and writing skills of historians. These skills include the ability to think critically about evidence, use diverse forms of evidence to construct interpretations, and defend these interpretations through argumentative historical writing. Students will corroborate their sources of evidence and place their interpretations within historical contexts.

Among other elements of historical thinking, students should have opportunities to consider the concept of historical significance. Out of all the events that have happened in the past, historians must determine those that are significant enough for study. Led by their teachers, students should have opportunities to consider and discuss the relative significance of diverse events.

These skills are embedded within the standards in places that seem particularly appropriate. However, local educational agencies and/or teachers may use their discretion to integrate skill instruction in a manner that meets local needs.

## A Note on the Organization of the Utah Standards in All Core Areas

Utah standards are organized into **strands**, which represent significant areas of learning within content areas. Depending on the core area, these strands may be designated by time periods, thematic principles, modes of practice, or other organizing principles.

Within each strand are **standards**. A standard is an articulation of the demonstrated proficiency to be obtained. A standard represents an essential element of the learning that is expected. While some standards within a strand may be more comprehensive than others, all standards are essential for mastery.

### U.S. I Strand 1: THREE WORLDS MEET

#### (Prehistory–Ca. 1650)

Europe’s exploration of America had a profound impact on the world. For thousands of years, complex and sophisticated American Indian civilizations had flourished in the Americas, separated from other parts of the world by vast bodies of water. After Columbus’ arrival, the lands of the Western Hemisphere were forever connected to the rest of the world. The international slave trade forced millions of Africans to the Americas, bringing these “three worlds” together

in unprecedented ways. Patterns of trade, exploration, conquest, and settlement have ramifications that continue to the present day.

***Possible Guiding Questions to Consider:***

- ] How do historians and archeologists construct interpretations from artifacts, oral histories, legends, primary sources, and other evidence?
- ] What were the motives that led to European exploration?
- ] What were the effects of European exploration, especially on the indigenous populations encountered?
- ] How has physical geography affected cultures historically? How does it affect cultures today?
- ] How is your own cultural history woven into the history of America?

- **U.S. I Standard 1.1:** Students will analyze evidence, including artifacts and other primary sources to make evidence-based inferences about life among several American Indian nations prior to European exploration of the Americas.
- **U.S. I Standard 1.2:** Students will compare and evaluate historians' interpretations of the motivations and conditions that led to European exploration.
- **U.S. I Standard 1.3:** Students will draw from multiple perspectives and cite evidence to explain the effects of European exploration, specifically on Africa, the Caribbean, and North and South America.
- **U.S. I Standard 1.4:** Students will identify how the period of exploration has affected the current human geography of the Americas, and in particular the role their own cultural background has played.

## U.S. I Strand 2: COLONIZATION

### (Ca. 1565–1776)

Driven by economic, religious, and political opportunities, colonial powers from Europe established footholds, then empires in North America. Many colonists fled poverty or persecution to start new lives in an unfamiliar land. Africans were enslaved and brought to the Americas against their will. Interactions between colonists and the indigenous peoples living in North America added complexity to the colonies. Geographic and cultural factors influenced where colonists settled and how they lived. Sectional and regional differences emerged that would affect American history. Patterns established within the English colonies on the Eastern seaboard would shape many of the dominant political, economic, linguistic, and religious traditions of the United States.

***Possible Guiding Questions to Consider:***

- ] What is a colony?
- ] What role did the concepts of self-government and religious freedom play in the colonial era?

- ] How did economic philosophies such as mercantilism promote colonization?
- ] How were English colonization patterns on the Atlantic coast different from those of the French colonies in the interior and Spanish colonization in what is now the southwestern United States?
- ] How are colonization patterns of the French, Spanish, and English colonies evident in human geography patterns today?

- **U.S. I Standard 2.1:** Students will identify the economic, social, and geographic factors that influenced the colonization efforts of the Dutch, English, French, and Spanish.
- **U.S. I Standard 2.2:** Students will compare and contrast the economic, political, and social patterns evident in the development of the 13 English colonies.
- **U.S. I Standard 2.3:** Students will use primary sources as evidence to contrast the daily life and contexts of individuals of various classes and conditions in and near the English colonies, such as gentry, planters, women, indentured servants, African slaves, landowners, and American Indians.
- **U.S. I Standard 2.4:** Students will explain historic and modern regional differences that had their origins in the colonial period, such as the institution of slavery; patterns of life in urban and rural areas; differences between the French continental interior, Spanish southwest, and English northeast; and the location of manufacturing centers.

### U.S. I Strand 3: THE AMERICAN REVOLUTION

#### (Ca. 1754–1787)

Enlightened ideas from both sides of the Atlantic, coupled with world events and British policies, led many to question the common sense of the relationship between the American colonies and Britain. Over time, many colonists who had viewed themselves as loyal subjects of the king began to support an independence movement that would result in war, the formation of the United States of America, and the ratification of a unique Constitution. The contributions of Adams, Jefferson, Washington, Hamilton, Madison, and other Founding Fathers, as well as those of men and women of all social classes and conditions, were vital in achieving independence and creating a new nation.

#### ***Possible Guiding Questions to Consider:***

- ] What defines a political movement as a revolution?
- ] Are there specific conditions that are necessary in order for political revolutions to occur?
- ] What were the important political philosophies used to justify the American Revolution and advance the cause of liberty?
- ] How does the Declaration of Independence make a case for a new nation?

- ] What role did propaganda play in promoting the patriot cause?
- ] How do some events, like the winter at Valley Forge and Washington crossing the Delaware, become major parts of the narrative of history when other events, like Morristown and Washington crossing the East River, do not?
- ] What led some colonists to become patriots, others to become loyalists, and some to remain neutral?
- ] What is American exceptionalism, and in what ways has it shaped how Americans see themselves?

- **U.S. I Standard 3.1:** Students will use primary sources to identify the significant events, ideas, people, and methods used to justify or resist the Revolutionary movement.
- **U.S. I Standard 3.2:** Students will compare and evaluate historians' interpretations of the significant historical events and factors affecting the course of the war and contributing to American victory.
- **U.S. I Standard 3.3:** Students will use primary sources to compare the contributions of key people and groups to the Revolution, such as Paul Revere, Thomas Paine, Abigail Adams, the Sons and Daughters of Liberty, and Thomas Jefferson.
- **U.S. I Standard 3.4:** Students will explain how the ideas and events of the American Revolution continue to shape American identity.

#### U.S. I Strand 4: THE U. S. CONSTITUTION

##### (Ca. 1781–1789)

American independence brought with it the need for self-government. Dissatisfaction with inadequate early political structures led to the creation of the Constitution. The Constitutional Convention brought together the greatest political minds of the fledgling nation. Through debate and compromise, the Founding Fathers brought together in a unique way the principles and philosophies that had been theorized and tested for centuries. The Bill of Rights was then added, enumerating the rights of American citizens. In the end, the Constitution and Bill of Rights created the structure of a government that has functioned, survived crises, and evolved for over two centuries, affecting the life of every citizen today.

##### ***Possible Guiding Questions to Consider:***

- ] What were the problems that led to the calling of a Constitutional Convention?
- ] What is the evidence that Enlightenment philosophies, the Articles of Confederation, Shays' rebellion, the Constitutional Convention, the Great Compromise, and the ratification debate all influenced the creation of the Constitution?
- ] What vision of civic virtue is evident in the Constitution?
- ] How does a compound constitutional republic balance state and federal powers?



- ] Why is James Madison sometimes referred to as “the Father of the Constitution”?
- ] What is the role of compromise in political processes?
- ] How has the U.S. Constitution influenced political structures around the world?
- ] In what ways can the U.S. Constitution be considered an exceptional document?

- **U.S. I Standard 4.1:** Students will explain how the ideas, events, and compromises which led to the development and ratification of the Constitution are reflected in the document itself.
- **U.S. I Standard 4.2:** Students will describe the structure and function of the government that the Constitution creates.
- **U.S. I Standard 4.3:** Students will use historic case studies and current events to trace how and explain why the rights, liberties, and responsibilities of citizens have changed over time.
- **U.S. I Standard 4.4:** Students will use evidence to explain how the Constitution is a transformative document that contributed to American exceptionalism.

## U.S. I Strand 5: THE DEVELOPMENT OF POLITICAL INSTITUTIONS AND PROCESSES

### (Ca. 1783–1861)

The United States’ constitutional republic and the political systems that Americans are familiar with took shape as the Constitution was interpreted and applied. Reformers have worked to ensure that increasing numbers and classes of people enjoy the rights guaranteed by the Bill of Rights. Opposing political parties have worked to mold the leadership, laws, and policies of the new nation in order to fit their vision of America. The first half of the nineteenth century was rich with examples of these organizing efforts that have set precedents still followed in the 21st century.

#### *Possible Guiding Questions to Consider:*

- ] What are the primary functions of political parties?
  - ] Why are there only two dominant political parties at the national level?
  - ] Is the two-party political system good for American democracy?
  - ] Are there conditions that are necessary in order for a reform movement to gain momentum or critical mass?
  - ] What are the most effective ways to promote reform?
  - ] How have Supreme Court decisions shaped the government?
- **U.S. I Standard 5.1:** Students will use evidence to document the development and evolution of the American political party system and explain the historic and current roles of political parties.

- **U.S. I Standard 5.2:** Students will identify the conditions that gave rise to, and evaluate the impact of, social and political reform movements such as Jacksonian Democracy, the women’s rights movement, the Abolitionist movement, and anti-immigration reform.
- **U.S. I Standard 5.3:** Students will use case studies to document the expansion of democratic principles and rights over time.

## U.S. I Strand 6: EXPANSION

### (Ca. 1783–1890)

The territorial expansion of the United States created challenges and opportunities for the young nation. Significant advances in industrial technology, discoveries of vast natural resources, a series of gold rushes, visions of the destiny of the nation, continuing conflicts between American Indians and settlers, disagreements between slave states and free states, and a number of push and pull factors influenced territorial expansion. The physical, political, and human geography of the United States today reflects, in part, the 19th century expansion of the nation.

#### *Possible Guiding Questions to Consider:*

- ] What motivated settlers to move west?
  - ] How do 19th century events such as the Louisiana Purchase and the Mexican-American War continue to affect the United States today?
  - ] What is the relationship between land and power?
  - ] How did the continent’s physical geography affect the expansion of the United States?
  - ] What were the costs and benefits of the Industrial Revolution?
  - ] How did industrial leaders use markets and capital to grow their businesses?
- **U.S. I Standard 6.1:** Students will compare and contrast historians’ interpretations of the ideas, resources, and events that motivated the territorial expansion of the United States.
  - **U.S. I Standard 6.2:** Students will use primary sources representing multiple perspectives to interpret conflicts that arose during American expansion, especially as American Indians were forced from their traditional lands and as tensions grew over free and slave holding territory.
  - **U.S. I Standard 6.3:** Students will identify the economic and geographic impact of the early Industrial Revolution’s new inventions and transportation methods, such as the Erie Canal, the transcontinental railroad, steam engines, the telegraph, the cotton gin, and interchangeable parts.
  - **U.S. I Standard 6.4:** Students will make a case for the most significant cultural, political, and economic impacts of territorial and/or industrial expansion.

**U.S. I Strand 7: THE CIVIL WAR AND RECONSTRUCTION****(Ca. 1820–1877)**

Trends that started with the earliest colonization of America grew into sectional conflicts, and by the election of Lincoln in 1860 the nation was on the brink of civil war. The war had a profound impact on American society and American identity. Events leading to the war and the heavy toll of the war created a severely fractured America. The period of Reconstruction started the process of mending, but created new controversies as concepts of equality, democracy, and citizenship were redefined. The Civil War era and Reconstruction are important aspects of U.S. history, essential to understanding modern America, including race relations and inequality.

***Possible Guiding Questions to Consider:***

- ] Why were efforts at compromise unsuccessful immediately prior to the Civil War?
- ] What caused a growing number of people in the North to be opposed to slavery?
- ] Was it necessary and worthwhile to wage a war to preserve the Union?
- ] What does it take for a brother to take up arms against a brother?
- ] What forces made Reconstruction so difficult?
- ] Why does the Civil War remain such a defining event for American identity?
- ] Why does Lincoln reference ideas in the Declaration of Independence when referring to the Civil War?
- ] What is the proper way to memorialize controversial events and people?

- **U.S. I Standard 7.1:** Students will explain how slavery and other geographic, social, economic, and political differences between the North, South, and West led to the Civil War.
- **U.S. I Standard 7.2:** Students will use evidence to interpret the factors that were most significant in shaping the course of the war and the Union victory, such as the leadership of Lincoln, Grant, and Lee; the role of industry; demographics; and military strategies.
- **U.S. I Standard 7.3:** Students will compare historians' interpretations of the competing goals of Reconstruction and why many of those goals were left unrealized.
- **U.S. I Standard 7.4:** Students will use current events to evaluate the implications of the Civil War and Reconstruction for contemporary American life.