

New Jersey Department of Education
2006 Social Studies Standards Implementation Guide (SIG)

6.2. CIVICS: ALL STUDENTS WILL KNOW, UNDERSTAND AND APPRECIATE THE VALUES AND PRINCIPLES OF AMERICAN DEMOCRACY AND THE RIGHTS, RESPONSIBILITIES, AND ROLES OF A CITIZEN IN THE NATION AND THE WORLD.

Grade 8

6.2.8.A. Civic Life, Politics and Government

3. Discuss the major characteristics of democratic governments.
4. Describe the processes of local government.

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Framework97 References

Apply Knowledge of Governmental Structure and Process, p. 58 and 59

National History Standard

- I. What Are Civic Life, Politics, and Government?
- II. What Are the Foundations of the American Political System?
- III. How Does the Government Embody the Principles of American Democracy?
- V. What Are the Roles of the Citizen in American Democracy?

Content Overview

This section examines how law protects individual rights and also considers the major features of democracy in comparison to other types of political systems that exist in the world (e.g. parliamentary, oligarchy, dictatorship). Students learn the underlying principles of the American civic core and are introduced to some of the historic origins (Athens, Rome, British Common Law Tradition, Medieval and Renaissance thought, the Scientific Revolution, the Enlightenment, Montesquieu, Locke, Mill et al.) Important topics also addressed are domestic agencies and how they make governmental policy and processes, characteristics of local government, and how citizens can get involved.

Essential Questions

What are the principle differences between democratic and authoritarian governments?
What is the American “civic core”? What are its origins and roots?
How does law protect individual rights in a democratic society as opposed to a nondemocratic society? What is the meaning of “rule of law” as opposed to “rule of men?”

How are laws made to protect all members of a society?
What are some examples of domestic government agencies?
What are some policies that have been created by domestic government agencies for good of the people?
What are the most important features of our American democracy?
How does local government function similarly and differently from the state and federal government?

Teaching Resources

<http://press-pubs.uchicago.edu/founders/> Fully annotated U.S. Constitution with references to various sources for every phrase in the document. Also available in libraries in book form. Website may change. If necessary, Google “Founders Constitution.”

See Chapter 8, “Paths to Power: The Legal Rights of Citizens to Participate in Local Government and Politics” of Empowerment Civics by Harry S. Pozzycki of the Center for Civic Responsibility, 450 Main Street, Metuchen, NJ. info@civicresponsibility.org This is a very specific listing of ways that citizens can directly contact their government.

[Http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Citizenship](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Citizenship) is the free online encyclopedia entry which contains six pages on the meaning of citizenship.

Assessment

Students do a matching test with sections and subsections of the seven articles in the U.S. Constitution. “A” column would consist of Article 1-7. Specific content would be listed in the “B” column.

Column A .

a. Article 1, Legislative Power

b. Article 2, Executive Branch

Column B

___ **Amendment process**

___ **Interstate commerce**

___ **Authority of the Constitution as the supreme law**