

Florida Interim Assessment Item Bank and Test Platform

Item Specifications

**Social Studies
U.S. Government
Grades 9–12**



FLORIDA DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
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I. Introduction

The U.S. Department of Education awarded a Race to the Top grant to Florida in August 2010. An important component of this grant focused on the development of high-quality assessment items and balanced assessments for use by districts, schools, and teachers. The assessment items will be stored in the Florida Interim Assessment Item Bank and Test Platform (IBTP), a statewide secure system which allows Florida educators to search the item bank, export test items, and generate customized high-quality assessments for computer-based delivery or paper-and-pencil delivery. The IBTP allows Florida educators to determine what students know and are able to do relative to instruction on Florida’s Next Generation Sunshine State Standards and the Common Core State Standards (CCSS).

A. Purpose of the Item Specifications

The *Item Specifications* define the expectations for content, standards alignment, and format of assessment items for the Item Bank and Test Platform. The *Item Specifications* are intended for use by item writers and reviewers in the development of high-quality assessment items.

B. Scope

The *Item Specifications* provide general and grade-specific guidelines for the development of all Grades 9–12 Social Studies Assessment items available in the Florida Interim Assessment Item Bank.

C. Standards Alignment

Items developed for the Florida Interim Assessment Item Bank and Test Platform will align to the Next Generation Sunshine State Standards for Social Studies and, where appropriate and applicable, the Common Core State Standards for Mathematics and Literacy in History/Social Studies.

1. Next Generation Sunshine State Standards

Florida’s Next Generation Sunshine State Standards (NGSSS) for Social Studies provide the basis for social studies teaching and learning in Florida’s public schools. For Grades 9–12, the NGSSS are divided into benchmarks that identify what a student should know and be able to do in each course. The NGSSS are available at <http://www.floridastandards.org/homepagelindex.aspx>.

2. Common Core State Standards

Selected standards from the CCSS for Mathematics and Literacy in History/Social Studies have been embedded in Florida’s course descriptions for Grades 6–12 social studies courses to provide support for social studies literacy and mathematics skills. Appendix B of this document provides a list of the CCSS Mathematics and Literacy Standards associated with the Grades 9–12 U.S. Government course. Assessment items for social studies should be aligned to one or more of the associated CCSS, whenever appropriate, in addition to the targeted social studies benchmark.

II. Criteria for Item Development

Social studies item writers for the Florida Interim Assessment Item Bank must have a comprehensive knowledge of social studies curriculum based on the Next Generation Sunshine State Standards and an understanding of the range of cognitive abilities of the target student population. Item writers should understand and consistently apply the guidelines established in this document. Item writers are expected to use their best judgment in writing items that measure the social studies benchmarks of the NGSSS and the CCSS, where appropriate, without introducing extraneous elements that reflect bias for or against a group of students.

A. Overall Considerations for Item Development

These guidelines are provided to ensure the development of high-quality assessment items for the Florida Interim Assessment Item Bank.

1. Each item should be written to measure primarily one NGSSS benchmark; however, other benchmarks may also be addressed for some item types.
2. Whenever possible, each item will also be aligned to a secondary CCSS Mathematics and/or Literacy standard applicable to a particular grade.
3. Items should be appropriate for students in terms of grade-level instruction, experience and difficulty, cognitive development, and reading level. The reading level of the test items should be on grade level (refer to the glossaries in CPALMS for each course), except for specifically assessed social studies terms or concepts. Some words used in the social studies benchmarks are above grade level.
4. Of the assessment items associated with a given benchmark, 50% or more should meet or exceed the cognitive level (DOK) of the benchmark.
5. Each item should be written clearly and unambiguously to elicit the desired response.
6. Items should not disadvantage or exhibit disrespect to anyone in regard to age, gender, race, ethnicity, language, religion, socioeconomic status, disability, occupation, or geographic region.

B. Item Contexts

The context in which an item is presented is called the item context or scenario. These guidelines are provided to assist item writers with development of items within an appropriate context.

1. The item context should be designed to interest students at the targeted level. Scenarios should be appropriate for students in terms of grade-level experience and difficulty, cognitive development, and reading level.
2. The context should be directly related to the question asked. The context should lead the student cognitively to the question. Every effort should be made to keep items as concise as possible without losing cognitive flow or missing the overall idea or concept.

3. Information and/or data in items must be accurate and verifiable using reliable sources. Source documentation should accompany items as needed.
4. All item scenarios, graphics, diagrams, and illustrations must be age-, grade-, and experience-appropriate.
5. The item content should be timely but not likely to become dated.

C. Use of Media

Media can be used to provide either necessary or supplemental information—that is, some media contain information that is necessary for answering the question, while other media support the context of the question. Items may include diagrams, illustrations, charts, tables, audio files, or video files unless otherwise noted in the Individual Benchmark Specifications.

1. Items should not begin with media. Media in items is always preceded by text.
2. All visual media (tables, charts, graphs, photographs, maps, illustrations, etc.) should be titled. Titles should be in all caps, boldfaced, and centered, and may be placed above or below the visual media.

D. Item Style and Format

This section presents stylistic guidelines and formatting directions that should be followed while developing items.

1. Items should be clear and concise and should use vocabulary and sentence structure appropriate for the assessed grade level. Writers should refer to the resources provided during item writer training and to the glossaries in CPALMS.
2. The words *most likely* or *best* should be used only when appropriate to the question.
3. Items requiring art should be to scale whenever possible. If not possible, a not-to-scale text box should be included at the bottom left of the art.
4. Graphics in items should be clearly labeled and contain all necessary information.
5. Items using the word *not* should emphasize the word *not* using all uppercase letters (e.g., Which of the following is NOT an example of . . .). The word *not* should be used sparingly.
6. As appropriate, boldface type should be used to emphasize key words in the item (e.g., **least**, **most**, **greatest**, **percent**, **best**).
7. Masculine pronouns should NOT be used to refer to both sexes. Name(s) should be used whenever possible to avoid gender-specific pronouns (e.g., instead of “The student will make changes so that he . . .”, use “John and Maria will make changes so that they . . .”).

E. Item Types

This section presents guidelines for development of the following types of items:

- Selected Response (SR)—1 point
- Gridded Response (GR)—1 point
- Short Response (SHR)—1 point
- Constructed Response (CR)—2 points
- Extended Response (ER)—4 points
- Essay Response (ESR)—6 points
- Performance Task (PT)—1–10 points

1. Selected Response (SR) Items (1 point)

Selected response items require students to choose an answer from the choices given. Each item consists of a stem and either three or four answer options, depending on the grade level (see #3 below). One of the answer options is the correct answer, and the remaining options are called distractors. Selected response items may also include a stimulus and/or passage.

1. SR items should take approximately one minute per item to answer.
2. SR items are worth one point each.
3. SR items for grades K, 1, and 2 should have three answer options (A, B, and C). SR items for all other grades and courses should have four answer options (A, B, C, and D).
4. SR items must have only one correct answer option.
5. During item development and review, the correct response should be indicated.
6. During item development and review, the rationale for distractors (incorrect answer choices) should be indicated. The rationale should include information explaining why a student would select that distractor.
7. Distractor rationales should represent social studies misconceptions commonly made by students who have not mastered the assessed concepts.
8. Each distractor should be a believable answer (i.e., plausible, but incorrect).
9. All answer options should be written in a style appropriate to the question asked. For example, a “how” question should have answer options that explain how.
10. Options should have parallel structure whenever possible. Test item options should not have an outlier (e.g., an answer option that is significantly longer than or different from the other options).
11. Items should not be clued or answered by information in the stem or other options.

12. Options such as *none of the above*, *all of the above*, *not here*, *not enough information*, or *cannot be determined* should not be used as answer options.
13. If an option is a single word or a phrase, the option should start with a lowercase letter. If an option is a sentence, the sentence should be conventionally capitalized and punctuated. Options that are imperatives should be treated as sentences.
14. Answer options that are single words should be arranged in alphabetical or reverse alphabetical order.
15. Answer options that are phrases or sentences should be arranged from shortest to longest or longest to shortest.
16. Numerical answer options should be arranged in ascending or descending order.
17. Numerical answer options that represent relative magnitude or size should be arranged as they are shown in the stem or in some other logical order.
18. When the item requires the identification of a choice from the item stem, table, chart, or illustration, the options should be arranged as they are presented in the item stem, table, chart, or illustration.
19. If the answer options for an item are neither strictly numerical nor denominate numbers, the options should be arranged by the logic presented in the item, by alphabetical order, or by length.

2. Gridded Response (GR) Items (1 point)

Gridded response questions are worth 1 point each. The questions require students to solve problems or interpret charts or graphs and mark their answers by filling in the appropriate bubbles for the numbers on answer grids. Students must accurately complete the grid to receive credit for their answers.

3. Short Response (SHR) Items (1 point)

Short response items usually include a scenario and instructions on how to respond. The recommended time allotment for a student to respond is 3 minutes. A complete answer is worth 1 point. There are no partial points for this item type.

4. Constructed Response (CR) Items (2 points)

Constructed response items usually include a scenario and instructions on how to respond. The recommended time allotment for a student to respond is 5 minutes. A complete answer is worth 2 points and a partial answer is worth

1 point. The constructed response holistic rubric and exemplar specific to each item are used for scoring as follows:

SCORING RUBRIC	
2	A score of two indicates that the student has demonstrated a thorough understanding of the social studies concepts applicable to the prompt. The student has provided a complete and correct response to all parts of the prompt. When required, student explanations are clear and complete. The response may contain minor flaws that do not detract from the demonstration of a thorough understanding.
1	A score of one indicates that the student has demonstrated an incomplete understanding of the social studies concepts applicable to the prompt or has provided a response that is only partially correct. The student may have arrived at an acceptable conclusion, but with a flawed or weak application of social studies concepts. The student may also have applied the social studies concepts, but failed to fully arrive at the conclusion. The response may contain flaws that detract slightly from the demonstration of understanding.
0	A score of zero indicates that the student has not provided a response or has provided a response that does not demonstrate an understanding of the social studies concepts applicable to the prompt. The student's explanation may be uninterpretable, lack sufficient information to determine the student's understanding, or contain clear misunderstandings of the underlying social studies concepts. The response may contain major flaws that detract from the demonstration of understanding.

Exemplars: A specific exemplar should be developed for each constructed response item. Exemplars will be used as scoring guides and should be specific to the item, but not so specific as to discount multiple correct answers. Exemplars should include a clear and defensible description of the top score point, and contain straightforward language that is accurate, complete, and easy to interpret.

5. Extended Response (ER) Items (4 points)

Extended response items include a scenario and instructions on how to respond and are worth 4 score points. However, ER items are usually more complex than SHR items and 2-point CR items. The recommended time allotment for a student to respond is 10–15 minutes. The extended response

holistic rubric and exemplar specific to each item are used for scoring as follows:

SCORING RUBRIC	
4	A score of four indicates that the student has demonstrated a thorough understanding of the social studies concepts applicable to the prompt. The student has provided a complete and correct response to all parts of the prompt. The appropriate social studies terminology is used correctly. The response may contain minor flaws that do not detract from a demonstration of a thorough understanding.
3	A score of three indicates that the student has demonstrated an understanding of the social studies concepts applicable to the prompt. The student's response to the prompt is essentially correct, but the social studies explanations and/or interpretations provided are not thorough. The response may contain minor flaws that reflect inattentiveness or indicate some misunderstanding of the underlying social studies concepts.
2	A score of two indicates that the student has demonstrated only a partial understanding of the social studies concepts applicable to the prompt. Although the student may have arrived at an acceptable conclusion, the student's work lacks an essential understanding of the underlying social studies concepts. The response may contain errors related to misunderstanding important aspects of the prompt and misuse of social studies terms.
1	A score of one indicates that the student has demonstrated a very limited understanding of the social studies concepts applicable to the prompt. The student's response is incomplete and exhibits many flaws. Although the student's response has addressed some of the conditions of the prompt, the student has reached an inadequate conclusion. The response exhibits many flaws or may be incomplete.
0	A score of zero indicates that the student has not provided a response or has provided a response that does not demonstrate an understanding of the social studies concepts applicable to the prompt. The student's explanation may be uninterpretable, lack sufficient information to determine the student's understanding, contain clear misunderstandings of the underlying social studies concepts, or be incorrect.

Exemplars: A specific exemplar should be developed for each extended response item. Exemplars will be used as scoring guides and should be specific to the item, but not so specific as to discount multiple correct answers. Exemplars should include a clear and defensible description of the top score point, and contain straightforward language that is accurate, complete, and easy to interpret.

6. Essay Response (ESR) Items (6 points)

Essay response items consist of asking a general question or providing a stimulus (such as an article or research paper on a relevant topic), and asking the student to express their thoughts or provide facts about the topic using logic and reason. Essay response items encompass a higher level of thinking and a broader range of skills that includes CCSS literacy standards, both of which are critical to future success in higher education and the workforce.

In most cases, essay responses will go beyond a single paragraph in length, with a distinct introduction, body, and conclusion. An essay response will be worth a total of 6 points, with a rubric structure similar to that of the 4-point extended response. Students should be given about 20 to 30 minutes to complete each item.

Exemplars: A specific exemplar should be developed for each essay response item. Exemplars will be used as scoring guides and should be specific to the item, but not so specific as to discount multiple correct answers. Exemplars should include a clear and defensible description of the top score point, and contain straightforward language that is accurate, complete, and easy to interpret.

7. Performance Task (PT) Items (1–10 points)

Performance tasks are used to measure students' ability to *demonstrate* knowledge and skills from one or more benchmarks of the NGSSS and the CCSS. Specifically, performance tasks may require students to create a product, demonstrate a process, or perform an activity that demonstrates proficiency in social studies. They are evaluated using customized scoring rubrics, and each task may be worth 1–10 points. Performance tasks may have the following characteristics:

1. Performance tasks may cover a short time period or may cover an extended period of time.
2. Performance tasks must contain clear and explicit directions for understanding and completing the required component tasks and producing the objective output.
3. All tasks, skills, and/or behaviors required by the performance tasks must be objective, observable, and measurable.
4. All necessary equipment, materials, and resources should be referenced within the text of the performance task.
5. Performance tasks should elicit a range of score points.
6. Performance tasks generally require students to organize, apply, analyze, synthesize, and/or evaluate concepts.

7. Performance tasks may measure performance in authentic situations and outside the classroom, where appropriate and practical.
8. Typical response formats include demonstrations, oral presentations, exhibits, or other products.
9. Every performance task requires companion rubrics to be used for scoring purposes. Rubrics should meet the following criteria:
 - a. The rubrics and performance tasks should be developed in tandem to ensure compatibility.
 - b. Rubrics must be specific to the individual requirements of each performance task; generic rubrics are not acceptable.
 - c. The rubric must allow for efficient and consistent scoring.
 - d. The customized rubric will also serve as an exemplar and should include a clear and defensible description of the top score point, and contain straightforward language that is accurate, complete, and easy to interpret.
 - e. The highest score descriptor should allow for all foreseeable methods of correctly and thoroughly completing all requirements of the performance task.

A performance task may address one or more benchmarks or standards and may be composed of multiple items. The expectation is the performance tasks will include a demonstration of the student’s mastery of the benchmark or standard. Items are expected to have rubrics.

F. Complex Stimuli and Reading Passages

The cross-curricular focus on aligning Florida IBTP items with the Common Core State Standards for mathematics and literacy make complex reading passages important components of the item bank. A passage is a segment of written work, followed by a series of questions that assess the student’s comprehension of reading and the content presented. Some social studies items will be associated with a reading passage, while others will be standalone items.

G. Readability

Items must be written with readability in mind. In addition, vocabulary must be appropriate for the grade level being tested. The following sources provide information about the reading level of individual words:

Taylor, Stanford E. *EDL Core Vocabularies: Reading, Mathematics, Science, and Social Studies*. Austin, TX: Steck-Vaughn-EDL, 1989.

Mogilner, Alijandra. *Children’s Writer’s Word Book*. Cincinnati, OH: Writer’s Digest Books, 1992.

H. Cognitive Complexity

1. Overview

Florida’s adoption of the Common Core State Standards (CCSS) for Mathematics and English Language Arts & Literacy in History/Social Studies, Science, and Technical Subjects presents Florida with an opportunity

to revise its current Depth of Knowledge (DOK) Model of Cognitive Complexity. More information about Florida’s Depth of Knowledge levels is available online at <http://www.cpalms.org/cpalms/dok.aspx>.

2. Levels of Depth of Knowledge for Social Studies

Level 1 (Recall) standards and assessment items require students to recall facts, terms, concepts, trends, generalizations and theories or to recognize or identify specific information contained in graphics. This level generally requires students to identify, list, or define. Standards or tasks at this level usually ask the student to recall who, what, when and where. Items that require students to “describe” and “explain” could be classified at Level 1 or 2 depending on what is to be described and explained. A Level 1 “describe or explain” would recall, recite or reproduce information. Items that require students to recognize or identify specific information contained in maps, charts, tables, graphs or drawings are generally Level 1.

Some examples that represent but do not constitute all of Level 1 performance are:

- Recognize the importance of U.S. symbols.
- List characteristics of good citizenship.
- Describe different types of jobs in an economic system and the types of tools used.
- Identify significant individuals responsible for the development of the New England, Middle, and Southern colonies.
- Use latitude and longitude to locate places.
- Describe the role of the three branches of government in the United States.

Level 2 (Basic Application of Concepts & Skills) includes the engagement of some mental processing beyond recalling or reproducing a response. This level generally requires students to contrast or compare people, places, events and concepts; convert information from one form to another; give an example; classify or sort items into meaningful categories; describe, interpret or explain issues and problems, patterns, reasons, cause and effect, significance or impact, relationships, points of view or processes. A Level 2 “describe or explain” would require students to go beyond a description or explanation of recalled information to describe or explain a result or “how” or “why.”

Some examples that represent but do not constitute all of Level 2 performance are:

- Distinguish between primary and secondary sources.
- Describe technological developments that shaped European exploration.
- Identify and explain significant events leading up to the American Revolution.
- Discuss the concept of Manifest Destiny.

- Explain how the three branches of government in the United States were designed to set up a system of checks and balances.

Level 3 (Strategic Thinking & Complex Reasoning) requires reasoning, planning, using evidence, and a higher level of thinking than the previous two levels. Students would go beyond explaining or describing “how and why” to justifying the “how and why” through application and evidence. The cognitive demands at Level 3 are more complex and more abstract than Levels 1 or 2. Items at Level 3 include drawing conclusions; citing evidence; applying concepts to analyze new situations; using concepts to solve problems; analyzing similarities and differences in issues and problems; proposing and evaluating solutions to problems; recognizing and explaining misconceptions or making connections across time and place to explain a concept or big idea.

Some examples that represent but do not constitute all of Level 3 performance are:

- Describe the introduction, impact, and role of slavery in the colonies.
- Examine and explain the changing roles and impact of significant women during the American Revolution.
- Compare and contrast Federalist and Anti-Federalist views of government.
- Trace the development of technology and the impact of major inventions on business productivity during the early development of the United States.
- Differentiate fact from opinion, utilizing appropriate historical research and fiction/nonfiction support materials.
- Discuss the impact of westward expansion on cultural practices and migration patterns of Native American and African slave populations.

Level 4 (Extended Thinking & Complex Reasoning) standards and assessment items combine the strategic thinking of Level 3 with the addition of planning, investigating, or developing that will require an extended period of time. The extended time period is not a distinguishing factor if the required work is only repetitive and does not require applying significant conceptual understanding and higher-order thinking. At this level the cognitive demands should be high and the work should require in-depth analysis using multiple sources. Students should connect and relate ideas and concepts within the content area or among content areas through research in order to be at this highest level. The distinguishing factor for Level 4 would be evidence through a task or product that the cognitive demands have been met. A Level 4 standard or assessment item will require students to analyze and synthesize information from multiple sources, examine and explain alternative perspectives across a variety of sources, and/or describe and illustrate how common themes and concepts are found across time and place. In some Level 4 performances students will make predictions with evidence as support, develop a logical argument, or plan and develop solutions to problems.

Standards, goals, and objectives can be stated so as to expect students to perform thinking at this level. On-demand assessments that do include tasks, products, or extended responses would be classified as Level 4.

Some examples that represent but do not constitute all of Level 4 performance are:

- Using primary sources, write an analysis of the historical development of significant sociocultural and/or socioeconomic trends and developments (e.g., women’s/worker’s rights, race relations, religious influences).
- Produce a presentation that compares and contrasts various political systems (e.g., democracy, communism, democratic socialism, anarchy, etc.).
- Write an essay linking the significance of geological location and resources on the economic and social development of a country or region.
- Design a study of regional natural resources and assess the impact of human development and use.

I. Item Difficulty

Item writers will not be expected to make a prediction of difficulty for each item created. However, item writers should develop items that reflect a range of difficulty levels.

J. Universal Design

The application of universal design principles helps develop assessments that are usable to the greatest number of students, including students with disabilities and nonnative speakers of English. To support the goal of providing access to all students, the items in the Florida Interim Assessment Item Bank maximize readability, legibility, and compatibility with accommodations, and item development includes a review for potential bias and sensitivity issues.

Items must allow for the widest possible range of student participation. Item writers must attend to the best practices suggested by universal design, including, but not limited to,

- reduction in wordiness;
- avoidance of ambiguity;
- selection of reader-friendly construction and terminology; and
- consistently applied concept names and graphic conventions.

Universal design principles also inform decisions about item layout and design, including, but not limited to, type size, line length, spacing, and graphics.

K. Sample Items

Appendix A of this document contains a selection of sample items. The sample items represent a range of cognitive complexities and item types.

III. Review Procedures for Florida Interim Assessment Item Bank Items

Prior to being included in the Florida Interim Assessment Item Bank, items must pass several levels of review as part of the item development process.

A. Review for Item Quality

Assessment items developed for the Florida Interim Assessment Item Bank are reviewed by Florida educators, the FDOE, and the Item Bank contractors to ensure the quality of the items, including grade-level appropriateness, standards alignment, accuracy, and other criteria for overall item quality.

B. Review for Bias and Sensitivity

Items are reviewed by groups of Florida educators generally representative of Florida’s geographic regions and culturally diverse population. Items are reviewed for the following kinds of bias: gender, racial, ethnic, linguistic, religious, geographic, and socioeconomic. Item reviews also include consideration of issues related to individuals with disabilities.

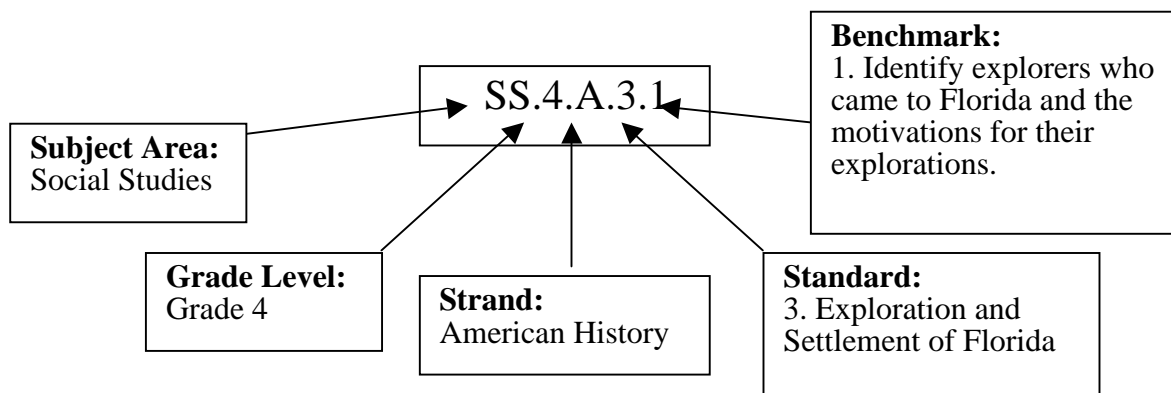
This review is to ensure that the primary purpose of assessing student achievement is not undermined by inadvertently including in the item bank any material that students, parents, or other stakeholders may deem inappropriate. Reviewers are asked to consider the variety of cultural, regional, philosophical, political, and religious backgrounds throughout Florida and to determine whether the subject matter will be acceptable to Florida students, their parents, and other members of Florida communities.

IV. Guide to the Individual Benchmark Specifications

A. Benchmark Classification System

Each benchmark in the NGSSS is labeled with a system of numbers and letters.

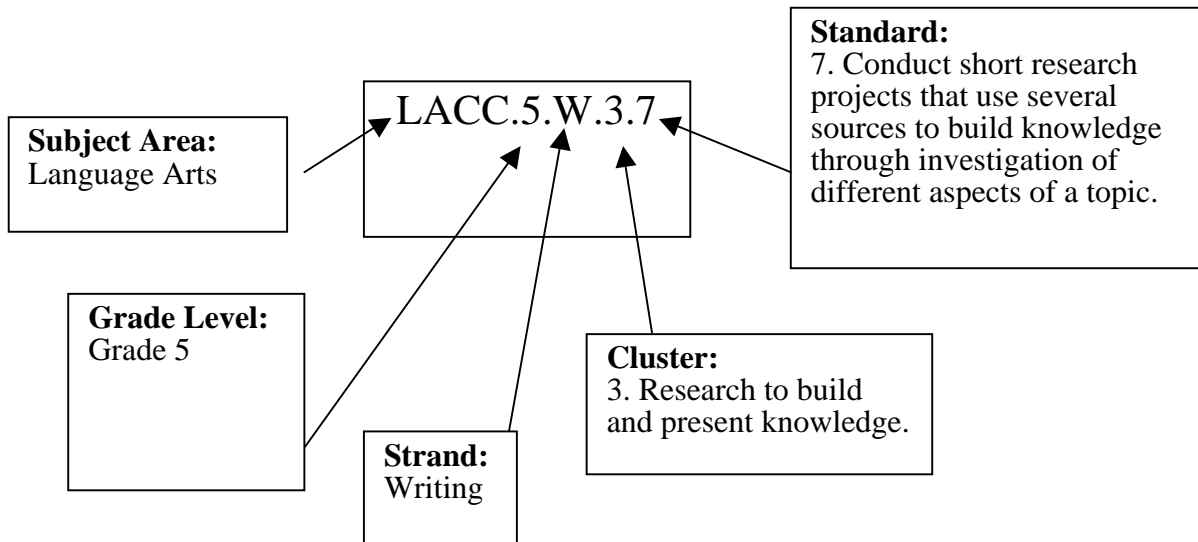
- -The two letters in the *first position* of the code identify the **Subject Area**.
- -The number(s) in the *second position* represent the **Grade Level**.
- -The letter in the *third position* represents the **Strand** to which the benchmark belongs (e.g., *A* represents American History, *G* represents Geography, *E* represents Economics, *W* represents World History, *C* represents Civics and Government, and *H* represents Humanities).
- -The number in the *fourth position* represents the **Standard**.
- -The number in the *last position* identifies the specific **Benchmark**.



B. Common Core State Standard Classification System

Each standard in the CCSS is also labeled with a system of numbers and letters.

- The four letters in the *first position* of the code identify the **Subject Area**.
- The number(s) in the *second position* represent the **Grade Level**.
- The letter in the *third position* represents the **Strand**.
- The number in the *fourth position* represents the **Cluster**.
- The number in the *last position* identifies the specific **Standard**.



V. Definitions of Benchmark Specifications

The *Item Specifications* identify how the benchmarks in Florida’s NGSSS and the CCSS are assessed by items in the Florida Interim Assessment Item Bank. For each assessed benchmark, the following information is provided in the Individual Benchmark Specifications section.

Strand	refers to the general category of knowledge. The strands for Social Studies are American History, Geography, Economics, World History, Civics and Government, and Humanities.
Standard	refers to a main idea or description statement of general expectations regarding knowledge and skill development.
Benchmark	refers to specific statements of expected student achievement.
Common Core State Standard Connections	refers to the Common Core Literacy and Mathematics Standards that are closely related to the benchmark. (See Appendix B for a list of CCSS standards associated with this course/grade band.)
Benchmark Clarifications	explain how achievement of the benchmark will be demonstrated by students. The clarification statements explain what students are expected to do when responding to the question.
Content Limits	define the range of content knowledge and degree of difficulty that should be assessed in the items for the benchmark. Content limits may be used to identify content beyond the scope of a targeted benchmark if the content is more appropriately assessed by another benchmark. These statements help to provide validity by ensuring the test items are clearly aligned to the targeted benchmark.

VI. Individual Benchmark Specifications

A. US Government Item Specifications

Course Number: 2106310 - **United States Government** - The grade 9–12 United States Government course consists of the following content area strands: Geography, Civics and Government. The primary content for the course pertains to the study of government institutions and political processes and their historical impact on American society. Content should include, but is not limited to, the functions and purpose of government, the function of the state, the constitutional framework, federalism, separation of powers, functions of the three branches of government at the local, state, and national level, and the political decision-making process.

Benchmark SS.912.C.1.1	
Strand	C: Civics and Government
Standard	1: Demonstrate an understanding of the origins and purposes of government, law, and the American political system.
Benchmark	SS.912.C.1.1: Evaluate, take, and defend positions on the founding ideals and principles in American Constitutional government.
Common Core State Standard Connections	Indicate appropriate alignments to the CCSS Literacy Standards for Social Studies whenever applicable. (See Appendix B.)
Benchmark Clarifications	Students will compare and evaluate viewpoints on the founding ideas and principles in U.S. Constitutional government. Students will construct arguments on a given position based on their knowledge of the ideals held by the Founders and/or what is written in the Constitution. Students will defend the legality of an action or belief and use the founding ideals or the Constitution to support their claim.
Content Limits	Items will not require students to identify specific framers of the Constitution.

Benchmark SS.912.C.1.2	
Strand	C: Civics and Government
Standard	1: Demonstrate an understanding of the origins and purposes of government, law, and the American political system.
Benchmark	SS.912.C.1.2: Explain how the Declaration of Independence reflected the political principles of popular sovereignty, social contract, natural rights, and individual rights.
Common Core State Standard Connections	Indicate appropriate alignments to the CCSS Literacy Standards for Social Studies whenever applicable. (See Appendix B.)
Benchmark Clarification	<p>Students will identify and explain rights specified in the Declaration of Independence (i.e., natural rights, popular sovereignty, social contract).</p> <p>Students will identify grievances listed in the Declaration of Independence in terms of popular sovereignty, social contract, natural rights, and individual rights.</p> <p>Students will examine and evaluate the influence of Enlightenment ideas on the drafting of the Declaration of Independence.</p> <p>Students will identify and describe popular sovereignty, social contract, natural rights, and individual rights.</p>
Content Limits	Item content is limited to the scope and intent of the instructional benchmark as related to the grades 9–12 United States Government course.

Benchmark SS.912.C.1.3	
Strand	C: Civics and Government
Standard	1: Demonstrate an understanding of the origins and purposes of government, law, and the American political system.
Benchmark	SS.912.C.1.3: Evaluate the ideals and principles of the founding documents (Declaration of Independence, Articles of Confederation, Federalist Papers) that shaped American Democracy.
Common Core State Standard Connections	Indicate appropriate alignments to the CCSS Literacy Standards for Social Studies whenever applicable. (See Appendix B.)
Benchmark Clarifications	<p>Students will differentiate among the Declaration of Independence, Articles of Confederation, and Federalist Papers and determine how each one was individually significant to the founding of the United States.</p> <p>Students will list the founding documents in chronological order and analyze how the documents are connected to one another.</p> <p>Students will identify key individuals who contributed to the founding documents (e.g., Thomas Jefferson, Alexander Hamilton, John Jay, and James Madison).</p>
Content Limits	Item content is limited to the scope and intent of the instructional benchmark as related to the grades 9–12 United States Government course.

Benchmark SS.912.C.1.4	
Strand	C: Civics and Government
Standard	1: Demonstrate an understanding of the origins and purposes of government, law, and the American political system.
Benchmark	SS.912.C.1.4: Analyze and categorize the diverse viewpoints presented by the Federalists and the Anti-Federalists concerning ratification of the Constitution and inclusion of a bill of rights.
Common Core State Standard Connections	Indicate appropriate alignments to the CCSS Literacy Standards for Social Studies whenever applicable. (See Appendix B.)
Benchmark Clarifications	Students will analyze competing arguments by the Federalists and the Anti-Federalists for and against the inclusion of a bill of rights in the U.S. Constitution.
Content Limits	Items will not ask students to identify specific Federalist Papers.

Benchmark SS.912.C.1.5	
Strand	C: Civics and Government
Standard	1: Demonstrate an understanding of the origins and purposes of government, law, and the American political system.
Benchmark	SS.912.C.1.5: Evaluate how the Constitution and its amendments reflect the political principles of rule of law, checks and balances, separation of powers, republicanism, democracy, and federalism.
Common Core State Standard Connections	Indicate appropriate alignments to the CCSS Literacy Standards for Social Studies whenever applicable. (See Appendix B.)
Benchmark Clarifications	<p>Students will identify and/or explain the three branches of government (executive, legislative, and judicial) established by the Constitution and how the terms separation of power and checks and balances apply.</p> <p>Students will define rule of law, understand its origins from the Magna Carta, and acknowledge the influence of political thinkers such as John Locke, Charles Montesquieu, and Thomas Paine.</p> <p>Students will distinguish what sections of the U.S. Constitution establish the federal system and identify what powers are granted to the states.</p> <p>Students will contrast republicanism and democracy as forms of government and discern how the United States reflects both.</p> <p>Students will evaluate how the political principles of rule of law, checks and balances, separation of powers, republicanism, democracy, and federalism are applied within the framework of constitutional government.</p>
Content Limits	Items will not require students to explain the amendments process.

Benchmark SS.912.C.2.1	
Strand	C: Civics and Government
Standard	2: Evaluate the roles, rights, and responsibilities of United States citizens and determine methods of active participation in society, government, and the political system.
Benchmark	SS.912.C.2.1: Evaluate the constitutional provisions establishing citizenship, and assess the criteria among citizens by birth, naturalized citizens, and non-citizens.
Common Core State Standard Connections	Indicate appropriate alignments to the CCSS Literacy Standards for Social Studies whenever applicable. (See Appendix B.)
Benchmark Clarifications	<p>Students will contrast the process by which citizens by birth, naturalized citizens, and non-citizens obtain citizenship using the language of the Constitution and its amendments.</p> <p>Students will differentiate the rights held by native born citizens and naturalized citizens (e.g., running for public office).</p> <p>Students will describe the different processes by which a foreign national can become a naturalized citizen including, but not limited to, taking a naturalization test and the interview process.</p> <p>Students will apply their knowledge of Constitutional amendments (i.e., 13th, 14th, 15th, and 19th) to explain how the concept of citizenship has changed over the course of history.</p>
Content Limits	Item content is limited to the scope and intent of the instructional benchmark as related to the grades 9–12 United States Government course.

Benchmark SS.912.C.2.2	
Strand	C: Civics and Government
Standard	2: Evaluate the roles, rights, and responsibilities of United States citizens and determine methods of active participation in society, government, and the political system.
Benchmark	SS.912.C.2.2: Evaluate the importance of political participation and civic participation.
Common Core State Standard Connections	Indicate appropriate alignments to the CCSS Literacy Standards for Social Studies whenever applicable. (See Appendix B.)
Benchmark Clarifications	<p>Students will explain the different ways in which United States citizens can exercise political and civic participation.</p> <p>Students will understand that political and civic participation is encouraged, but not required, in the United States (e.g., voting, attending town hall meetings, campaigning).</p> <p>Students will describe the ways in which individuals can be denied and limited in their right to practice political and civic participation (e.g., losing voting rights for felonies, limitations on political contributions, limits on the type of protesting).</p> <p>Students will analyze the importance of political and civil participation by citing historical examples of citizens petitioning for their rights (e.g., Civil Rights Movement, Women’s Suffrage Movement).</p>
Content Limits	Items will not require students to compare political and civic participation in the United States to other parts of the world.

Benchmark SS.912.C.2.3	
Strand	C: Civics and Government
Standard	2: Evaluate the roles, rights, and responsibilities of United States citizens and determine methods of active participation in society, government, and the political system.
Benchmark	SS.912.C.2.3: Experience the responsibilities of citizens at the local, state, or federal levels.
Common Core State Standard Connections	Indicate appropriate alignments to the CCSS Literacy Standards for Social Studies whenever applicable. (See Appendix B.)
Benchmark Clarifications	<p>Students will list various responsibilities held by citizens (e.g., voting, volunteering, informing, respecting laws).</p> <p>Students will understand the process of registering or pre-registering to vote.</p> <p>Students will recognize the process of running for office through participating in a campaign or staging a mock election.</p> <p>Students will attend or watch governmental proceedings at the local, state, and/or federal level (e.g., attend a school board meeting, viewing recorded proceedings).</p> <p>Students will contact governmental officials at the local, state, and/or federal level (e.g., calling their office, writing letters, visiting websites, using social media platforms).</p> <p>Examples are registering or pre-registering to vote, volunteering, communicating with government officials, informing others about current issues, participating in a political campaign/mock election.</p>
Content Limits	Item content is limited to the scope and intent of the instructional benchmark as related to the grades 9–12 United States Government course.

Benchmark SS.912.C.2.4	
Strand	C: Civics and Government
Standard	2: Evaluate the roles, rights, and responsibilities of United States citizens and determine methods of active participation in society, government, and the political system.
Benchmark	SS.912.C.2.4: Evaluate, take, and defend positions on issues that cause the government to balance the interests of individuals with the public good.
Common Core State Standard Connections	Indicate appropriate alignments to the CCSS Literacy Standards for Social Studies whenever applicable. (See Appendix B.)
Benchmark Clarifications	<p>Students will cite historical examples of local, state, and federal governments instituting new laws or policies to protect the public good.</p> <p>Students will analyze how environmental and financial policies place limitations on citizens and private industry for the public good.</p> <p>Students will explain different services provided by local, state, and federal governments to certain citizens to ensure their rights are protected (e.g., social services, law enforcement, defense, emergency response).</p> <p>Students will examine situations when individuals' rights have been restricted for the public good (e.g., limits on speech or rationing of goods during wartime, enactment of the Patriot Act).</p>
Content Limits	Items will not require students to comment on whether government actions were appropriate for a given situation.

Benchmark SS.912.C.2.5	
Strand	C: Civics and Government
Standard	2: Evaluate the roles, rights, and responsibilities of United States citizens and determine methods of active participation in society, government, and the political system.
Benchmark	SS.912.C.2.5: Conduct a service project to further the public good.
Common Core State Standard Connections	Indicate appropriate alignments to the CCSS Literacy Standards for Social Studies whenever applicable. (See Appendix B.)
Benchmark Clarifications	<p>Students will research nonprofit organizations and governmental agencies to better understand how different people conduct service projects for the public good.</p> <p>Students will collaborate with peers on a service project that is researched, planned, and performed in their local community.</p> <p>Students will contact members of their local, state, and/or federal government to gain an understanding of the role of various forms of government on furthering the public good.</p> <p>Students will analyze furthering the public good as a responsibility of citizens.</p> <p>Examples are school, community, state, national, international.</p>
Content Limits	Item content is limited to the scope and intent of the instructional benchmark as related to the grades 9–12 United States Government course.

Benchmark SS.912.C.2.6	
Strand	C: Civics and Government
Standard	2: Evaluate the roles, rights, and responsibilities of United States citizens and determine methods of active participation in society, government, and the political system.
Benchmark	SS.912.C.2.6: Evaluate, take, and defend positions about rights protected by the Constitution and Bill of Rights.
Common Core State Standard Connections	Indicate appropriate alignments to the CCSS Literacy Standards for Social Studies whenever applicable. (See Appendix B.)
Benchmark Clarifications	<p>Students will define the rights granted to citizens of the United States based on their knowledge of the Constitution and its amendments.</p> <p>Students will differentiate the rights provided by the Bill of Rights from those rights provided by the initial Constitution.</p> <p>Students will describe the importance of the Bill of Rights and the role it played in extending the natural rights of liberty and property for citizens.</p> <p>Students will analyze the historical role of the amendment process as a means of extending rights to citizens. (e.g., 13th, 14th, 15th, 19th, and 26th amendments).</p> <p>Students will apply their knowledge of freedoms granted by the Constitution and its amendments to analyze a given scenario (e.g., freedom of speech, right to bear arms, and search and seizure).</p>
Content Limits	Item content is limited to the scope and intent of the instructional benchmark as related to the grades 9–12 United States Government course.

Benchmark SS.912.C.2.7	
Strand	C: Civics and Government
Standard	2: Evaluate the roles, rights, and responsibilities of United States citizens and determine methods of active participation in society, government, and the political system.
Benchmark	SS.912.C.2.7: Explain why rights have limits and are not absolute.
Common Core State Standard Connections	Indicate appropriate alignments to the CCSS Literacy Standards for Social Studies whenever applicable. (See Appendix B.)
Benchmark Clarifications	<p>Students will analyze the role of the judicial branch and how the courts' interpreting of laws has placed limits on rights.</p> <p>Students will explain the necessity and/or reasoning for placing limits on freedom of speech (e.g., inciting a crime, campaign contributions, defamation, military secrets).</p> <p>Students will cite historical examples of times when freedoms and rights were restricted as a matter of national security (e.g., during the Civil War, world wars, and post-9/11).</p> <p>Examples are speech, search and seizure, religion, gun possession.</p>
Content Limits	Item content is limited to the scope and intent of the instructional benchmark as related to the grades 9–12 United States Government course.

Benchmark SS.912.C.2.8	
Strand	C: Civics and Government
Standard	2: Evaluate the roles, rights, and responsibilities of United States citizens and determine methods of active participation in society, government, and the political system.
Benchmark	SS.912.C.2.8: Analyze the impact of citizen participation as a means of achieving political and social change.
Common Core State Standard Connections	Indicate appropriate alignments to the CCSS Literacy Standards for Social Studies whenever applicable. (See Appendix B.)
Benchmark Clarifications	<p>Students will cite historical examples of citizens achieving political and social change to show the impact individuals can have (e.g., the Civil Rights Movement, Women’s Suffrage, the Abolitionist Movement, and war protests).</p> <p>Students will examine the role of the Internet and social media as a means of using technology to promote political and social change (e.g., e-mail, social media).</p> <p>Students will identify legal methods that citizens can use to promote social and political change (e.g., protests, petitioning, demonstrations, and contacting government offices).</p> <p>Students will assess the impact of civic participation on a given contemporary or historical example.</p> <p>Examples are e-mail campaigns, boycotts, blogs, podcasts, protests, demonstrations, letters to editors.</p>
Content Limits	Item content is limited to the scope and intent of the instructional benchmark as related to the grades 9–12 United States Government course.

Benchmark SS.912.C.2.9	
Strand	C: Civics and Government
Standard	2: Evaluate the roles, rights, and responsibilities of United States citizens and determine methods of active participation in society, government, and the political system.
Benchmark	SS.912.C.2.9: Identify the expansion of civil rights and liberties by examining the principles contained in primary documents.
Common Core State Standard Connections	Indicate appropriate alignments to the CCSS Literacy Standards for Social Studies whenever applicable. (See Appendix B.)
Benchmark Clarifications	<p>Students will identify different groups of people (e.g., African Americans, immigrants, and women) that have had their civil rights expanded through the passage of new legislation.</p> <p>Students will analyze the role of the courts and landmark court cases in expanding the rights of citizens (e.g., <i>Brown v. Board of Education</i>, <i>Miranda v. Arizona</i>, and <i>Roe v. Wade</i>).</p> <p>Students will examine the role of the legislative branch on expanding the rights and liberties of citizens (e.g., Voting Rights Act and Civil Rights Act).</p> <p>Students will assess the role of the executive branch on influencing the expansion of civil rights and liberties (e.g., Truman’s desegregation of the army and Lincoln’s Emancipation Proclamation).</p> <p>Students will explain the role founding documents, such as the Declaration of Independence and the Constitution, had on setting precedent for future granting of rights.</p> <p>Examples are Preamble, Declaration of Independence, Constitution, Emancipation Proclamation, 13th, 14th, 15th, 19th, 24th, and 26th Amendments, Voting Rights Act of 1965.</p>
Content Limits	Items will not feature primary documents that are only loosely affiliated to the expansion of rights or liberties.

Benchmark SS.912.C.2.10	
Strand	C: Civics and Government
Standard	2: Evaluate the roles, rights, and responsibilities of United States citizens and determine methods of active participation in society, government, and the political system.
Benchmark	SS.912.C.2.10: Monitor current public issues in Florida.
Common Core State Standard Connections	Indicate appropriate alignments to the CCSS Literacy Standards for Social Studies whenever applicable. (See Appendix B.)
Benchmark Clarifications	<p>Students will research Florida issues being discussed at the national level by monitoring major publications via print and online media.</p> <p>Students will observe their regional media’s coverage of local and state-level issues by watching local news, reading their town’s newspaper, and visiting regional websites.</p> <p>Students will contact members of their local, state, and/or federal government to gain an understanding of the issues in Florida that the politicians feel of are the utmost importance.</p> <p>Students will follow the progress of current issues in Florida by following politicians, journalists, and other important public figures by signing up for e-mail alerts or using traditional and social media.</p> <p>Examples are On-line Sunshine, media, e-mails to government officials, political text messaging.</p>
Content Limits	Item content is limited to the scope and intent of the instructional benchmark as related to the grades 9–12 United States Government course.

Benchmark SS.912.C.2.11	
Strand	C: Civics and Government
Standard	2: Evaluate the roles, rights, and responsibilities of United States citizens and determine methods of active participation in society, government, and the political system.
Benchmark	SS.912.C.2.11: Analyze public policy solutions or courses of action to resolve a local, state, or federal issue.
Common Core State Standard Connections	Indicate appropriate alignments to the CCSS Literacy Standards for Social Studies whenever applicable. (See Appendix B.)
Benchmark Clarifications	<p>Students will describe the procedure by which a bill is introduced to the legislature at either the state level or the federal level.</p> <p>Students will explain the process of using ballot proposals or amendments at the local or state level to resolve issues.</p> <p>Student will demonstrate knowledge of the differences of purpose of the branches and the functions of the office holders.</p> <p>Students will analyze the role of interest groups and the methodology used by interest groups to influence local, state, and federal courses of action.</p> <p>Students will demonstrate an understanding of the logistics of the election processes.</p>
Content Limits	Items will not require students to have specific knowledge about how a particular issue was resolved.

Benchmark SS.912.C.2.12	
Strand	C: Civics and Government
Standard	2: Evaluate the roles, rights, and responsibilities of United States citizens and determine methods of active participation in society, government, and the political system.
Benchmark	SS.912.C.2.12: Explain the changing roles of television, radio, press, and Internet in political communication.
Common Core State Standard Connections	Indicate appropriate alignments to the CCSS Literacy Standards for Social Studies whenever applicable. (See Appendix B.)
Benchmark Clarifications	<p>Students will analyze the role of the 24-hour news cycle and the impact it has had on the political process.</p> <p>Students will explain the ways in which the Internet and social media have provided politicians with new means of reaching their constituents.</p> <p>Students will examine how technology will impact the role of radio and newspapers as media used for political communications.</p> <p>Students will contrast how politicians campaign today with historical campaigns.</p> <p>Students will compare the strength and weaknesses of different media, including, but not limited to, television, radio, press, and Internet.</p>
Content Limits	Item content is limited to the scope and intent of the instructional benchmark as related to the grades 9–12 United States Government course.

Benchmark SS.912.C.2.13	
Strand	C: Civics and Government
Standard	2: Evaluate the roles, rights, and responsibilities of United States citizens and determine methods of active participation in society, government, and the political system.
Benchmark	SS.912.C.2.13: Analyze various forms of political communication and evaluate for bias, factual accuracy, omission, and emotional appeal.
Common Core State Standard Connections	Indicate appropriate alignments to the CCSS Literacy Standards for Social Studies whenever applicable. (See Appendix B.)
Benchmark Clarifications	<p>Students will examine the effectiveness of different campaign materials distributed by candidates to build appeal (e.g., bumper stickers, buttons, and yard signs).</p> <p>Students will analyze the coverage of the same political issue by different media outlets (video and print) to identify possible bias and omissions.</p> <p>Students will compare coverage of the same political event or issue by different websites, blogs, and social media to evaluate factual accuracy.</p> <p>Students will research the historical impact of propaganda and campaign advertisements on the American political process.</p> <p>Examples are political cartoons, propaganda, campaign advertisements, political speeches, electronic bumper stickers, blogs, media.</p>
Content Limits	Items will not require students to match specific propaganda or advertisements with a specific candidate or issue.

Benchmark SS.912.C.2.14	
Strand	C: Civics and Government
Standard	2: Evaluate the roles, rights, and responsibilities of United States citizens and determine methods of active participation in society, government, and the political system.
Benchmark	SS.912.C.2.14: Evaluate the processes and results of an election at the state or federal level.
Common Core State Standard Connections	Indicate appropriate alignments to the CCSS Literacy Standards for Social Studies whenever applicable. (See Appendix B.)
Benchmark Clarifications	<p>Students will explain the process by which candidates register for elections at the state or federal level.</p> <p>Students will describe the different methods used to tabulate election results in state and federal elections. (i.e., electronic voting, punch cards, fill-in ballots).</p> <p>Students will analyze the different primary formats and how political parties nominate candidates using primaries.</p> <p>Students will examine the role of debates on the results of elections at the state and federal level.</p> <p>Students will contrast the different ways in which elections are decided (i.e., electoral college, proportional, popular vote, winner-take-all).</p>
Content Limits	Items will not require students to memorize results of particular elections.

Benchmark SS.912.C.2.15	
Strand	C: Civics and Government
Standard	2: Evaluate the roles, rights, and responsibilities of United States citizens and determine methods of active participation in society, government, and the political system.
Benchmark	SS.912.C.2.15: Evaluate the origins and roles of political parties, interest groups, media, and individuals in determining and shaping public policy.
Common Core State Standard Connections	Indicate appropriate alignments to the CCSS Literacy Standards for Social Studies whenever applicable. (See Appendix B.)
Benchmark Clarifications	<p>Students will identify the origins of the two major political parties and evaluate their roles in shaping public policy.</p> <p>Students will analyze the role of interest groups and political action committees on American politics by examining their origins and how they operate.</p> <p>Students will contrast the modern media’s influence on politics with the press at other major points in United States history.</p> <p>Students will describe changes in the U.S. voting population throughout history, recognizing major turning points (e.g., 15th Amendment, 19th Amendment, and 26th Amendment).</p>
Content Limits	Items will not ask students to compare the United States system to political parties, interest groups, and media in other countries.

Benchmark SS.912.C.2.16	
Strand	C: Civics and Government
Standard	2: Evaluate the roles, rights, and responsibilities of United States citizens and determine methods of active participation in society, government, and the political system.
Benchmark	SS.912.C.2.16: Analyze trends in voter turnout.
Common Core State Standard Connections	Indicate appropriate alignments to the CCSS Literacy Standards for Social Studies whenever applicable. (See Appendix B.)
Benchmark Clarifications	<p>Students will examine data of voter turnout to reach conclusions about why turnout was particularly high or low.</p> <p>Students will compare solutions offered by politicians and political scientists that attempt to increase voter turnout.</p> <p>Students will explain how legislative action has both increased and decreased voter turnout at different points in American history (e.g., 15th, 19th, and 26th Amendments, Jim Crow, poll tax, and current voter suppression efforts).</p> <p>Students will contrast voter turnout figures for presidential election years against elections that featured only local or state races.</p> <p>Examples may include, but are not limited to, youth voter turnout and issue-based voting.</p>
Content Limits	Items will not require students to have specific knowledge of voter turnout in a particular election.

Benchmark SS.912.C.3.1	
Strand	C: Civics and Government
Standard	3: Demonstrate an understanding of the principles, functions, and organization of government.
Benchmark	SS.912.C.3.1: Examine the constitutional principles of representative government, limited government, consent of the governed, rule of law, and individual rights.
Common Core State Standard Connections	Indicate appropriate alignments to the CCSS Literacy Standards for Social Studies whenever applicable. (See Appendix B.)
Benchmark Clarifications	<p>Students will identify the major principles of the Constitution, including representative government, limited government, consent of the governed, rule of law, and individual rights.</p> <p>Students will describe how the U.S. system characterizes a representative government and the constitutional provisions that establish representative government.</p> <p>Students will examine how the structure of the U.S. Constitution limits the power of the federal government through separation of powers, checks and balances, and federalism.</p> <p>Students will explain how the language of the Constitution fulfills the phrase “consent of the governed.”</p>
Content Limits	Items will not require students to judge the constitutional principles in order of importance or necessity.

Benchmark SS.912.C.3.2	
Strand	C: Civics and Government
Standard	3: Demonstrate an understanding of the principles, functions, and organization of government.
Benchmark	SS.912.C.3.2: Define federalism, and identify examples of the powers granted and denied to states and the national government in the American federal system of government.
Common Core State Standard Connections	Indicate appropriate alignments to the CCSS Literacy Standards for Social Studies whenever applicable. (See Appendix B.)
Benchmark Clarifications	<p>Students will describe what the term federalism means and how the United States system matches the definition.</p> <p>Students will explain specific rights that are granted to the states in the language of the Constitution and its amendments (e.g., 10th Amendment, defense, and extradition).</p> <p>Students will analyze how different states have challenged the federal government regarding states' rights (e.g., Civil War, the New Deal, No Child Left Behind, Affordable Health Care Act, and Civil Rights Movement).</p> <p>Students will examine the role the Great Compromise had on the eventual establishment of a federal system of fifty equal states.</p>
Content Limits	Items will not require students to decide whether the states or the federal government should be granted more rights.

Benchmark SS.912.C.3.3	
Strand	C: Civics and Government
Standard	3: Demonstrate an understanding of the principles, functions, and organization of government.
Benchmark	SS.912.C.3.3: Analyze the structures, functions, and processes of the legislative branch as described in Article I of the Constitution.
Common Core State Standard Connections	Indicate appropriate alignments to the CCSS Literacy Standards for Social Studies whenever applicable. (See Appendix B.)
Benchmark Clarifications	<p>Students will explain why Article I of the Constitution established a bicameral legislative body and how the House of Representatives functions differently than the Senate.</p> <p>Students will identify the methods for determining the number of members in the House of Representatives and the Senate.</p> <p>Students will identify and describe the “enumerated powers” granted to Congress (i.e., taxes, borrow money, declare war, and make laws).</p> <p>Students will analyze the role of the legislative branch in terms of its relationship with the judicial and executive branch of the government.</p> <p>Students will describe constitutional amendments that have changed the role of Congress from its original description in Article I of the Constitution (i.e., 10th, 14th, 16th, 17th, and 27th).</p>
Content Limits	<p>Items will not require students to identify specific legislation passed by Congress.</p> <p>Items will not require students to compare the United States Congress to other international legislative bodies.</p>

Benchmark SS.912.C.3.4	
Strand	C: Civics and Government
Standard	3: Demonstrate an understanding of the principles, functions, and organization of government.
Benchmark	SS.912.C.3.4: Analyze the structures, functions, and processes of the executive branch as described in Article II of the Constitution.
Common Core State Standard Connections	Indicate appropriate alignments to the CCSS Literacy Standards for Social Studies whenever applicable. (See Appendix B.)
Benchmark Clarifications	<p>Students will examine the role of the executive branch in terms of its relationship with the judicial and legislative branch of the government.</p> <p>Students will describe constitutional amendments (e.g., 12th, 20th, 22nd, and 25th) that have changed the role of the executive branch from its original description in Article II.</p> <p>Students will explain the qualifications one must have to seek the office of the president and the process of presidential elections.</p> <p>Student will describe the different powers assigned to the executive branch via Article II (i.e., commander-in-chief, head of cabinet, treaties, and appointments).</p> <p>Students will explain different presidential responsibilities outlined in Article II (e.g., receiving foreign heads of state, delivering the State of the Union address, and carrying out faithful execution of the law).</p> <p>Students will analyze the impeachment process and understand how a president can be removed from office.</p>
Content Limits	<p>Students will not be required to identify specific presidents.</p> <p>Students will not be required to match policy with specific presidential administrations.</p>

Benchmark SS.912.C.3.5	
Strand	C: Civics and Government
Standard	3: Demonstrate an understanding of the principles, functions, and organization of government.
Benchmark	SS.912.C.3.5: Identify the impact of independent regulatory agencies in the federal bureaucracy.
Common Core State Standard Connections	Indicate appropriate alignments to the CCSS Literacy Standards for Social Studies whenever applicable. (See Appendix B.)
Benchmark Clarifications	<p>Students will describe how independent regulatory agencies interact with the three branches of government and with citizens. Students will examine the role independent regulatory agencies play in the federal bureaucracy and why such agencies were created.</p> <p>Students will explain the role of the Federal Reserve and other agencies like the Securities and Exchange Commission on monitoring the United States economy.</p> <p>Students will examine the role of different independent federal agencies in protecting consumers (e.g., Food and Drug Administration, Consumer Product Safety Commission, and Federal Communications Commission).</p> <p>Students will explain the role of the Environmental Protection Agency and similar agencies tasked with monitoring land, water, and air quality.</p> <p>Examples may include, but are not limited to, Federal Reserve, Food and Drug Administration, Federal Communications Commission.</p>
Content Limits	<p>Students will not have to know all of the different independent regulatory agencies.</p> <p>Students will not have to know specific regulatory policies.</p>

Benchmark SS.912.C.3.6	
Strand	C: Civics and Government
Standard	3: Demonstrate an understanding of the principles, functions, and organization of government.
Benchmark	SS.912.C.3.6: Analyze the structures, functions, and processes of the judicial branch as described in Article III of the Constitution.
Common Core State Standard Connections	Indicate appropriate alignments to the CCSS Literacy Standards for Social Studies whenever applicable. (See Appendix B.)
Benchmark Clarifications	<p>Students will examine the role of the judicial branch in terms of its relationship with the executive and legislative branches of the government.</p> <p>Students will describe the role of the Supreme Court and lesser federal courts.</p> <p>Students will explain what Article III says about judicial tenure, appointment, and salaries.</p> <p>Students will describe the powers granted to the courts by Article III, including, but not limited to, treason, jurisdiction and trial by jury.</p>
Content Limits	<p>Students will not have to name all of the members of the Supreme Court.</p> <p>Students will not be required to have specific knowledge about judicial decisions.</p>

Benchmark SS.912.C.3.7	
Strand	C: Civics and Government
Standard	3: Demonstrate an understanding of the principles, functions, and organization of government.
Benchmark	SS.912.C.3.7: Describe the role of judicial review in American constitutional government.
Common Core State Standard Connections	Indicate appropriate alignments to the CCSS Literacy Standards for Social Studies whenever applicable. (See Appendix B.)
Benchmark Clarifications	<p>Students will define judicial review and identify it as a means of achieving a separation of powers among the three branches of government.</p> <p>Students will analyze the importance of the Supreme Court case <i>Marbury v. Madison</i> and its impact on judicial review.</p> <p>Students will examine the role of district courts, the court of appeals, and the Supreme Court in the judicial review process.</p> <p>Students will explain the relationship between the concept of judicial review and the language of the Supremacy Clause in Article VI of the Constitution.</p> <p>Students will describe how judicial review was a key point of contention during the Constitutional Convention.</p>
Content Limits	Items will not require students to cite contemporary cases or issues that should have been addressed by judicial review.

Benchmark SS.912.C.3.8	
Strand	C: Civics and Government
Standard	3: Demonstrate an understanding of the principles, functions, and organization of government.
Benchmark	SS.912.C.3.8: Compare the role of judges on the state and federal level with other elected officials.
Common Core State Standard Connections	Indicate appropriate alignments to the CCSS Literacy Standards for Social Studies whenever applicable. (See Appendix B.)
Benchmark Clarifications	<p>Students will contrast the ways state and federal judges are appointed compared to other elected officials.</p> <p>Students will compare the decision making process of judges compared to other political figures.</p> <p>Students will differentiate the role judges have with the general (voting) public versus other elected officials.</p> <p>Students will distinguish the qualifications needed for a judge at the state or federal level versus other elected officials.</p> <p>Examples may include, but are not limited to, decisions based on the law vs. will of the majority.</p>
Content Limits	Item content is limited to the scope and intent of the instructional benchmark as related to the grades 9–12 United States Government course.

Benchmark SS.912.C.3.9	
Strand	C: Civics and Government
Standard	3: Demonstrate an understanding of the principles, functions, and organization of government.
Benchmark	SS.912.C.3.9: Analyze the various levels and responsibilities of courts in the federal and state judicial system and the relationships among them.
Common Core State Standard Connections	Indicate appropriate alignments to the CCSS Literacy Standards for Social Studies whenever applicable. (See Appendix B.)
Benchmark Clarifications	<p>Students will examine why particular court cases go to the state court, while others go to federal court.</p> <p>Students will describe the relationship among the Supreme Court, federal appellate courts, and federal district courts.</p> <p>Students will analyze the role of the Erie Doctrine and the Rooker-Feldman Doctrine on the relationship between federal court decisions and state court decisions.</p> <p>Students will explain the roles of different courts and judges in a given state (i.e., city courts, justice of the peace, county courts, and family court).</p> <p>Students will contrast the differences among civil trials and criminal trials at the state level.</p> <p>Students will describe what Article III of the Constitution states about the relationship between state and federal courts.</p>
Content Limits	Students will not be required to have specific knowledge about the court system of each state.

Benchmark SS.912.C.3.10	
Strand	C: Civics and Government
Standard	3: Demonstrate an understanding of the principles, functions, and organization of government.
Benchmark	SS.912.C.3.10: Evaluate the significance and outcomes of landmark Supreme Court cases.
Common Core State Standard Connections	Indicate appropriate alignments to the CCSS Literacy Standards for Social Studies whenever applicable. (See Appendix B.)
Benchmark Clarifications	<p>Students will analyze the impact of a given Supreme Court decision.</p> <p>Students will identify a Supreme Court description when provided a synopsis of a ruling or a description of the impact a given case had.</p> <p>Examples may include, but are not limited to, <i>Marbury v. Madison</i>, <i>Plessy v. Ferguson</i>, <i>Brown v. Board of Education</i>, <i>Gideon v. Wainwright</i>, <i>Miranda v. Arizona</i>, <i>Tinker v. Des Moines</i>, <i>Hazelwood v. Kuhlmeier</i>, <i>United States v. Nixon</i>, <i>Roe v. Wade</i>, <i>Bush v. Gore</i>, <i>Texas v. Johnson</i>, <i>Mapp v. Ohio</i>, <i>McCulloch v. Maryland</i>, and <i>District of Columbia v. Heller</i>.</p>
Content Limits	Item content is limited to the scope and intent of the instructional benchmark as related to the grades 9–12 United States Government course.

Benchmark SS.912.C.3.11	
Strand	C: Civics and Government
Standard	3: Demonstrate an understanding of the principles, functions, and organization of government.
Benchmark	SS.912.C.3.11: Contrast how the Constitution safeguards and limits individual rights.
Common Core State Standard Connections	Indicate appropriate alignments to the CCSS Literacy Standards for Social Studies whenever applicable. (See Appendix B.)
Benchmark Clarifications	<p>Students will identify the individual rights citizens are granted in the language of the Constitution, the Bill of Rights, and other constitutional amendments.</p> <p>Students will describe the role of the Supreme Court in further defining the safeguards and limits of constitutional rights.</p> <p>Students will explain the reasoning for limits on certain individual rights (i.e., freedom of speech, freedom of religion, the right to bear arms).</p> <p>Students will analyze the role of safeguards in protecting the rights of the individual from possible tyranny of the majority.</p>
Content Limits	Students will not have to know state laws that may further limit or safeguard individual rights.

Benchmark SS.912.C.3.12	
Strand	C: Civics and Government
Standard	3: Demonstrate an understanding of the principles, functions, and organization of government.
Benchmark	SS.912.C.3.12: Simulate the judicial decision-making process in interpreting law at the state and federal level.
Common Core State Standard Connections	Indicate appropriate alignments to the CCSS Literacy Standards for Social Studies whenever applicable. (See Appendix B.)
Benchmark Clarifications	<p>Students will describe how the judicial process applies the principles of the United States Constitution and state constitutions in making judicial decisions.</p> <p>Students will incorporate language from the Constitution or court briefs to justify a legal decision when interpreting state or federal law.</p> <p>Students will explain the process used by judges at the state and federal level when making a decision or writing summary opinions.</p> <p>Students will contrast the rulings made by different judges through citing language from specific court decisions.</p> <p>Students will demonstrate an understanding of the process that state or federal judges apply to reach a decision.</p>
Content Limits	Items will not require students to speculate on whether state or federal judges made the right decision when issuing an opinion.

Benchmark SS.912.C.3.13	
Strand	C: Civics and Government
Standard	3: Demonstrate an understanding of the principles, functions, and organization of government.
Benchmark	SS.912.C.3.13: Illustrate examples of how government affects the daily lives of citizens at the local, state, and national levels.
Common Core State Standard Connections	Indicate appropriate alignments to the CCSS Literacy Standards for Social Studies whenever applicable. (See Appendix B.)
Benchmark Clarifications	<p>Students will identify local government officials and employees who affect the daily lives of citizens (e.g., law enforcement, mayors, teachers, and transportation workers).</p> <p>Students will identify the role of state governmental officials and employees who affect the daily lives of citizens (e.g., law enforcement, governors, secretary of state, and legislators).</p> <p>Students will identify the role of federal governmental officials and employees who affect the daily lives of citizens (e.g., law enforcement, president, vice president, and military).</p> <p>Students will explain how government at all levels use its resources to impact the daily lives of citizens (e.g., funding of services, protection, and passing new laws).</p> <p>Students will compare current and historical examples of the government impacting the daily lives of its citizens.</p> <p>Examples may include, but are not limited to, education, transportation, crime prevention, and funding of services.</p>
Content Limits	<p>Items will not require students to speculate whether government should intervene in a given situation.</p> <p>Items will not require students to assess the effectiveness of government regarding a specific issue.</p>

Benchmark SS.912.C.3.14	
Strand	C: Civics and Government
Standard	3: Demonstrate an understanding of the principles, functions, and organization of government.
Benchmark	SS.912.C.3.14: Examine constitutional powers (expressed, implied, concurrent, reserved).
Common Core State Standard Connections	Indicate appropriate alignments to the CCSS Literacy Standards for Social Studies whenever applicable. (See Appendix B.)
Benchmark Clarifications	<p>Students will identify that expressed powers are also known as enumerated powers found in Article I of the United States Constitution.</p> <p>Students will identify powers that are expressed in the United States Constitution to Congress (e.g., coin money, declare war, tax).</p> <p>Students will analyze the role of the “general welfare clause” and “necessary and proper clause” in granting Congress implied powers.</p> <p>Students will describe examples of concurrent powers as those powers shared by both state and federal governments (e.g., build roads, tax citizens, make laws).</p> <p>Students will explain how reserved powers define issues as matters for the people or the state governments.</p> <p>Students will compare the roles of expressed, implied, concurrent, and reserved powers in United States federalism.</p>
Content Limits	Item content is limited to the scope and intent of the instructional benchmark as related to the grades 9–12 United States Government course.

Benchmark SS.912.C.3.15	
Strand	C: Civics and Government
Standard	3: Demonstrate an understanding of the principles, functions, and organization of government.
Benchmark	SS.912.C.3.15: Examine how power and responsibility are distributed, shared, and limited by the Constitution.
Common Core State Standard Connections	Indicate appropriate alignments to the CCSS Literacy Standards for Social Studies whenever applicable. (See Appendix B.)
Benchmark Clarifications	<p>Students will examine federalism in the United States to determine the distribution of power between state and federal governments.</p> <p>Students will explain how the three branches of government were instituted as means of distributing, limiting, and sharing power in the United States Constitution.</p> <p>Students will analyze how individual rights are distributed and limited by the language of the United States Constitution and its amendments.</p> <p>Students will describe how expressed, implied, concurrent, and reserved powers distribute, limit, and share power and responsibility in the United States Constitution.</p>
Content Limits	Students will not have to assess whether individuals, states, or the federal government should limit, share, or distribute more of their power.

Benchmark SS.912.C.4.1	
Strand	C: Civics and Government
Standard	4: Demonstrate an understanding of contemporary issues in world affairs, and evaluate the role and impact of United States foreign policy.
Benchmark	SS.912.C.4.1: Explain how the world’s nations are governed differently.
Common Core State Standard Connections	Indicate appropriate alignments to the CCSS Literacy Standards for Social Studies whenever applicable. (See Appendix B.)
Benchmark Clarifications	<p>Students will identify other forms of government utilized in other countries (e.g., communism, monarchy [absolute and constitutional], dictatorship, oligarchy).</p> <p>Students will compare and contrast democracy in the United States with democracies in other countries (e.g., proportional representation, parliamentary, direct).</p> <p>Students will compare and contrast the platforms of political parties found in the United States with the platforms of political parties in other countries.</p> <p>Students will explain the role of supranational political organizations and their effect on governments of other countries (e.g., European Union, African Union).</p> <p>Students will analyze the role of religion in other forms of government and how it impacts governance (e.g., theocracy, sharia law).</p>
Content Limits	Item content is limited to the scope and intent of the instructional benchmark as related to the grades 9–12 United States Government course.

Benchmark SS.912.C.4.2	
Strand	C: Civics and Government
Standard	4: Demonstrate an understanding of contemporary issues in world affairs, and evaluate the role and impact of United States foreign policy.
Benchmark	SS.912.C.4.2: Evaluate the influence of American foreign policy on other nations and the influences of other nations on American policies and society.
Common Core State Standard Connections	Indicate appropriate alignments to the CCSS Literacy Standards for Social Studies whenever applicable. (See Appendix B.)
Benchmark Clarifications	<p>Students will describe how the use of the United States military has influenced foreign policy and the effect it has had on other nations (e.g., Afghanistan, Iraq, Germany, and Japan).</p> <p>Students will identify agencies of the United States government that contribute to its foreign policy agenda (e.g., NSA, CIA).</p> <p>Students will examine how the use of embargos and economic sanctions by the United States has affected other nations (e.g., Cuba, Iran, and Syria).</p> <p>Students will recognize how nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) influence foreign policy (e.g., USAID, Red Cross, American Woman Suffrage Association, and Amnesty International).</p> <p>Students will explain how terrorism has influenced United States' foreign policy and its relationship with nations that harbor terrorists.</p> <p>Students will describe how United States' trade policy influences its relationships with other nations (e.g., NAFTA, China, and Saudi Arabia).</p>
Content Limits	Students will not be required to assess whether the United States should intervene more or less in international matters.

Benchmark SS.912.C.4.3	
Strand	C: Civics and Government
Standard	4: Demonstrate an understanding of contemporary issues in world affairs, and evaluate the role and impact of United States foreign policy.
Benchmark	SS.912.C.4.3: Assess human rights policies of the United States and other countries.
Common Core State Standard Connections	Indicate appropriate alignments to the CCSS Literacy Standards for Social Studies whenever applicable. (See Appendix B.)
Benchmark Clarifications	<p>Students will synthesize human rights policies with data to assess the effectiveness of a given policy.</p> <p>Students will identify the supranational organizations the United States works with to ensure human rights are upheld internationally (e.g., UN, NATO, and G8).</p> <p>Students will describe human rights outlined in the United States Constitution, the Bill of Rights, and other amendments.</p> <p>Students will examine the influences of nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) on human rights policies of the United States and other countries. (e.g., Amnesty International, Human Rights Watch, and Invisible Children).</p> <p>Students will assess the impact of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights on human rights awareness and its effects in the United States and in other countries.</p>
Content Limits	Items will not require students to know an individual country's human rights policies.

Benchmark SS.912.C.4.4	
Strand	C: Civics and Government
Standard	4: Demonstrate an understanding of contemporary issues in world affairs, and evaluate the role and impact of United States foreign policy.
Benchmark	SS.912.C.4.4: Compare indicators of democratization in multiple countries.
Common Core State Standard Connections	Indicate appropriate alignments to the CCSS Literacy Standards for Social Studies whenever applicable. (See Appendix B.)
Benchmark Clarifications	<p>Students will identify different indicators of democratization, including, but not limited to, civil rights, political participation, rule of law, free media, safety, and government responsiveness.</p> <p>Students will compare the level of democratization among different countries using various available reliable data.</p> <p>Students will incorporate the findings of agencies that monitor democratization to assess a given country’s democratization (e.g., Freedom House, Index of Economic Freedom, and Human Development Index).</p> <p>Students will examine the progress of democratization in countries for a given period of time.</p> <p>Students will describe the benefits that some countries have experienced by switching to a democratic form of government (e.g., market economies, social equality, and human empowerment).</p> <p>Examples could feature information including timelines, graphs, tables, charts, or excerpts from primary or secondary sources.</p>
Content Limits	Students will not have to know specific details about a given country’s progress toward democratization.

Benchmark SS.912.G.4.1	
Strand	G: Geography
Standard	4: Understand the characteristics, distribution, and migration of human populations.
Benchmark	SS.912.G.4.1: Interpret population growth and other demographic data for any given place.
Common Core State Standard Connections	Indicate appropriate alignments to the CCSS Literacy Standards for Social Studies whenever applicable. (See Appendix B.)
Benchmark Clarifications	<p>Students will examine changes in population data from states and compare it to redistricting maps for the U.S. House of Representatives.</p> <p>Students will compare maps detailing migration patterns to maps detailing demographics to analyze voting shifts over the course of time.</p> <p>Students will examine Florida state maps detailing population and evaluate the influence of population density on public policy.</p> <p>Students will analyze population maps to determine the changing needs for government services.</p>
Content Limits	Item content is limited to the scope and intent of the instructional benchmark as related to the grades 9–12 United States Government course.

Benchmark SS.912.G.5.5	
Strand	G: Geography
Standard	5: Understand how human actions can impact the environment.
Benchmark	SS.912.G.5.5: Use geographic terms and tools to analyze case studies of policies and programs for resource use and management.
Common Core State Standard Connections	Indicate appropriate alignments to the CCSS Literacy Standards for Social Studies whenever applicable. (See Appendix B.)
Benchmark Clarifications	<p>Students will compare resource management programs in a variety of communities.</p> <p>Students will examine maps to analyze policies concerning future resource use.</p> <p>Students will describe the importance of resource management.</p> <p>Students will evaluate local and state resource use policies.</p>
Content Limits	Students will not have to know specific resource use policies or programs.

Appendix A: Sample Items

Sample Item 1

Grade/Course	Item Type	DOK	NGSSS Benchmark	CCSS Benchmark	Point Value
U.S. Government	SR	2	SS.912.C.1.2: Explain how the Declaration of Independence reflected the political principles of popular sovereignty, social contract, natural rights, and individual rights.	LACC.910.RH.1.2	1

Read this quote from the Declaration of Independence.

“We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness. — That to secure these rights, Governments are instituted among Men, deriving their just powers from the consent of the governed.”

Source: National Archives, public domain

In the quote, the phrase “deriving their powers from the consent of the governed” is best described by which of the following political principles?

- A. civil society
- B. natural rights
- C. individual rights
- D. popular sovereignty

Rationales:

A	This is the idea that society creates order and gives legitimacy to the state.
B	Natural rights refer to those rights that are considered innate and applicable to all people, such as life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness.
C	While individual rights are a keystone of American democracy, the highlighted phrase does not discuss these rights.
D	Correct. Popular sovereignty by definition means that government is legitimate because it reflects the will of the people.

Readability: 11.9

Sample Item 2

Grade/Course	Item Type	DOK	NGSSS Benchmark	CCSS Benchmark	Point Value
U.S. Government	SHR	2	SS.912.C.3.15: Examine how power and responsibility are distributed, shared, and limited by the Constitution.		1

There are several ways in which the United States represents a federal system of government, as described in the box below. Complete the information in the box by writing one more way in which the United States represents a federal system of government.

- Authority is divided between national and state governments.
- Each government has specified powers.
- Some powers are denied to each government.
- The powers are spelled out in a constitution.
- _____

Scoring Exemplar

Correct Answer	Some powers are shared
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Readability: 10.7

Sample Item 3

Grade/Course	Item Type	DOK	NGSSS Benchmark	CCSS Benchmark	Point Value
U.S. Government	CR	2	SS.912.C.1.5: Evaluate how the Constitution and its amendments reflect the political principles of rule of law, checks and balances, separation of powers, republicanism, democracy, and federalism.		2

Two commonly referenced political principles of the United States Constitution are “the separation of powers” and “checks and balances.”

Describe a specific power granted to one of the branches of government. Then explain how the other branches of the government “checks” this power.

Scoring Rubric and Exemplar

Rubric	
2	A score of two indicates that the student has demonstrated a thorough understanding of the social studies concepts applicable to the prompt. The student has provided a complete and correct response to all parts of the prompt. When required, student explanations are clear and complete. The response may contain minor flaws that do not detract from the demonstration of a thorough understanding.
1	A score of one indicates that the student has demonstrated an incomplete understanding of the social studies concepts applicable to the prompt or has provided a response that is only partially correct. The student may have arrived at an acceptable conclusion but with a flawed or weak application of social studies concepts. The student may also have applied the social studies concepts but failed to fully arrive at the conclusion. The response may contain flaws that detract slightly from the demonstration of understanding.
0	A score of zero indicates that the student has not provided a response or has provided a response that does not demonstrate an understanding of the social studies concepts applicable to the prompt. The student’s explanation may be uninterpretable, lack sufficient information to determine the student’s understanding, or contain clear misunderstandings of the underlying social studies concepts. The response may contain major flaws that detract from the demonstration of understanding.

Exemplar

2	The president has the power to veto a bill passed by Congress. Then Congress has the power to override the presidential veto, and the Supreme Court has the power to review laws in order to ensure that the president and Congress are following the Constitution.
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Readability: 10.7

Sample Item 4

Grade/Course	Item Type	DOK	NGSSS Benchmark	CCSS Benchmark	Point Value
U.S. Government	ER	3	SS.912.C.3.10: Demonstrate an understanding of the principles, functions, and organization of government.	LACC.910.WHST.1.2	4

The U.S. Constitution established the judicial branch of the government as an independent judiciary. In the landmark decision *Marbury v. Madison* (1803), the Supreme Court declared the Judiciary Act of 1789 to be unconstitutional. It was the first time the high court had declared a law enacted by Congress to be unconstitutional. It set the precedence for the Supreme Court to have judicial review or the power to interpret the Constitution. This precedent established that the judicial branch upholds the principles of the United States Constitution. During the twentieth century, judicial review was most often applied to cases involving individual rights.

Briefly describe both the background and decision of a specific Supreme Court landmark case that involved an individual rights issue. Explain how that decision has succeeded or failed to protect individual rights. Finally, evaluate how the decision is significant to Americans today or significant to the evolution of the United States as a modern democratic nation.

Scoring Rubric and Exemplar

Rubric	
4	A score of four indicates that the student has demonstrated a thorough understanding of the social studies concepts applicable to the prompt. The student has provided a complete and correct response to all parts of the prompt. The appropriate social studies terminology is used correctly. The response may contain minor flaws that do not detract from a demonstration of a thorough understanding.
3	A score of three indicates that the student has demonstrated an understanding of the social studies concepts applicable to the prompt. The student's response to the prompt is essentially correct, but the social studies explanations and/or interpretations provided are not thorough. The response may contain minor flaws that reflect inattentiveness or indicate some misunderstanding of the underlying social studies concepts.
2	A score of two indicates that the student has demonstrated only a partial understanding of the social studies concepts applicable to the prompt. Although the student may have arrived at an acceptable conclusion, the student's work lacks an essential understanding of the underlying social studies concepts. The response may contain errors related to misunderstanding important aspects of the prompt and misuse of social studies terms.
1	A score of one indicates that the student has demonstrated a very limited understanding of the social studies concepts applicable to the prompt. The student's response is incomplete and exhibits many flaws. Although the student's response has addressed some of the conditions of the prompt, the student has reached an inadequate conclusion. The response exhibits many flaws or may be incomplete.
0	A score of zero indicates that the student has not provided a response or has provided a response that does not demonstrate an understanding of the social studies concepts applicable to the prompt. The student's explanation may be uninterpretable, lack sufficient information to determine the student's understanding, or contain clear misunderstandings of the underlying social studies concepts, or it may be incorrect.

Exemplar

4

Brown v. Board of Education is one of the most important Supreme Court cases in American History. The case involved a group of parents suing the Board of Education of Topeka, Kansas, over its racially segregated schools. A previous Supreme Court ruling, *Plessy v. Ferguson*, had established segregation as Constitutional if it was “separate but equal.” The plaintiffs in *Brown* argued that separate schools were inherently unequal. The Supreme Court ruled in favor of the plaintiffs, and segregated public schools were ruled unconstitutional due to the 14th Amendment.

The Court’s ruling in *Brown v. Board of Education* was a victory for individual rights. It said that government cannot separate people just because of the color of their skin. This let individuals enjoy public services (like schools) regardless of their race. The case’s impact can still be seen today, as students of all races must be welcomed into public schools. Instead of attending segregated schools, modern American children are able to experience diversity.

Readability: 12.0

Sample Item 5

Grade/Course	Item Type	DOK	NGSSS Benchmark	CCSS Benchmark	Point Value
U.S. Government	ESR	3	SS.912.C.2.15: Evaluate the origins and roles of political parties, interest groups, media, and individuals in determining and shaping public policy.	LACC.910.WHST.3.9	6

Examine this political cartoon from the early twentieth century.



Source: National Archives, public domain

The media has used political cartoons to criticize politicians since newspapers first appeared. Since the cartoon above first debuted in 1912, technological advancements have impacted the media's role in shaping public policy.

Write an essay addressing the following questions.

- How has the media's role in shaping public policy changed in the last 100 years?
- How would citizens in 1912 inform themselves compared to citizens in 2012?
- What does this comparison suggest about the media's role in shaping public policy today?

Scoring Rubric and Exemplar

Rubric	
6	A score of six indicates that the student has demonstrated a thorough understanding of the social studies concepts applicable to the prompt. The response demonstrates a thorough understanding of the connections between the social studies concepts and the real-life application. The student has provided a complete and correct response to all parts of the prompt. The appropriate social studies terminology is used correctly. There are no major conceptual errors, though there may be non-detracting minor conceptual errors.
5	A score of five indicates that the student has demonstrated an understanding of the social studies concepts applicable to the prompt. The response demonstrates an understanding of the connections between the social studies concepts and the real-life application. The student has provided a complete and correct response to all parts of the prompt. The appropriate social studies terminology is used. There are no conceptual errors, though there may be minor conceptual errors.
4	A score of four indicates that the student has demonstrated a satisfactory understanding of the social studies concepts applicable to the prompt. The response may attempt connections between the social studies concepts and the real-life application. The student has provided a complete and correct response to most parts of the prompt. There are minor errors in the use of social studies terminology. There are minor conceptual errors or omissions.
3	A score of three indicates that the student has demonstrated a limited understanding of the social studies concepts applicable to the prompt. The response demonstrates a limited attempt to make connections between the social studies concepts and the real-life application. The student attempted to provide a response to two or more parts of the prompt. There is limited use of social studies terminology. The response contains some major conceptual errors or omissions. The response shows limited understanding.
2	A score of two indicates that the student has some understanding of the social studies concepts applicable to the prompt. The response does not demonstrate an attempt to make connections between the social studies concepts and the real-life application. The student attempted to provide a response to one or more parts of the prompt. The use of social studies terminology may be missing. The response contains many major conceptual errors and omissions. The response shows minimal understanding.
1	A score of one indicates that the student made a limited attempt to answer the prompt. Social studies terminology is missing. The response contains many major conceptual errors or omissions. The explanation shows no understanding.
0	A score of zero indicates the student has demonstrated no understanding of the social studies concept or the response is completely unintelligible.

Exemplar

6

The role of the media has changed immensely in the last 100 years. In 1912, there were not as many outlets available for citizens to become informed, especially during elections. There was no television or Internet, which meant that people had to rely on newspapers and radio (when it came along) to learn about what was going on in the country. Since options for receiving news were so limited, a few major newspapers gained a great deal of influence. During the time of this cartoon, powerful newspapers were able to present information in certain ways in order to influence people's interpretations of stories. Sometimes, newspapers would even resort to "yellow journalism" by printing sensational or false stories. Since people did not have access to other forms of news, it was hard for them to know whether the newspapers were being honest.

Today, the media is more open because there are so many outlets for citizens to obtain information about candidates and issues. Ideas that might never have been published by the major newspapers can now be spread across the world using the Internet. This gives the once-powerful news organizations less power to influence how people respond to stories. While the traditional media still influences public policy by providing information and opinion, there are many more voices and outlets in the media today than there were 100 years ago.

Readability: 9.7

Sample Item 6

10 points

Introduction:

Part of being an informed and educated citizen is closely monitoring issues in your community. Citizens can stay updated on issues in their community in a variety of ways. It can be as simple as watching the local news or reading the newspaper. Other ways to stay up-to-date include following media members using social media, finding internet articles related to the topic, and even contacting local politicians and members of the community dedicated to the issue you feel strongly about.

For this performance task, you will identify an issue that you are passionate about in your local community. To begin, you will create a hypothesis about your issue and describe your methods of research. After identifying the issue of your choice, you will complete a variety of tasks that will require you to research and analyze your topic in greater depth than what was included in your original news story.

Component 1

Course	Item Type	DOK	NGSS Benchmark	CCSS Benchmark	Point Value
U.S. Government	CR	3	SS.912.C.2.10	LACC.910.RH.1.2 LACC.910.WHST.1.2	2

Consider some political issues that impact your community, your city, or your state as a whole. These might be issues that are being voted on in an upcoming election or simply issues that you believe are important. Your teacher or classmates may be able to help you brainstorm some ideas. Decide upon one issue that you would like to learn more about.

Once you've decided on a topic, write a short paragraph identifying the issue you have chosen to follow and the sources you'll use to research it. Explain why this is a topic of importance to you or your community. What do you hypothesize is being done by local politicians to address your issue? Why have you chosen a particular source for searching for information?

NOTE: For the next assessment period, take some time to research your issue. Follow the local news in your area by watching local televised news, reading your local newspaper, or checking online sources. Pay close attention to how different groups are approaching this issue and how much attention is being devoted to it in the media.

Component 2

Course	Item Type	DOK	NGSS Benchmark	CCSS Benchmark	Point Value
U.S. Government	ER	3	SS.912.C.2.10	LACC.910.RH.1.2 LACC.910.WHST.1.2	4

Now that you have identified your issue, it is time to dig deeper and gain a greater understanding of your topic. You will complete a report with three paragraphs. You may conduct research during class time and continue researching at home or at the library if you need more time. To score well in Component 2, your research analysis should address the following questions:

What are the different political parties doing regarding your topic? How do you account for these differences?

Check: <http://www.myfloridahouse.gov/sections/bills/bills.aspx> to check whether any bills have been introduced at the state level.

What is the public opinion about your issue? What data do you have to support your claim? Try to find polling data online and report the details.

What have other articles or news reports said about your topic? How has that extended your understanding? Go beyond your initial story; have there been further developments?

Component 3

Course	Item Type	DOK	NGSS Benchmark	CCSS Benchmark	Point Value
U.S. Government	ER	4	SS.912.C.2.10	LACC.910.RH.1.2 LACC.910.WHST.1.2	4

The final portion of this task requires you to use what you've learned about your chosen issue to contribute to an op-ed page similar to those found in many newspapers. Your op-ed piece should consist of one of these three parts:

1. **An editorial:** The editorial will express a newspaper's official opinion on the issue. It should clearly side with one point of view and outline the evidence that supports its argument. It should be written formally and professionally but use persuasive language that seeks to convince the reader to adopt the paper's preferred position on the issue.
2. **A letter to the editor:** The letter to the editor will reflect the opinion of a reader rather than the paper itself. The letter will present an argument in less formal language than the editorial, but should still be well written enough to be published in a newspaper. An editorial also has more leeway for including personal stories and appeals to emotion than an official editorial.
3. **A political cartoon:** The political cartoon should reflect the editorial opinion using images and symbols. All symbols should be clearly labeled, and the cartoon should be able to convey its message without captions or extra explanation.

Modified Rubric/Exemplar

Teacher Instructions:

This performance task consists of three components. The first task requires students to choose a topic of importance and describe their plan to research it in a constructed response worth 2 points. The second task asks students to explain their research findings in an extended response worth four points. The third, and final, task requires students to present their opinions in an op-ed page worth 4 points. The total points available for this performance task are 10 points.

2 points

Component 1

The topic I have chosen to monitor is the new laws that are being put in place regarding voter registration. I read a story in the *Miami Herald* about the governor passing new laws that will affect how people register to vote, and I would like to know more about it. I'll probably do my research on the Internet because it provides so many different perspectives on issues. I am passionate about this topic because I feel everyone should vote for issues and politicians that they feel are important to them. Also, I want my community to elect people that are representative of our values and needs. However, I do not want people who are non-Florida citizens to be able to vote. I hypothesize that people who support the governor are doing what they can to make sure the laws pass; however, I feel those opposing the governor will be trying to block the new laws. This is because I think politicians usually act based on party politics rather than their own opinions on what is right or wrong for the state.

4 points	<p>Component 2</p> <p>The Republican Party for the most part supports the governor’s actions toward purging voter registration records. The Republicans feel strongly about ensuring non-citizens are not allowed to vote, and they want to make sure only Florida citizens have the opportunity to vote. The Democratic Party is largely opposed to the governor’s actions. They are not necessarily arguing that they want non-citizens to vote; instead, they are concerned that some Florida citizens will be blocked from voting for no reason.</p> <p>The public seems to support the governor’s actions. According to polls published by CNN, 60% of Florida voters support the new law. However, CNN also suggests that the person’s political preferences affect their opinion. Voters that see themselves as Republicans tend to like the governor’s new law, as CNN reports 90% do. CNN states that 57% of independent voters like it, but 60% of Democrats do not.</p> <p>I was surprised to find how many articles have been written on this issue. There were reports on CNN, <i>The Huffington Post</i>, <i>The Sarasota Herald-Tribune</i>, <i>Fox News</i>, <i>The Nation</i>, and <i>The Washington Post</i>. I realized that as much as this is a local issue, it has attracted national attention. Florida could have a major impact on the presidential election, which is why it seems so many people are interested. One development that has emerged since I first chose this topic is that the Department of Justice is becoming involved. The Department of Justice is looking into whether or not this new law violates the Voting Rights Act. I will continue to monitor this issue to see if any changes are made to the law.</p>
4 points	<p>Component 3</p> <p>There are many possible ways for students to address this task. However, to achieve a score of four, the student has demonstrated exceptional performance in one of the three categories: editorial, letter to the editor, or cartoon. All arguments (either for the editorial or for the letter to the editor) are written persuasively and use compelling evidence to back up all claims. Cartoons effectively convey their point using images and symbols that are clearly labeled and relevant. The student also succeeded in arranging and organizing the material to resemble an actual part of an OP ED page.</p>

Appendix B: Common Core State Standard Connections

Reading Standards for Literacy in Social Studies—U.S. Government

LACC.910.RH.1.1	Cite specific textual evidence to support analysis of primary and secondary sources, attending to such features as the date and origin of the information.
LACC.910.RH.1.2	Determine the central ideas or information of a primary or secondary source; provide an accurate summary of how key events or ideas develop over the course of the text.
LACC.910.RH.1.3	Analyze in detail a series of events described in a text; determine whether earlier events caused later ones or simply preceded them.
LACC.910.RH.2.4	Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in a text, including vocabulary describing political, social, or economic aspects of history/social science.
LACC.910.RH.2.5	Analyze how a text uses structure to emphasize key points or advance an explanation or analysis.
LACC.910.RH.2.6	Compare the point of view of two or more authors for how they treat the same or similar topics, including which details they include and emphasize in their respective accounts.
LACC.910.RH.3.7	Integrate quantitative or technical analysis (e.g., charts, research data) with qualitative analysis in print or digital text.
LACC.910.RH.3.8	Assess the extent to which the reasoning and evidence in a text support the author’s claims.
LACC.910.RH.3.9	Compare and contrast treatments of the same topic in several primary and secondary sources.
LACC.910.RH.4.10	By the end of grade 10, read and comprehend history/ social studies texts in the grades 9–10 text complexity band independently and proficiently.

Writing Standards for Literacy in Social Studies—U.S. Government

<p>LACC.910.WHST.1.1</p>	<p>Write arguments focused on <i>discipline-specific content</i>.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Introduce precise claim(s), distinguish the claim(s) from alternate or opposing claims, and create an organization that establishes clear relationships among the claim(s), counterclaims, reasons, and evidence. Develop claim(s) and counterclaims fairly, supplying data and evidence for each while pointing out the strengths and limitations of both claim(s) and counterclaims in a discipline-appropriate form and in a manner that anticipates the audience’s knowledge level and concerns. Use words, phrases, and clauses to link the major sections of the text, create cohesion, and clarify the relationships between claim(s) and reasons, between reasons and evidence, and between claim(s) and counterclaims. Establish and maintain a formal style and objective tone while attending to the norms and conventions of the discipline in which they are writing. Provide a concluding statement or section that follows from or supports the argument presented.
<p>LACC.910.WHST.1.1a</p>	<p>Introduce precise claim(s), distinguish the claim(s) from alternate or opposing claims, and create an organization that establishes clear relationships among the claim(s), counterclaims, reasons, and evidence.</p>
<p>LACC.910.WHST.1.1b</p>	<p>Develop claim(s) and counterclaims fairly, supplying data and evidence for each while pointing out the strengths and limitations of both claim(s) and counterclaims in a discipline-appropriate form and in a manner that anticipates the audience’s knowledge level and concerns.</p>
<p>LACC.910.WHST.1.1c</p>	<p>Use words, phrases, and clauses to link the major sections of the text, create cohesion, and clarify the relationships between claim(s) and reasons, between reasons and evidence, and between claim(s) and counterclaims.</p>
<p>LACC.910.WHST.1.1d</p>	<p>Establish and maintain a formal style and objective tone while attending to the norms and conventions of the discipline in which they are writing.</p>
<p>LACC.910.WHST.1.1e</p>	<p>Provide a concluding statement or section that follows from or supports the argument presented.</p>

LACC.910.WHST.1.2	<p>Write informative/explanatory texts, including the narration of historical events, scientific procedures/ experiments, or technical processes.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Introduce a topic and organize ideas, concepts, and information to make important connections and distinctions; include formatting (e.g., headings), graphics (e.g., figures, tables), and multimedia when useful to aiding comprehension. b. Develop the topic with well-chosen, relevant, and sufficient facts, extended definitions, concrete details, quotations, or other information and examples appropriate to the audience’s knowledge of the topic. c. Use varied transitions and sentence structures to link the major sections of the text, create cohesion, and clarify the relationships among ideas and concepts. d. Use precise language and domain-specific vocabulary to manage the complexity of the topic and convey a style appropriate to the discipline and context as well as to the expertise of likely readers. e. Establish and maintain a formal style and objective tone while attending to the norms and conventions of the discipline in which they are writing. f. Provide a concluding statement or section that follows from and supports the information or explanation presented (e.g., articulating implications or the significance of the topic).
LACC.910.WHST.1.2a	<p>Introduce a topic and organize ideas, concepts, and information to make important connections and distinctions; include formatting (e.g., headings), graphics (e.g., figures, tables), and multimedia when useful to aiding comprehension.</p>
LACC.910.WHST.1.2b	<p>Develop the topic with well-chosen, relevant, and sufficient facts, extended definitions, concrete details, quotations, or other information and examples appropriate to the audience’s knowledge of the topic.</p>
LACC.910.WHST.1.2c	<p>Use varied transitions and sentence structures to link the major sections of the text, create cohesion, and clarify the relationships among ideas and concepts.</p>
LACC.910.WHST.1.2d	<p>Use precise language and domain-specific vocabulary to manage the complexity of the topic and convey a style appropriate to the discipline and context as well as to the expertise of likely readers.</p>
LACC.910.WHST.1.2e	<p>Establish and maintain a formal style and objective tone while attending to the norms and conventions of the discipline in which they are writing.</p>

LACC.910.WHST.1.2f	Provide a concluding statement or section that follows from and supports the information or explanation presented (e.g., articulating implications or the significance of the topic).
LACC.910.WHST.2.4	Produce clear and coherent writing in which the development, organization, and style are appropriate to task, purpose, and audience.
LACC.910.WHST.2.5	Develop and strengthen writing as needed by planning, revising, editing, rewriting, or trying a new approach, focusing on addressing what is most significant for a specific purpose and audience.
LACC.910.WHST.2.6	Use technology, including the Internet, to produce, publish, and update individual or shared writing products, taking advantage of technology’s capacity to link to other information and to display information flexibly and dynamically.
LACC.910.WHST.3.7	Conduct short as well as more sustained research projects to answer a question (including a self-generated question) or solve a problem; narrow or broaden the inquiry when appropriate; synthesize multiple sources on the subject, demonstrating understanding of the subject under investigation.
LACC.910.WHST.3.8	Gather relevant information from multiple authoritative print and digital sources, using advanced searches effectively; assess the usefulness of each source in answering the research question; integrate information into the text selectively to maintain the flow of ideas, avoiding plagiarism and following a standard format for citation.
LACC.910.WHST.3.9	Draw evidence from informational texts to support analysis, reflection, and research.
LACC.910.WHST.4.10	Write routinely over extended time frames (time for reflection and revision) and shorter time frames (a single sitting or a day or two) for a range of discipline-specific tasks, purposes, and audiences.

Mathematics Standards for Literacy in Social Studies—U.S. Government

MACC.K12.MP.1.1

Make sense of problems and persevere in solving them.

Mathematically proficient students start by explaining to themselves the meaning of a problem and looking for entry points to its solution. They analyze givens, constraints, relationships, and goals. They make conjectures about the form and meaning of the solution and plan a solution pathway rather than simply jumping into a solution attempt. They consider analogous problems, and try special cases and simpler forms of the original problem in order to gain insight into its solution. They monitor and evaluate their progress and change course if necessary. Older students might, depending on the context of the problem, transform algebraic expressions or change the viewing window on their graphing calculator to get the information they need. Mathematically proficient students can explain correspondences between equations, verbal descriptions, tables, and graphs or draw diagrams of important features and relationships, graph data, and search for regularity or trends. Younger students might rely on using concrete objects or pictures to help conceptualize and solve a problem. Mathematically proficient students check their answers to problems using a different method, and they continually ask themselves, “Does this make sense?” They can understand the approaches of others to solving complex problems and identify correspondences between different approaches.

<p>MACC.K12.MP.3.1</p>	<p>Construct viable arguments and critique the reasoning of others.</p> <p>Mathematically proficient students understand and use stated assumptions, definitions, and previously established results in constructing arguments. They make conjectures and build a logical progression of statements to explore the truth of their conjectures. They are able to analyze situations by breaking them into cases, and can recognize and use counterexamples. They justify their conclusions, communicate them to others, and respond to the arguments of others. They reason inductively about data, making plausible arguments that take into account the context from which the data arose. Mathematically proficient students are also able to compare the effectiveness of two plausible arguments, distinguish correct logic or reasoning from that which is flawed, and—if there is a flaw in an argument—explain what it is. Elementary students can construct arguments using concrete referents such as objects, drawings, diagrams, and actions. Such arguments can make sense and be correct, even though they are not generalized or made formal until later grades. Later, students learn to determine domains to which an argument applies. Students at all grades can listen or read the arguments of others, decide whether they make sense, and ask useful questions to clarify or improve the arguments.</p>
<p>MACC.K12.MP.5.1</p>	<p>Use appropriate tools strategically.</p> <p>Mathematically proficient students consider the available tools when solving a mathematical problem. These tools might include pencil and paper, concrete models, a ruler, a protractor, a calculator, a spreadsheet, a computer algebra system, a statistical package, or dynamic geometry software. Proficient students are sufficiently familiar with tools appropriate for their grade or course to make sound decisions about when each of these tools might be helpful, recognizing both the insight to be gained and their limitations. For example, mathematically proficient high school students analyze graphs of functions and solutions generated using a graphing calculator. They detect possible errors by strategically using estimation and other mathematical knowledge. When making mathematical models, they know that technology can enable them to visualize the results of varying assumptions, explore consequences, and compare predictions with data. Mathematically proficient students at various grade levels are able to identify relevant external mathematical resources, such as digital content located on a website, and use them to pose or solve problems. They are able to use technological tools to explore and deepen their understanding of concepts.</p>

MACC.K12.MP.6.1**Attend to precision.**

Mathematically proficient students try to communicate precisely to others. They try to use clear definitions in discussion with others and in their own reasoning. They state the meaning of the symbols they choose, including using the equal sign consistently and appropriately. They are careful about specifying units of measure, and labeling axes to clarify the correspondence with quantities in a problem. They calculate accurately and efficiently, express numerical answers with a degree of precision appropriate for the problem context. In the elementary grades, students give carefully formulated explanations to each other. By the time they reach high school they have learned to examine claims and make explicit use of definitions.