

Arizona

(Source: *Arizona Standards: Social Studies Standards*, Arizona State Department of Education, May 10, 2000)

The five criteria: An overview

Are the essentials of a civic core specified clearly?	Are the topics teachable within the allotted timeframe?	Do the documents provide a scope and sequence?	Is the essential content required of all students?	Are the important facts and ideas presented coherently across subjects?
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Standards that largely meet the criteria are designated with a full star [★]; standards that partially meet the criteria are designated with a half star [☆]; and standards that do not meet the criteria are designated with an empty star [☆].

Summary:

The Arizona document rates well on two of the five criteria for evaluation. On Criterion #1, most topics in history and civics are specific, clearly stated, and largely jargon-free. From them, schools could select a common core of learning for citizenship. But Criterion #2 is not satisfied. Required topics for middle and high school are too numerous and demanding. As in many states, the geography and economics standards attempt to bring introductory college courses down to the secondary level, complete with the academic vocabulary of the national standards booklets for those subjects. Criterion #3 is partly satisfied. Topics are not arranged or articulated grade by grade but under four grade spans (one through three; four through five; six through eight; and nine through twelve). Topics and even details are repeated across grades and spans, as if different writers wrote different levels. On Criterion #4, the document does not say if its content is required of all students, and Arizona has no current plans to assess social studies learning at the state level. Finally, Criterion #5 is not applied, in spite of the point in the standards' introduction that history "integrates the humanities (such as art and literature) and the social sciences (political science, economics, and geography)." Arizona isolates history, civics, geography, and economics into separate strands. Authors of the four strands do not seem to have worked together to avoid overlap and repetition. This weakens the document's usefulness to teachers, to the disadvantage of all four subjects.

Particulars:

History standards for grades four to five imply a course on Arizona and another on American history through the Revolution. Together, the two reflect 32 main topics embodying some 70 subtopics for history, a teachable number for these grades. But civics, geography, and economics add another 34 main topics with 88 items. Nine civics topics, with nineteen items, are on the Constitution. They are separate from history and repetitive, but teachers could easily integrate them if they had time. Of 25 topics with 69 items for geography and economics, two-thirds could also have been integrated with Arizona and U.S. history.

Topic overload is worse in grades six to eight and nine to twelve. Middle school has an average of 50 main topics with 100 separate items each year. High school has an average of 50 main topics, embodying 150 separate items. In addition are "Distinction" or "Honors" top-

ics for each high school subject: six topics with eleven items in history; 39 topics with 68 items in civics; fourteen topics with 28 items in economics; 42 topics with 93 items in geography. Geography adds eight topics with sixteen items under physical geography, taught under Arizona's science standards.

The grades six to eight U.S. history topics to Reconstruction are fairly strong. The long topics list is missing pre-Civil War humanitarian reforms, immigration and nativism, and the early labor movement, all engaging for middle-schoolers and politically instructive. Civil War causes and turning-points are cited, but missing are the hostile interests at stake in Reconstruction, central to its failure in concept and practice. Still, the Klan and Jim Crow laws appear, showing that Lincoln's Second Inaugural prayer was in vain; a lawful union was still a distant hope.

The U.S. history and civics standards for grades nine to twelve are unusually strong, including a list of the forces of rapid economic expansion after the Civil War, helping students see contrasts between our experiences and those of today's developing countries. Although missing in many states, the document includes the violent opposition to labor unions, the farmers' problems behind Populism, President Theodore Roosevelt's conservationism, and the imperialism debate over the Philippines. The causes and course of World War II are absent, as is the cold war. Both are done earlier in world history, but this blurs the reasons for America's reversal of postwar policies, domestic and foreign, from those of post-World War I. The civics standards capture the origins of American political ideas, in Judeo-Christian teachings, Greek democracy, and Roman republican government. History and civics standards together should prove effective, if not swamped by the many, and often abstract, items in geography and economics.

World history, grade spans six-eight and nine-twelve

As in many states, Arizona standards for U.S. history are better for political education than those for the history of the world and the West. In grades six to eight, the ancient world to c. 1500, most standards are general, without detail to help teachers develop them. The demagoguery, factions, and imperialism that felled both Athens and Rome's republic, from which the American founders drew lessons, are missing. Later, the topic "reasons for the fall of Rome" is not helpful without a few details on its decline, some of which concern us today. Feudalism and the Magna Carta are listed but not connected, as they must be for students to see why internal balances of power are indispensable for limited government and meaningful elections.

World history in grades nine to twelve has some of the same needs. All revolutions—English, Scientific, American, French, Latin American—are crowded under one main topic, without events or ideas, even of the Enlightenment or the "laws of nature" applied to society, so much debated by our founders. Missing are nineteenth-century British and European reforms, political and social, the effects of expanded suffrage, legal labor unions, and skilled parliamentary leaders. The crushing of Russian moderates in 1917 is missing, as is that of Weimar moderates, each riveting lessons on conditions dangerous to constitutional government, which led to the Gulags and the Holocaust as surely as Marxist ideas and Nazi racist theories did. Lastly, the world history standards do not deal with current global issues.

Overall Arizona's history and civics standards are better than most, but still lack key topics and are so over-stuffed with others that it is difficult to imagine how they could garner enough instructional time (especially given the unrealistic demands of the geography and economics standards).