

# Indiana

(Source: *Indiana's Academic Standards: Social Studies, 2001*, Indiana Department of Education)

---

## 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?
★	☆	★	★	★

---

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:

Indiana's standards wholly meet Criterion #1 on critical specifics, but their sheer volume cannot satisfy Criterion #2, on teachability within the limits of instructional time. On Criterion #3, scope and sequence, the Indiana document sets Indiana studies in grade four; U.S. history to c.1800 in grade five; regional studies of Europe and the Americas in grade six; studies of Africa, Asia, and Australia in grade seven; U.S. history from origins to Reconstruction in grade eight. As elsewhere, high school courses are not assigned to grades. U.S. history runs from Reconstruction to the present after a brief review of prior eras. World history, not required, is a survey from human origins. State requirements only partly meet Criterion #4. A year of U.S. history and a term of American government are required of all students; state tests are planned for grade five in 2003, grade seven in 2005, and grade nine in 2007. On Criterion #5, the level of subject matter integration among the kindergarten to eighth-grade strands of civics, economics, geography, and history is unusually high. Grades nine-ten have no separate strands; content is integrated in the U.S. and world history courses.

### Particulars:

Indiana standards show evidence of hard and careful work, with more than usual attention to other state, national, and scholarly models. The pitfalls of many social studies standards have been avoided. The kindergarten to eighth grades carry a fifth strand, "Individuals, Society, and Culture," and some of its items could be taught better with civics and history topics. But most are well matched with the times and places of each grade's main course, so that teachers may easily integrate them on their own.

Once high school world history (and thereby Western civilization) is required and strengthened in the grades six and seven regional courses, Indiana social studies will suffer only from the problem of topic overload. It begins in grade five U.S. history, with 58 main headings embodying some 127 separate topics. Grades six and seven ask for 165 and 160, respectively. The grade eight U.S. history course has 76 main headings with 180 topics, more than one a day over the real teaching year, including such broad items as "Analyze different interests and points of view of individuals and groups involved in the abolitionist, feminist, and social reform movements and in sectional conflicts." High school U.S. history has 78 headings with 177 topics. These do not count well-chosen but numberless examples in small

print in both grades.

The high school survey course in world history is inevitably overstuffed with 98 main headings and 180 topics, many very broad yet without vital detail for civic education (e.g., “Explain the concept of ‘the Enlightenment’ in European history, and describe its impact upon political thought and government in Europe, North America, and other regions of the world”).

It is precisely to rescue the strengths embedded in the Indiana standards that they should be refined and pared down, and their priorities established, especially for world history in grades six, seven, and high school, before they lose credibility for teachers who must face statewide assessments of student achievement in the near future.