

Introduction

The Code of Maryland Regulations (COMAR) 13A.04.08.01, Requirements for Social Studies Instructional Programs for Grades Prekindergarten – 12 states that, “each local education agency shall provide in public schools an instructional program in social studies each year for all students in grades prekindergarten – 8; and offer in public schools a social studies program in grades 9 – 12 which enables students to meet graduation requirements and to select social studies electives.”

State Frameworks are developed by the Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE) to support local education agencies in providing high-quality instructional programs in social studies. State Frameworks are defined as supporting documents and provide guidance for implementing the State Standards in Social Studies which are reviewed and adopted by the Maryland State Board of Education every eight years. State Frameworks also provide consistency in learning expectations for students in social studies programs across the twenty-four local education agencies as local curriculum is developed and adopted using these documents as a foundation.

MSDE shall update the State Frameworks in Social Studies in the manner and time the State Superintendent of Schools determines is necessary to ensure alignment with best-in-class, research-based practices. Tenure and stability of State Frameworks affords local education agencies the necessary time to procure supporting instructional materials, provide professional development, and to measure student growth within the program. State Frameworks in Elementary social studies grades Prekindergarten – 5 were developed, reviewed, and revised by teams of Maryland educators and practitioners, including local education agency content curriculum specialists, classroom teachers, and academic researchers and experts in close collaboration with MSDE. The most recent updates to the Social Studies Frameworks were reviewed, refined, and validated through a comprehensive process led by the Standards and Frameworks Validation Committee (SFVC)—a statewide group representing diverse perspectives—in close partnership with MSDE.

The Grade 1 Social Studies Framework was revised in June 2025.

Course Overview

The Elementary Framework provides the foundational knowledge and skills necessary for young students to become empowered, informed, and socially responsible citizens. Through the study of history, geography, economics, and civics, students learn to interact with, and contribute to the world in which they live. Learning how to evaluate sources of information, craft arguments based on evidence, and take informed action helps students develop their civic identity and voice. Additionally, elementary social studies prepares students to meet the challenge of secondary social studies content and supports literacy development across subject areas. The elementary framework is designed to highlight opportunities in which the English language arts reading, writing, and speaking and listening standards can be integrated into the social studies class. In grades PreK – 3, content is organized within units of study that introduce and reinforce knowledge of the six Maryland State Social Studies Standards. In grades 4 – 5, the state social studies standards are integrated into an overview of the history of the United States, using Maryland’s key figures and events as a lens into the national story. The framework broadens the historical narrative by including marginalized groups and encourages students to learn more about all members of their communities through the inquiry process.

To help students in acquiring these understandings, the content of the framework is structured by the following six state social studies standards:

STANDARD	DESCRIPTION OF STANDARD
Standard 1.0: Civics	Students shall inquire about the historical development of the fundamental concepts and processes of authority, power, and influence with particular emphasis on civic reasoning in order to become informed, responsible citizens, engage in the political process, and contribute to society.
Standard 2.0: Peoples of the Nations and World	Students shall inquire about the people of the United States and the world using a historically grounded, multidisciplinary approach in order to recognize multiple narratives and acknowledge the diversity and commonality of the human experience.
Standard 3.0: Geography	Students shall inquire about the role of culture, technology, and the environment in the location, distribution, and impact of human activities using geographic tools and spatial thinking in order to demonstrate a significance of place.

STANDARD	DESCRIPTION OF STANDARD
Standard 4.0: Economics	Students will inquire about decisions made by individuals and groups using economic reasoning in order to understand the historical development and current status of economic principles, institutions, and processes needed to be effective citizens, consumers, and workers participating in local communities, the nation, and the world.
Standard 5.0: History	Students will inquire about significant events, ideas, beliefs, and themes to identify patterns, trends, and to analyze how individuals and societies have changed over time to make connections to the present in their communities, Maryland, the United States, and the world.
Standard 6.0: Skills and Processes	Students will inquire about civics, geography, economics, history, and people and nations of the world using disciplinary literacy skills and processes to critically evaluate content through a variety of source materials across disciplines and use reading, writing, and other forms of communication to develop, defend, and critique arguments in order to take informed action.

Standard 6.0

The four dimensions of The Inquiry Arc are reflected in Maryland's Standard 6.0:

1. **Developing Questions & Planning Inquiries** – constructing compelling and supporting questions, planning inquiries, and determining helpful sources.
2. **Applying Disciplinary Concepts & Tools** – applying the disciplinary concepts and tools of civics, geography, economics, and history.
3. **Evaluating Sources & Using Evidence** – evaluating sources, identifying credible, relevant information contained in sources, using evidence to support and develop claims.
4. **Communicating and Critiquing Conclusions & Taking Informed Action** – communicating and presenting claims, critiquing claims, and identifying ways to address problems in their communities.

Throughout the course, students should be employing the social studies skills and processes delineated in the 6.0 Skills and Processes standard. Organizing these skills is the Inquiry Arc which provides a structure to facilitate effective instruction in social studies.

The Inquiry Arc**ELA Integration**

Effective integration of English language arts standards into social studies curriculum affords students the opportunity to enrich their understanding of essential social studies content, develop civic reasoning, geographic and economic analysis, and historical thinking skills while simultaneously improving literacy development. When designing social studies units of study, teachers are encouraged to address ELA standards as they design instruction and assessment for the social studies standards. Additional detail regarding the indicators and objectives associated with Standard 6.0 can be found at [MSDE Social Studies homepage](#). Connections between Standard 6.0, media literacy, and English language arts standards in reading, writing, and speaking and listening can be found at the [MSDE English Language Arts homepage](#).

Using this document:

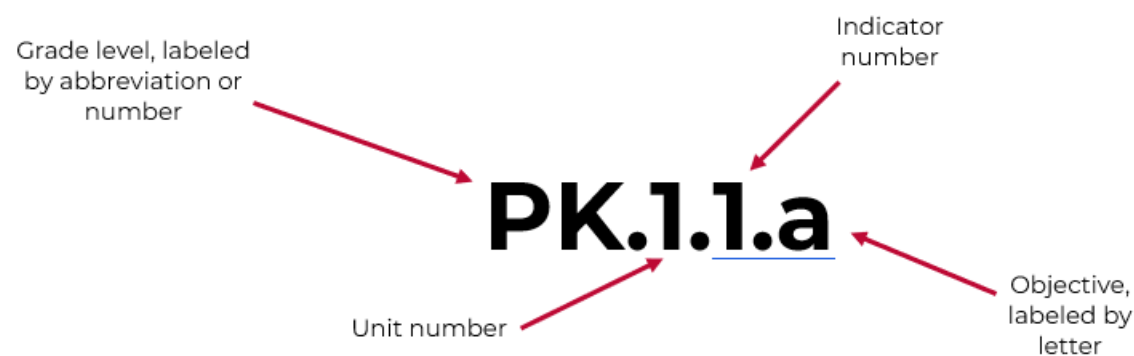
The organization of the framework is uniform throughout the entire document. On this page the key terms that are used are defined to support the use of the document.

Sample Unit Template

Unit Enduring Understanding: An **enduring understanding** is the overarching, conceptual guideline for the unit. Enduring understandings explain why this unit is important and connect important concepts and processes to history and the world today.

Unit Question: A **unit question** connects the big ideas in the enduring understandings and essential questions to the period of study. Everything in the unit contributes to answering this question.

Layout of Social Studies Content: The coding of the framework serves to assist educators' instructional organization and structure. The coding begins with grade level, followed by unit, indicator and objective. Grade levels use either a short abbreviation (e.g., PK for Prekindergarten) or a number (1). Units and indicators use numbers (e.g., PK Unit 1's first indicator is coded as PK.1.1.). Finally, objectives are coded as lowercase letters following the grade, unit, and indicator (e.g., first objective of PK Unit 1's first indicator is coded as PK.1.1.a).



CONTENT TOPIC	ESSENTIAL QUESTION	INDICATOR AND OBJECTIVES
The content topic indicates the umbrella under which several common topics are organized for study.	Essential questions help students unpack the big ideas in the enduring understandings and social studies thinking skills. These are questions that can be asked and answered in different times and places.	Indicator statements assist teachers in determining how to link specific content to be studied to the essential question. • Objectives provide teachers with detailed information regarding what specific learning should occur.

Layout of English Language Arts (ELA) Content

READING	WRITING	SPEAKING AND LISTENING
English language arts reading standards identify opportunities for teachers to integrate the ELA standards in their social studies units. These could be used to access social studies content contained in the unit question.	English language arts writing standards identify opportunities for teachers to integrate the ELA standards in their social studies units. These could be used to express social studies content contained in the unit question.	English language arts speaking and listening standards identify opportunities for teachers to integrate the ELA standards in their social studies units. These could be used to access and express social studies content contained in the unit question.

Unit 1: Civics

Unit Enduring Understanding: Rules, leaders, responsibilities, and symbols help us shape and demonstrate our citizenship.

Unit Question: How can I be a responsible and engaged citizen?

Unit Content

CONTENT TOPIC	ESSENTIAL QUESTION	INDICATOR AND OBJECTIVES
Community	How do communities help individuals and groups?	1.1.1 Students will be able to explain the importance of community by: - identifying communities that are unique and common to students. (1.1.1.a) - explaining how community members and leaders work together to create and uphold rules to promote fairness and safety for its members. (1.1.1.b) - recognizing the impact and contributions of their community leaders. (1.1.1.c) - analyzing celebrations and traditions that are shared by members of a school community. (1.1.1.d) - identifying the benefits and responsibilities of being a part of a community. (1.1.1.e)
Leadership	Why are leaders important?	1.1.2 Students will be able to explain the importance of leaders by: - identifying leaders in the classroom, school, home, and community. (1.1.2.a) - explaining the purpose and responsibilities of a leader to promote the common good. (1.1.2.b) - describing the characteristics of a good leader. (1.1.2.c)

CONTENT TOPIC	ESSENTIAL QUESTION	INDICATOR AND OBJECTIVES
Cooperation	Why is it important that people work together toward a common goal?	1.1.3 Students will be able to describe the importance of cooperation by: - defining cooperation as the efforts made by a group of people with multiple points of view to meet a common goal. (1.1.3.a) - analyzing examples of how cooperation helps accomplish tasks at home and school. (1.1.3.b) - identifying shared goals of the school community. (1.1.3.c) - explaining why school goals require the collaborative effort of the school community members and cannot be reached by individuals alone. (1.1.3.d)
Problem Solving	How do communities work together to solve problems?	1.1.4 Students will analyze community problem solving by: - analyzing a community problem and creating potential solutions for the common good. (1.1.4.a) - identifying how multiple perspectives in a community can complicate but also enrich conflict resolution. (1.1.4.b) - applying the key steps of the voting process including the nomination of ideas, the discussion of those ideas, and the voting for selection of those ideas. (1.1.4.c) - voting on possible solutions for community problems. (1.1.4.d)

CONTENT TOPIC	ESSENTIAL QUESTION	INDICATOR AND OBJECTIVES
Civic Engagement	Why is it important to be civically engaged?	1.1.5 Students will be able to explain the importance of civic engagement by: - defining civic engagement as being an active learner and participating in the community. (1.1.5.a) - identifying how students can be civically engaged in the classroom, home, school, and community. (1.1.5.b) - comparing tools of communication that are used to be an active participant in the community. (1.1.5.c) - describing how civically engaged individuals impact their community. (1.1.5.d)

ELA Integration

READING	WRITING	SPEAKING AND LISTENING
RI.1.1 Ask and answer questions about key details in a text. RI.1.2 Identify the main topic and retell key details of a text.	W.1.1 Write opinion pieces in which they introduce the topic or name the book they are writing about, state an opinion, supply a reason for the opinion, and provide some sense of closure. W.1.2 Write informative/explanatory texts in which they name a topic, supply some facts about the topic, and provide some sense of closure.	SL.1.1 Participate in collaborative conversations with diverse partners about grade 1 topics and texts with peers and adults in small and larger groups. SL.1.2 Ask and answer questions about key details in a text read aloud or presented orally or through other media.

READING	WRITING	SPEAKING AND LISTENING
RI.1.3 Describe the connection between two individuals, events, ideas, or pieces of information in a text. RI.1.4 Ask and answer questions to help determine or clarify the meaning of words and phrases in a text. RI.1.5 Know and use various text features (e.g. headings, tables of contents, glossaries, electronic menus, icons) to locate key facts or information in a text. RI.1.6 Distinguish between information provided by pictures or other illustrations and information provided by the words in a text RI.1.7 Use the illustrations and details in a text to describe its key ideas. RI.1.8 Identify the reasons an author gives to support points in a text.	W.1.3 Write narratives in which they recount two or more appropriately sequenced events, include some details regarding what happened, use temporal words to signal event order, and provide some sense of closure. W.1.5 With guidance and support from adults, focus on a topic, respond to questions and suggestions from peers, and add details to strengthen writing as needed. W.1.6 With guidance and support from adults, use a variety of digital tools to produce and publish writing, including in collaboration with peers. W.1.7 Participate in shared research and writing projects (e.g., explore a number of “how-to” books on a given topic and use them to write a sequence of instructions. W.1.8 With guidance and support from adults, recall information from experiences or gather information from provided sources to answer a question.	SL.1.3 Ask and answer questions about what a speaker says in order to gather additional information or clarify something that is not understood. SL.1.4 Describe people, places, things, and events with relevant details, expressing ideas and feelings clearly. SL.1.5 Add drawings or other visual displays to descriptions when appropriate to clarify ideas, thoughts, and feelings. SL.1.6 Produce complete sentences when appropriate to task and situation SL.1.6 Produce complete sentences when appropriate to task and situation.

READING	WRITING	SPEAKING AND LISTENING
RI.1.9 Identify basic similarities in and differences between two texts on the same topic (e.g., illustrations, descriptions, or procedures). RI.1.10 With prompting and support, read informational texts appropriately complex for grade 1.		

Unit 2: Geography

Unit Enduring Understanding: Geographic tools can be used in order to identify locations, describe places in the world, and explain the movement of people, goods, and ideas.

Unit Question: How do geographic tools help people understand where they live in the world?

Unit Content

CONTENT TOPIC	ESSENTIAL QUESTION	INDICATOR AND OBJECTIVES
Place	What makes our school community's location special?	1.2.1 Students will be able to explain how location makes their community unique by: • applying cardinal directions on maps, globes, GPS, and Google Earth. (1.2.1.a) • describing the relative location of Maryland by identifying the equator and north and south poles. (1.2.1.b) • identifying continents and oceans near and far from Maryland on maps and globe. (1.2.1.c) • locating key physical features and human-made features in their school community using maps and other geographic tools. (1.2.1.d) • describing where places are located in their school community on a map using relative distance and direction, such as near-far, above-below and cardinal directions (north, south, east, and west). (1.2.1.e) • analyzing the school's community using bird's eye view that includes important landmarks in a school or community. (1.2.1.f)

CONTENT TOPIC	ESSENTIAL QUESTION	INDICATOR AND OBJECTIVES
Human and Environmental Interaction	How does where we live impact how we live?	1.2.2 Students will analyze the unique human and environmental interactions in their school community by: - contrasting how regions across Maryland modify their environment to meet changing needs for shelter. (1.2.2.a) - describing why and how people in Maryland protect the environment. (1.2.2.b) - explaining how people adapt to changes in the environment. (1.2.2.c)
Movement of People, Goods and Ideas	How does movement of goods and ideas influence the growth of community?	1.2.3 Students will describe how transportation and communication link people and places by the movement of goods and ideas by: - explaining how transportation links goods and people both near and far. (1.2.3.a) - explaining how communication links people to ideas both near and far. (1.2.3.b) - identifying goods and ideas that make their community special and come from both near and far. (1.2.3.c)

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Unit 3: Economics

Unit Enduring Understanding: Communities are shaped by wants and needs.

Unit Question: How does the economy impact you and your community?

Unit Content

CONTENT TOPIC	ESSENTIAL QUESTION	INDICATOR AND OBJECTIVES
Scarcity	Why can't we have everything we want in school?	1.3.1 Students will analyze the role of scarcity in their lives by: - explaining why limited productive resources create scarcity. (1.3.1.a) - identifying natural and human productive resources in schools. (1.3.1.b) - explaining why natural and human productive resources are limited in schools. (1.3.1.c)
Trade	Why do people trade goods and services?	1.3.2 Students will analyze trade by: - identifying goods and services that are provided by a school and local businesses. (1.3.2.a) - identifying barter as a form of trade. (1.3.2.b) - explaining that people benefit when they trade voluntarily. (1.3.2.c) - describing times when they have traded, the goods or services that were exchanged, and the benefit they got from the trade. (1.3.2.d)

CONTENT TOPIC	ESSENTIAL QUESTION	INDICATOR AND OBJECTIVES
Decision Making	How can people make good decisions?	1.3.3 Students will analyze decision making by: - determining that people make choices because of limited resources. (1.3.3.a) - identifying that incentives influence the choices we make. (1.3.3.b) - explaining that the consequences of choices lie in the future. (1.3.3.c) - identifying trade-offs as the options that people give up when they make a choice. (1.3.3.d)
Personal Finance	Why do people borrow goods and services?	1.3.4 Students will analyze borrowing and lending by: - identifying times when people borrow and lend goods or services. (1.3.4.a) - determining that people lend goods and services to help others and to benefit. (1.3.4.b) - explaining potential risks and benefits associated with lending and borrowing. (1.3.4.c) - explaining the importance of paying back borrowed goods and services to the lender. (1.3.4.d)

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Unit 4: History

Unit Enduring Understanding: Historians use tools to understand the past.

Unit Question: What was school like in the past?

Unit Content

CONTENT TOPIC	ESSENTIAL QUESTION	INDICATOR AND OBJECTIVES
Chronology	How do we organize time?	1.4.1 Students will analyze change over time by: - analyzing school schedules to determine past, present, and future. (1.4.1.a) - classifying activities of the day according to themes. (1.4.1.b) - constructing personal timelines that show events from the past, present, and dreams for the future. (1.4.1.c)
Life in the Past	How is our school different today than in the past?	1.4.2 Students will analyze life in the past by: - analyzing photographs, images, and text from schools in the past. (1.4.2. a) - comparing images and text descriptions of schools from the past with today. (1.4.2.b) - explaining how life today is similar and different than in the past using evidence from a variety of sources. (1.4.2.c)

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