

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 5 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:

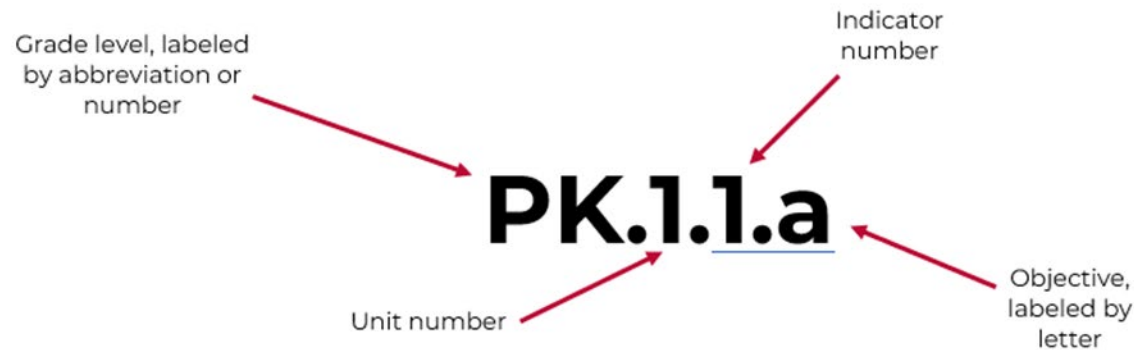
The organization of the framework is uniform throughout the entire document. On this page the key terms that are used are defined to support the use of the document.

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: Development of American Government (1780-1789)

Unit Enduring Understanding: The Constitution establishes the rules, virtues, and organization of the United States government.

Unit Question: Why do we limit the power of government?

Unit Content

CONTENT TOPIC	ESSENTIAL QUESTION	INDICATOR AND OBJECTIVES
Conflicts and Compromises at the Constitutional Convention	How and why is power distributed in the United States Constitution?	5.1.1 Students will examine the distribution of power in the United States Constitution by: - determining how disagreements among the states and federal government under the Articles of Confederation led to people wanting to reform the government. (5.1.1.a) - assessing the promises set forth in the Preamble. (5.1.1.b) - evaluating the principles of separation of powers and checks and balances. (5.1.1.c) - critiquing the Great Compromise and Three-Fifths Compromise. (5.1.1.d) - identifying scope of powers within branches and levels of government. (5.1.1.e) - distinguishing the powers and responsibilities of government on the federal, state, and local levels. (5.1.1.f) - evaluating how perspectives and decisions at the Constitutional Convention limited the definition of citizenship. (5.1.1.g) - analyzing the roles and powers between the executive, legislative, and judicial branches of the Maryland state government. (5.1.1.h)

CONTENT TOPIC	ESSENTIAL QUESTION	INDICATOR AND OBJECTIVES
Bill of Rights	How does the Bill of Rights protect citizens of the United States?	5.1.2 Students will examine the implications of the Bill of Rights by: - analyzing how individuals with varying interests contributed to the emergence of the federalists and antifederalists perspectives. (5.1.2.a) - appraising how Maryland's Declaration of Rights influenced the debate over ratification between Daniel Carroll, Luther Martin, and John Francis Mercer. (5.1.2.b) - identifying the purpose and importance of the first ten Amendments of the United States Constitution. (5.1.2.c) - exploring how the amendments are exercised in contemporary times in Maryland and the nation. (5.1.2.d)

ELA Integration

READING	WRITING	SPEAKING AND LISTENING
RI.5.1 Quote accurately from a text when explaining what the text says explicitly and when drawing inferences from the text. RI.5.2 Determine two or more main ideas of a text and explain how they are supported by key details; summarize the text.	W.5.1 Write opinion pieces on topics or texts, supporting a point of view with reasons and information. W.5.2 Write informative/explanatory texts to examine a topic and convey ideas and information clearly.	SL.5.1 Engage effectively in a range of collaborative discussions (one-on-one, in groups, and teacher-led) with diverse partners on grade 5 topics and texts, building on others' ideas and expressing their own clearly. SL.5.2 Summarize a written text read aloud or information presented in diverse media and formats, including visually, quantitatively, and orally

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RI.5.3 Explain the relationships or interactions between two or more individuals, events, ideas, or concepts in a historical, scientific, or technical text based on specific information in the text. RI.5.4 Determine the meaning of general academic and domain-specific words and phrases in a text relevant to a grade 5 topic or subject area. RI.5.5 Compare and contrast the overall structure (e.g., chronology, comparison, cause/effect, problem/solution) of events, ideas, concepts, or information in two or more texts. RI.5.6 Analyze multiple accounts of the same event or topic, noting important similarities and differences in the point of view they represent. RI.5.7 Draw on information from multiple print or digital sources, demonstrating the ability to locate an answer to a question quickly or to solve a problem efficiently.	W.5.3 Write narratives to develop real or imagined experiences or events using effective technique, descriptive details, and clear event sequences. W.5.4 Produce clear and coherent writing in which the development and organization are appropriate to task, purpose, and audience. W.5.5 With guidance and support from peers and adults, develop and strengthen writing as needed by planning, revising, editing, rewriting, or trying a new approach. W.5.6 With some guidance and support from adults, use technology, including the Internet, to produce and publish writing as well as to interact and collaborate with others; demonstrate sufficient command of keyboarding skills to type a minimum of two pages in a single sitting. W.5.7 Conduct short research projects that use several sources to build knowledge through investigation of different aspects of a topic.	SL.5.3 Summarize the points a speaker makes and explain how each claim is supported by reasons and evidence. SL.5.4 Report on a topic or text or present an opinion, sequencing ideas logically and using appropriate facts and relevant, descriptive details to support main ideas or themes; speak clearly at an understandable pace. SL.5.5 Include multimedia components (e.g., graphics, sound) and visual displays in presentations when appropriate to enhance the development of main ideas or themes. SL.5.6 Adapt speech to a variety of contexts and tasks, using formal English when appropriate to task and situation.

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RI.5.8 Explain how an author uses reasons and evidence to support particular points in a text, identifying which reasons and evidence support which point(s). RI.5.9 Integrate information from several texts on the same topic in order to write or speak about the subject knowledgeably. RI.5.10 By the end of the year, read and comprehend informational texts, including history/social studies, science, and technical texts, at the high end of the grades 4-5 text complexity band independently and proficiently.	W.5.8 Recall relevant information from experiences or gather relevant information from print and digital sources; summarize or paraphrase information in notes and finished work, and provide a list of sources. W.5.9 Draw evidence from literary or informational texts to support analysis, reflection, and research. W.5.10 Write routinely over extended time frames (time for research, 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.	

Unit 2: Challenges of a New and Expanding Nation (1800 – 1900)

Unit Enduring Understanding: The Civil War demonstrated that the Constitution is a living document.

Unit Question: How did the Civil War challenge and change the Constitution?

Unit Content

CONTENT TOPIC	ESSENTIAL QUESTION	INDICATOR AND OBJECTIVES
Conflicts over Slavery and the Civil War	How did conflicts over slavery result in the Civil War?	5.2.1 Students will identify slavery as the central cause of the Civil War by: - contrasting the role of slavery in the North and South as it defined their distinct and interdependent economies and culture, including in Maryland. (5.2.1.a) - analyzing Maryland's unique role as a hub for industry and transportation as it contributed to national growth and sectional conflict. (5.2.1.b) - comparing forms of resistance used by Harriet Tubman, Frederick Douglass, and the abolitionist movement. (5.2.1.c) - evaluating how the Supreme Court, federal law, and individual action increased the conflict over slavery. (5.2.1.d) - examining the significance of Maryland's status as a border state in order to explain why there was conflict in Maryland. (5.2.1.e)

CONTENT TOPIC	ESSENTIAL QUESTION	INDICATOR AND OBJECTIVES
Aftermath of the Civil War	How did the conclusion of the Civil War affect the United States (North and South) and Maryland?	5.2.2 Students will evaluate the effects of the Civil War by: - explaining the economic, political, and social impact of the war in the North, the South, and in Maryland. (5.2.2.a) - analyzing the 13th, 14th, and 15th Amendments and how Jim Crow and state voting regulations limited the citizenship granted to African Americans. (5.2.2.b) - evaluating the successes and failures of the Freedmen's Bureau. (5.2.2.c) - comparing the founding missions of the four historically black colleges and universities in Maryland that were formed between 1865 – 1900. (5.2.2.d)
Urbanization, Industrialization, and Immigration	Do the benefits of post-Civil War industrialization outweigh the costs?	5.2.3 Students will analyze the transformations in the movement of goods, people and ideas by: - evaluating how the emergence of new industries, technologies, and manufacturing processes impacted the standard of living and daily lives for Marylanders. (5.2.3.a) - identifying changes in immigration and settlement patterns in Maryland. (5.2.3.b) - assessing how mass urbanization led to reforms that improved the quality of life for citizens of Baltimore. (5.2.3.c)

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Unit 3: U.S. The Challenges of American Economic, Political, and Civic Life (1900 - today)

Unit Enduring Understanding: Americans continue to contest, uphold, and redefine freedom, citizenship, and rights.

Unit Question: What does it mean to be living and learning in the “the land of the free?”

Unit Content

CONTENT TOPIC	ESSENTIAL QUESTION	INDICATOR AND OBJECTIVES
Freedom of Information	What does it mean to have an informed citizenry?	5.3.1 Students will analyze the freedom of the press by: - analyzing examples of the media upholding a free and democratic society. (5.3.1.a) - analyzing how interpretations of First Amendment rights to speech and press have changed over time. (5.3.1.b) - developing critical media literacy and online civic literacy skills as they pertain to being an informed citizen in the 21st century. (5.3.1.c)
Individuals as Tools for Change	How have members of my community supported and expanded freedom for its members?	5.3.2 Students will analyze local community leaders by: - explaining how historical or contemporary local unelected community leaders addressed local needs. (5.3.2.a) - describing ways that people have benefitted from and been challenged by working together including through government, work-places, voluntary organizations, and families. (5.3.2.b)

CONTENT TOPIC	ESSENTIAL QUESTION	INDICATOR AND OBJECTIVES
Institutions as tools of Change	How have institutions defined and defended freedom?	5.3.3 Students will analyze the role of institutions in shaping American ideas of freedom by: - assessing the effectiveness of presidential or congressional foreign policy decisions that impacted trade, human rights, and/or national security. (5.3.3.a) - evaluating the effectiveness of presidential, congressional, or judicial domestic decisions on American ideas, freedoms, the rights of individuals and groups, and to maintain order and/or provide safety. (5.3.3.b)
Contesting, Upholding, and Redefining Freedom, Rights, and Citizenship: Civil Rights	How has government evolved to expand the meaning of “We the People”?	5.3.4 Students will evaluate civil rights in Maryland and the United States by: - defining civil rights and their importance for all people in the United States. (5.3.4.a) - analyzing methods used by individuals and/or groups throughout the 20th century to contribute to the advancement of civil rights for all people. (5.3.4.b) - exploring how federal law, Constitutional amendments and the Supreme Court have extended and protected civil rights. (5.3.4.c) - analyzing how the government granted or denied freedoms to people based on race, gender, and religion over time. (5.3.4.d)

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