

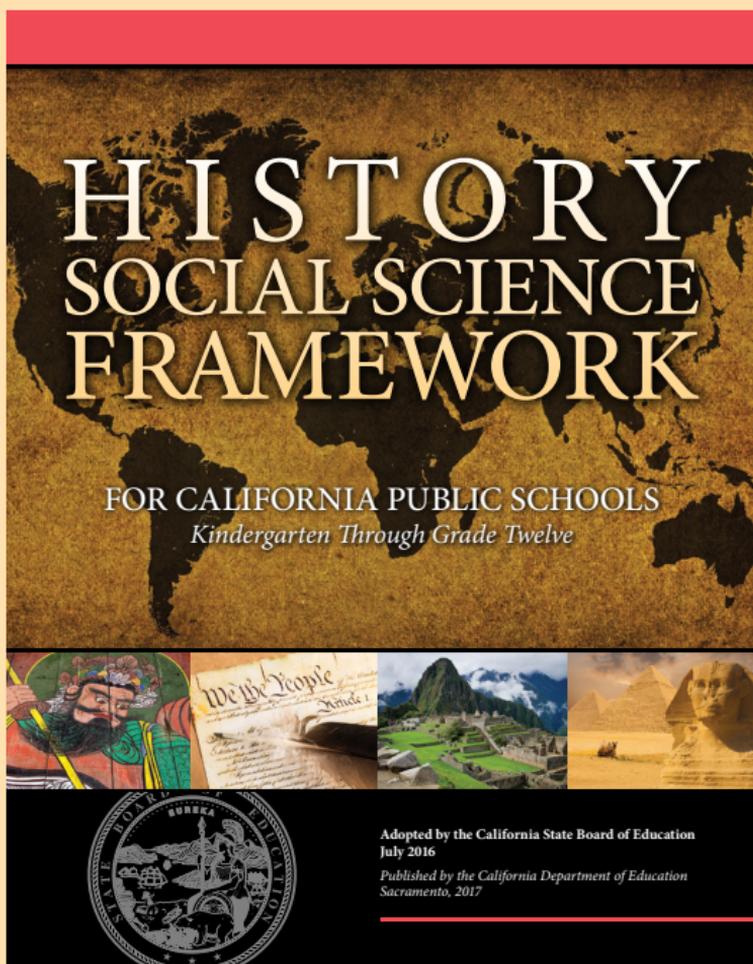
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An Overview of the New History–Social Science Framework for California Public Schools

THE MIDDLE GRADES



This pamphlet is part of a series that provides a brief summary of the main instructional shifts in the curriculum framework adopted by the State Board of Education on July 14, 2016. The framework provides guidance for teachers and administrators in implementing a rigorous, standards-based, and student-focused curriculum in history–social science.

Content

The California curriculum framework incorporates new scholarship and recent state mandates such as the Fair, Accurate, Inclusive, and Respectful (FAIR) Act. The course descriptions for grades six through eight have been completely rewritten to tell a story that reflects the breadth of world history and the contributions of many diverse groups to the development of California and the United States.

Inquiry

This framework is rooted in a strong emphasis on student inquiry. The goal is not just to tell students **about** history–social science but to teach them the skills to **do** history–social science. The framework calls upon students to conduct research (both guided and independent), evaluate primary and secondary sources, develop arguments, and make presentations.

Literacy

The framework views the development of student literacy as a shared enterprise, not something that is just limited to the language arts classroom. The curriculum includes an emphasis on giving all students access to the academic vocabulary and skills necessary for success in college, careers, and civic life.

Citizenship

The history–social science curriculum places a strong emphasis on democratic values in the relations between citizens and the state. It encourages teachers to help their students practice the skills of engaged citizenship.

Grade Six

In the middle grades, students study a wide range of history from ancient civilizations to the early history of the United States. These grades include challenging topics like religion, slavery, war, and human oppression. But those topics are also necessary for understanding the world that we live in today.

The framework places a great deal of emphasis on students learning through exposure to **primary sources**, studying history through the words of the people who lived it. The grade six course description suggests lesson activities that have students use a wide diversity of sources, such as Hammurabi's Code, selections from the Torah, the writings of Greek historians and playwrights, the Analects of Confucius and Ban Zhao's *Admonitions for Women*, the Vedas and the *Ramayana*, writings on Roman law and citizenship, and works of art and literature from around the world.



Grade Seven

The seventh grade course in the framework focuses on medieval and early modern world history. The chapter provides students with opportunities to study the rise and fall of empires, the diffusion of religions and languages, and significant movements of people, ideas, and products. Although societies were quite distinct from one another, there were more exchanges of people, products, and ideas with every passing century. The focus is on questions that get at those larger geographical, historical, economic, and civic patterns. To answer these questions, students study content-rich examples and case studies rather than surveying topics superficially.

The framework includes more than 30 **classroom examples**. As part of the framework's emphasis on literacy development, these sample lessons include correlations to the California history–social science standards, the California Common Core language arts and literacy standards, and the California English language development standards. Grade seven includes the following classroom examples:

- ▶ The Roman Empire
- ▶ Quanzhou, Site of Encounter
- ▶ The Spanish Conquest of Mexico



Grade Eight

The eighth grade chapter focuses on U.S. history from the founding of the American Republic through the end of the nineteenth century.

Throughout this course, students will confront the themes of freedom, equality, and liberty and their changing definitions over time. This course will also explore the geography of place, movement, and region, starting with the Atlantic Seaboard and then exploring American westward expansion and economic development, the Civil War and Reconstruction, and finally, industrialization.

The framework uses **guiding questions** at each grade level to direct instruction toward student investigation and research, allow students to explore topics in depth, and to answer important questions for themselves. These guiding questions are part of the inquiry-based approach of this framework. Some of the guiding questions from grade eight include:

- ▶ Why was there an American Revolution?
- ▶ How much power should the federal government have, and what should it do?
- ▶ Was the Louisiana Purchase Constitutional?
- ▶ What did freedom mean, and how did it change over time?
- ▶ Why do periods of reform arise at certain historical moments?

The Role of the Framework

The role of a curriculum framework is to provide guidance to teachers and administrators. While some of the content in the current framework is mandated by state law, the majority of decisions that affect classroom instruction are made at the local level by the school and district administrators and the governing board of the school district.



You can find more information about the framework on the California Department of Education History–Social Science Curriculum Frameworks Web page at <https://www.cde.ca.gov/ci/hs/cf/>.

The *California History–Social Science Content Standards for California Public Schools* can be viewed and downloaded at <https://www.cde.ca.gov/be/st/ss/>.

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