

**SOCIAL STUDIES****SOCIAL STUDIES  
GRADE 8  
CIVICS AND ECONOMICS**

*Counselors are available to assist parents and students with course selections and career planning. Parents may arrange to meet with the counselor by calling the school's guidance department.*

**COURSE DESCRIPTION**

Social Studies 8 refines and expands basic concepts and skills and assists students in achieving a successful and positive transition from the middle school to the secondary program. Examination of the U.S. and Virginia constitutions provides the basis for the study of governments at the national, state, and local levels. The role and responsibilities of informed citizens in the democratic decision-making processes are emphasized.

The development of skills essential to academic success and effective citizenship are the focus of the course. Basic economic, political, and geographic concepts and vocabulary are developed through the study of the operation of the American political and economic systems. The activity-based program encourages students to explore current topics and issues and to use their knowledge, ideas, and creativity to communicate in a variety of visual, written, and oral forms.

Students will take the Standards of Learning test for *Civics and Economics* at the completion of the course. Specific dates for the spring SOL test will be announced by the school.

**PREREQUISITE**

Social Studies 7

**OPTIONS FOR NEXT COURSE**

World History to 1500 A.D.

World History Since 1500 A.D.

Students pursuing a regular diploma must accumulate three (3) social studies credits in high school: one (1) World Studies course, one (1) Virginia and U.S. History course, and one (1) Virginia and U.S. Government course.

Students pursuing an advanced diploma must accumulate four (4) social studies credits in high school: two (2) World Studies courses, one (1) Virginia and U.S. History course, and one (1) Virginia and U.S. Government course.

**REQUIRED STUDENT TEXTBOOK**

*Civics and Economics*, Virginia Edition (Prentice Hall, 2010)

**SUPPLEMENTARY MATERIALS**

The teacher may choose to supplement the basal textbook with materials to extend and enrich the students' understanding of course topics. These materials may be drawn from daily newspapers, periodicals, television and other visual media, primary source documents, simulations, and computer programs.

**THE KNOWLEDGE, SKILLS, AND ATTITUDES THAT COMPRISE THE GRADE 8 CITIZENSHIP FOR THE CIVICS AND ECONOMICS COURSE ARE SUMMARIZED AS FOLLOWS FROM THE PRESCRIBED CURRICULUM**

**TOPICS OF STUDY**

**Unit 1: We the People: A Government of Citizens**

- 8.1.1 Explain the basic purposes of government. **(CE.13b)**
- 8.1.2 Examine influences on the development of democratic ideals.
- 8.1.3 Describe fundamental principles of democratic government. **(CE.2a, .2b)**
- 8.1.4 Explain the significance and relevance of key documents that influenced the *Constitution of the United States*.
- 8.1.5 Describe the sources of citizenship. **(CE.3a)**
- 8.1.6 Describe the process of gaining citizenship through naturalization **(CE.3a)**
- 8.1.7 Describe the duties of citizenship. **(CE.3c)**
- 8.1.8 Identify the responsibilities of citizens. **(CE.3d)**
- 8.1.9 Explain the difference between duties and responsibilities of citizenship. **(CE.3c, .3d)**
- 8.1.10 Identify personal character traits of good citizens. **(CE.4a, .4b, .4c, .4d, .4e, .4f, .4g)**
- 8.1.11 Identify ways citizens participate in community service. **(CE.3e, CE.4g)**
- 8.1.12 Identify skills involved in effective participation in civic life. **(CE.4g)**

**Unit 2: The Supreme Law of the Land:  
Constitutional Government**

- 8.2.1 Explain why the *Articles of Confederation* were replaced by the *Constitution*. **(CE.2b)**
- 8.2.2 Describe the basic structure and organization of the *Constitution of the United States of America*. **(CE.2b)**
- 8.2.3 Identify the purposes of government as stated in the *Preamble*. **(CE.2c)**
- 8.2.4 Describe the fundamental principles of constitutional government. **(CE.2a)**
- 8.2.5 Explain the principles of separation of powers and the system of checks and balances. **(CE.6b)**
- 8.2.6 Explain how the Constitution reflects ideas found in previous documents. **(CE.2b)**
- 8.2.7 Explain how democratic principles are reflected in the *Constitution of the United States*.
- 8.2.8 Describe the primary responsibilities of the state and national governments. **(CE.7b)**
- 8.2.9 Explain how the *Constitution* divides power between state and the national governments in the federal system. **(CE.7b)**
- 8.2.10 Explain why the *Constitution of the United States* is called a “living document.”

- 8.2.11 Explain the procedures used to amend the *Constitution*. **(CE.2d)**
- 8.2.12 Describe the freedoms guaranteed by the First Amendment. **(CE.3b)**
- 8.2.13 Explain why the *Constitution* has been amended. **(CE.1a, .1d)**
- 8.2.14 Explain why individual rights may be limited. **(CE.3b)**

**Unit 3: Promoting the General Welfare:  
The Legislative Branch**

- 8.3.1 Describe the structure of the legislative branch. **(CE.6a, .6b)**
- 8.3.2 Compare the two houses of the Congress in terms of their powers, organization, membership, and privileges. **(CE. 6a)**
- 8.3.3 Describe the process by which congressional representation is determined. **(CE.1g)**
- 8.3.4 Identify the powers of the legislative branch. **(CE.6a, .6c)**
- 8.3.5 Identify key steps in the legislative process. **(CE.6c)**
- 8.3.6 Describe the role of the legislative branch in the system of checks and balances. **(CE.6b)**
- 8.3.7 Describe how the system of checks and balances limits the power of the legislative branch. **(CE.6b)**
- 8.3.8 Describe the role of individuals and interest groups in the legislative process. **(CE.6c, .9b)**
- 8.3.9 Identify factors that may influence a legislator's vote. **(CE.9b)**
- 8.3.10 Examine current issues and controversies dealing with the legislative branch. **(CE.1g)**

**Unit 4: Ensuring Domestic Tranquility:  
The Executive Branch**

- 8.4.1 Describe the structure of the executive branch. **(CE.6a)**
- 8.4.2 Identify the powers and responsibilities of the president and the executive branch. **(CE.6a, .6d)**
- 8.4.3 Describe the roles the President of the United States exercises in carrying out his responsibilities. **(CE.6d)**
- 8.4.4 Describe the role and responsibilities of the vice president.
- 8.4.5 Explain the procedures used to elect the president and vice president. **(CE.5f)**
- 8.4.6 Identify the procedures established to ensure the United States always has a president.

- 8.4.7 Explain how cabinet departments, federal agencies, and regulatory agencies interpret and enforce the laws. **(CE. 6d, CE.13a, .13e)**
- 8.4.8 Assess the role of the executive branch in the system of checks and balances. **(CE.6b)**
- 8.4.9 Describe how the system of checks and balances limits the power of the executive branch. **(CE.6b)**
- 8.4.10 Examine current issues and controversies involving the executive branch. **(CE.1g)**

**Unit 5: Establishing Justice: The Judicial Branch**

- 8.5.1 Describe the structure of the federal judicial branch. **(CE.6a, .6b)**
- 8.5.2 Identify the powers of the judicial branch. **(CE.6a)**
- 8.5.3 Explain the difference between original and appellate jurisdiction. **(CE.10a)**
- 8.5.4 Describe the organization and jurisdiction of the federal court system. **(CE.10a)**
- 8.5.5 Describe how the system of checks and balances limits the power of the judicial branch. **(CE.6b)**
- 8.5.6 Describe the role of the Supreme Court in the system of checks and balances. **(CE.6b)**
- 8.5.7 Explain the significance of the landmark decision, *Marbury v. Madison*. **(CE.10b)**
- 8.5.8 Identify the types of cases heard by federal courts. **(CE.6a)**
- 8.5.9 Identify the types of cases heard by state courts.
- 8.5.10 Distinguish between civil and criminal cases. **(CE.10c)**
- 8.5.11 Describe the procedures involved in criminal cases. **(CE.10c)**
- 8.5.12 Describe the procedures for civil cases. **(CE.10c)**
- 8.5.13 Explain why cases are appealed to a higher court.
- 8.5.14 Identify factors that influence the Supreme Court's decision to hear a case.
- 8.5.15 Explain the role of the *Bill of Rights* in protecting the rights of the accused.
- 8.5.16 Explain how due process protections seek to ensure equal treatment under the law. **(CE.10d)**
- 8.5.17 Examine current issues and controversies involving the judicial branch. **(CE.1g)**

**Unit 6: People and Politics**

- 8.6.1 Describe how individuals influence public policy. **(CE.9b)**
- 8.6.2 Describe ways interest groups influence public policy. **(CE.9b)**
- 8.6.3 Examine the influence of the media on public opinion and public policy. **(CE.9a)**

- 8.6.4 Identify and describe strategies for evaluating campaign information. **(CE.5c)**
- 8.6.5 Describe the purpose and functions of political parties in the United States. **(CE.5a)**
- 8.6.6 Identify the similarities and differences between the two major political parties. **(CE.5b)**
- 8.6.7 Assess the advantages and disadvantages of the two-party system. **(CE.5f)**
- 8.6.8 Explain the reasons for the formation of third parties in American politics. **(CE.5b)**
- 8.6.9 Describe the processes involved in running for public office.
- 8.6.10 Analyze the role of the media in political campaigns. **(CE.5c)**
- 8.6.11 Examine the role of finances in political campaigns. **(CE.5d)**
- 8.6.12 Describe the procedures for voter registration in Virginia. **(CE.5e)**
- 8.6.13 Assess factors that influence voter participation. **(CE.5e)**

**Unit 7A: Economic Systems**

- 8.7.1 Identify the basic questions all economic systems address. **(CE.11b)**
- 8.7.2 Explain the role of scarcity in economic decision-making. **(CE.11a)**
- 8.7.3 Describe the role of the factors of production in an economic system. **(CE.11a)**
- 8.7.4 Describe characteristics of the basic economic systems. **(CE.11b)**
- 8.7.5 Describe the characteristics of a mixed economy. **(CE.11b)**
- 8.7.6 Describe the characteristics of the United States economy. **(CE.11c)**

**Unit 7B: A Wealth of Opportunity:  
The Economy of the United States**

- 8.7.7 Describe the circular flow of resources, goods and services, and money in the United States economy. **(CE.12b)**
- 8.7.8 Describe the advantages and disadvantages of the various forms of business organization. **(CE.12a)**
- 8.7.9 Identify the characteristics of private financial institutions. **(CE.12c)**
- 8.7.10 Describe the characteristics and functioning of the global economy. **(CE.12d)**
- 8.7.11 Assess the costs and benefits of international trade **(CE.12d)**
- 8.7.12 Explain how knowledge of career opportunities affects employment. **(CE.14a, .14b, .14c, .14d, 14e)**
- 8.7.13 Describe the characteristics of fiscal responsibility. **(CE.14d)**

- 8.7.14 Investigate current issues and controversies involving the operation of the mixed economy of the United States. **(CE.1f, CE.1g)**

### **Unit 7C: A Wealth of Opportunity: Government's Role in the Economy**

- 8.7.15 Explain the role of government in the operation of the United States economy. **(CE.13a, .13b, .13c)**
- 8.7.16 Identify the various types of money used in the United States. **(CE.13f)**
- 8.7.17 Explain how the government's taxing, spending, and borrowing policies affect the economy. **(CE.13c)**
- 8.7.18 Describe the causes and the effects of inflation.
- 8.7.19 Describe the purpose of the Federal Reserve System. **(CE.13d)**

### **Unit 8: The Commonwealth of Virginia: State Government**

- 8.8.1 Describe the purposes, functions, and responsibilities of state governments. **(CE.7b)**
- 8.8.2 Explain how power is divided between state and federal governments. **(CE.7b)**
- 8.8.3 Describe the structure of the legislative branch of Virginia government. **(CE.7a)**
- 8.8.4 Describe the responsibilities of the legislative branch in Virginia government. **(CE.7a, 7c)**
- 8.8.5 Explain the major steps in the legislative process in Virginia. **(CE.7c, CE.10b)**
- 8.8.6 Describe the process used to amend the Constitution of Virginia. **(CE.2d)**
- 8.8.7 Identify the elected officials of the executive branch of Virginia government. **(CE.7a)**
- 8.8.8 Describe the roles and responsibilities of the governor of Virginia. **(CE.7d)**
- 8.8.9 Identify the responsibilities of Virginia's executive departments and agencies. **(CE.7d)**
- 8.8.10 Describe the organization of the Virginia court system. **(CE.7a)**
- 8.8.11 Describe the responsibilities of the Virginia court system. **(CE.7a, CE.10b)**
- 8.8.12 Explain how Virginia government raises money to provide public goods and services. **(CE.13b)**
- 8.8.13 Investigate ways citizens participate in state and local government. **(CE.10b)**

### **Unit 9: Cities, Counties, and Towns: Virginia's Local Governments**

- 8.9.1 Explain how political power is divided between state and local governments. **(CE.8b)**
- 8.9.2 Identify the units of local government in Virginia. **(CE.8a)**

- 8.9.3 Describe the structures and powers of county governments in Virginia. **(CE.8a)**
- 8.9.4 Describe the structures and powers of town governments in Virginia. **(CE.8a)**
- 8.9.5 Describe the structure and powers of city governments in Virginia. **(CE.8a)**
- 8.9.6 Identify the state constitutional officers elected in every locality. **(CE.8a)**
- 8.9.7 Identify the powers exercised by Virginia local governments. **(CE.8a, CE.8b)**
- 8.9.8 Explain how local governments in Virginia raise money to provide public goods and services. **(CE.11b)**
- 8.9.9 Investigate the influence of international issues and events on local policy making. **(CE.9c)**
- 8.9.10 Investigate ways in which citizens may participate in state and local government. **(CE.3c, CE.3d, CE.3e)**
- 8.9.11 Investigate local issues or controversies using the problem-solving or decision-making process. **(CE.1g, CE.3d)**

### **CITIZENSHIP GOALS**

- Appreciating the diversity of people and nations in the world
- Respecting the worth and dignity of individuals, their beliefs, and their ways of life.
- Valuing the freedoms and rights of a democratic way of life
- Recognizing the reciprocal relationship between the rights and responsibilities of citizenship
- Appreciating the diversity of life in our pluralistic society
- Treating others with courtesy and respect
- Accepting responsibility for behavior and its consequences
- Seeking compromise and consensus in resolving differences

### **SKILLS**

- **Study Skills**
  - Bringing required materials to class
  - Organizing and maintaining a class notebook
  - Selecting appropriate or relevant information from sources
  - Collecting information from newspapers, magazines, and other media
  - Using note-taking strategies
  - Using a variety of test-taking and study strategies to prepare for quizzes, tests, etc.
- **Chart/Graph Skills** (CE.1b, CE.1c)
  - Making and using charts and graphs to organize and classify information
  - Identifying symbols and devices used in political cartoons
  - Interpreting and drawing inferences from charts, tables, graphs, and editorial cartoons

- Drawing conclusions and making generalizations about data
- **Map/Globe Skills** (CE.1b)
  - Locating physical and political features on maps and globes
  - Identifying regional patterns around the globe
  - Describing location in relative terms
  - Making and interpreting political, physical, and special purpose maps
- **Problem-Solving/Decision-Making Skills** (CE.1f)
  - Identifying the steps in the decision-making/problem-solving process
  - Applying the process to seek solutions and make decisions
- **Critical Thinking Skills** (CE.1a, CE.1d, CE.1e)
  - Distinguish between statements of fact and opinion
  - Identifying differing points of view
  - Recognizing biased statements and stereotypes
  - Distinguishing important from unimportant information
  - Using facts to support a position or opinion
  - Interpreting primary and secondary source documents
- **Communication Skills** (CE.1g)
  - Preparing short reports, projects, and presentations
  - Writing paragraphs and brief summaries
  - Listening actively to the ideas and thoughts of others
  - Contributing ideas and suggestions to class discussion
  - Defending positions in writing discussion and debate
  - Integrating new vocabulary words into oral and written communication
  - Demonstrating an understanding of content related material in a variety of ways
- **Reading Skills**
  - Analyzing new vocabulary words
  - Using a variety of strategies to comprehend written material
  - Confirming or revising predictions
  - Reading for information and enjoyment
  - Analyzing his or her understanding of what is read



## VIRGINIA BEACH CITY PUBLIC SCHOOLS

A H E A D O F T H E C U R V E

### Mission Statement

The Virginia Beach City Public Schools, in partnership with the entire community, will empower every student to become a life-long learner who is a responsible, productive and engaged citizen within the global community.

Dr. James G. Merrill, Superintendent

### DEPARTMENT OF CURRICULUM AND INSTRUCTION

2512 George Mason Drive • P. O. Box 6038 • Virginia Beach, Virginia 23456-0038

Virginia Beach City Public Schools does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, disability, or age in its programs and activities and provides equal access to the Boy Scouts and other designated youth groups. School Board policies and supporting regulation (Policies 2-33, 4-4, 5-7, and 6-7 and Regulation 5-44.1) provide equal access to courses, programs, counseling services, physical education and athletics, vocational education, instructional materials, and extracurricular activities. The following staff are designated to handle inquiries regarding the non-discrimination policies:

Director of Guidance Services at (757) 263-1980 or to the Assistant Superintendent of Human Resources at (757) 263-1133.

For further information on notice of non-discrimination, visit <http://wdcrobcolp01.ed.gov/CFAPPS/OCR/contactus.cfm> for the address and phone number of the office that serves your area, or call 1-800-421-3481.

Alternative formats of this publication which may include taped, Braille, or large print materials are available upon request for individuals with disabilities. Call or write The Department of Curriculum and Instruction,

Virginia Beach City Public Schools, 2512 George Mason Drive, P.O. Box 6038, Virginia Beach, VA 23456-0038.

Telephone (757) 263-1070 or (757) 263-1429; fax (757) 263-1424; TDD (757) 263-1240

Visit our website at [vbschools.com](http://vbschools.com) -  
your virtual link to Hampton Roads' largest school system

No part of this publication may be produced or shared in any form without giving specific credit to Virginia Beach City Public Schools.