



## Grade 8 Unit 1 - Defining Democracy: US Citizenship

### Unit Focus

The purpose of the Government and Civics unit is for students to develop a historical and philosophical definition of the United States federal government. Students will be investigating the purpose of government and origins of US democratic system. They will question the concept of citizenship and what makes a good citizen in a healthy democratic society. As the Constitution and US government are dissected, the student begins to understand the framework of the federal system through concepts such as the roles of the three branches, separation of powers, checks and balances, and how a bill becomes a law. Various Constitutional issues will guide this unit as the student gains a deeper understanding of the challenge of balancing personal freedoms with the common good.

The intent of each concept is also to engage the students as active, informed, and interested citizens, understanding their roles and responsibilities as contributing members of their local, state, and national communities. They will be introduced to social and political movements, understanding what triggers change in law and policy. While researching, students will also develop a deeper understanding for the research process, evaluating sources, and validating evidence. Through a final, performance-based assessment, students will evaluate the definition of the "citizenship standard" in Madison Public Schools, applying content and concepts they have learned throughout the unit. Finally, the foundational understanding from this unit will serve as a basis throughout the rest of the course as democracy is continually "re-defined" to determine if the American system is functioning as intended by its founders.

### STAGE 1: DESIRED RESULTS – KEY UNDERSTANDINGS

ESTABLISHED GOALS	TRANSFER	
<p><b>Common Core Standards</b>  <i>History/Social Studies : 8</i>            919684 Reading History            919685 Key Ideas and Details</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.6-8.2 Determine the central ideas or information of a primary or secondary source; provide an accurate summary of the source distinct from prior knowledge or opinions.</li> <li>• CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.6-8.3 Identify key steps in a text's description of a process related to history/social studies (e.g., how a bill becomes law, how interest rates are raised or lowered).</li> </ul> <p><i>919693 Integration of Knowledge and Ideas</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.6-8.7 Integrate visual information (e.g., in charts, graphs, photographs, videos, or maps) with other information in print and digital texts.</li> </ul>	<p>T1 Develop and communicate an informed argument/explanation using illustrative details and examples based on audience and purpose (<i>Presentation</i>)</p> <p>T2 Understand roles in communities and how to propose and/or create change in communities based on important issues (<i>Analyzing</i>)</p>	
<p><b>Performance Standards</b>  <i>Social Studies : 8</i>            1011020 DIMENSION 1: DEVELOPING QUESTIONS &amp; PLANNING INQUIRY</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• INQ.6--8.1 Explain how a question represents key ideas in the field.</li> </ul> <p><i>1011026 DIMENSION 2: APPLYING DISCIPLINARY CONCEPTS &amp; TOOLS</i>            1011027 Civics</p>	MEANING	
	UNDERSTANDINGS	ESSENTIAL QUESTIONS
	<p>U1 Historians use evidence and reasoning to draw conclusions about probable causes and effects, recognizing that these are multiple and complex.</p> <p>U2 Rules, laws, and processes are created by people and can be changed by people.</p> <p>U3 Various levels and branches of government have unique responsibilities and powers that interact with other levels and branches to make government work.</p> <p>U4 The health of a democracy relies on people's active and appropriate participation.</p>	<p>Q1 Why do historians consider multiple and complex causes and effects of events?</p> <p>Q2 What is the purpose of government? How do we balance personal freedoms and the common good?</p> <p>Q3 What does it mean to be a citizen?</p> <p>Q4 As a citizen, what are my rights and responsibilities?</p>

## STAGE 1: DESIRED RESULTS – KEY UNDERSTANDINGS

- CIV.8.2 Analyze ideas and principles contained in the founding documents of the United States, and explain how they influence the social and political system.
- CIV.8.4 Compare historical and contemporary means of changing societies, and promoting the common good.
- CIV.8.1 Explain the origins, functions and structure of government with reference to the U.S. Constitution, state constitutions and selected other systems of government.  
*1011044 History*
- HIST.8.3 Analyze multiple factors that influenced the perspectives of people during different historical eras.
- HIST.8.1 Analyze connections among events and developments in historical contexts.  
*1011055 DIMENSION 3: EVALUATING SOURCES & USING EVIDENCE*
- INQ.6--8.6 Gather relevant information from multiple sources while using the origin, authority, structure, context and corroborative value of the sources to guide the selection.  
*1011060 DIMENSION 4: COMMUNICATING CONCLUSIONS & TAKING INFORMED ACTION*
- INQ.6--8.11 Construct explanations using reasoning, correct sequences, examples and details with relevant information and data, while acknowledging the strengths and weaknesses of the explanations.
- INQ.6--8.12 Present adaptations of arguments and explanations on topics of interest to others to reach audiences and venues outside the classroom using print and oral technologies (e.g., posters, essays, letters, debates, speeches, reports, maps) and digital technologies (e.g., Internet, social media, digital documentary).

### Student Growth and Development 21st Century Capacities Matrix

#### *Critical Thinking*

- Analyzing: Students will be able to examine information/data/evidence to make inferences and identify possible underlying assumptions, patterns, and relationships.

#### *Collaboration/Communication*

- Presentation: Students will be able to relay information and ideas to an authentic audience (other than the teacher) to promote collective understanding.

### ACQUISITION OF KNOWLEDGE AND SKILL

#### KNOWLEDGE

#### SKILLS

K1 The philosophical origins of the U.S. government	S1 analyzing key ideas to explain a question and determine connections
K2 The basic structure and function of the three branches	S2 identifying sources through inquiry
K3 The different roles, responsibilities, and powers of each branch of the U.S. government	S3 evaluating historical sources
K4 The active political process and legislative or Constitutional change	S4 determining causes and effects of events from the past
K5 The rights guaranteed in the first Ten Amendments	S5 comparisons of historical and contemporary societies
K6 Vocabulary: Social Contract, State of Nature, Government, Constitution, Preamble, Welfare, Democracy, Republic, Federalism, Executive, Judicial, Legislative, bicameralism, Checks and Balances, Separation of Powers, Amendment, Civics, Citizenship, popular sovereignty, due process, Liberty, Rights, social responsibility, social issue, mandatory voting	S6 gathering relevant information from multiple sources
	S7 presenting adaptations of arguments and explanations
	S8 determining the central ideas or information of a primary or secondary source and providing a summary
	S9 identifying key steps in a text's description
	S10 conducting short research projects