



VALWOOD

GO BEYOND

United States Government Curriculum

US Government Overview

Course Description		Topics at a Glance	
<p>This course reviews the basic concepts of United States Government from pre-revolutionary days to the present time, the functions of national, state, and local governments and their relationships to the citizens of the United States. The responsibilities and obligations of both the citizen and the government to each other are an integral part of this course. The course will combine the historical foundations with analysis of current events. Students will be encouraged to simulate, observe and participate in local government.</p>		<p>Origins, Revolution and Independence <i>Theories of Government, Articles of Confederation, Direct vs. Representative Democracy, Enlightenment philosophies</i></p> <p>Federalism and Checks and Balances <i>States' Rights vs. Federal Rights, Local/State/Federal Gov't, Congress and Passing Legislation, Executive Powers, Federalism and Checks and Balances</i></p> <p>Documents We Live By <i>Declaration of Independence, The Constitution and the Bill of Rights</i></p> <p>Law and the Judicial Branch <i>Justice System, Supreme Court, landmark cases, laws vs. amendments</i></p> <p>Political Beliefs and Civic Responsibility <i>Political Spectrum, Liberal vs. Conservative, Political Parties, Elections, Civic Education</i></p> <p>Comparative World Systems <i>Contemporary foreign policy issues, US's role in foreign policy</i></p>	
Assessments		Useful Information	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Teacher Assessments • Assessments Adopted from course materials 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Classes do not have to be organized into the five units provided, nor is the course limited to the above topics. • Use broad themes and embed details. • Use current events to address issues and current realities. • Suggested review topics include: the American Revolution and early colonization. 	
Grade Level Expectations			
Standard	Grade Level Expectations (Big Ideas in Social Studies)		
4. Civics	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Research, formulate positions, and engage in appropriate civic participation to address local, state or national issues or policies 2. Purposes of and limitations on the foundations, structures and functions of government 3. Analyze how public policy – domestic and foreign – is developed at the local, state, and national levels and compare how policy-making occurs in other forms of government 		

1. History

The study of history prepares students to develop critical thinking skills in an effort to explain the human experience through events of the past. Discerning clarity from the jumble of conflicting facts and sources, students get a clearer picture of how individuals, communities, and the world connect, both past and present. History develops moral understanding, defines identity and creates an appreciation of how things change, while building judgment and decision-making skills. History enhances the ability to read varied sources and develop the skills necessary to analyze, interpret, and communicate.

History inspires by exposing students to the wonders and beauty of the past. The historical perspective prepares for an ever-changing future by helping to understand changes in the past. It allows students to gain perspective and develop better judgment by discovering and uncovering the complexity of human beings. This allows students to better understand themselves as individuals and their place in a complex and often confusing society. History provides examples of ethical behavior and the context for change, and illustrates the importance of responsible members of society in both our country and our world.

History is a critical component in the future success of a student in the 21st century world. Inquiry is the central component of historical thinking. Students learn the skills of reading, interpreting and analyzing historical sources and develop the ability to craft a well-constructed and communicated historical argument. History teaches the interpretive, analytical, and critical thinking skills that will allow students to become productive citizens in the future.

Valwood Graduate Competencies

The Valwood graduate competencies are the preschool through twelfth-grade concepts and skills that all graduates will be able to demonstrate.

Valwood Graduate Competencies in the History standards are:

- Develop an understanding of how people view, construct, and interpret history
- Analyze key historical periods and patterns of change over time within and across nations and cultures

2. Geography

The study of geography creates an informed person with an understanding of spatial perspective and technologies for spatial analysis; and an awareness of the interdependence of the world regions and resources, and how places are connected at the local, national, and global scales. Students understand the complexity and interrelatedness of people, places, and environments. Geography helps students appreciate the dynamic relationships and complexity of the world.

The skills, concepts, and knowledge acquired in geography are fundamental literacy components for a 21st century student. Use of critical thinking, information literacy, collaboration, self-direction, and invention are apparent in every facet of geographic education. Geography helps students develop a framework for understanding the world, ultimately contributing to the creation of informed citizens.

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Valwood Graduate Competencies in the Geography standard are:

- Develop spatial understanding, perspectives, and personal connections to the world
- Examine places and regions and the connections among them

3. Economics

Economics and personal financial literacy teach students the skills, knowledge, and habits that they must master in order to contribute in a positive manner to society. Economics and personal financial literacy teach how to understand personal responsibility, set goals, create plans, evaluate choices, value entrepreneurship, comprehend globalization and international connections, and learn to make rational decisions through critical analysis.

Economics teaches students how society manages its scarce resources, how people make decisions, how people interact in the domestic and international markets, and how forces and trends affect the economy as a whole. Personal financial literacy applies the economic way of thinking to help understand how to manage scarce resources using a logical decision-making process that involves prioritization based on analysis of the costs and benefits of every choice.

Economics and personal financial literacy are essential to function effectively in personal lives, as participants in a global economy, and as citizens contributing to a strong national economy. As citizens, workers, consumers, savers, and investors, members of society must have a level of economic and personal financial literacy that enables them to understand how economies function and to apply economic analysis in their own lives.

Valwood Graduate Competencies

The Valwood graduate competencies are the preschool through twelfth-grade concepts and skills that all graduates will be able to demonstrate.

Valwood Graduate Competencies in the Economics Standards are:

- Understand the allocation of scarce resources in societies through analysis of individual choice, market interaction, and public policy
- Acquire the knowledge and economic reasoning skills to make sound financial decisions

4. Civics

Civics has an impact on every individual daily through the work of city councils, state legislatures, Congress and school boards. Civics teaches students the complexity of the origins, structure, and functions of governments; the rights, roles, and responsibilities of ethical citizenship; the importance of law; and the skills necessary to participate in all levels of government.

Civics is a foundational component of the educational experience and critical to the continued success of our society. A democratic and free society relies on the skills, intelligence, engagement and virtue of its citizens. Our students will one day be responsible for strengthening our civic culture based on the knowledge they learn at school, their own values, and their choices for action. Democracy demands that they have these tools to be responsible contributors to civic culture.

Valwood Graduate Competencies

The Valwood graduate competencies are the preschool through twelfth-grade concepts and skills that all graduates will be able to demonstrate.

Valwood Graduate Competencies in the Civics standard are:

- Analyze and practice rights, roles, and responsibilities of citizens
- Analyze the origins, structure, and functions of governments and their impacts on societies and citizens

Content Area: Social Studies - US Government	
Standard: 4. Civics	
Valwood Graduates: Analyze and practice rights, roles, and responsibilities of citizens	
Grade Level Expectation: Concepts and skills students master: 1. Research, formulate positions, and engage in appropriate civic participation to address local, state, and national issues or policies	
Evidence Outcomes	21st Century Skills and Readiness Competencies
Students Can: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Engage ethically in civic activities including discussing current issues, advocating for their rights and the rights of others, practicing their responsibilities, influencing governmental actions, and other community service learning opportunities (DOK 1-4) b. Evaluate how individuals and groups can effectively use the structure and functions of various levels of government to shape policy (DOK 1-3) c. Describe the roles and influence of individuals, groups, and the press as checks on governmental practices (DOK 1-2) d. Identify which level of government is appropriate for various policies and demonstrate an ability to appropriately engage with that level of government (DOK 1-3) e. Critique various media sources for accuracy and perspective (DOK 2-3) 	Inquiry Questions: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. What is the meaning of civic participation in a democratic republic? 2. How do citizens act as a "check" on government? 3. What strategies can citizens use most effectively to influence public policy? 4. How do people resolve differences while remaining respectful of multiple perspectives? 5. Why should you participate in government?
	Relevance and Application: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Decision-making involves researching an issue, listening to multiple perspectives, and weighing potential consequences of alternative actions. For example, citizens study the issues before voting. 2. Participation in a local or national issue involves research, planning, and implementing appropriate and ethical civic engagement. For example, citizens speak at a school board meeting or run for office. 3. Technology is a tool for researching civic issues, advocating for ideas, and expressing views to elected officials.
	Nature of Discipline: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Responsible community members research civic issues and act appropriately using a variety of sources from multiple perspectives and communicating views in a respectful, ethical manner.

Content Area: Social Studies - US Government	
Standard: 4. Civics	
Valwood Graduates: Analyze origins, structure, and functions of governments and their impacts on societies and citizens	
Grade Level Expectation Concepts and skills students master: 2. Identify purposes of and limitations on the foundations, structures and functions of government	
Evidence Outcomes	21st Century Skills and Readiness Competencies
Students Can: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Describe the origins, purposes and limitations of government and include the contribution of key philosophers and documents b. Identify the structure, function, and roles of members of government and their relationship to democratic values c. Analyze and explain the importance of the principles of democracy and the inherent competition among values. Values to include but not be limited to freedom and security, individual rights and common good, and rights and responsibilities d. Analyze the role of the founding documents and the evolution of their interpretation through governmental action and court cases. Documents to include but not limited to the United States Constitution and the Bill of Rights e. Use media literacy skills to locate multiple valid sources of information regarding the foundations, structures, and functions of government f. Analyze how court decisions, legislative debates, and various and diverse groups have helped to preserve, develop, and interpret the rights and ideals of the American system of government g. Evaluate the effectiveness of our justice system in protecting life, liberty, and property 	Inquiry Questions: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. What are the most important democratic ideals and practices? 2. What would society look like if several landmark court cases had been decided differently? 3. How does government best protect individual rights and the rights of minorities, yet have the majority rule? 4. What would United States government look like with no checks and balances or another mix of those limitations? Relevance and Application: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Skills and strategies are used to participate in public life and exercise rights, roles, and responsibilities. For example, eligible individuals vote, individuals pay taxes to support government services, and citizens act as advocates for ideas. 2. Political issues are covered by the media, and individuals evaluate multiple media accounts using technology. Nature of Discipline: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Responsible community members understand the concept of "rule of law" and its role in policies and practices of the government. 2. Responsible community members know the political theories that contributed to the foundation and development of the structures of government and their meaning today.

Content Area: Social Studies - US Government	
Standard: 4. Civics	
Valwood Graduates: Analyze origins, structure, and functions of governments and their impacts on societies and citizens	
Grade Level Expectation Concepts and skills students master: 3. Analyze how public policy - domestic and foreign - is developed at the local, state, and national levels and compare how policy-making occurs in other forms of government	
Evidence Outcomes	21st Century Skills and Readiness Competencies
Students Can: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Discuss multiple perspectives on local issues and options for participating in civic life b. Analyze and discuss multiple perspectives on state issues and option for participating in civic affairs by shaping policies c. Explain how to monitor and influence public policy d. Analyze goals and tools used by the United States in developing foreign policy e. Illustrate how various governments and leaders interact and evaluate how interactions among nations affect domestic and world events 	Inquiry Questions: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Why do countries view global issues from different perspectives? 2. How does domestic policy affect foreign policy? 3. How does a government make foreign policy and can individuals influence policy? 4. What are possible motivations underlying foreign policy decisions?
	Relevance and Application: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 3. The making of foreign and domestic policies impacts daily lives. For example, unrest in the Middle East could cause gasoline prices to rise and unrest in another nation affects extended families in the United States.
	Nature of Discipline: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Responsible community members gather and analyze data from multiple sources to look for patterns and create hypotheses regarding foreign policy. 2. Responsible community members investigate foreign policy issues prior to making decisions.

