

TOPIC: CIVIC INVOLVEMENT**Content Statement****1. Opportunities for civic engagement within the structures of government are made possible through political and public policy processes.****CONTENT ELABORATION**

A variety of opportunities exist at the local, state, and national levels for students to engage with issues that appeal to them.

As students look for opportunities for civic engagement, they will identify issues, and then research, debate, and propose appropriate solutions. As part of this process, students will devise action plans, and examine the possible consequences of each proposed solution, weighing the costs and benefits of each approach.

Political processes are related to the acquisition of governmental power and influencing governmental decision-making. Public policy processes are related to the institutional actions and procedures involved with the government carrying out its functions.

EXPECTATIONS FOR LEARNING

Devise and implement a plan to address a problem by engaging either the political process or the public policy process.

Content Statement**2. Political parties, interest groups, and the media provide opportunities for civic involvement through various means.****CONTENT ELABORATION**

Political parties consist of organizations whose members hold similar views on public issues. Political parties seek to determine public policy through winning elections and having their members hold public office.

Interest groups consist of organizations whose members hold similar views on public issues. Interest groups seek to influence the making and execution of public policy by engaging in political and public policy processes.

Media are various means of mass communication with different audiences. Political parties and interest groups use media to influence the political and public-policy processes.

EXPECTATIONS FOR LEARNING

Select a political party or interest group to address a civic issue, identify a type of media as a means of communication, then defend the viability of the choices made in an effort to achieve a successful result in resolving the civic issue.

TOPIC: CIVIC PARTICIPATION AND SKILLS**Content Statement****3. Issues can be analyzed through the critical use of credible sources.****CONTENT ELABORATION**

Researching a civic issue involves determining which sources of information are relevant to the task, identifying the perspective or position of each source, and evaluating the credibility of the sources. Considerations involved with determining the credibility of sources and/or media outlets include:

- the qualifications/reputation of the writer and/or organization;
- the circumstances in which the source material was generated;
- internal consistency and agreement with other credible sources;
- use of supporting evidence and logical conclusions; and
- evidence of bias or unstated assumptions.

EXPECTATIONS FOR LEARNING

Identify the factors that determine the credibility of a source and evaluate the credibility of a given source.

TOPIC: CIVIC PARTICIPATION AND SKILLS**Content Statement****4. The processes of persuasion, compromise, consensus building, and negotiation contribute to the democratic process.****CONTENT ELABORATION**

The focus of this standard is on the group dynamics and interpersonal skills involved in decision making. This complements the focus of other content statements on the formal procedures and institutions of governing. The democratic process depends on these skills for effective functioning. These skills are studied and assessed within a real-world context as a collective, interdependent group as opposed to isolated techniques. For example, negotiation may involve persuasion and lead to compromise.

While these skills are presented in the abstract here, students examine them in the context of the rest of the course. No specialized or technical understanding of these terms is required; common definitions are sufficient for examining the contributions these skills make to the democratic process.

EXPECTATIONS FOR LEARNING

Explain how persuasion, compromise, consensus building, and negotiation help the democratic process and achieve agreement and settle differences in governing.

TOPIC: BASIC PRINCIPLES OF THE U.S. CONSTITUTION**Content Statement****5. As the supreme law of the land, the U.S. Constitution incorporates basic principles that help define the government of the United States as a federal republic including its structure, powers, and relationship with the governed.****CONTENT ELABORATION**

Basic principles which help define the government of the United States include:

- popular sovereignty;
- limited government;
- federalism;
- separation of powers; and
- checks and balances.

Popular sovereignty is the principle that governmental authority is derived from the people. Under this principle, the government governs with the consent of the governed.

The principle of limited government holds that a government can only exercise the powers granted to it. Government must be conducted according to the rule of law.

Federalism is a system in which power is divided between a national and state governments. Under the U.S. Constitution, this principle is reflected in the division of powers between the national government and the states.

The principle of separation of powers requires a distribution of governmental powers among independent branches. Each of the branches has a specific field of authority and unique set of responsibilities within the operation of the government.

Checks and balances constitute a system for controlling government power. Under this principle, each branch of government possesses the ability to restrain certain actions of the other branches.

EXPECTATIONS FOR LEARNING

Explain in context one of the basic principles which help define the government of the United States.

TOPIC: BASIC PRINCIPLES OF THE U.S. CONSTITUTION**Content Statement**

- 6. The Federalist Papers and the Anti-Federalist Papers framed the national debate over the basic principles of government encompassed by the Constitution of the United States and led to the adoption of the Bill of Rights.**

CONTENT ELABORATION

The supporters of the ratification of the Constitution became known as Federalists and the opponents as Anti-Federalists. The Federalist Papers and the Anti-Federalist Papers discussed key principles of government as they related to the circumstances of that time.

Federalists argued:

- for Constitutional ratification;
- for the supremacy of the national government;
- for more powers to be given to the national government to address weaknesses of the Articles of Confederation (e.g., no power to tax and no national executive or judicial branches); and
- for the "necessary and proper" and "supremacy" clauses.

Anti-Federalist argued:

- against Constitutional ratification;
- for supremacy of the state governments;
- for the need of a national bill of rights to protect citizens from the powers of national government; and
- against the "necessary and proper" and "supremacy" clauses.

The Constitution was ratified and the Anti-Federalists achieved success with the limitations on government by the adoption of the Bill of Rights.

EXPECTATIONS FOR LEARNING

Identify Federalist and Anti-Federalist viewpoints using excerpts from the Federalist and/or Anti-Federalist Papers.

Content Statement

- 7. Constitutional government in the United States has changed over time as a result of amendments to the U.S. Constitution, Supreme Court decisions, legislation, and informal practices.**

CONTENT ELABORATION

The operations of government in the United States take place within a framework provided by the U.S. Constitution. However, the U.S. Constitution has been amended, interpreted, and implemented in a variety of ways.

The processes for formally amending the U.S. Constitution are outlined in the document. Constitutional amendments have added to, modified, replaced and/or voided provisions of the original document and previous amendments.

The U.S. Supreme Court, in deciding cases brought before it, has frequently interpreted provisions of the U.S. Constitution to clarify and extend their meaning. With its power of judicial review, the Supreme Court has also declared actions of the branches and of the states to be unconstitutional. The U.S. Congress, in creating legislation, has provided details which build upon the framework of the Constitution. For example, civil rights acts and voting rights acts have provided specific directions to promote constitutional principles.

Informal practices also have changed how constitutional government has been implemented in the United States. These practices are related to provisions in the Constitution, but venture into areas not specifically addressed in the Constitution. For example, legislative oversight of the executive branch grew in part out of Congress' need for information to help draft new legislation.

EXPECTATIONS FOR LEARNING

Select an example of how constitutional government in the United States has changed the meaning and application of any one of the basic principles which help define the government of the United States and explain the nature of the change.

American Government continued

TOPIC: BASIC PRINCIPLES OF THE U.S. CONSTITUTION**Content Statement**

8. The Bill of Rights was drafted to ensure the protection of civil liberties of the people and place limits on the federal government.

CONTENT ELABORATION

The protection of civil liberties and limits on the federal government found in the Bill of Rights include, but are not limited to:

- freedoms guaranteed by the First Amendment: religion, assembly, press, petition, speech;
- the right to bear arms;
- no unreasonable search and seizure, no warrants without probable cause;
- no self-incrimination, protection against double jeopardy;
- right to speedy and public trial by an impartial jury, right to be informed of the charges, the right to confront one's accuser(s), the right to counsel;
- no cruel or unusual punishment; and,
- any power not given to the federal government is given to the states or the people.

EXPECTATIONS FOR LEARNING

Apply the protections of the Bill of Rights in a given scenario.

Content Statement

9. The constitutional amendments known collectively as the Reconstruction Amendments extended new constitutional protections to African Americans, though the struggle to fully achieve equality would continue.

CONTENT ELABORATION

The new constitutional protections extended under the Reconstruction Amendments include:

- abolishing slavery;
- defining and extending citizenship to all persons born or naturalized in the U.S.;
- prohibiting the states from denying due process and equal protection of the law to all persons; and
- preventing the denial of voting rights based on race, color, or previous condition of servitude.

These amendments were originally designed to protect African Americans. However, they did not result in immediate equality. Jim Crow laws were enacted to enforce racial segregation until the mid-20th century.

Application of these protections have been extended to other groups.

EXPECTATIONS FOR LEARNING

Analyze how the Reconstruction Amendments attempted to address African American inequality through the new constitutional protections.

Explain the continued struggles faced by African Americans despite the passage of these amendments.

TOPIC: BASIC PRINCIPLES OF THE U.S. CONSTITUTION**Content Statement****10. Constitutional amendments have provided for civil rights such as suffrage for disenfranchised groups.****CONTENT ELABORATION**

Some amendments prohibited the denial of voting rights based on the following:

- race, color, or previous condition of servitude;
- age (18-20-year olds); and
- gender.

Poll taxes also limited voting rights for poor people although they were originally designed to keep African Americans from voting.

EXPECTATIONS FOR LEARNING

Explain how amendments have extended voting rights to disenfranchised groups.

Content Statement**11. Constitutional amendments have altered provisions for the structure and functions of the federal government.****CONTENT ELABORATION**

The Framers of the Constitution created a method of presidential selection that reflected the nation's federal system of government. The president would be chosen based on electoral votes from the states. A candidate is required to win a majority of the total number of electoral votes in order to secure the presidency. Electoral votes are determined based upon the number of each state's representatives and senators.

Some amendments have altered the procedures of the Electoral College:

- Separate balloting for president and vice president was established to avoid a tie in electoral votes.
- The District of Columbia was granted electoral votes.

Other amendments have altered the functioning of government:

- Presidential term limits.
- Presidential succession and disability.

EXPECTATIONS FOR LEARNING

Describe how constitutional amendments have changed the structure and function of the federal government with regard to the Electoral College and the U.S. Presidency.

TOPIC: STRUCTURE AND FUNCTIONS OF THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT**Content Statement**

12. Law and public policy are created and implemented by three branches of government; each functions with its own set of powers and responsibilities.

CONTENT ELABORATION

Laws are rules recognized as binding and enforced by a government. Public policy consists of institutional actions and procedures pursued by a government in carrying out its functions. Each of the three branches of government has a role related to law and the creation of public policy.

Legislative Branch:

- makes laws;
- declares war; and
- imposes taxes.

Executive Branch:

- enforces the law;
- issues executive orders; and
- appoints and receives ambassadors.

Judicial Branch:

- interprets the law;
- hears cases with original jurisdiction; and
- hears appeals from lower courts.

EXPECTATIONS FOR LEARNING

Compare the powers and responsibilities of each branch of government as they pertain to law and public policy.

TOPIC: STRUCTURE AND FUNCTIONS OF THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT**Content Statement****13. The political process creates a dynamic interaction among the three branches of government in addressing current issues.****CONTENT ELABORATION**

Current issues are addressed by all three branches of the government as they make public policy. The interactions among the branches range from instances where they work together in concert to instances involving the exercise of checks and balances. Examples include:

- legislative branch checking the executive: overrides vetoes, impeaches and removes civil officers, approves appointments and treaties;
- legislative branch checking the judicial: impeaches and removes federal judges, proposes constitutional amendments;
- executive branch checking the legislative: vetoes legislation;
- executive branch checking the judicial: nominates federal judges, grants pardons and reprieves;
- judicial branch checking the legislative: reviews and interprets the laws, declares acts unconstitutional; and
- judicial branch checking the executive: reviews and interprets the laws, federal judges not subject to removal by president, declares executive acts unconstitutional.

The interaction among the three branches of government is impacted by the following:

- interest group involvement, e.g. proposing legislation, advocating rules, filing briefs;
- political party control of the executive and legislative branches;
- amount of public interest and nature of media coverage/commentary; and
- informal relationships among the members of each branch.

EXPECTATIONS FOR LEARNING

Use examples of checks and balances among two or three branches of the federal government to illustrate dynamic interactions.

TOPIC: ROLE OF THE PEOPLE**Content Statement****14. In the United States, people have rights that protect them from undue governmental interference. Rights carry responsibilities that help define how people use their rights and that require respect for the rights of others.****CONTENT ELABORATION**

People in the United States have claims to protection from government intrusion in certain aspects of their lives. These claims are called rights. The federal Bill of Rights not only enumerates many rights, but alludes to other unstated rights.

Many of the rights held by American citizens protect the ability to participate in the political process, such as speech, press, assembly, petition, suffrage, and hold public office. The U.S. Supreme Court, in its interpretation of the 14th Amendment's due process clause, has instituted the doctrine of incorporation meaning that most of the guarantees in the Bill of Rights also apply to state and local governments.

There are general responsibilities of citizenship. They include respecting the rule of law, paying taxes and fees, and accepting responsibility for one's actions. There also are responsibilities associated with the exercise of particular rights. Examples include:

- right of free speech – engaging in civil discourse;
- right to bear arms – receiving firearms training;
- right to jury trial – serving on juries; and
- right to vote – registering to vote and being informed on public issues.

Citizenship also includes service to the nation which guarantees the rights of the people. This may include military service, community service and serving in public office. Individual rights are relative, not absolute. The exercise of rights must be balanced by the rights of others and by the common good.

EXPECTATIONS FOR LEARNING

Explain how the fulfillment of civic responsibilities is related to the exercise of rights in the United States.

TOPIC: STRUCTURE AND FUNCTIONS OF THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT**Content Statement**

15. Historically, the United States has struggled with majority rule and the extension of minority rights. As a result of this struggle, the government has increasingly extended civil rights to marginalized groups and broadened opportunities for participation.

CONTENT ELABORATION

The U.S. Constitution guarantees rights to the people of the United States. Historically, despite those guarantees, various groups of people have been denied the ability to fully exercise their rights. Over time, the U.S. government has responded to public pressure to take action to ensure the free exercise of rights by all people and to protect their ability to participate in the processes of governing.

For example, constitutional amendments guaranteed suffrage to women and eliminated poll taxes as a means of restricting African Americans from voting. The executive branch used troops to help integrate schools and brought charges against violators of open housing legislation. The legislative branch enacted a series of civil rights acts and voting rights acts. The U.S. Supreme Court, through the process of incorporation, has used the due process and equal protection clauses in the 14th Amendment to apply most of the federal Bill of Rights to the states.

EXPECTATIONS FOR LEARNING

Identify an issue related to the denial of civil rights to a particular minority group and explain how at least one branch of the federal government helped to extend civil rights or opportunities for participation to that group of people.

TOPIC: OHIO'S STATE AND LOCAL GOVERNMENTS**Content Statement**

16. As a framework for the state, the Ohio Constitution has similarities and differences to the federal Constitution; it was changed in 1851 to address difficulties governing the state.

CONTENT ELABORATION

Similarities between the Ohio and U.S. Constitutions:

- separation of powers into three branches (executive, judicial, legislative);
- checks and balances;
- limited government;
- bill of rights;
- popular sovereignty; and
- elections.

Differences between the Ohio and U.S. Constitutions:

Ohio Constitution

- Citizens can directly vote on laws through initiative and referendum.
- Judges are elected.
- Legislators are term limited.

U.S. Constitution

- Legislators vote on laws for citizens.
- Judges are appointed.
- Legislators do not have term limits.

In 1851 a new Ohio Constitution was written which made several changes to improve governing including:

- Major executive officials and all judges were to be elected.
- District courts were added.
- Debt limitations were instituted.

EXPECTATIONS FOR LEARNING

Compare the Ohio and U.S. Constitutions.

TOPIC: OHIO'S STATE AND LOCAL GOVERNMENTS**Content Statement**

17. Individuals in Ohio have a responsibility to assist state and local governments as they address relevant and often controversial problems that directly affect their communities.

CONTENT ELABORATION

Ohioans can assist government in addressing problems affecting the state and local communities.

Involvement at the state level can range from paying taxes to serving in the National Guard, running for state office, voting, and signing petitions to place issues on the ballot.

Involvement at the local level can range from organizing civic activities to running for local office, attending meetings of local boards and commissions, joining community watch groups, and serving in a volunteer fire department.

EXPECTATIONS FOR LEARNING

Identify and explain roles that Ohio's citizens can play in helping state and local government address problems facing their communities.

TOPIC: PUBLIC POLICY**Content Statement**

18. A variety of entities within the three branches of government, at all levels, address public policy issues that arise in domestic and international affairs.

CONTENT ELABORATION

Public policy issues are matters of discussion and debate related to the functions of government. They frequently revolve around problems the government is attempting to address and the projected consequences of public policy decisions.

Examples of different levels and different branches of government addressing public policy issues includes:

- federal executive – the Department of State, which advises the president on foreign policy and directs activities of embassies in foreign countries;
- federal legislative – the Congressional Budget Office, which provides analyses of economic and budgetary data
- state legislative – the Ohio Legislative Service Commission, which assists in drafting legislation;
- state judicial – the Ohio Courts of Common Pleas, which apply sentencing guidelines for convicted felons; and
- local legislative/executive – county commissions, which determine and grant tax abatements.

The complexity of public policy issues may involve multiple levels and branches of government. These levels and branches may engage in collaboration or conflict as they attempt to address public policy issues.

EXPECTATIONS FOR LEARNING

Analyze a public policy issue in terms of collaboration or conflict among the levels of government involved and the branches of government involved.

Content Statement

19. Individuals and organizations play a role within federal, state, and local governments in helping to determine public (domestic and foreign) policy.

CONTENT ELABORATION

Individuals and organizations engage government officials on public policy using several methods. Individuals and organizations can:

- campaign for candidates who will support their positions once in office;
- provide information to executive branch officials on the impacts of potential rules and regulations;
- lobby members of a legislature;
- provide testimony before legislative committees;
- propose laws to legislators;
- prepare briefs to present during judicial proceedings;
- offer comments during public meetings;
- conduct letter-writing campaigns; and
- hold public demonstrations.

Individuals and organizations must know the proper level and branch of government to engage at the various stages of making public policy.

EXPECTATIONS FOR LEARNING

Defend different positions on public policy issues and determine an approach for providing effective input to the appropriate level and branch/agency of the government.

TOPIC: GOVERNMENT AND THE ECONOMY**Content Statement**

20. The federal government uses spending and tax policy to maintain economic stability and foster economic growth. Regulatory actions carry economic costs and benefits.

CONTENT ELABORATION

Fiscal policy is government decision-making about taxing and spending in an attempt to regulate the American economy. In theory, fiscal policy falls into two broad categories:

- increased government spending and/or reduced taxes to encourage economic growth; and
- decreased government spending and/or increased taxes to slow economic growth.

The imposition of government regulations may foster economic benefits such as prohibiting unfair business practices and providing consumer protections. Government regulations may carry costs such as reduced corporate profits and slower economic growth.

EXPECTATIONS FOR LEARNING

Explain how the federal government uses fiscal policy to affect changes in the nation's economic conditions.

Content Statement

21. The Federal Reserve System uses monetary tools to regulate the nation's money supply and moderate the effects of expansion and contraction in the economy.

CONTENT ELABORATION

Monetary policy involves the Federal Reserve System making decisions about the nation's money supply.

To encourage economic growth, the Federal Reserve System can:

- reduce the amount of money that banks must have on reserve and not use to make loans;
- buy bonds; and
- take action that results in lower interest rates.

To slow economic growth the Federal Reserve System can:

- increase the amount of money that banks must have on reserve and not use to make loans;
- sell bonds; and
- take action that results in higher interest rates.

EXPECTATIONS FOR LEARNING

Explain how the Federal Reserve System uses monetary policy to regulate the nation's money supply and encourage or slow economic growth.