

# Social Studies

## National Rankings of Essential Skills (as of October 10, 2007)

National Essential Skills Study (NESS) Social Studies Topic Statements	National Rank	NESS Priority	Subgroup Rankings			
			Business/ Industry	Other Non- Educators	Social Studies Educators	Other Educators
Employ geographic tools (maps, globes, photographs, models, satellite images, charts, databases, GPS, etc.) and other visual images (physical, mental, and electronic representations) to acquire, process, and report information about people, places, and environments from a spatial perspective.	1	High	1	1	2	1
Explain the roles, rights, and responsibilities of the U.S. citizen in our democracy.	2	High	3	5	1	2
Examine the purpose of rules and laws, explain how governments enact and enforce them, and assess ways to evaluate rules and laws.	3	High	2	4	6	3
Examine the concepts of civic life, politics, and government and explain why government is necessary.	4	High	5	2	3	4
Describe the U.S. Constitution and why it, or any constitution, is important.	5	High	4	3	11	6
Analyze how people's culture and experience in one place or region influence perceptions of peoples from other places and regions.	6	High	8	6	14	5
Analyze the values, principles, and beliefs of our constitutional democracy and evaluate why it is important for U.S. citizens to promote and share these values, principles, and beliefs.	7	High	6	7	6	7
Analyze long-term changes and recurring patterns in world history and explain any relationship to situations in the world today.	8	High	11*	10	4	8
Give examples of and explain how scarcity of productive resources (natural and human resources and capital goods) necessitates choices at both the personal and societal levels in the modern world and explain the impact of those choices.	9	High	11	12	12	9
Explain how changes in supply or demand cause relative prices to change and, in turn, affect the purchasing and sales incentives of buyers and sellers.	10	High	9	14	18	10
Compare and contrast the organization, roles, and major responsibilities of federal, state, and local governments.	11	High	14	11	20	11
Describe the impacts of revolution and reform on the world economy from the early 20th century through today and explain the causes and global consequences of local, regional, and global wars.	12	High	17	8	9	13
Compare the present with the past, evaluating the consequences of past events and decisions and determining the lessons that were learned.	13	High	23	13	5	14
Compare and contrast U.S. foreign and domestic governmental policies to those of other nations and describe how this affects how nations interact with each other.	14	High	14	9	20	12
Analyze and describe the struggle for racial and gender equality and the extension of civil liberties.	15	High	18	21	10	15

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Identify bias and prejudice in historical or modern interpretations of people, places, or events.	16	High	20	22	8	17
Describe the benefits and challenges of diversity in the United States.	17	High	18	19	29	15
Explain how American principles and values came to be and are represented today by people from many cultures, which contribute to and help form a national cultural, economic, and political heritage.	18	High	11	17	17	18
Compare and contrast the physical, human, and cultural characteristics of places and regions on Earth.	19	High	27	16	33	19
Investigate current U.S. economic, social, and cultural developments and trends and describe the impact they have on modern foreign and domestic politics and policies.	20	High	9	30	15	21
Analyze the interaction between humans and the physical environment.	21	High	20	15	26	20
Analyze the causes and effects of population change on the characteristics, distribution, and complexity of Earth's diverse populations and cultures, including the impact of demographics and the fact that they are constantly shifting.	22	Medium	35	31	22	22
Describe significant people, events, problems, and ideas that were instrumental in creating the history of your state.	23	Medium	33	17	42	23
Describe how buyers and sellers interact to create market forces whereby market prices are determined and scarce goods and services are allocated.	24	Medium	16	26	30	25
Investigate how a cost/benefit analysis can influence decisions based on profits and losses.	25	Medium	7	24	53	24
Describe the advantages and disadvantages of different methods for allocating goods and services (e.g., by price, command, majority rule, contests, force, first-come/first-served, sharing equally, lottery), then choose the method that is most appropriate for a specific problem or situation.	26	Medium	24	33	46	26
Analyze major global occurrences from 1000 BCE – 1914 CE (onset of World War I) and describe the causes, consequences, or results.	27	Medium	46	19	16	32
Solve problems effectively by characterizing a problem through identification of variables and relationships and moving to a solution.	28	Medium	22	35	33	27
Explain limited government and the importance of limiting the power of government.	29	Medium	38	25	24	29
Analyze the patterns and networks of economic interdependence between places and regions on Earth.	30	Medium	31	40	23	31
Identify connections between particular historical events and larger social, economic, and political trends and developments.	31	Medium	35	34	19	33
Classify the political organization of other nations and evaluate how U.S. politics and society have influenced, or been influenced by, other nations.	32	Medium	43	28	30	30

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Describe the impacts of revolution and reform on the U.S. economy and society from the period of colonization through contemporary times and explain the causes and consequences of local, regional, and global wars on the United States.	33	Medium	28	29	12	37
Explain how workers' incomes depend primarily on the market value of what they produce, the skill with which they produce it, and how productive they are.	34	Medium	24	32	47	28
Understand and evaluate the role of political parties and interest groups in the United States and other nations.	35	Medium	41	36	35	35
Investigate major scientific and technological discoveries, the inventors responsible for them, and their social and economic impact on societies within North America and around the world.	36	Medium	43	23	43	34
Use geographic studies (e.g., demographics) to interpret the past and present and to plan or predict future events.	37	Medium	47	46	37	36
Understand the meaning, implications, and impacts of historical events and recognize that events could have taken other directions.	38	Medium	48	27	28	38
Analyze how a nation's overall levels of income, employment, and price for goods are determined by the interaction of spending and production decisions made by all households, firms, government agencies, and others in the economy.	39	Medium	38	41	38	40
Make and communicate decisions by identifying alternatives and consequences and satisfying constraints.	40	Medium	24	44	49	39
Analyze how change happens at different rates at different times; understand that some aspects can change while others remain the same; and understand that change is complicated and affects not only technology and politics, but also values and beliefs.	41	Medium	29	48	40	41
Analyze how the forces of cooperation and conflict among people influence the division and control of the Earth's surface.	42	Medium	31	42	47	42
Describe how investment in factories, machinery, and new technology and in the health, education, and training of people can raise future standards of living.	43	Medium	29	36	45	44
Distinguish valid arguments from fallacious arguments in historical interpretations.	44	Medium	43	43	32	46
Analyze how economic institutions (banks, labor unions, corporations, legal systems, not-for-profit organizations, etc.) evolve in market economies to help individuals and groups accomplish their goals.	45	Medium	42	38	51	43
Evaluate the trends and impacts of unemployment and inflation on individuals, nations, and economies.	46	Medium	38	49	52	45
Construct and test hypotheses; collect, evaluate, and report information from multiple primary and secondary sources.	47	Medium	50	57	24	48
Interpret past events and issues within the context in which an event unfolded rather than solely in terms of present-day norms and values.	48	Medium	49	50	27	50

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Analyze the extent to which government policies or programs play a role in a market economy or society and evaluate the effectiveness of those policies or programs.	<b>49</b>	<b>Medium</b>	34	53	36	49
Explain how money (currency, coins, checks) makes it easier to trade, borrow, save, invest, and compare the value of goods and services than bartering does.	<b>50</b>	<b>Medium</b>	35	39	57	47
Describe how exploration and colonization resulted in cultural, economic, and ecological interactions among societies in North America, Western Europe, and Western Africa around the 15th century.	<b>51</b>	<b>Medium</b>	52	51	39	51
Investigate how political, religious, and social values and institutions emerged in the English colonies and assess how they impacted life in the Americas during the 16th to 18th century.	<b>52</b>	<b>Medium</b>	50	44	40	53
Explain the attraction of the Americas to Europeans and examine why enslaved Africans were brought to the colonies and how the Europeans struggled for control of their settlements in North America and the Caribbean.	<b>53</b>	<b>Medium</b>	58	52	49	52
Compare the purposes, sources of power, and effectiveness of various governments around the world to each other and to those outlined in the U.S. Constitution.	<b>54</b>	<b>Low</b>	55	55	55	55
Compare and contrast family life as well as local and North American community life now and in the past.	<b>55</b>	<b>Low</b>	56	55	60	54
Examine and explain the characteristics of early civilizations (4000–1000 BCE) in Eurasia and Africa and the emergence and spread of agrarian and militaristic societies	<b>56</b>	<b>Low</b>	53	46	53	56
Recognize the complexity of historical causes and effects, including the limitations on determining cause and effect.	<b>57</b>	<b>Low</b>	53	58	44	58
Examine and explain the processes that led to the emergence of the earliest agricultural communities around the world.	<b>58</b>	<b>Low</b>	57	54	58	57
Evaluate major debates among historians concerning alternative interpretations of the past, including an analysis of authors' use of evidence and the distinctions between sound generalization and misleading oversimplification.	<b>59</b>	<b>Low</b>	59	59	56	60
Relate the physical processes that shape the Earth's surface to the spatial distribution of ecosystems.	<b>60</b>	<b>Low</b>	60	60	59	59

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