

## Political Science/Civic Literacy

**NOTE: The Essential Concepts and Skills listed in Social Studies – Political Science/Civic Literacy are the same as the Essential Concepts and Skills listed in 21<sup>st</sup> Century Skills – Civic Literacy.**

Political science is the study of power and authority through the examination of political processes, governmental institutions, and human behavior in a civil society. In this context the study of civics is understood to include the form and function of government. Civic literacy encompasses civics but also addresses the individual's social and political participation.

### High School (9 – 12) Details and Example

**Essential Concept and/or Skill: *Understand the rights and responsibilities of each citizen and demonstrate the value of lifelong civic action. (SS.9-12.PSCL.1)***

- Understand rights, roles, and status of the individual in relation to the general welfare.
- Understand that constitutional democracy requires the participation of an attentive, knowledgeable, and competent citizenry.
- Understand personal, political, and economic rights are secured by constitutional government, the rule of law, checks and balances, an independent judiciary, and a vigilant citizenry.
- Understand ways citizens participate in the political process at local, state, and national levels.
- Understand the importance of becoming knowledgeable about public affairs.
- Understand the importance of voluntarism as a characteristic of American society.

**Essential Concept and/or Skill: *Understand how the government established by the Constitution embodies the enduring values and principles of democracy and republicanism. (SS.9-12.PSCL.2)***

- Understand the central ideas of American constitutional government and how this form of government has shaped the character of American society.
- Understand the role of government in major areas of domestic and foreign policy.

**Essential Concept and/or Skill: *Understand the purpose and function of each of the three branches of government established by the Constitution. (SS.9-12.PSCL.3)***

- Understand the purpose of government and how its powers are acquired, used and justified.
- Understand the necessity of politics and government.
- Understand the purposes, organization, and functions of the legislative, executive, and judicial branches and the independent regulatory agencies.

**Essential Concept and/or Skill: Understand the differences among the complex levels of local, state and national government and their inherent, expressed, and implied powers. (SS.9-12.PSCL.4)**

- Understand the design and features of the Constitution prevent the abuse of power by aggregating power at the national, state, and local levels and using a system of checks and balances.
- Understand provisions of the Constitution and principles of the constitutional system help to insure a government that will not exceed its limits.
- Understand the limits the United States Constitution places on the powers of the states and on the powers of the national government over state governments.
- Understand the policies of state and local governments provide citizens with ways to monitor and influence the actions of members of government and hold them responsible for their actions.

**Essential Concept and/or Skill: Understand strategies for effective political action that impact local, state, and national governance. (SS.9-12.PSCL.5)**

- Understand participation in civic and political life can help citizens attain individual and public goals.
- Understand the role of diversity in American life and the importance of shared values, political beliefs, and civic beliefs in an increasingly diverse American society.

**Essential Concept and/or Skill: Understand how law and public policy are established at the local, state, and national levels of government. (SS.9-12.PSCL.6)**

- Understand the purposes and functions of law.
- Understand the processes by which public policy concerning a local, state, or national issue is formed and carried out.
- Understand issues concerning the relationship between state and local governments and the national government.

Illustration of <i>Understand how law and public policy are established at the local, state, and national levels of government</i> in the ICLE’s Rigor and Relevance Framework	
<b>Quadrant C</b> Students will predict the fate of a piece of proposed legislation based on an assessment of the current political climate, partisan perspectives, public opinion and media coverage.	<b>Quadrant D</b> Students analyze a local, state or national issue and prescribe a legislative response that promotes the public interest or general welfare.
<b>Quadrant A</b> Students will be able to create a sequence diagram that shows how a bill becomes a law at the federal and state level as well as how local statutes are established.	<b>Quadrant B</b> Students select a current bill that they support and track it through the legislative session.

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**Essential Concept and/or Skill: *Understand how various political systems throughout the world define the rights and responsibilities of the individual.***  
*(SS.9-12.PSCL.7)*

- Understand ideologies, structures, institutions, processes and political cultures of different political systems in the world.
- Understand the essential characteristics of limited and unlimited governments.

**Essential Concept and/or Skill: *Understand the role of the United States in current world affairs.***  
*(SS.9-12.PSCL.8)*

- Understand conditions, actions and motivations that contribute to conflict and cooperation within and among nations.
- Understand the significance of foreign policies and events in the United States' relations with the world.
- Understand the idea of national interest and how it is used as a criterion for shaping American foreign policy.
- Understand the effects that significant world political developments have on the United States.
- Understands the influence that American ideas about rights have had abroad and how other peoples' ideas about rights have influenced Americans.

**Middle (6 – 8) Details and Example**

**Essential Concept and/or Skill: *Understand the rights and responsibilities of each citizen and demonstrate the value of lifelong civic action.***  
*(SS.6-8.PSCL.1)*

- Understand rights, roles and status of the individual in relation to the general welfare.
- Understand issues regarding personal, political, and economic rights.
- Understand what is meant by the "scope and limits" of a right.
- Understand participation in civic and political life can help bring about the attainment of individual and public goals.
- Understand the functions of political leadership and why leadership is a vital necessity in a democracy.
- Understand the importance of voluntarism as a characteristic of American society.

**Essential Concept and/or Skill: *Understand how the government established by the Constitution embodies the principles of democracy and republicanism.***  
*(SS.6-8.PSCL.2)*

- Understand the essential ideas of American government that are expressed in the Declaration of Independence, the Constitution, and other documents.
- Understand the concepts of constitutional government as fundamental principles of American democracy.
- Understand the essential characteristics of limited and unlimited governments.
- Understand the basic concepts of a federal system of government.
- Understand values such as individual rights, the common good, self government, justice, equality, diversity, openness and free inquiry, truth, patriotism are fundamental to American public life.
- Understand the type of citizenry needed to establish and maintain constitutional government.

**Essential Concept and/or Skill: Understand the purpose and function of each of the three branches of government established by the Constitution. (SS.6-8.PSCL.3)**

- Understand the primary responsibilities of each branch of government in a system of shared powers (legislative, executive, judicial) and ways in which each branch shares the powers and functions of the other branches.
- Understand how the legislative, executive, and judicial branches use checks and balances.

Illustration of <i>Understand the purpose and function of each of the three branches of government established by the Constitution</i> in the ICLE’s Rigor and Relevance Framework	
<p><b>Quadrant C</b> In groups, students create an informative chart that defines the relationship between each of the branches of the federal government—emphasizing similarities and differences. Each chart is displayed in the classroom for a gallery walk, allowing each student to comment on the information found on the charts.</p>	<p><b>Quadrant D</b> In groups, students create a tri-fold board and a corresponding brochure that displays the functions and relationships between the three branches of the U.S. Government. On Constitution Day, September 17th the students take their boards and brochures to a local community gathering place such as a senior center or a mall and present their findings. Students publicize the event in the local paper and on community bulletin boards.</p>
<p><b>Quadrant A</b> Students read about the three branches of the federal government and complete a corresponding worksheet.</p>	<p><b>Quadrant B</b> Students research the branches of the federal government and create a presentation that gives an overview of the responsibilities of each branch and shows how individuals are affected by the actions of the three branches. The students present their findings to an elementary class studying government.</p>

**Essential Concept and/or Skill: Understand the similarities and differences among the complex levels of local, state and national government (SS.6-8.PSCL.4).**

- Understand the relationship between state and local governments and the national government.
- Understand the powers and responsibilities of local, state and national governments.

**Essential Concept and/or Skill: Understand strategies for effective political action that impacts local, state and national governance. (SS.6-8.PSCL.5)**

- Understand the concept of civic responsibility.
- Understand the importance of political leadership, public service, and a knowledgeable citizenry in American democracy.
- Understand the concept of political leadership in the student’s own school, community, state, and the nation.

**Essential Concept and/or Skill: *Understand how laws are established at the local, state and national levels. (SS.6-8.PSCL.6)***

- Understand the concept of public policy.
- Understand the sources, purposes, and functions of law, and the importance of the rule of law for the protection of individual rights and the common good.

**Essential Concept and/or Skill: *Understand how various political systems throughout the world define the rights and responsibilities of the individual. (SS.6-8.PSCL.7)***

- Understand constitutions protect individual rights and promote the common good.
- Understand the essential characteristics of limited and unlimited governments.

**Essential Concept and/or Skill: *Understand the role of the United States in current world affairs. (SS.6-8.PSCL.8)***

- Understand conditions, actions and motivations that contribute to conflict and cooperation within and among nations.
- Understand current foreign policy issues and the means the United States is using to deal with them.

**Intermediate (3 – 5) Details and Example**

**Essential Concept and/or Skill: *Understand the rights and responsibilities of each citizen and demonstrate the value of lifelong civic action. (SS.3-5.PSCL.1)***

- Understand what it means to be a citizen.
- Understand why civic responsibility is important and know examples of civic responsibility.
- Understand that Congress passes laws to protect individual rights.
- Understand how people can participate in their government.
- Understand what political leaders do and why leadership is necessary in a democracy.
- Understand opportunities for leadership and public service in the student’s own classroom, school, community, state, and the nation.
- Understand the importance of voluntarism as a characteristic of American society.

<p><b>Illustration of <i>Understand the rights and responsibilities of each citizen and demonstrate the value of lifelong civic action</i> in the ICLE’s Rigor and Relevance Framework</b></p>	<p><b>Illustration of <i>Understand the rights and responsibilities of each citizen and demonstrate the value of lifelong civic action</i> in the ICLE’s Rigor and Relevance Framework</b></p>
<p><b>Quadrant C</b> In small groups, students prioritize the rules contained in the school’s student handbook. Each group compares their ranking of the rules with other group’s rankings. Each group must come to consensus with at least one other group.</p>	<p><b>Quadrant D</b> The students cooperatively develop a classroom belief statement that serves as their classroom constitution, incorporating rules from the school’s student handbook. Each student is involved in the creation of the statement using cooperative learning groups, guidelines for success and after a review of the United States Constitution and Bill of Rights.</p>
<p><b>Quadrant A</b> Students examine the rules in the school handbook and explain reasons for these rules. The teacher facilitates a discussion centered on the students’ responsibilities to their class and school. Students summarize their responsibilities in their class notes or journal.</p>	<p><b>Quadrant B</b> In groups, students list and explain the rights and responsibilities of groups and or citizens (e.g. students and adults) in their community. The groups then produce a comprehensive list.</p>

**Essential Concept and/or Skill: *Understand how the government established by the Constitution embodies the enduring values and principles of democracy and republicanism. (SS.3-5.PSCL.2)***

- Understand the fundamental values and principles of American democracy.
- Understand the difference between power and authority.
- Understand fundamental values and principles of American democracy are expressed in documents such as the Declaration of Independence, the Preamble to the United States Constitution, and the Bill of Rights, as well as in American songs, stories, and speeches.
- Understand the costs and benefits of diversity in American society.

**Essential Concept and/or Skill:** *Understand the purpose and function of each of the three branches of government established by the Constitution. (SS.3-5.PSCL.3)*

- Understand that the legislative branch passes laws to protect individual rights.
- Understand that the executive branch carries out and enforces laws to protect individual rights.
- Understand that the judicial branch, headed by the Supreme Court, makes decisions concerning the law that aim to protect individual rights.

**Essential Concept and/or Skill:** *Understand the differences among local, state and national government. (SS.3-5.PSCL.4)*

- Understand the roles of local, state and national government and the roles of representative leaders at these levels such as mayor, governor and President.
- Understand major services provided by national, state, and local governments.
- Understand how national, state and local government officials are chosen.

**Essential Concept and/or Skill:** *Understand the role of the United States in current world affairs. (SS.3-5.PSCL.5)*

- Understand that the world is divided into many different nations with each one having its own government.
- Understand the major ways nations interact with each other such as trade, diplomacy, cultural contacts, treaties or agreements, and use of military force.
- Understand factors that contribute to cooperation and cause disputes within and among groups and nations.

**Primary (K – 2) Details and Example**

**Essential Concept and/or Skill:** *Understand the basic concepts of government and democracy and that the Constitution defines the rights and responsibilities of citizens. (SS.K-2.PSCL.1)*

- Understand what the US Constitution is and why it is important.
- Understand the purpose of rules.
- Understand the concept of fairness.
- Understand rights and responsibilities.

<p><b>Illustration of <i>Understand the basic concepts of government and democracy and that the Constitution defines the rights and responsibilities of citizens</i> in the ICLE’s Rigor and Relevance Framework</b></p>	
<p><b>Quadrant C</b> Students develop a ballot on which they list their rights and responsibilities as students. They vote on the most important rights and responsibilities.</p>	<p><b>Quadrant D</b> The students construct a class constitution identifying the most important rights and responsibilities. The class constitution is displayed next to a copy of the U.S. constitution.</p>
<p><b>Quadrant A</b> The teacher defines rights and responsibilities, democracy and the Constitution.</p>	<p><b>Quadrant B</b> Students give examples of their rights and responsibilities as members of their school class.</p>

**Essential Concept and/or Skill:** *Understand how government affects citizens and how citizens affect government. (SS.K-2.PSCL.2)*

- Understand the purpose of government.
- Understand the characteristics of a good leader.
- Understand respect for other’s point of view.
- Understand the concepts of power and authority.

**Essential Concept and/or Skill:** *Understand the United States has a role in current world affairs. (SS.K-2.PSCL.3)*

- Understand the world is divided into nations.
- Understand how the nations of the world interact with one another.



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