

History-Social Science Big Ideas

Grades 10-12

The following thought-provoking and comprehensive ‘big ideas’ were developed by San Diego County teachers, and relate to the political, social, cultural, geographic, and economic concepts that spiral through different periods of history. These ‘big ideas’ can be built upon as cognitive learning blocks to help teachers teach and students master the California History-Social Science Content Standards.

(There are no History-Social Science standards for Grade 9)

Grade 10: World History, Culture, and Geography: The Modern World

1. Moral and ethical principles influence the development of political thought.
2. Throughout history people have struggled for rights.
3. New technologies can revolutionize the way people live, work, interact, and govern.
4. Nations compete for natural resources and strategic advantages over other nations.
5. War causes immeasurable devastation.
6. A totalitarian system violates human rights in pursuit of political power.
7. International rivalry between superpowers and growing nationalism in the Third World led to major conflicts in the Cold War.
8. The quest for national self-determination is universal.

Grade 11: U.S. History and Geography: Continuity and Change in the 20th Century

1. A written contract between the people and their government can preserve natural rights and allow for change over time.
2. The Industrial Revolution changed the face of America.
3. America’s military and economic strength made it a world power.
4. People react to periods of breathtaking social and cultural change in different ways.
5. Social and economic crises lead to new roles for government.
6. The fate of nations is forever changed by monumental world events.
7. International competition can lead to conflict and cooperation.
8. The quest for equality is eternal.
9. Societies change over time.

Grade 12: Government

1. The U.S. Constitution is a living document based on evolving interpretations of the meaning of democracy.
2. The three branches of government are fundamental to American democracy.
3. Democracy is only as strong as citizen participation in the political process.
4. Political power is shared and divided in the American system of government.
5. Governments should reflect the will of the people.

Grade 12: Economics

1. Scarcity exists and therefore people must make choices.
2. Markets act as rationing devices for scarce resources.
3. Government can influence the economy.
4. The economic health of a nation can be seen through aggregate data.
5. Economic forces beyond the U.S. border affect the United States economy.
6. People’s skills and wages vary in a labor market.

The above listing of history-social science big ideas were drawn from the *History-Social Science Standards-based Implementation Models Template*.

Giberson, Nancy, et al. (2002). *History-Social Science Standards-based Implementation Models Template*, San Diego, California: San Diego County Office of Education.