

History-Social Science Big Ideas

Pre K-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.

Preschool: Introduction to Social Studies

1. People are special.
2. It is important to follow rules and work together.
3. There are many stories that tell about the past.
4. We live in a big world.

Kindergarten: Learning and Working Now and Long Ago

1. Being a good citizen means acting in certain ways.
2. People create communities by working together and with the environment.
3. History tells the stories of people and events that have happened over time.

Grade 1: A Child’s Place in Time and Space

1. All citizens have rights and individual responsibilities.
2. Over time and place, people differ and share things in common.
3. We all have a place in the world and in the economy.

Grade 2: People Who Make a Difference

1. Where people live influences how people live.
2. People today and people from the past make/made a difference in the world.
3. The actions of a nation are guided by its beliefs and laws.

Grade 3: Continuity and Change: Local History

1. All communities have a history.
2. Citizens should know and practice their responsibilities within their communities and within the larger nation.
3. Differences exist within and between communities.

Grade 4: California: A Changing State

1. Culture reflects adaptation to geographic regions.
2. People move to improve their lives or because they are forced.
3. Economic factors influence geographic, cultural and political change.
4. The interactions of different people shape the history and culture of regions.
5. Government is responsible to its people.

Grade 5: U.S. History and Geography: Making a New Nation

1. People adapt to the geography of their environments.
2. People establish and use systems of government for order and group survival.
3. People move to improve their lives or because they are forced.
4. Economic, political, and social differences may lead to rebellion and war.
5. Cooperation and conflict often result when people of different cultures come into contact with each other.
6. Exploration, immigration, and migration encourage the exchange of ideas, technology, and knowledge between people.

Grade 6: World History and Geography: Ancient Civilizations

1. Exploration of the past leads to increased knowledge and understanding of the present.
2. Physical geography influences the characteristics and success and decline of civilizations.
3. People's lives are impacted by social status, which can be determined in a variety of ways.
4. Enduring civilizations have stable and productive economies that allow for the accumulation of wealth.
5. Religious beliefs influenced the development of cultures just as cultures influenced the development of religions.
6. Advancements in science, medicine, technology and communications (written, oral, art and music) contribute to the longevity and enduring legacies of civilizations.
7. Regardless of the political, religious or economic system, all civilizations depend upon leadership for survival.

Grade 7: World History and Geography: Medieval and Early Modern Times

1. Exploration of the past leads to increased knowledge and understanding of the present as well as the past.
2. Physical geography influences the development of culture and trade.
3. The exchange of goods, ideas, and values occurs through exploration and trade.
4. Cultural exchange of goods, ideas, and values leads to advances in intellectual thought, art, and technology.
5. Civilizations are structured into social, economic, and political classes.
6. Religion plays a key role in the development of civilizations and the spread of culture.

Grade 8: United States History and Geography: Growth and Conflict

1. Political philosophies and major events influence the formation of constitutional governments.
2. Conflicts and compromises result in the creation of constitutions that reflect differing perspectives.
3. Citizen participation is essential to the foundation and preservation of the U.S. political system.
4. Geography influences the divergent paths of people, resulting in physical, economic, and political challenges and rewards.
5. Reactions to social injustice can lead to reform movements.
6. Differences in economic, political, and social beliefs and practices can lead division within a nation and have lasting consequences.
7. Immigration leads to the economic development of an area with varied consequences.

(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.