Unit 1: Political Ideology and Participation

The Standards

SSCG7 The student will describe how thoughtful and effective participation in civic life is characterized by obeying the law, paying taxes, serving on a jury, participating in the political process, performing public service, registering for military duty, being informed about current issues, and respecting differing opinions.

Essential Questions

1. What is political ideology and how does it influence the political platform of an individual?

2. How is an individual’s political platform influence by society?

3. How does an individual’s political platform influence their participation in the political process?
Unit 2: Foundations

The Standards

SSCG1 The student will demonstrate knowledge of the political philosophies that shaped the development of United States constitutional government.
- Analyze key ideas of limited government and the rule of law as seen in the Magna Carta, the Petition of Rights, and the English Bill of Rights.
- Analyze the writings of Hobbes (*Leviathan*), Locke (*Second Treatise on Government*), and Montesquieu (*The Spirit of Laws*) as they affect our concept of government.

SSCG19 The student will compare and contrast governments that are unitary, conferral, and federal; unitary, oligarchic and democratic; and presidential and parliamentary.

SSCG2 The student will analyze the natural rights philosophy and the nature of government expressed in the Declaration of Independence.
- Compare and contrast the Declaration of Independence and the Social Contract Theory.
- Evaluate the Declaration of Independence as a persuasive argument.

SSCG3 The student will demonstrate knowledge of the United States Constitution.
- Explain the main ideas in debate over ratification; include those in *The Federalist*.

Essential Questions

1. What major ideas from political philosophers were adopted by the Founding Fathers and how do these ideas affect our concept of government today?

2. Why do countries throughout the world develop different forms of government?

3. How does the American distribution of power compare with other forms of government around the world?

4. What ideals were in conflict in regards to the ratification of the Constitution?

5. How have the beliefs and ideals found in our early government documents changed or remained the same through our country's development?
Unit 3: The Constitution

The Standards

SSCG3 The student will demonstrate knowledge of the United States Constitution.
- Analyze the purpose of government stated in the Preamble of the United States Constitution.
- Explain the fundamental principles upon which the United States Constitution is based; include the rule of law, popular sovereignty, separation of powers, checks and balances, and federalism.

SSCG4 The student will demonstrate knowledge of the organization and powers of the national government.
- Describe the structure and powers of the legislative, executive, and judicial branches.
- Analyze the relationship between the three branches in a system of checks and balances and separation of powers.

SSCG5 The student will demonstrate knowledge of the federal system of government described in the United States Constitution.
- Explain the relationship of state governments to the national government.
- Define the difference between enumerated and implied powers.
- Describe the extent to which power is shared.
- Identify powers denied to state and national governments.
- Analyze the ongoing debate that focuses on the balance of power between state and national governments.
- Analyze the supremacy clause found in Article IV and the role of the U.S. Constitution as the “supreme law of the land.”

SSCG6 The student will demonstrate knowledge of civil liberties and civil rights.
- Examine the Bill of Rights with emphasis on First Amendment freedoms.
- Analyze due process law expressed in the 5th and 14th Amendments.
- Explain selective incorporation of the Bill of Rights.
- Explain how government seeks to maintain the balance between individual liberties and the public interest.
- Explain every citizen’s right to be treated equally under the law.

SSCG7 The student will describe how thoughtful and effective participation in civic life is characterized by obeying the law, paying taxes, serving on a jury, participating in the political process, performing public service, registering for military duty, being informed about current issues, and respecting differing opinions.

Essential Questions

1. How does the idea of rule of law manifest itself in the Constitution?
2. How does the Constitution distribute power in terms of checks and balances and separation of powers?
3. Where, specifically, does each level of government get its power?
4. Why is it important to distribute power both horizontally and vertically?
5. How does the relationship between state and local governments compare with the relationship between the national and state governments?
6. In what ways have our beliefs and values about federalism changed since the ratification of the Constitution? In what ways are they the same?
7. How have the first amendment freedoms been expanded and inhibited over time?
8. How has suffrage been impacted by changing beliefs and ideals over time?
Unit 4: Legislative Branch

The Standards

SSCG9 The student will explain the differences between the House of Representatives and the Senate, with emphasis on terms of office, powers, organization, leadership, and representation of each house.

SCG10 The student will describe the legislative process including the roles played by committees and leadership.

- Explain the steps in the legislative process.
- Explain the function of various leadership positions within the legislature.

SSCG11 The student will describe the influence of lobbyists (business, labor, professional organizations) and special interest groups on the legislative process.

- Explain the function of lobbyists.
- Describe the laws and rules that govern lobbyists.
- Explain the function of special interest groups.

Essential Questions

1. How is each house of Congress different from the other?
2. In what ways is the legislative process guided by rules and laws?
3. How does the legislative process differ at the national level and the state level?
4. Where in the legislative process do individuals get to exert their greatest influence?
5. What role do lobbyists and interest groups play in the legislative process?
Unit 5: Executive Branch

The Standards

SSCG12 The student will analyze the various roles played by the President of the United States; include Commander-in-Chief of the Armed Forces, chief executive, chief agenda setter, representative of the nation, chief of state, foreign policy leader, and party leader.

SSCG13 The student will describe the qualifications for becoming President of the United States.
   - Explain the written qualifications for President of the United States.
   - Describe unwritten qualifications common to past presidents.

SSCG14 The student will explain the impeachment process and its usage for elected officials.
   - Explain the impeachment process as defined in the U.S. Constitution.
   - Describe the impeachment proceedings of Andrew Johnson and Bill Clinton.

SSCG15 The student will explain the functions of the departments and agencies of the federal bureaucracy.
   - Compare and contrast the organization and responsibilities of independent regulatory agencies, government corporations, and executive agencies.
   - Explain the functions of the Cabinet.

SSCG20 The student will describe the tools used to carry out United States foreign policy (diplomacy; economic, military, and humanitarian aid; treaties; sanctions; and military intervention).

Essential Questions

1. What are the roles of the president?
2. How does a president’s personality impact his term in office?
3. What are the requirements to become president?
4. Should there be more or less stringent requirements to become president?
5. How is the power of the executive checked by the Constitution and tradition?
6. In what ways is the president limited in power by the Constitution or other rules and laws?
7. Why are presidential decisions so important on a global scale?
8. How does the source of funding for a government relate to its power?
9. How do decisions made by executive agencies impact individuals and groups outside of government?
10. How has the power of the bureaucracy changed over the last 200 years?
11. How does the power of the bureaucracy challenge the distribution of power in government?
SSCG7 The student will describe how thoughtful and effective participation in civic life is characterized by obeying the law, paying taxes, serving on a jury, participating in the political process, performing public service, registering for military duty, being informed about current issues, and respecting differing opinions.

SSCG8 The student will demonstrate knowledge of local, state, and national elections.

- Describe the organization, role, and constituencies of political parties.
- Describe the nomination and election process.
- Examine campaign funding and spending.
- Analyze the influence of media coverage, campaign advertising, and public opinion polls.
- Identify how amendments extend the right to vote.

Essential Questions

1. How can American citizens participate in the American political process?

2. How is civic participation affected by rule of law?

3. How are rules or laws that govern the election process beneficial to the citizens of America?

4. Why is being an informed voter important to society?

5. How do political parties, the media, and special interest groups influence the way Americans vote?
Unit 7: Judicial Branch and Criminal Justice

The Standards

SSCG16 The student will demonstrate knowledge of the operation of the federal judiciary.
- Explain the jurisdiction of the federal courts and the state courts.
- Examine how John Marshall established the Supreme Court as an independent, coequal branch of government through his opinions in *Marbury v. Madison*.
- Describe how the Supreme Court decides cases.
- Compare the philosophies of judicial activism and judicial restraint.

SSCG21 The student will demonstrate knowledge of criminal activity.
- Examine the nature and causes of crimes.
- Explain the effects criminal acts have on their intended victims.
- Categorize different types of crimes.
- Explain the different types of defenses used by perpetrators of crime.

SSCG22 The student will demonstrate knowledge of the criminal justice process.
- Analyze the steps in the criminal justice process.
- Explain an individual’s due process rights.
- Describe the steps in a criminal trial or civil suit.
- Examine the different types of sentences a convicted person can receive.

Essential Questions

1. How are the powers of the judicial branch unique among the three branches of government?

2. How does the principle of federalism work in the judicial branch?

3. In what ways do the ideas of judicial restraint and activism reflect different ideals of our society?

4. How have court decisions defined the Constitution and the civil liberties of American citizens?

5. Why are due process rights important to individuals accused of committing a crime?

6. Why is it important to explicitly state rights like those found in the Bill of Rights and the 14th Amendment?

7. How are criminal actions defined in America?

8. Why do people commit crimes and what effects do these criminal acts have on their intended victims?

9. How effective are various sentencing options at resolving conflict?
Unit 8: State and Local Government

The Standards

SSCG17 The student will demonstrate knowledge of the organization and powers of state and local government described in the Georgia Constitution.

- Examine the legislative, executive, and judicial branches.
- Examine the structure of local governments with emphasis on county, city, and town.
- Identify current state and local officials.
- Analyze the relationship among state and local governments.
- Evaluate direct democracy by the initiative, referendum, and recall processes.

SSCG18 The student will demonstrate knowledge of the powers of Georgia’s state and local governments.

- Examine the powers of state and local government.
- Examine sources of revenue received by each level of government.
- Analyze the services provided by state and local government.

Essential Questions

1. How is the state government of Georgia alike and different from the national government of the United State?

2. What is the function of local governments?

3. How does the relationship between local governments and the state government benefit citizens?