

Competencies and Current Programs of Study

SOCIAL STUDIES

Competencies are combinations of attitudes, skills and knowledge that students develop and apply for successful learning, living and working. In school, competencies help students achieve learning outcomes and transfer their learning to new situations. Alberta's curriculum promotes the development of eight competencies, which are a streamlined expression of the competencies identified in the Ministerial Order on Student Learning (#001/2013). The following are examples that describe how competencies may be expressed within the context of Alberta's current Kindergarten to Grade 12 Social Studies programs of study.

CRITICAL THINKING in social studies involves using reasoning to explore topics, examine issues and develop informed positions. Students:

- distinguish fact from opinion to identify bias in historical or contemporary sources;
- make reasoned judgements based on historical or contemporary evidence to challenge or affirm thoughts, beliefs or actions;
- determine relationships of cause and consequence to understand historical or contemporary events;
- consider the ethics of decisions or actions that influence society; and
- demonstrate integrity and open-mindedness when making reasoned decisions or forming opinions about topics and issues.

MANAGING INFORMATION in social studies involves synthesizing information from a variety of sources to understand people, places, land, events or issues over time. Students:

- use various methods and sources to explore historical or contemporary topics or issues;
- evaluate the accuracy and relevance of information to clarify understandings of topics or issues;
- synthesize information to determine points of view, perspectives, themes or trends; and
- interpret, organize and share social, historical, geographic, political, economic or environmental information in an ethical manner.

PROBLEM SOLVING in social studies involves taking responsible action to implement solutions that address problems or issues in communities. Students:

- identify dimensions or causes of historical or contemporary problems or issues;
- examine societal issues from diverse perspectives to generate possible solutions;
- evaluate the social, political, economic or environmental impacts of proposed solutions in order to select courses of action;
- recognize that solutions to problems can create new challenges and may require alternative solutions; and
- demonstrate flexibility, creativity and fairness when selecting courses of action.

CREATIVITY AND INNOVATION in social studies involves envisioning possibilities and taking action to affect change. Students:

- adapt existing or develop new approaches to address social, political, economic or environmental issues;
- create opportunities or products to inform, persuade or inspire action on issues; and
- demonstrate initiative and resourcefulness when taking action to address social, political, economic or environmental issues.

COMMUNICATION in social studies involves exchanging ideas about historical or contemporary topics or issues while considering audience, points of view, perspectives and context. Students:

- use language to express ideas or support their positions on topics or issues in an appropriate manner;
- engage in dialogue, debate or presentations to construct and share understandings about historical or contemporary topics or issues;
- consider how experiences, perspectives, points of view or contexts influence how messages are constructed and perceived;
- use a variety of oral, written or visual modes of expression when exchanging ideas on topics or issues; and
- respect cultures or protocols when sharing ideas about experiences, topics or issues.

CULTURAL AND GLOBAL CITIZENSHIP

in social studies involves taking ethical action to contribute to the dignity and well-being of individuals in communities. Students:

- identify the diverse social, political, historical, geographic, economic and environmental characteristics of communities;
- consider a range of needs, perspectives or approaches when taking action to strengthen communities;
- demonstrate respect for and commitment to the vitality of land, people and resources within local and global communities; and
- demonstrate fairness, equity, empathy and justice when taking action in response to issues.

COLLABORATION in social studies involves working with others to build and renew relationships. Students:

- negotiate to resolve conflict or build consensus when making decisions about topics or issues;
- consider needs, points of view or perspectives when setting and working towards common goals;
- share roles and responsibilities among group members when working towards a common goal; and
- nurture positive relationships within diverse communities by demonstrating empathy and respecting differences.

PERSONAL GROWTH AND WELL-BEING

in social studies involves developing a sense of identity as a valuable member of local or global communities. Students:

- exercise their rights and responsibilities to develop healthy relationships and affirm their place in an inclusive, pluralistic and democratic society;
- develop the ability to make informed choices to effect change as active and responsible citizens;
- recognize the consequences and the interconnectedness of their choices on self and community;
- appreciate how social, political, economic or legal institutions can promote and secure individual and collective well-being; and
- demonstrate reflection, resilience and resourcefulness in fostering individual and collective well-being.

Evidence of competency development is contextualized by subject-area learning content. Educators are not required to formally evaluate and report on competencies separately from students' progress in achieving learning outcomes. Educators are encouraged to give students feedback on competency development as it relates to specific learning outcomes and activities.