

## Iowa Core – Davenport Schools

### Priority Essential Concepts and Skills for Geography, World Studies, or AP Human Geography with Details and Examples

#### Introduction

Social studies is the integrated study of the social sciences and humanities to promote civic competence. Within the school program, social studies provides coordinated, systematic study drawing upon such disciplines as anthropology, archaeology, economics, geography, history, law, philosophy, political science, psychology, religion, and sociology, as well as appropriate content from the humanities, mathematics, and natural sciences. The primary purpose of social studies is to help young people develop the ability to make informed and reasoned decisions for the public good as citizens of a culturally diverse, democratic society in an interdependent world.

*Definition of Social Studies*  
*National Council for the Social Studies (NCSS)*

The founders of our country emphasized that the vitality and security of a democracy depends upon the education and willingness of its citizens to participate actively in society. This level of participation requires civic competence. In other words, it is imperative that our future generations gain an understanding of the core concepts of social studies. Life in the United States within our democratic system is constantly changing which creates varying social circumstances. As a result, citizens need to adapt to such changes in order to sustain vital democratic traditions. Meeting this need is the mission of the social studies.

In social studies, students develop knowledge, skills, and dispositions, including but not limited to:

- Possessing basic knowledge and ways of thinking drawn from many academic disciplines
- Expressing ideas in written form
- Reading reflectively and critically
- Analyzing their own and others' opinions on social issues
- Becoming motivated to participate in civic and community life as active and informed citizens

As we work to carry on the ideals of the founders, we are compelled to revisit our fundamental beliefs and institutions and to construct new social contexts and relationships. The Iowa Core for Social Studies reflects the belief that the informed social studies student comprehends and applies to personal and public experiences the core content perspectives of the many academic fields of the social studies. Our entire social experiences, as well as our republic, are established upon the principles of individual citizenship. Therefore, it is necessary to pay attention to the education of those future citizens.

For that reason, the Iowa Core for Social Studies has been structured around five core social studies content areas. They are:

- Behavioral Sciences
- Economics
- Geography
- History
- Political Science/Civic Literacy

For each area, knowledge and skills have been identified and defined in terms of detailed understandings that students should be able to apply. It is of key importance that students possess the knowledge and skills associated with the economic, political, and social forces that make up the human systems in which they live. In addition, they must possess the historical knowledge which created the spatial, temporal, and cultural perspectives present in our world.

The Iowa Core for Social Studies is premised upon a rigorous and relevant K – 12 social studies program. Engaging students in the pursuit of active informed citizenship will require a broad range of understandings and skills. It will also require an articulated curriculum which connects students to the social world through informed instructional experiences led by teachers who are committed to active civic participation. This represents a bold step toward a vision of social and civic literacy for all of Iowa’s students.

## Geography

Geography is the study of the interaction between people and their environments. Geography therefore looks at the world through the concepts of location, place, human-environmental interaction, movement, and region.

### **Geography, World Studies, or AP Human Geography Course Priorities - Details and Examples**

**Essential Concept and/or Skill:** *Understand the use of geographic tools to locate and analyze information about people, places, and environments.*

Examples:

- Understand the characteristics and uses of geographic technologies.
- Understand geographic representations and tools used to analyze, explain and solve geographic problems.
- Understand the use of mental maps of physical and human features of the world to answer complex geographic questions.
- Understand perspective and point of view in interpreting data on maps.
- Understand the value of using maps from different sources and points of view.

**Essential Concept and/or Skill:** *Understand how physical and human characteristics create and define regions.*

Examples:

- Understand culture as an integrated whole that explains the function and interactions of language, literature, the arts, traditions, beliefs and values and behavior patterns.
- Understand regional boundaries change.
- Understand places and regions are important to individual human identity and as symbols for unifying or fragmenting society.
- Understand external forces can conflict economically and politically with internal interests in a region.

**Essential Concept and/or Skill:** *Understand how human factors and the distribution of resources affect the development of society and the movement of populations.*

Examples:

- Understand population issues.
- Understand international migrations are shaped by push and pull factors.
- Understand the impact of human migration on physical and human systems.
- Understand the impact of policy decisions regarding the use of resources in different regions of the world.
- Understand issues related to the reuse and recycling of resources.
- Understand the physical and human factors that have led to famines and large-scale refugee movements.
- Understand competition for and conflict over natural resources.

**Essential Concept and/or Skill:** *Understand how physical and human processes shape the Earth's surface and major ecosystems.*

Examples:

- Understand relationships between soil, climate, plant and animal life affect the distributions of ecosystems.
- Understand the importance of ecosystems in understanding the environment.
- Understand physical processes affect different regions of the United States and the world.
- Understand social, cultural and economic processes shape the features of places.
- Understand the effects of human and physical changes in ecosystems both locally and globally.

**Essential Concept and/or Skill:** *Understand how human actions modify the environment and how the environment affects humans.*

Examples:

- Understand competition for control of the Earth's surface can have a positive or negative effect on the planet and its inhabitants.
- Understand the global impact of human changes in the physical environment.
- Understand programs and positions related to the use of resources on a local to global scale.

**Essential Concept and/or Skill:** *Understand how culture affects the interaction of human populations through time and space.*

Examples:

- Understand technology and human mobility have changed various cultural landscapes.
- Understand the processes of spatial change have affected history.
- Understand the role culture plays in incidences of cooperation and conflict in the present day world.
- Understand the causes of boundary conflicts and internal disputes between culture groups.
- Understand diverse cultural responses to persistent human issues.

**Essential Concept and/or Skill:** *Understand how cultural factors influence the design of human communities.*

Examples:

- Understand the impact of changing global patterns of trade and commerce on the local community and predict the future impact of these patterns.
- Understand cultures influence the characteristics of regions.
- Understand people create places that reflect culture, human needs, government policy, and current values and ideals as they design and build places.

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