



INDIANA
DEPARTMENT *of*
EDUCATION

2026 Indiana Academic Standards
SOCIAL STUDIES
GRADE 3

Indiana Department of Education

100 N. Senate Ave.
Indianapolis, IN 46204



Indiana Academic Standards Context and Purpose

Introduction

The Indiana Academic Standards for Grade 3 Social Studies are the result of a process designed to identify, evaluate, synthesize, and create high-quality, rigorous learning expectations for Indiana students.

Pursuant to Indiana Code [\(IC\) 20-31-3-3](#), the Indiana Department of Education (IDOE) facilitated the formal revision of the Indiana Academic Standards for K-12 Social Studies. The standards are designed to ensure that all Indiana students, upon graduation, are prepared with essential knowledge and skills needed to access employment, enrollment, or enlistment leading to service. Select standards are identified as essential for mastery by the end of the grade level in alignment with IDOE’s 2023 post-secondary essential skills study. “Essential” standards are indicated with grey shading and an “E.”

What are the Indiana Academic Standards and how should they be used?

The Indiana Academic Standards are designed to help educators, parents, students, and a variety of stakeholders understand the appropriate content for each grade level or course, and within each content area domain. All standards are required to be taught and should form the basis for strong core instruction for every student enrolled in the designated grade level or course. The standards identify the minimum academic content or skills that Indiana students need in order to be prepared for success after graduation, but they are not an exhaustive list.

While the Indiana Academic Standards establish key expectations for knowledge and skills and should be used as the basis for curriculum, the standards by themselves do not constitute a curriculum. It is the responsibility of the local school corporation to select and formally adopt curricular tools that align with Indiana Academic Standards. Additionally, corporation and school leaders should consider the appropriate instructional sequence of the standards as well as the length of time needed to teach each standard. Every standard has a unique place in the continuum of learning, but each standard will not require the same amount of time and attention. A deep understanding of the vertical articulation of the standards will enable educators to make the best instructional decisions. These standards must also be complemented by robust, evidence-based instructional practices to support overall student development. By utilizing strategic and intentional instructional practices, other areas such as STEM, can be integrated with the content standards.

Content-Specific Considerations

The Indiana Academic Standards for Grade 3 Social Studies are organized by four domains: History, Civics and Government, Geography, and Economics. The content and skills listed in each domain indicate what students should know and be able to do in Social Studies by the end of the grade level, including those designated as “essential” for student mastery.

The National Council for the Social Studies' College, Career, and Civic Life (C3) Framework emphasizes the acquisition and application of knowledge to prepare students for college, career, and civic life. IDOE's formal review process incorporated principles of the C3 Framework to enhance critical thinking skills, increase rigor, and promote literacy skills within the standards.

Historical Thinking Skills

Historical thinking skills enable students to analyze, interpret, and understand the past through evidence-based reasoning and contextual understanding. The six skills featured here underpin all of Indiana's social studies standards and should be a primary consideration for schools when implementing developmentally appropriate social studies instruction for all K-12 students. All thinking skills have equal value but are addressed differently depending on a student's grade level and ability. Schools have considerable flexibility when providing students opportunities to develop these thinking skills, as there is no prescribed starting point or sequence.

HISTORICAL THINKING SKILLS

<h3>HISTORICAL ANALYSIS & INTERPRETATION</h3> <ul style="list-style-type: none">Realizing that two people can see the same event in different ways 	<h3>HISTORICAL COMPREHENSION</h3> <ul style="list-style-type: none">Comparing and contrasting different historical perspectivesPutting a modern object or issue next to an older one to see how people across time solve problems 
<h3>HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVES</h3> <ul style="list-style-type: none">Understanding how one event makes another thing happen (cause/effect)Asking, "Why are we still talking about this today?" 	<h3>HISTORICAL ARGUMENTATION</h3> <ul style="list-style-type: none">Making a claim and proving it by using "because..."Sharing what you learn through a drawing, speech, or short story 
<h3>CHRONOLOGICAL REASONING</h3> <ul style="list-style-type: none">Identifying significant moments that changed everything for a group of peopleCreating timelines and mind maps 	<h3>HISTORICAL RESEARCH</h3> <ul style="list-style-type: none">Using clues and evidence to understand questions and mysteries of the past 

Acknowledgments

IDOE appreciates the time, dedication, and expertise offered by Indiana’s K-12 educators, higher education professors, representatives from business and industry, families, and other stakeholders who contributed to the development of the Indiana Academic Standards. We wish to especially acknowledge the committee members, as well as participants in the public comment period, who dedicated many hours to the review and evaluation of these standards designed to prepare Indiana students for success after graduation.

Grade 3 Social Studies

Standards identified as essential for mastery by the end of the grade level are indicated with gray shading and an “E.” The learning outcome statement for each domain immediately precedes each set of standards.

Domain 1: History	
Learning Outcome: Students describe how significant people, events, and developments have shaped their own community and region; compare their community to other communities in the region in other times and places; and use a variety of resources to gather information about the past.	
3.H.1	Identify and describe how Native Americans impacted the development of local and regional communities. (E)
3.H.2	Explain why and how the local community was established, and identify its founders and early settlers.
3.H.3	Describe the role of the local community and other communities in the development of the state’s regions.
3.H.4	Give examples of people, events, and developments that brought important changes to your community and the region where your community is located. (E)
3.H.5	Create simple timelines that identify important events in various regions of the state.
3.H.6	Use a variety of resources to gather information about your region’s communities and identify factors that make the region’s culture unique.
3.H.7	Distinguish between fact and fiction in historical accounts by comparing documentary sources on historical figures and events with fictional characters and events in stories. (E)
3.H.8	Define immigration and explain how it contributed to the early development and cultural structures of communities. (E)
Domain 2: Civics and Government	
Learning Outcome: Students explain what it means to be citizens of their community, state, and nation; identify the functions and major services provided by local government; and use a variety of resources to gather information about their local, state, and federal governments.	
3.C.1	Discuss the reasons governments are needed and identify specific goods and services that governments provide. (E)
3.C.2	Identify and explain the duties of and selection process for local and state government officials who make, implement, and enforce laws.
3.C.3	Explain that the United States has three levels of government (i.e., local, state, and federal), and that each level has special duties and responsibilities. (E)

<p>3.C.4</p>	<p>Explain the importance of being a responsible citizen of your community, state, and nation. Identify people in your community and state who exhibit the characteristics of good citizenship.</p>
<p>3.C.5</p>	<p>Explain the role citizens have in making decisions and rules within the community, state, and nation, such as participating in local and regional activities, voting in elections, running for office, and voicing opinions in a positive way. (E)</p>
<p>Domain 3: Geography</p>	
<p>Learning Outcome: Students explain that simple grid systems (latitude and longitude) are used to locate places on maps and globes, identify the distinctive physical and cultural features of their community, and explain the geographic relationships between their own community and the state and other states within the region.</p>	
<p>3.G.1</p>	<p>Use labels and symbols to locate and identify physical and political features on maps and globes.</p>
<p>3.G.2</p>	<p>Label a map of the Midwest, identifying states, major rivers, lakes, and the Great Lakes. (E)</p>
<p>3.G.3</p>	<p>Identify the local and regional communities, including Indiana and other Midwestern states, on maps using simple grid systems. (E)</p>
<p>3.G.4</p>	<p>Identify the northern, southern, eastern, and western hemispheres; cardinal and intermediate directions; and determine the direction and distance from one place to another on a variety of maps and globes. (E)</p>
<p>3.G.5</p>	<p>Explain that regions are areas that have similar physical and cultural characteristics. Identify Indiana and the local community as part of a specific region.</p>
<p>3.G.6</p>	<p>Compare and contrast the physical characteristics of Indiana to neighboring states using words, illustrations, maps, photographs, and other resources.</p>
<p>3.G.7</p>	<p>Describe the difference in how Native Americans and early settlers of Indiana adapted to and modified their environment to meet their needs.</p>
<p>3.G.8</p>	<p>Identify and describe how human activities and natural systems affect the local environment.</p>
<p>Domain 4: Economics</p>	
<p>Learning Outcome: Students explain how people in the local community make choices about using goods, services, and productive resources; how they engage in trade to satisfy their economic wants and needs; how they use a variety of resources to gather and apply information about economic changes in the community; and how they compare costs and benefits in economic decision making.</p>	
<p>3.E.1</p>	<p>Give examples from the local community that illustrate scarcity of resources and explain how scarcity requires people to make choices and give up other options (i.e., opportunity cost).</p>

3.E.2	Give examples of goods and services provided by local business and industry. (E)
3.E.3	Give examples of trade in the local community, and explain how trade benefits both parties.
3.E.4	Define interdependence, and give examples of how people in the local community depend on each other for goods and services.
3.E.5	List the characteristics of money, and explain how money makes trade and the purchase of goods easier. (E)
3.E.6	Explain that prices are influenced by interactions between buyers and sellers in markets. (E)
3.E.7	Illustrate how people compare benefits and costs when making choices and decisions as consumers and producers.
3.E.8	Identify different ways people save their income, and explain advantages and disadvantages of each.