



INDIANA
DEPARTMENT *of*
EDUCATION

2026 Indiana Academic Standards

SOCIAL STUDIES

SOCIOLOGY

Indiana Department of Education

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Indiana Academic Standards Context and Purpose

Introduction

The Indiana Academic Standards for Sociology 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

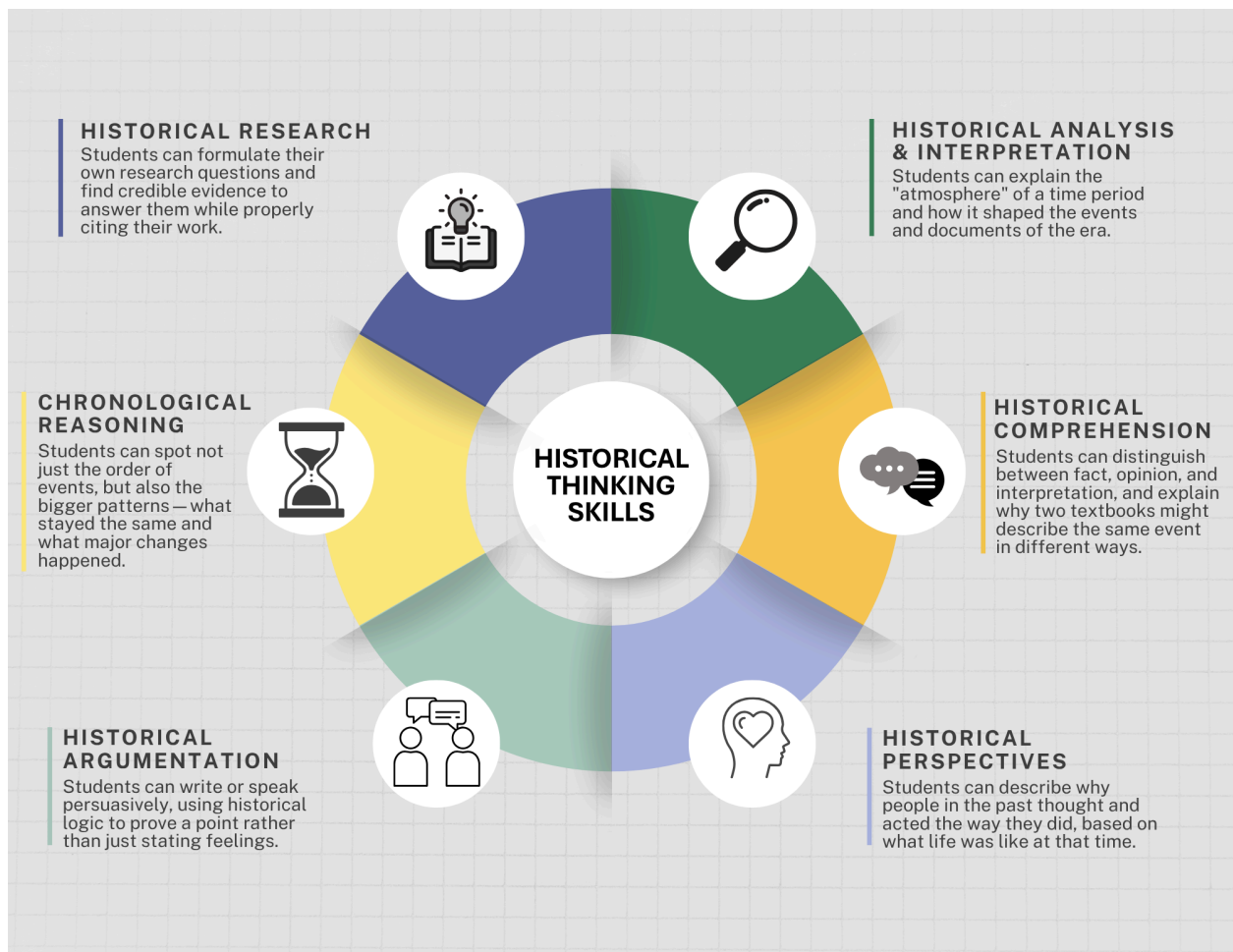
The Indiana Academic Standards for Sociology indicate what students should know and be able to do by the end of the course, including those designated as "essential" for student mastery.

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.



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.

Sociology

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

Domain 1: Foundations of Sociology as a Social Science	
Learning Outcome: Students describe the development of sociology as a social science, by identifying methods and strategies of research and by examining the contributions of sociology to the understanding of social issues.	
S.1.1	Define sociology and trace its development as a distinct discipline. (E)
S.1.2	Identify key figures in the development of the discipline of sociology. (E)
S.1.3	Illustrate the relationship of sociology to the other social science disciplines, including history, economics, psychology, and political science.
S.1.4	Explain the major theoretical perspectives (paradigms) common to sociology including structural functional, symbolic interaction, and conflict theory. Demonstrate how each perspective sheds light on human social behavior. (E)
S.1.5	Identify the research methods commonly used by sociologists including survey research, content/historical analysis, secondary analysis, controlled experiments, observation, participant observation, and case study. Explain the strengths and weaknesses of each.
S.1.6	Distinguish fact from opinion in data source analysis.
S.1.7	Prepare original written and oral reports and presentations on sociological topics. (E)
Domain 2: Culture	
Learning Outcome: Students examine the influence of culture on the individual and the way cultural transmission is accomplished. Students study the way culture defines how people in a society behave in relation to groups and to physical objects. They also learn that human behavior is learned within the society. Through the culture, individuals learn the relationships, structures, patterns and processes to be members of the society.	
S.2.1	Define culture and identify the material and non-material components of culture.
S.2.2	Explain the differences between the concepts: culture and society.
S.2.3	Identify and apply elements of nature vs. nurture in explaining human social behavior.
S.2.4	Identify American cultural values; differentiate between a heterogeneous society and homogenous society. (E)
S.2.5	Identify examples of culture similarities and differences.
S.2.6	Explain the relationship between norms and values; explain how norms develop and change in a society; distinguish between folkways, mores, and taboos. (E)

S.2.7	Define and explore the characteristics of subcultures and countercultures.
S.2.8	Explain how functionalists, interactionists, and conflict theorists differ in their view of culture.
S.2.9	Discuss how innovations in science and technology affect social interaction and culture.
S.2.10	Describe traditions, roles, and expectations necessary for a community to continue. (E)
Domain 3: Socialization	
Learning Outcome: Students examine the process by which people develop their human potential and learn culture. Socialization will be considered as a lifelong process of human social experience.	
S.3.1	Define socialization as a process that takes place from birth to death, and how it changes throughout the life cycle. (E)
S.3.2	Explore the contributions of George Herbert Mead and Charles Horton Cooley to the development of theories of self-concept and how the self-concept is formed.
S.3.3	Explain how symbolic communication allows for socialization and cultural transmission. (E)
S.3.4	Identify the goals of socialization (transmission of culture including values inculcation, self-control, and social control, appropriate role behavior, skills attainment). (E)
S.3.5	Identify the major agents of socialization and evaluate the role each plays (family, play group, peer group, school, mass media, job, religion, total institutions, including re-socialization). (E)
S.3.6	Discuss how societies recognize rites of passage.
Domain 4: Social Stratification	
Learning Outcome: Students identify how social status influences individual and group behaviors and how that status relates to the position a person occupies within a social group.	
S.4.1	Define stratification as understood in sociology and describe its connection to ideology.
S.4.2	Compare the stratification of different societies along with its causes and effects. (E)
S.4.3	Explore stratification from both functionalist and conflict perspectives.
S.4.4	Distinguish between the terms role, status, and esteem.
S.4.5	Explain how roles and role expectations can lead to role conflict and role strain.

Domain 5: Sociology of Gender	
Learning Outcome: Students learn to differentiate between the biological differences that divide the human population into male and female, and gender which is the personal traits and social positions that members of a society attach to being male or female. The development and changes in gender roles over time will be examined.	
S.5.1	Distinguish between biological (ascribed) status and socially assigned gender roles.
S.5.2	Explore how gender role socialization occurs.
S.5.3	Examine how language can reflect and reinforce traditional gender roles. (E)
S.5.4	Explore how gender roles differ in different societies and how they change over time. (E)
S.5.5	Compare and contrast various sociological perspectives of gender role socialization.
Domain 6: Sociology of Groups	
Learning Outcome: Students explore the impacts of social groups on individual and group behavior. They understand that social groups are comprised of people who share some common characteristics, such as common interests, beliefs, behavior, feelings, thoughts, and contact with each other.	
S.6.1	Define social groups as understood in sociology and distinguish groups from crowds and aggregates.
S.6.2	Distinguish between primary groups and secondary groups with examples of each.
S.6.3	Explore reasons for group formation; distinguish instrumental from expressive needs.
S.6.4	Explain the functions of groups both for individual group members and for society.
S.6.5	Explain how the importance of primary and secondary groups have changed over time, particularly in relation to pre-industrial and industrial society. (E)
S.6.6	Describe leadership styles (authoritarian, democratic, laissez-faire) and the benefits and drawbacks of each.
S.6.7	Define ethnocentrism and cultural relativism and explain how they can be beneficial or destructive to a culture. (E)
S.6.8	Define different types of groups (involuntary, voluntary, coercive, reference).
S.6.9	Explore the formation of group norms.
S.6.10	Identify both rights and responsibilities the individual has to the group.
S.6.11	Investigate how incorrect communications, such as rumors or gossip, can influence group behavior.

Domain 7: Social Institutions	
Learning Outcome: Students identify the effects of social institutions on individual and group behavior. They understand that social institutions are the social groups in which an individual participates, and that these institutions influence the development of the individual through the socialization process.	
S.7.1	Define social institutions as being made up of norms and values, and explain their importance to society. (E)
S.7.2	Identify basic social institutions and explain their impact on individuals, groups, and organizations within society and how they transmit the values of society.
S.7.3	Discuss the concept of political power and factors that influence political power.
S.7.4	Conduct research and analysis on an issue associated with social structure or social institutions. (E)
S.7.5	Examine one or more important social institutions (e.g., marriage, family, education, health care, judicial system, religion) and their functions for society; consider how conflict theory sees the institution.
S.7.6	Examine how technological innovations and scientific discoveries have influenced major social institutions
S.7.7	Define propaganda and discuss the methods of propaganda used to influence social behavior.
Domain 8: Collective Behavior and Social Change	
Learning Outcome: Students examine the changing nature of society. They explain that social change addresses the disruption of social functions caused by numerous factors and that some changes are minor and others are major.	
S.8.1	Describe how and why societies change over time. (E)
S.8.2	Examine various social influences that can lead to immediate and long-term changes.
S.8.3	Describe how collective behavior can influence and change society. (E)
S.8.4	Describe how the role of the mass media has changed over time and project what changes might occur in the future. (E)
S.8.5	Distinguish major differences between social movements and collective behavior with examples.
S.8.6	Investigate the consequences of change to society.
S.8.7	Discuss theories that attempt to explain collective behavior.
S.8.8	Examine factors that could lead to the breakdown and disruption of an existing community.

S.8.9	Discuss the impact of leaders of different social movements.
S.8.10	Discuss both the benefits and social costs of collective behavior in society.
Domain 9: Social Problems	
Learning Outcome: Students analyze a range of social problems in today's world. Social problems result from imbalances within the social system and affect a large number of people in an adverse way.	
S.9.1	Identify characteristics of a social problem as opposed to an individual problem.
S.9.2	Describe how social problems have changed over time.
S.9.3	Discuss the implications of social problems for society.
S.9.4	Examine how individuals and groups respond to social problems.
S.9.5	Evaluate possible solutions to social problems and the potential consequences. (E)
S.9.6	Design school- and community-based projects to address a local aspect of a social problem.
S.9.7	Analyze a social issue.
Domain 10: Deviance and Social Control	
Learning Outcome: Students examine all types of deviant behavior from all three sociological perspectives as well as the means and methods of social control.	
S.10.1	Define deviance and explore the functions deviance serves as identified by Emile Durkheim.
S.10.2	Identify formal and informal, as well as positive and negative forms of social control employed in our society. (E)
S.10.3	Explore explanations of deviance such as the Strain Theory, the Differential Association Theory, and the Control Theory. (E)
S.10.4	Identify deviant subcultures.
S.10.5	Examine labeling theory from a symbolic interactionist perspective. (E)
S.10.6	Identify types of crime and their consequences.
S.10.7	Identify the consequences of the medicalization of deviance.
S.10.8	Explore theoretical foundations of punishment including retributive, rehabilitative, and deterrent. (E)