



INDIANA
DEPARTMENT *of*
EDUCATION

2026 Indiana Academic Standards

SOCIAL STUDIES

WORLD HISTORY & CIVILIZATION

Indiana Department of Education

100 N. Senate Ave.

Indianapolis, IN 46204



Indiana Academic Standards Context and Purpose

Introduction

The Indiana Academic Standards for World History and Civilization 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

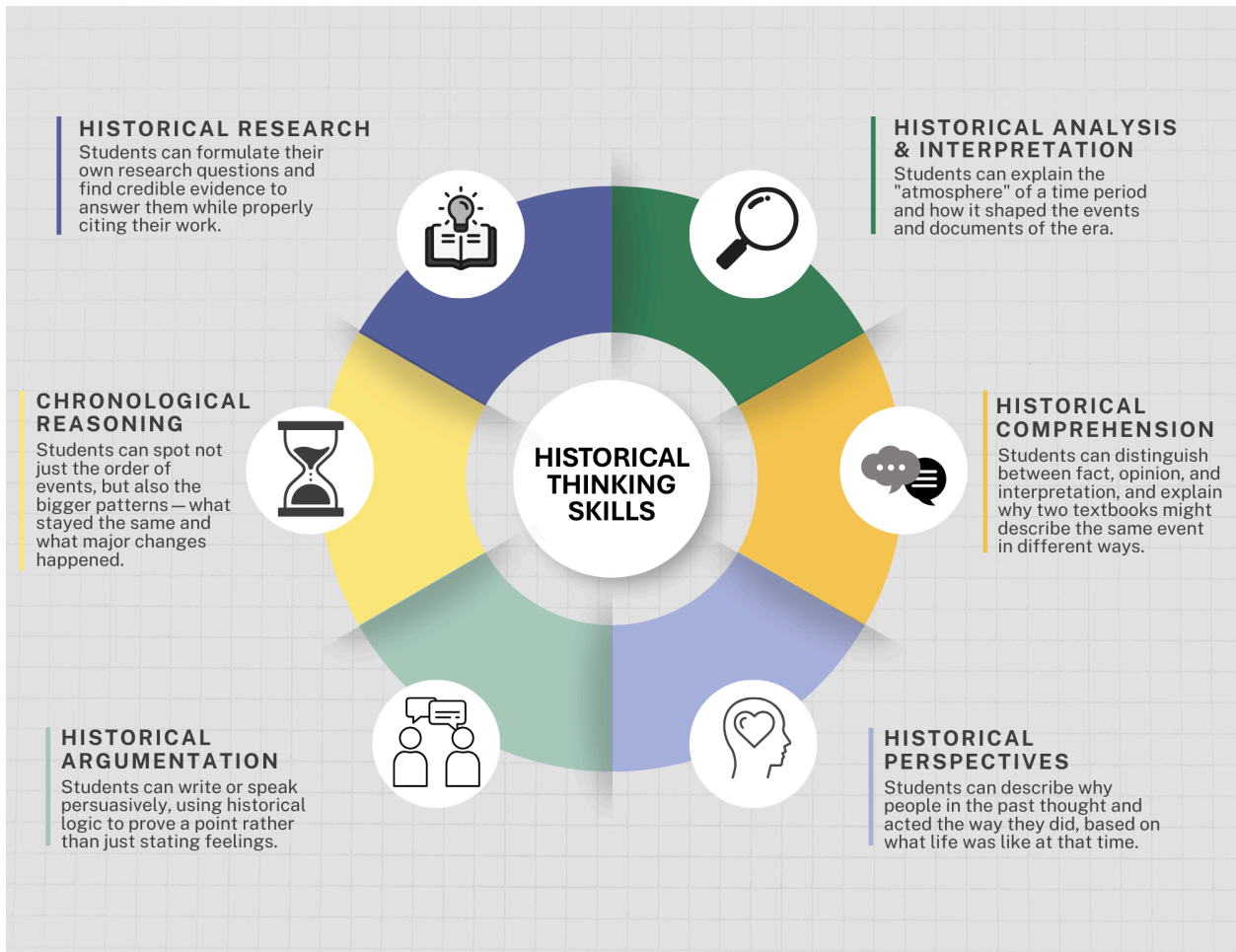
Content-Specific Considerations

The Indiana Academic Standards for World History and Civilization 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.

World History and Civilization

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.

Learning Outcome: Students are expected to compare and contrast events and developments involving diverse peoples and civilizations in different regions of the world. They examine examples of continuity and change, universality and particularity, and unity and diversity among various peoples and cultures from the past to the present.	
Domain 1: Ancient Cultures and Civilizations: 8000 BCE to 600 BCE	
WH.1.1	Describe and evaluate social, cultural, and economic changes of small agriculture communities which led to the development of large agricultural settlements, such as the movement from hunting and gathering societies to civilization. (E)
WH.1.2	Identify the key components that make up a civilization and the key differences between civilizations and how people organize themselves outside of civilizations.
WH.1.3	Review the key elements of the development of early river valley civilizations in Mesopotamia, Egypt, the Indus River Valley, and Shang China.
WH.1.4	Examine the development and characteristics of early empires, such as Assyria, Persia, Israel, Minoan, and Zhou.
WH.1.5	Examine the development of Judaism and the civilization of Ancient Israel, including the origins of monotheism, the significance of the Exodus from Egypt, the Hebrew Bible and the Ten Commandments as the source of many moral and ethical traditions of Western civilization.
Domain 2: Classical Civilizations: 1000 BCE to 600 CE	
WH.2.1	Review the development and fundamental beliefs and features of major world religions and philosophies, including Hinduism, Buddhism, Sikhism, Judaism, Christianity, Islam, and examine the origins of monotheism, as the source of many moral and ethical traditions of Western Civilization. (E)
WH.2.2	Examine the development of Greek civilization, including differing political and social structures and major conflicts. (E)
WH.2.3	Trace the changes that culminated in the end of the Republic and the formation of the Roman Empire.
WH.2.4	Analyze the causes, conditions, and consequences of the decline and fall of the western part of the Roman Empire. (E)
WH.2.5	Examine the significant achievements of the Greeks and Romans and their impact on the modern world. (E)

WH.2.6	Examine the origins, developments, and major achievements of civilizations in India, such as the Mauryan and Gupta empires. Compare and contrast the influence of Hinduism and Buddhism on the civilizations.
WH.2.7	Trace the developments and achievements of the Qin and Han Dynasties. (E)
WH.2.8	Compare and contrast the influence of Confucianism, Taoism, and Legalism on East Asian civilizations.
Domain 3: Major Civilizations and Cultural Interactions: 600 to 1300 CE	
WH.3.1	Analyze the impact of trade networks, such as the Silk Road and Indian Ocean trade network. (E)
WH.3.2	Examine the origins and spread of Islam, including Islam's division into the Sunnis and Shiites, and Islam's early impact on West Asia, Southern Europe, and North Africa. (E)
WH.3.3	Explain the role of Christianity as a unifying force in medieval Europe. (E)
WH.3.4	Explain the cultural, political, economic, and religious causes of the Crusades and their consequences for Europe and Southwest Asia, including the growth in power of the monarchies in Europe.
WH.3.5	Examine the key achievements of civilizations in Africa prior to European contact. (E)
WH.3.6	Compare and contrast the developments and achievements of the Maya, Aztec, and Inca civilizations.
WH.3.7	Describe and explain the rise, expansion, and decline of the Mongol Empire and its impact on the development and expansion of land-based empires throughout Asia. (E)
WH.3.8	Examine the development of feudalism in Japan and its impact on Japanese society and government.
WH.3.9	Examine the role of the Tang and Song Chinese dynasties in establishing political, social, economic, and cultural trends in China.
Domain 4: The Rise of Western Civilization and Global Interactions: 1300 CE to 1750 CE	
WH.4.1	Trace the origins and developments of the European Renaissance and its impact throughout Western Europe. (E)
WH.4.2	Analyze the factors that led to the origin and spread of the Protestant Reformation, the Catholic Counter-Reformation, as well as reforming movements in other religions, including the wars of religion. (E)
WH.4.3	Discuss the emergence of nation-states as well as the increased impact of the citizen as a result of the decline of the European medieval period.

WH.4.4	Explain the consequences of and resistance to the conquests and colonization as a result of the worldwide voyages of exploration, including the transatlantic slave trade, Columbian Exchange, and the effects on native populations in the Americas. (E)
WH.4.5	Examine the reactions against European Exploration including reactions in China, Japan, Africa, and the Americas.
Domain 5: Revolutions, Nationalism, and Imperial Power: 1500 CE to 1900 CE	
WH.5.1	Explain the key developments of the Scientific Revolution and its impact on the world. (E)
WH.5.2	Explain the key ideas of the Enlightenment in European history, and describe its impact upon political and religious thought in Europe and the Americas, including the foundation of American government and subsequent revolutions. (E)
WH.5.3	Examine the causes, events, and consequences of the Atlantic Revolutions, including the American, French, Haitian, and Latin American revolutions. (E)
WH.5.4	Examine the economic, social, and political changes caused by the Industrial Revolution and their impact on the development of political and economic theories. (E)
WH.5.5	Analyze the causes and consequences of 19th century imperialism for Asia, Africa, and the Americas, including resistance movements to imperial control.
Domain 6: An Era of Global Conflicts, Challenges, Controversies, and Changes: 1900 CE to Present	
WH.6.1	Identify and explain the impact of nationalism, imperialism, militarism, and alliances on relationships between countries. (E)
WH.6.2	Trace major events and global consequences of World War I. (E)
WH.6.3	Explain the causes and consequences of the Russian Revolutions of 1917 and the establishment of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics.
WH.6.4	Identify the causes (i.e., social, political, militaristic, and economic) and key events of World War II, and analyze the impact this war had on the global community. (E)
WH.6.5	Examine the causes, course, and effects of the Holocaust, including accounts of camp victims, survivors, liberators, and perpetrators, and summarize world responses, including the Nuremberg Trials. (E)
WH.6.6	Explain the causes and consequences of the Cold War, and describe the role it played in ethnic or nationalistic conflicts in various parts of the world. (E)
WH.6.7	Describe the paths to decolonization and independence from colonial rule in Asia, Africa, and the Middle East. (E)

2026 Indiana Academic Standards: World History and Civilization

WH.6.8	Explain the origins of the modern State of Israel and the ongoing conflict with Palestine and the Arab World.
WH.6.9	Trace the rise of communism in China including its foundations, the Cultural Revolution, and modern day developments.
WH.6.10	Describe and analyze the global expansion of democracy and globalization in the late 20th century.
WH.6.11	Investigate current global issues, such as terrorism, genocide, environmental issues, and globalization.