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ABSTRACT

The State of New Jersey has established core proficiencies for those courses most high school students take to meet state graduation requirements. The purpose of the core course proficiencies is to assure that students throughout the state taking similar courses are acquiring the same essential knowledge and skills. This document presents the core course proficiencies for U.S. History I and II and World History/Cultures. For each of these course areas, proficiencies in four areas have been established: knowledge, attitudes, basic social studies skills, and social participation. An overview of the proficiencies for each of the two course areas also is provided. (DB)

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CORE COURSE PROFICIENCIES:

Social Studies

John Ellis  
Commissioner

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## FOREWORD

New Jersey public education is increasingly dedicated to ensuring that all students have access to a quality education, one that will prepare them to be effective and productive citizens. To ensure this quality and students' access to the essential knowledge and skills, regardless of where our young people reside, educators from all parts of the state have worked collaboratively to identify core course proficiencies in those social studies and English courses students take to meet the high school graduation requirements.

The Core Course Proficiencies initiative is an outgrowth of the recommendations from two study panels convened over a five-year period: one to review and revise high school graduation requirements, and the other to consider the need for and impact of establishing a common core of knowledge and skills in specified high school courses. Both panels identified the need for a common core in the content areas; both identified a need to upgrade the high school curriculum; and both stressed concern for assuring equity in education for all New Jersey students. The Core Course Proficiencies initiative meets these three concerns.

Included within the initiative is an exhaustive five-year plan to convene panels of outstanding educators in each of the specified courses in order to identify proficiencies in their respective subject areas. The social studies panel, with input from local educators across the state, has developed core course proficiencies for three social studies courses. These proficiencies are but a first step toward building a stronger curriculum and ensuring equity for all students.

Local boards of education are required to incorporate these core course proficiencies into the curricula. All students can learn these core course proficiencies. It is up to New Jersey educators to provide learning opportunities that will enable them to do so.

  
John Ellis  
Commissioner

## CORE COURSE PROFICIENCIES

### Social Studies Panel

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James O'Hara, Co-chair

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Camden County Vocational

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Westfield  
Rahway  
Global Learning Inc.  
Newark  
Ramsey  
Paramus  
World Trade Institute  
West Windsor-Plainsboro Regional  
Northern Burlington County Regional  
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Hopewell Valley Regional  
Cherry Hill Township  
Ridgefield Park  
Manalapan-Englishtown Regional  
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Lawrence Township  
Trenton  
College St. Elizabeth  
Monroe Township  
Ocean Township  
Middletown Township  
New Jersey Parent Teachers Association  
Moorestown Township  
Bayonne  
Hunterdon Central Regional  
Rutgers Preparatory  
Camden City  
Millville  
Bernards Township  
Metuchen

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# NEW JERSEY'S CORE COURSE PROFICIENCIES

## Background

In May, 1980, a statewide committee studying high school graduation requirements recommended that the establishment of student proficiencies for each course and the continuous upgrading of proficiencies be studied. Responding to that recommendation, a Statewide Panel on High School Proficiencies, appointed by the Commissioner of Education, studied the issues of proficiencies: how they should be developed and assessed and what their impact would be. In light of the panel's findings, which were reported in December, 1987, the Commissioner presented recommendations to the State Board of Education in June, 1988. These recommendations included establishing core proficiencies statewide for those courses most students take to meet the State Board of Education curriculum requirements for graduation in New Jersey. The proficiencies were to be identified by panels of outstanding professionals in each of the identified content areas through curriculum convocations and school-district review. The Core Course Proficiencies Initiative was adopted by the State Board of Education at its May, 1989, meeting.

## Purpose

The purpose of the Core Course Proficiencies Initiative is to ensure that all students, regardless of where they reside, have equal access to the fundamental knowledge and skills critical to achieving success. From district to district, New Jersey students must meet the same course and credit requirements in: English; mathematics; science; social studies; fine, practical, and/or performing arts; career education; and physical, health, and safety education. Until the State Board of Education established the initiative in May, 1989, no consideration had been given to assure that students taking similar courses for high school graduation were acquiring the same essential core knowledge and skills.

Although the state sets the general requirements for graduation, determining the skills and knowledge that constitute proficiency in specific subjects has been left to individual districts; and standards vary widely. Such discrepancies can cheat students and undermine New Jersey's efforts to guarantee the quality of its diploma.

The expected outcomes of the New Jersey Core Course Proficiencies initiative are:

- Equity in education for all children.
- The identification of the essential knowledge and skills that students should master in those courses most students take to meet the high school graduation requirements.
- The upgrading of the high school curriculum across the state.

Feedback during all phases of the initiative has been extremely positive. Most participants in the eighteen-month identification process have indicated

that the development of core course proficiencies is critical for improving curriculum and "the right thing to do." At the heart of this effort has been and continues to be the involvement of dedicated educators, including content area teachers, administrators, and supervisors, as well as representatives from business and industry and from high education.

### Process

In July, 1990, panels of outstanding educators in English and social studies (approximately 25 and 35 members respectively) met to identify core course proficiencies for three social studies courses (United States History I and II and World History/World Cultures) and for all courses offered within an English (language arts) program which students take to meet high school graduation requirements for English. Panel members included content area teachers, administrators and supervisors, as well as representatives from business and industry, and higher education.

During August, educators statewide were invited to attend two English and social studies convocations in order to review panel drafts of the proficiencies. The panel subsequently reconvened on October 15 to revise the proficiencies based on the input of the 250 educators who attended the August convocations. Approximately one half of the high school districts were then selected to review the English and one half to review the social studies proficiencies and to provide feedback on them. This feedback served as the basis for final revisions of the English and social studies proficiencies, which were presented to the State Board of Education for approval.



## UNITED STATES HISTORY I & II

### OVERVIEW

"History, by apprising them [future citizens] of the past, will enable them to judge of the future; it will avail them of the experience of other times and other nations; it will qualify them as judges of the actions and designs of men; it will enable them to know ambition under every disguise it may assume; and knowing it, to defeat its views."

--Thomas Jefferson, 1781

The historic goal of education in the United States has been to prepare students for enlightened, active citizenship in a democratic republic. Although all school subjects are an integral part of educating future citizens, since the mid-twentieth century, responsibility for this task has been placed largely on the social studies. Because a historical perspective dominates social studies courses, the teaching and learning of history in the schools should proceed with an eye toward educating students as citizens. It is for these reasons that the Core Course Proficiencies for United States History I and II go beyond the conventional emphasis on the mere acquisition of historical information. Rather, the goal is for students to develop the ability to apply their insights into the past to deal with issues they face presently and in the future.

The proficiencies listed below are divided into four complementary areas of learning: knowledge, attitudes, skills, and social participation. While it is fundamental that students learn each proficiency, it is imperative that they recognize that the proficiencies in these four areas are not isolated but are interdependent. The effective social studies course, then, is one

that integrates proficiencies from the four areas. The proficiencies also were designed so that United States History courses would integrate learning from all of the social studies "disciplines" and, to a lesser extent, from other curriculum areas. Certain proficiencies were written to conform to state law and administrative code requirements, i.e., Knowledge Proficiencies #5, #8, #9, #10, #16, and #24. (See Appendix for N.J.S.A. 18A:35-1 & 2.)

The proficiencies were written in an effort to convey essential considerations in the social studies while at the same time allowing districts to retain a degree of local autonomy. Therefore, while these proficiencies are state-mandated learning outcomes, it is left to local districts to identify the specific content elements that will help students achieve them. Additionally, all of the proficiencies were designed to transcend the chronological boundaries of United States History I and United States History II courses, leaving districts the flexibility to develop courses that best suit the needs of their students. **The proficiencies, constructed so as to apply broadly across the lines of United States History I and United States History II, must be included in both.** High school studies must be viewed as a continuation of learning begun at the elementary and middle levels, as well. It should be noted that these proficiencies comprise not a course of study, but the basic goals of United States history courses.

These proficiencies were designed with the understanding that curriculum development basically consists of three interrelated activities: identifying what it is students should learn, creating the experiences that bring students to that learning, and designing ways and means of evaluating the extent to which students have learned and can express their understanding.

Many of these proficiencies require that students engage in learning activities that move beyond conventional "talk and chalk," and that a variety of instructional approaches be employed in social studies classrooms. Similarly, these proficiencies require that methods of evaluation move beyond conventional assessment techniques, and that a variety of evaluation techniques be employed. The goal underlying this approach is to ensure that students learn the lessons that social studies teach us and can apply their learning to contribute to decision making in real-world contexts.

The development of these proficiencies was a long, arduous endeavor. For committee members, the experience was sometimes difficult, other times draining, but ultimately exhilarating. These proficiencies are intended to develop in students the abilities necessary to function effectively as a citizen, and to provide students with opportunities to develop knowledge and understanding of the past which they can apply to living now and in the future. The study of history is not an end in itself, but a means of purposefully preparing youth for active citizenship in a democratic society.

UNITED STATES HISTORY I AND II CORE PROFICIENCIES\*

KNOWLEDGE

The students will:

1. Apply the historical concepts of change and continuity over time, turning points, cause and effect, and relationships between past and present to their understanding of United States history.
2. Explain how the historical development of the United States continues to take place in a global context.
3. Explain how cultural diversity has had and continues to have an impact on American life.
4. Describe the role and contributions of various groups, including but not limited to women and ethnic, racial, and religious minorities.
5. Analyze the roles of African-Americans in shaping the development of the United States and in continuing to struggle to achieve equality throughout American history.

\* The order of the proficiencies is not intended to indicate the order of their importance nor the sequence in which they should be taught.

6. Analyze the causes and consequences of prejudice as manifested through various forms of discrimination, which include segregation, expulsion, and genocide, and their effect on the historical and ongoing struggle for human rights.
7. Analyze the political ideas and principles in the Declaration of Independence, the Constitution of the United States, The Bill of Rights, and other documents that have shaped United States government and practices.
8. Explain the origin, development, significance, and interpretations of the Constitution in shaping governmental practices and in protecting the rights of the individual.
9. Explain the origin, structure, and functions of the legislative, executive, and judicial branches of government at the national, state, and local levels.
10. Analyze the changing relationship between the individual and the state in a democratic society.
11. Analyze the impact of various agents, such as individuals, executive initiatives, congressional legislation, court decisions, political parties, peoples' movements, interest groups, and international events and interactions, in determining the course of domestic and foreign policy.

12. Assess how national ideals and national interests have influenced the course of United States foreign policy from the founding of the Republic to the present day.
13. Explain the impact of religious beliefs, groups, practices, and traditions on the development of the United States, past and present.
14. Evaluate examples of social and civic responsibility evidenced in the work of individuals, groups, and institutions, both public and private.
15. Analyze change and continuity in the structure, functions, and roles of the family and education in the United States.
16. Explain the various roles the arts (literature, art, music, etc.) play in human expression, communication, and cultural identity in United States history.
17. Apply an understanding of the major economic systems, principles, and concepts to the study of United States history.
18. Compare and contrast the role, function, and response of business, labor, government, and consumers as these pertain to changes in the United States economy.
19. Explain the relationships between the important economic changes, conflicts, and crises that have occurred throughout the history of the United States, and their effect on various socioeconomic groups.

20. Relate scientific and technological innovations to physical, social, and environmental changes in American life.
21. Apply the geographical themes of location, place, human-environment interactions, movement, and regions to the history of the United States.
22. Evaluate the impact of attitudes and policies concerning the environment on the quality of life throughout United States history.
23. Explain the role of New Jersey in the development of United States history.

UNITED STATES HISTORY I AND II CORE PROFICIENCIES

ATTITUDES

The students will:

1. Recognize that they inherit the past and participate in shaping the future.
2. Recognize that a knowledge of their personal expectations, and cultural and ethnic heritage can empower them to effect social change.
3. Exhibit reflective attitudes toward their personal values, the values of others, and the cultural values evident in their own and other societies.
4. Recognize and be able to explain that assessing historical change, examining cultural diversity, and analyzing social conflict involve value judgments.
5. Develop respect for the dignity of the person and reject stereotyping, prejudice, discrimination, and injustice.
6. Appreciate societies as cultural inheritors, borrowers, and contributors to the common human experience.
7. Develop a commitment to basic principles of democracy.



8. Assess personal values in the face of conflicting influences and accept responsibility for their values and actions.
  
9. Recognize the need for civic involvement and for social cooperation, and be receptive to new ideas and various points of view.

UNITED STATES HISTORY I AND II CORE PROFICIENCIES

BASIC SOCIAL STUDIES SKILLS

The students will:

1. Acquire appropriate strategies to read social studies materials, including primary and secondary sources. These strategies may include but not be limited to:
  - identifying the purpose of a reading;
  - bringing background knowledge to bear on a new reading;
  - focusing attention on major, not trivial, content;
  - using monitoring techniques to check on comprehension;
  - evaluating content critically based on logic and background knowledge; and
  - drawing and testing inferences from a reading.
2. Recognize that written materials have a variety of purposes and patterns of organization which require different reading skills to improve comprehension.
3. Acquire and apply independently and cooperatively the processes of writing social studies materials. As students work on these materials, they will engage in a range of perspectives on their writing: planning/pre-writing, drafting, revising, and editing. The processes of writing social studies materials include the following:

- writing for a particular purpose;
  - writing to a specific audience;
  - selecting from and using a variety of forms of expression;
  - organizing ideas;
  - supporting ideas;
  - using standard written English; and
  - exhibiting technical correctness.
4. Acquire and apply independently and cooperatively oral communication skills in
- formulating relevant questions;
  - listening;
  - critically viewing non-print media; and
  - expressing themselves.
5. Assume a variety of roles in group settings, for example, participant, facilitator, leader, observer, recorder, or listener.
6. Access a variety of sources, and use appropriate research skills to gather information -- for example, interviewing people; observing behavior; exploring print and non-print materials; utilizing computer data bases, field trips, and guest speakers.
7. Locate, classify, interpret, analyze, summarize, synthesize, and evaluate information to acquire and apply social studies knowledge.

8. Clarify issues, develop and test hypotheses, construct generalizations, draw conclusions, offer solutions to problems, predict possible outcomes, and predict future issues and problems. These processes require the use of methodologies from the various social science disciplines.

9. Apply decision-making and problem-solving techniques orally and in writing to historic, contemporary, and controversial world issues. This includes but is not limited to:

- employing a rational decision-making process or model;
- using hypothetical reasoning processes;
- examining, understanding, and evaluating conflicting policy viewpoints;
- recognizing the importance of intuitive thinking;
- recognizing and analyzing values upon which judgments are made; and
- applying conflict resolution skills.

10. Apply computer technology in the social studies in some of the following ways:

- conducting research;
- participating in simulations;
- composing thoughts; and
- sorting and organizing information.

11. Analyze, interpret, create, and use resources and materials which include but are not limited to:

- maps, charts, graphs;
- political cartoons; and
- the arts, artifacts, and media.

12. Acquire and demonstrate the skills necessary to work cooperatively.

13. Apply the above knowledge, skills, and attitudes to engage in reasoned and responsive action.

UNITED STATES HISTORY I AND II CORE PROFICIENCIES

SOCIAL PARTICIPATION

The students will address issues and problems, and contribute to the building of community (classroom, school, neighborhood, state, nation, and world). To achieve such participation involves:

- keeping informed about issues that affect society;
- discussing issues with others in a constructive manner;
- reflecting on and making decisions about these issues; and
- engaging in personal, social, economic, and/or political actions in a manner consistent with democratic principles.

## WORLD HISTORY/CULTURES

### OVERVIEW

The basic purpose of social studies education is to prepare young people to be humane, reasoning, participating citizens. Social studies serves as the basis for students to understand their relationships and responsibilities to people, to institutions, and to the environment. It equips young people with the knowledge of the past that is necessary to cope with the present and to plan for the future, and it provides them with skills for productive problem solving and decision making, as well as for assessing issues and for making thoughtful value judgments. Above all, social studies is the integration of knowledge, skills, and attitudes into a framework that enables the individual to participate responsibly in the school, the community, the nation, and the world.

The study of World History/Cultures includes interrelated core proficiencies in knowledge, skills, attitudes, and social participation. While it may appear that some proficiencies are included in more than one area, this overlap reflects a deliberate attempt to highlight the integrated nature of the proficiencies. The proficiencies provide a historical and cultural knowledge base. They reflect the intellectual skills which are vital to reasoning processes and to the resolution of social issues. The proficiencies promote a reasoned adherence to a set of values based upon the worth of human beings and emphasize the examination of values and value conflicts.

The World History/Cultures core proficiencies have been so constructed as to apply broadly across the five models described in the World History/Cultures Curriculum Guide (1988, Trenton, NJ: New Jersey State Department of Education): world history, world cultures, world geography, global studies, and international relations. Certain proficiencies were written to be in accordance with state law and administrative code.

Although all core course proficiencies must be included in this course of study, the core proficiencies are based on the premise that not all school districts will desire to organize their program in the same manner. Whatever the organizational pattern adopted, the core proficiencies remain constant, while the content elements that are chosen to illustrate the major ideas contained in the proficiencies change. These proficiencies are not a course of study but a basis of the curriculum.

It is important that teachers use a variety of strategies and multiple resources. In other words, a single text approach and a single classroom procedure are not sufficient to develop student understanding of these proficiencies. Attention should be given to promoting individual student achievement and cooperative attitudes. Alternative assessment strategies will be necessary to evaluate some of the proficiencies in order to ensure that students can apply their learning to contribute to decision making in real-world contexts.

The World History/Cultures core proficiencies provide the framework that links students with a rich heritage. They challenge students to recognize that the record has been and continues to be a dynamic one of which they are now a living, shaping part.



## WORLD HISTORY/CULTURES CORE PROFICIENCIES

### KNOWLEDGE

The students will:

1. Demonstrate knowledge of the world as a series of emerging interdependent systems through the methodologies of the social science disciplines. These systems include ecological, cultural, social, economic, and political. The disciplines include history, economics, geography, anthropology, political science, and sociology.
2. Identify, locate, and describe physical and cultural characteristics of world culture regions. For example, students studying a culture region will know the continents, climate, land forms, political boundaries, cultures, and peoples of the region.
3. Explain and analyze the relationships between human culture and geographic environment.
4. Describe the elements of culture, and recognize that these elements are interrelated. These include but are not limited to:
  - origins and history;
  - customs and traditions;
  - economic systems;
  - political systems;

- education;
  - values, beliefs, and religion;
  - the arts;
  - social structure; and
  - technology.
5. Explain, analyze, and evaluate the processes of change. Such change can include social, technological, political, economic, and cultural change. For example, in evaluating the impact of culture on global development, students might study the development of the technology that stimulated the shift from the agrarian to an industrial - based economy.
6. Recognize the integral role of the arts as a vehicle of human expression, communication, and cultural identity.
7. Recognize, analyze, and evaluate the obstacles and conflicts that prevent effective communication and cooperation among cultures and societies.
8. Analyze the causes and consequences of discrimination, including prejudice, segregation, expulsion, and genocide. Students will evaluate how discrimination has affected the historical and ongoing struggle for human rights.

9. Analyze alternatives, and propose solutions to significant global issues. For example, such issues might include:

- cultural bias;
- ecological crisis;
- human rights;
- peace and security;
- racism, sexism, and class conflict;
- relationships that exist between the individual and the state;
- science and technology;
- social and economic inequities; and
- sustainable economic development.

## WORLD HISTORY/CULTURES CORE PROFICIENCIES

### ATTITUDES

The students will:

1. Recognize that they inherit the past and participate in shaping the future.
2. Recognize that a knowledge of their personal expectations, and cultural and ethnic heritage, can empower them to effect social change.
3. Exhibit reflective attitudes toward their personal values and the values of others, and the cultural values evident in their own and other societies.
4. Recognize and be able to explain that assessing historical change, examining cultural diversity, and analyzing social conflict involve value judgments.
5. Develop respect for the dignity of the person and reject stereotyping, prejudice, discrimination, and injustice.
6. Appreciate societies as cultural inheritors, borrowers, and contributors to the common human experience.
7. Develop a commitment to basic principles of democracy.

8. Assess personal values in the face of conflicting influences and accept responsibility for their values and actions.
  
9. Recognize the need for civic involvement and for social cooperation, and be receptive to new ideas and various points of view.

WORLD HISTORY/CULTURES CORE PROFICIENCIES

BASIC SOCIAL STUDIES SKILLS

The students will:

1. Acquire appropriate strategies to read social studies materials, including primary and secondary sources. These strategies may include but not be limited to:
  - identifying the purpose of a reading;
  - bringing background knowledge to bear on a new reading;
  - focusing attention on major, not trivial, content;
  - using monitoring techniques to check on comprehension;
  - evaluating content critically based on logic and background knowledge; and
  - drawing and testing inferences from a reading.
2. Recognize that written materials have a variety of purposes and patterns of organization which require different reading skills to improve comprehension.
3. Acquire and apply independently and cooperatively the processes of writing social studies materials. As students work on these materials, they will engage in a range of perspectives on their writing: planning/pre-writing, drafting, revising, and editing. The processes of writing social studies materials include the following:

- writing for a particular purpose;
  - writing to a specific audience;
  - selecting from and using a variety of forms of expression;
  - organizing ideas;
  - supporting ideas;
  - using standard written English; and
  - exhibiting technical correctness.
4. Acquire and apply independently and cooperatively oral communication skills in
- formulating relevant questions;
  - listening;
  - critically viewing non-print media; and
  - expressing themselves.
5. Assume a variety of roles in group settings, for example, participant, facilitator, leader, observer, recorder, or listener.
6. Access a variety of sources, and use appropriate research skills to gather information -- for example, interviewing people; observing behavior; exploring print and non-print materials; utilizing computer data bases, field trips, and guest speakers.
7. Locate, classify, interpret, analyze, summarize, synthesize, and evaluate information to acquire and apply social studies knowledge.

8. Clarify issues, develop and test hypotheses, construct generalizations, draw conclusions, offer solutions to problems, predict possible outcomes, and predict future issues and problems. These processes require the use of methodologies from the various social science disciplines.

9. Apply decision-making and problem-solving techniques orally and in writing to historic, contemporary, and controversial world issues. This includes but is not limited to:

- employing a rational decision-making process or model;
- using hypothetical reasoning processes;
- examining, understanding, and evaluating conflicting policy viewpoints;
- recognizing the importance of intuitive thinking;
- recognizing and analyzing values upon which judgments are made; and
- applying conflict resolution skills.

10. Apply computer technology in the social studies in some of the following ways:

- conducting research;
- participating in simulations;
- composing thoughts; and
- sorting and organizing information.



11. Analyze, interpret, create, and use resources and materials which include but are not limited to:

- maps, charts, graphs;
- political cartoons; and
- the arts, artifacts, and media.

12. Acquire and demonstrate the skills necessary to work cooperatively.

13. Apply the above knowledge, skills, and attitudes to engage in reasoned and responsible action.

**WORLD HISTORY CULTURES CORE PROFICIENCIES**

**SOCIAL PARTICIPATION**

The students will address issues and problems, and contribute to the building of community (classroom, school, neighborhood, state, nation, and world).

Achieving such participation involves:

- keeping informed about issues that affect society;
- discussing issues with others in a constructive manner;
- reflecting on and making decisions about these issues; and
- engaging in personal, social, economic, and/or political actions in a manner consistent with democratic principles.

APPENDIX

**18A:35-1.** Course in history of the United States in high school

The superintendent of schools in each school district shall prepare and recommend to the board of education of the district, and the board of education shall adopt a suitable two-year course of study in the history of the United States, including the history of New Jersey, to be given to each student during the last four years of high school. Said course of study shall include materials recommended by the commissioner dealing with the history of the Negro in America.

Amended by L.1973, c.20, & 1; L.1987, c.52, & 1, eff. July 1, 1987.

**18A:35-2.** Nature and purpose of United States history course

Such course of study shall include instruction in

(1) The principles and ideals of the American form of representative government as expressed in the Declaration of Independence and the Constitution of the United States and particularly in the Bill of Rights; and

(2) The history of the origin and growth of the social, economic and cultural development of the United States, of American family life and of the high standard of living and other privileges enjoyed by the citizens of the United States; and

(3) Such other events in the history of the United States as will tend to instill, into every girl and boy, a determination to preserve these principles and ideals as those of citizens of the United States and an appreciation of their solemn duty and obligation to exercise the privilege of the ballot, upon their reaching voting age, to the end that said principles and ideals may be so preserved; and

(4) The history of the State of New Jersey.

Amended by L.1987, c.52 & 2, eff. July 1, 1987.

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**NEW JERSEY STATE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION  
DIVISION OF GENERAL ACADEMIC EDUCATION**

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