

Alaska Social Studies Standards

Crosswalk: Alaska Studies & Alaska History, 1998 to 2024



Purpose and Audience

This document was drafted to:

- Define the terms “Alaska Studies” and “Alaska History” as they apply to the newly adopted (2024) Alaska Social Studies Standards¹
- Compare the 1998 Alaska Social Studies Standards (and the 2006 Alaska History Framework) to the 2024 Alaska Social Studies Standards in terms of Alaska Studies and Alaska History standards, courses, and content

This document is intended to support the following audiences:

- Teachers in Alaska who teach social studies or Alaska History
- Pre-service teachers preparing to teach Social Studies or primary grades in Alaska
- Alaska Districts
- Interested Community Partners

Key Vocabulary

Alaska Studies: may refer to:

1. Any Social Studies discipline focused on Alaska content, including Alaska History, Alaska Geography, Alaska Government, and Alaska Native Cultures and Languages.
2. Grade 6 course in “Alaska Studies and Geography” as articulated in the 2024 Alaska Social Studies Standards.

Alaska History: may refer to:

1. High School course in Alaska History offered to meet the Alaska state high school graduation requirement of one-half unit of credit in Alaska history.
2. Grade 3 course on “Alaska’s Past, Present, and Future” as articulated in the 2024 Alaska Social Studies Standards.
3. Standards related to Alaska History which occur across the grades in the 2024 Alaska Social Studies Standards.

Three Courses

In the 2024 Standards, three courses at three grade levels feature an Alaska content focus.

Grade	Course Name
Grade 3	Alaska’s Past Present, and Future
Grade 6	Alaska Studies and Geography
Grade 9-12	**Alaska History

Figure 1: Alaska Studies Courses in the 2024 Alaska Social Studies Standards.

**As per Regulation 4AAC 06.075, a half-unit of Alaska History is required to graduate high school.

¹ <https://education.alaska.gov/akstandards/Adopted-AK-SS-Standards-2024.pdf>

Context

On December 9, 2024, the Alaska Board of Education adopted the revised Alaska Social Studies Standards. This revision followed a process begun by DEED in February of 2021². The previous (and initial) Alaska Social Studies Standards were adopted in 1998.

Comparison

The 2024 standards feature significant changes in the structure, quantity, and frequency of Alaska Studies and Alaska History content and standards as compared to the 1998 standards.

1998 Social Studies Standards	2024 Social Studies Standards
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Published in short, separate documents• Three content areas:<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ History○ Geography○ Government and Citizenship• No grade levels included• No guidance for differentiation of content standards based on grade levels• No Inquiry standards included <p><i>**Key takeaway: The same content standards for History, Geography, and Government and Citizenship could be used by lower and upper grades, K-12.</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Published in a unified, 129-page document• Skills and content standards are organized under four disciplinary strands:<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ History○ Civics○ Economics○ Geography• Grade banded: K-2, 3-5, 6-8, 9-12• Content anchor standards embedded in every grade level<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ Organized by theme○ Leveled content standards explicitly differentiate each content anchor standard• Inquiry standards embedded in each grade band<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ Differentiated for each grade level <p><i>**Key takeaway: Students will encounter differentiated content for Alaska Studies anchor standards recursively throughout their Alaska classroom experience, K-12.</i></p>

Figure 2: Comparison of 1998 standards to 2024 standards

² [AK DEED 2023-24 Social Studies Standards Revision Process Guide](#)

Alaska Standards and Content Across Grades

Alaska is referenced in multiple anchor standards across the disciplines and grade levels, K-12 (see Figure 3). Differentiated Alaska content appears in the leveled content standards for many anchor standards, at many grade levels, whether or not those standards are part of an Alaska-specific course (see examples in Figures 4-6).

This means a student will encounter Alaska content and Alaska Studies / Alaska History standards spiraled within and without Alaska-specific courses in multiple grade levels K-12.

Content Anchor Standards

Civics	Economics	Geography	History
Anchor Standard 6 Civic and Political Institutions and Systems	Anchor Standard 11 Economic Systems, Models, and Markets	Anchor Standard 16 Human Environment Interaction: Place, Regions, and Culture	Anchor Standard 21 Perspectives
Anchor Standard 7 Participation and Deliberation	Anchor Standard 12 Decision-Making and Personal Finance	Anchor Standard 17 Global Interconnections: Changing Spatial Patterns	Anchor Standard 22 Historical Sources and Evidence
Anchor Standard 8 Processes, Rules, and Laws	Anchor Standard 13 The National Economy	Anchor Standard 18 Geographic Representations and Reasoning	Anchor Standard 23 Change, Continuity, and Context
Anchor Standard 9 Alaska's Governments	Anchor Standard 14 The Global Economy	Anchor Standard 19 Human Populations: Spatial Patterns and Movement	Anchor Standard 24 Historical Thinking
Anchor Standard 10 Rights, Rules, and Responsibilities of Citizens	Anchor Standard 15 Alaska Economies: State, Local, and Tribal	Anchor Standard 20 Geography of Alaska	Anchor Standard 25 Alaskan History

Figure 3: Content standards from the 2024 Alaska Social Studies Standards featuring Alaska

Kindergarten through Grade 2 Geography Standards

Anchor Standard The student demonstrates an understanding of...	Grade-Band Standard	Leveled Content Standard Therefore, the student is able to...
Geography Anchor Standard 16 Human-Environment Interaction: Place, Regions, and Culture	SS.K-2.16.1 Explain how weather, climate, and other environmental characteristics affect people's lives in a place or region.	By the end of K: SS.K.1.16.1 With support, describe seasonal weather patterns in the local community.
		By the end of 1: SS.1.1.16.1 Describe local weather and how it affects individuals and their activities.
		By the end of 2: SS.2.1.16.1 Explain how weather, climate, and other environmental characteristics affect people's lives in the local region.

Figure 4: Example leveled content standards featuring Alaska-related content from K-2 grade-band

Grade 3 through 5 Geography Standards

Anchor Standard The student demonstrates an understanding of...	Grade-Band Standard	Leveled Content Standard Therefore, the student is able to...
Geography Anchor Standard 16 Human-Environment Interaction: Place, Regions, and Culture	SS.3-5.16.1 Explain how culture influences the way people modify and adapt to their environments.	By the end of 3: SS.3.1.16.1 Discuss how culture influences the way people modify and adapt to their environments in Alaska.
		By the end of 4: SS.4.1.16.1 Explain how culture influences the way people modify and adapt to their environments in each region of the United States.

Figure 5: Example leveled content standard featuring Alaska-specific content from 3-5 grade-band

Grade 8 U.S. History and Civics

Theme 1: Geography and Early Civilizations of the Americas

Time Period: 10,000 BCE to 1492 CE

Topic	Anchor Standard The student demonstrates an understanding of...	Content Standard Therefore, the student is able to...
Early Human Migration	Geography Anchor Standard 19 Human Populations: Spatial Patterns and Movements	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> SS.8.1.19.1 Investigate patterns of migration of early people as they settled across Alaska and North, Central, and South America.
	Geography Anchor Standard 16 Human Environment Interaction: Place, Regions, and Culture	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> SS.8.1.16.1 Analyze the push and pull factors that influenced early people to migrate.
	History Anchor Standard 23 Change, Continuity, and Context	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> SS.8.1.23.1 Explain the importance of artifacts and oral histories in understanding how prehistoric people lived.

Figure 6: Example leveled content standard featuring Alaska-specific content from Grade 8

Origins of the Alaska History Requirement

In 2005, the Alaska Board of Education amended regulation 4AAC 06.075, the Alaska High School Graduation requirements, to include a required half unit of credit in Alaska History.

“Beginning January 1, 2009, the three units of credit in social studies required under (b)(2) of this section must include one-half unit of credit in Alaska history or demonstration that the student meets the Alaska history performance standards.”³

As a result of the required Alaska History half unit of credit, many districts offer Alaska History as a required course for high school students, and, in 2006, an Alaska History Framework was added to the existing 1998 Alaska Social Studies Standards.

2006 Alaska History Framework

The 2006 Alaska History Framework organized the Alaska History course into four central themes: People, Places, Environment; Consumption, Production, Distribution; Individual Citizenship, Governance, Power; Continuity and Change.

The framework divided Alaska History into five chronological periods with suggested topics. Each chronological period featured multiple content standards for each theme. See Tables 1 and 2 for lists of themes, chronological periods, and topics from the 2006 Alaska History Framework.

Districts were encouraged to add to their local Alaska history curriculum.

2006 Alaska History Framework <i>from the 1998 Social Studies Standards</i>	2024 Alaska History Course Standards <i>from the current Alaska Social Studies Standards</i>
	Four disciplines History Civics / Government Economics Geography
Four central themes: - People, Places, Environment - Consumption, Production, Distribution - Individual Citizenship, Governance, Power - Continuity and Change	Themes Theme 1: Alaska’s Land and People Theme 2: Land Claims Throughout Time Theme 3: Resource Stewardship Throughout Time Theme 4: The Myth of the Last Frontier Theme 5: Civics and Government Theme 6: Alaska’s Economy
	Inquiry Standards Embedded and differentiated for 9-12 grade band

Figure 7: Standards comparison

³ https://education.alaska.gov/regs/filed/4aac_06.075.pdf

Alaska History in the 2024 Standards

In the 2024 Alaska Social Studies Standards, the high school Alaska History course content standards are organized into six themes and four disciplines, with Inquiry Standards embedded throughout (see Figure 7).

The 2024 course includes five time periods and timeframes, a very similar structure to the 2006 Alaska History Framework (see Figure 8).

2006 Alaska History Framework <i>from the 1998 Social Studies Standards</i>		2024 Alaska History Course Standards <i>from the current Alaska Social Studies Standards</i>	
Time Periods	Time Frames		Time Periods
Indigenous Alaskans Before Western Contact	<i>Time Immemorial — Contact</i>	<i>Time Immemorial— 1741 CE</i>	Alaska Before Western Contact
Colonial Era—The Russian Period	<i>1741 — 1867</i>	<i>1741 CE —1867 CE</i>	Russian Colonial Period
Colonial Era—The United States Period	<i>1867 — 1912</i>	<i>1867 CE — 1912 CE</i>	American Colonial Period
Alaska as a Territory	<i>1912 — 1959</i>	<i>1912 CE —1959 CE</i>	American Territorial Period
Alaska as a State	<i>1959 —Present</i>	<i>1959 CE —Present</i>	Statehood

Figure 8: Time Periods & Time Frames comparison

Summary of Key Takeaways

Definitions:

- “Alaska Studies” refers to any discipline focused on Alaska content, as well as the Grade 6 course articulated in the 2024 Alaska Social Studies Standards.
- “Alaska History” refers to the required, half-credit HS course, and may refer to the Grade 3 course articulated in the 2024 standards, and any standards related to Alaska History.

Key differences between 1998 and 2024 Alaska Studies / Alaska History standards:

- 3 Alaska-focused courses are articulated in the 2024 standards:
 - Grade 3: Alaska’s Past, Present & Future
 - Grade 5: Alaska Studies & Geography
 - Grade 9-12: Alaska History (required for graduation)
- Alaska content and Alaska-related standards appear throughout the grade levels and content standards; as a result, students will encounter Alaska content and standards throughout K-12
- 2024 AK History Course vs 2006 AK History Course
 - Similarities: time frames, time periods
 - Differences: 2024 organized by 6 themes, with 4 disciplines, and Inquiry Standards embedded throughout