**Alaska Social Studies Standards**

***Glossary:*** Key Vocabulary in the 2024 Alaska Social Studies Standards

**Purpose and Audience**

*This document was drafted to:*

* Define and clarify key terms and vocabulary foundational to the Alaska Social Studies Standards (2024)[[1]](#footnote-2)
* Terms are organized to support PD Module 1: Key Instructional Shifts[[2]](#footnote-3)

*This document is intended to support the following audiences:*

* Teachers in Alaska who teach social studies or primary grades
* Pre-service teachers preparing to teach Social Studies or primary grades in Alaska
* Alaska School Districts and other institutions
* Interested Community Partners

**Key Vocabulary**

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| **General** | **Anchor Standards:**  Anchor standards provide lenses through which the essential skills and disciplinary knowledge of inquiry and action are practiced and applied.   * Remain the same through all grades and courses * Align closely with the dimensions of the C3 Framework[[3]](#footnote-6556) |
| **Content Standards:**  Content standards define what students should know or be able to do in a specific grade or course   * Emphasize knowledge and skills * Discipline specific (Civics, Economics, Geography, History) * Leveled by grade   **Example:** By the end of 4: SS.4.1.18.1 Construct maps and other graphic representations of the various regions around the world. |

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| **Shift 1: Thematic Social Studies Content and Skills** | **Theme:**  Topic or concept around which instructional content is organized.   * In K-5 The standards are organized by content area and themes connect these content areas * In grades 6-8 and 9-12, course standards are articulated in thematic units   **Example:** The first **theme** of the Grade 9-12 Alaska History course is “Alaska’s Land and People.” |
| **Thematic Unit:**  Instructional unit organized around a theme.   * Typically 3-8 weeks long * Opens with a unit launch, closes with an assessment * Inquiry-based thematic units focus on a compelling question or questions   **Example:** **Thematic units** support students’ comprehension, retention, and recall of social studies content. |

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| **Shift 2: Incorporate and Honor Alaska History and Tribal Government** | **Alaska Studies:**  May refer to:   * Any Social Studies discipline focused on Alaska content, including Alaska History, Alaska Geography, Alaska Government, and Alaska Native Cultures and Languages. * Grade 6 course in “Alaska Studies andGeography” as articulated in the 2024 Alaska Social Studies Standards. * Coursework requirement for teacher certification in Alaska.[[4]](#footnote-10697) |
| **Alaska History**:  May refer to:   * 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[[5]](#footnote-11601). * Grade 3 course on “Alaska’s Past, Present, and Future” as articulated in the 2024 Alaska Social Studies Standards. * Standards related to Alaska History which occur across the grades in the 2024 Alaska Social Studies Standards. |

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| **Shift 3: Understand Social Studies Through Inquiry** | **Inquiry:**  Teaching approach where students actively investigate social studies topics through questions, research, and critical thinking.   * Tends to be Constructivist (as opposed to direct / explicit) * Students explore, analyze, develop questions, research, weigh evidence, draw and communicate conclusions, take informed action * Aligns with place-based learning   **Example**: Working both individually and collaboratively, students engage in **inquiry** about important issues in social studies classes. |
| **Inquiry Standards:**   * Meant to be used “in concert” with content standards whenever appropriate   + How these standards will be integrated into the curriculum is a collaborative decision made by the state, districts, and schools.   **Example:** SS.3‐5.2.3 Gather relevant information from multiple credible sources to address compelling questions or research. |

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| **Shift 4:**  **Deep Civic Knowledge, Skills, and Dispositions** | **Civics:**  May refer to:   1. Standards related to Civics which occur in all grades, K-12, in the 2024 Alaska Social Studies Standards. 2. A grade 8 course in “U.S. History and Civics” as articulated in the 2024 Alaska Social Studies Standards. 3. A course, often in high school, on Civics, offered in Alaska School Districts.   **Example** Civics is the focus of Theme 5 “Civic and Political Institutions of the U.S.” in the Grade 8 U.S. History and Civics Course. |

1. <https://education.alaska.gov/akstandards/Adopted-AK-SS-Standards-2024.pdf> [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
2. [PD Module 1 Instructional Shifts](https://education.alaska.gov/akstandards/social/PD/PD%20Module%201%20AK%20Standards%20_%20Instructional%20Shifts.pptx) [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
3. National Council for the Social Studies [C3 Framework](https://www.socialstudies.org/standards/c3). [↑](#footnote-ref-6556)
4. <https://education.alaska.gov/teachercertification/alaska-studies> [↑](#footnote-ref-10697)
5. As per Alaska Board of Education [Regulation 4AAC 06.075](https://education.alaska.gov/regs/filed/4aac_06.075.pdf), a half-unit of Alaska History is required to graduate high school. [↑](#footnote-ref-11601)