

# New Hampshire

(Source: *K-12 Social Studies Curriculum Framework, August 1995*, New Hampshire Department of Education)

---

## The five criteria: An overview

---

| Are the essentials of a civic core specified clearly? | Are the topics teachable within the allotted timeframe? | Do the documents provide a scope and sequence? | Is the essential content required of all students? | Are the important facts and ideas presented coherently across subjects? |
|---|---|--|--|---|
|---|---|--|--|---|



Standards that largely meet the criteria are designated with a full star [★]; standards that partially meet the criteria are designated with a half star [☆]; and standards that do not meet the criteria are designated with an empty star [☆].

### Summary:

On Criterion #1, the document could offer a common core of learning to educate citizens, but only with more specifics and priorities. It is clearly written on important themes, but too general in civics and U.S. and world history. On Criterion #2, the content needed to explain the general items overflows teachers' time, especially given the many economics and geography items, taking up eleven of eighteen standards. Criterion #3 is partially met; New Hampshire does not suggest a kindergarten through grade twelve sequence of courses, but standards and topics are listed in two grade spans, kindergarten to six and seven to ten. These imply the ancient world is studied in grade five or six, and the world since then in grade eight, nine, or ten. The U.S. to 1877 is finished in grade eleven (modern U.S. topics are added in "End-of-Grade 12"). State assessment of all subjects in grades six and ten imply that content is required of all students, earning a "partially met" on Criterion #4. Under Criterion #5, on integration, of four strands, only civics relates to historical context.

### Particulars:

Familiar problems are the absence of priorities and separate strands that appear to have been written by different people who did not collaborate on matters of teaching time and integration. As elsewhere, New Hampshire's standards are overstuffed, likely the result of using the "national" standards as models, with the economics, geography, and history documents each developed by its own academic advocates. The pre-grade seven topics in world history and cultures are typically broad and unselective (e.g., "basic understanding of the origin, development, and distinctive characteristics of major ancient, classical, and agrarian civilizations including Mesopotamian, Ancient Hebrew, Egyptian, Nubian (Kush), Greek, Roman, Gupta Indian, Han Chinese, Islamic, Byzantine, Olmec, Mayan, Aztec, and Incan Civilizations," and "basic understanding of the distinctive characteristics of major contemporary societies and cultures of Africa, the Americas, Asia, Europe, and the Middle East." The world history topics listed under "End-of-Grade Ten" could not be taught in under two full years. They begin with "political, philosophical, and cultural legacies of Greece and Rome" plus "origin, central ideas and worldwide influence" of Hinduism, Buddhism, Confucianism, Judaism, Christianity, and Islam. A single page presents sweeping topics up to the present (e.g., "causes

and worldwide consequences of World War I, the Russian Revolutions, World War II, the Chinese Revolution, the cold war, and post-World War II conflicts”). U.S. history topics are only a bit more specific. A civics standard on “fundamental ideals and principles of American democracy” is better in specifying points vital to citizens.

The main general topics of U.S. and world history put New Hampshire ahead of many states, but with so much time claimed by other topics, it is hard to see how democratic history could be well taught or fairly tested. The two addenda issued in 1998 to aid teachers in preparing students for the state assessments do not help. Neither addresses the real problems. Activities and lesson plans merely demonstrate how much time it could take to teach only one “proficiency,” and most do not relate to the vital content of the subjects. Unhappily, too, neither of the local district samples of scope and sequence for kindergarten to twelfth-grade courses is aligned with the standards’ content. New Hampshire makes a good start, but its topic selection needs a new look, as do subsequent publications.