Appendix B:
Making it teachable

Finding time for the civic core and other themes

All standards documents examined for this report have one flaw in common. Whether over-detailed or over-general, the subject matter content and skills they demand cannot be taught in the limited instructional time teachers have at their disposal. Nor could they be taught even if social studies time were no longer hemmed in by the demands of other education priorities and other subjects' standards.

How, then, can teachers deal imaginatively with all of the topics for the civic core and still have room for other themes and content, ideally chosen by themselves or their own school?

As already suggested, they can do it when (a) history, geography, civics, and economics are taught together, whenever appropriate; (b) courses are segmented by eras, and (c) assessment systems allow local choice of topics to teach in depth.

What follows here is but one among several possible ways to arrange the content of a civic core across middle and high school in courses segmented by historical eras. A common pattern is to offer United States history/geography from origins through Reconstruction (c. 1880) in grades five and eight, followed by the study of the post-Civil War era (reviewing

the Civil War Amendments to the Constitution and Reconstruction) to the present in grades ten or eleven. For world history/geography, an often-used sequence is to offer the ancient, medieval, and early modern periods in the sixth and seventh or seventh and ninth grades, with a close study of the world since 1750 or 1800 to the present in grade ten or eleven. As suggested in Appendix A, all of these should be followed by a required senior capstone course in government, stressing current policy questions (including foreign affairs) and their historical roots.

In middle and high school curricula designed with segmented eras, it is imperative to weave the grades together by returning again and again to a number of dramatic issues and questions that students recognize as significant through all periods of United States and world history. Familiar approaches to history/social studies should also be revisited constantly, such as: exploring multiple causes for important turning-points, good and ill; the interdependence of change and continuity (for example, in the evolution of the United States Constitution); relating economic and social issues to politics; comparing theory or ideology with what really happens to people; using biography, the arts, and literature to nourish empathy for people of the past; and repeated focus on the great consequences of decisions that seemed of little importance in their time.

To convey the main topics in Appendix A, the following is one suggested scope and sequence:

Grade 5. United States History to c. 1800 (7 main topics)

1. Exploration, conquest, colonization
2. Politics of the Colonial Period
3. The American Revolution, origins, stages
4. The Anglo-American political heritage (age-appropriate selected items)
5. Founding documents, debates (age-appropriate selected items)
6. The Constitution
7. The Early Republic

Grade 7. World History to c. 1500 (10 main topics)

1. Ancient Asian Civilizations
2. Ancient Israel
3. Ancient Greece
4. The Roman Republic
5. Decline and fall of the Roman Empire
6. Christianity
7. Byzantine Empire
8. Islam and Muslim civilization
9. Medieval feudalism, root of constitutions
10. Renaissance Humanism

Grade 8. United States History to 1877 (15 main topics, including 4 reviews)

Review:

1. The Anglo-American political heritage
2. Founding documents and debates
3. The Constitution
4. The Early Republic
5. Early Industrial revolution
6. Jacksonian democracy as modern politics
7. Pre-Civil War social reforms
8. New immigration
9. Life in slavery: work, family, religion, resistance
10. Abolitionism and its leaders
11. Abraham Lincoln
12. Civil War stages and turning-points
13. Slavery formally ended
14. Reconstruction's failure
15. Unfinished emancipation

Grade 9. World History, c. 1500 to 1800 (13 main topics, including 7 reviews)

Review:

1. Ancient Asia religion and ethics
2. Judaism
3. Christianity
4. Islam
5. Medieval roots of constitutions
6. Protestant Reformation
7. The English Revolution
8. The Enlightenment
9. The American Revolution

Review:

10. The Anglo-American political heritage
11. The Constitution
12. The French Revolution, origins and stages
13. Advent of modern politics

Grade 10. World History, 1800 to the present (29 main topics)

The World,1800 to 1945

1. Latin American revolutions
2.The Industrial Revolution
3. Ideologies of the 19th century
4. Drives to political and social democracy
5. Western nationalism and imperialism
6. Chinese resistance and revolution
7. Japan's rise to world power
8. Nationalism and resistance in India and Africa
9. The century turns, 1900
10. Origins and outbreak of 1914-18 World War
11. The War of 1914-18 shapes the century
12. The Russian Revolutions
13. Paris Peace Conference, 1919
14. The World Depression
15. International Communism between wars, Stalinism
16. International Fascism
17. Liberal democracy in peril
18. Aggression and appeasement
19. World War II

The World since 1945

20. The Soviet Union seizes Eastern Europe
21. The Marshall Plan
22. Japan adopts a democratic constitution and demilitarization
23. New nations arise in former Anglo-European colonies
24. Chinese Communists take power in 1949
25. Worldwide open and covert duels between East and West
26. Collapse of Soviet Union
27. Post-Cold War threats
28. Ongoing struggles for political democracy
29. Democracies of Western Europe

Grade 11. U. S. History, 1877 to the present (27 main topics,including 2 reviews)

Review:

1.The Constitution
2. Unfinished emancipation

The advent of modern America,1865-1920
3. A "developing" country industrializes
4. The new world of business
5. Labor struggles to organize
6. Immigration, migration, urbanization
7. Farm crises and Populism
8. The United States starts rise to world power
9. The Progressive reform movement

The United States and World Wars I & II, 1914-1945
10. World War I
11. The war's effect on 20th century America
12. Women's suffrage
13. The `Twenties
14. Underside of the `Twenties
15. Causes of the Great Depression
16. American democracy in crisis, 1930-33
17. The New Deal
18. Origins of World War II
19. World War II

The United States since 1945
20. Reversal of post-World War I isolationism
21. Reversal of post-World War I domestic policies
22. Cold War effects on American politics
23. Cuban missile crisis of 1962
24. Wars in Korea and Vietnam
25. The Civil Rights movement and its background
26. The effects of television on democratic politics
27. The American nation in a global technocracy

Grade 12. Civics, American Government, and World Affairs (OneTem)

Recommended:
National Standards for Civics and Government, the closing section on major topics for grades nine through twelve, with general questions, content summaries, and content standards.

Finding the time: Sample scenarios, which easily can be varied

Assuming a minimum of 160 days devoted entirely to classroom instruction each year (as opposed to tests and exams, discussion of writing assignments, field trips, assemblies, etc.):

Fifth grade, with seven main topics, has time for three weeks on each, or 105 instructional days (21 weeks), leaving 55 days (eleven weeks) for instruction in other topics and exercises.

Seventh grade, with ten main topics, could devote two weeks to each, or 100 instructional days (20 weeks), leaving 60 days (twelve weeks) for other topics.

Eighth grade, with fifteen main topics, can choose four on which to spend three weeks each, with one week each on the other eleven, taking 115 instructional days (23 weeks) and leaving 45 days (nine weeks) for other topics. Or, perhaps, ten topics on which to spend two weeks each, or 100 instructional days (20 weeks), leaving 60 days (twelve weeks) for other topics.

Grade nine, with thirteen main topics, can choose three on which to spend three weeks each and two topics on which to spend two weeks each, taking 75 days (fifteen weeks), leaving seventeen weeks (85 days) for the remaining and other topics.

Note: Grades ten and eleven, because of the intensity of changes in all spheres of life affecting American politics over the last 200 years, require tighter schedules. But given the usual pronouncement that social studies' prime purpose is making competent citizens, it follows that the vital subjects of civics and political history deserve priority in courses for the more mature high school student. Even so, there is time for studies in depth and other themes.

Grade ten, with 29 main topics, could give two weeks each to six of them (three per term), taking 60 days (twelve weeks), plus an average of three days each for the other 23, or 69 instructional days, leaving 31 days (six weeks) for other topics.

Grade eleven, with 27 main topics, could give two weeks each to six chosen topics (three per term), taking 60 days (12 weeks), plus an average of three days each for the other 21, taking 63 days (c. thirteen weeks), leaving 37 days (seven weeks) for other topics.

In both these later grades, time can be made for more studies in depth or other themes and topics by leaving certain core topics to student reading, with single days of follow-up.

Students will at least have read and "heard about" topics done hurriedly. Educators and the rest of us must admit that this is how most people learn what they know of history, social sciences and the humanities—some in depth, some more briefly, some just "heard about." School and testing authorities need to face reality about these subjects, whose needed breadth and depth (the two are interdependent; neither can be comprehended without having the other in mind) require focus on certain aspects and less attention to others.

Making use of non-school hours: Student work outside the classroom

It cannot be said often enough that these subjects—civics, economics, geography, history (and the humanities)—depend heavily on student reading outside the classroom. Of many core topics and reviews for middle and high school study of civics, economics, geography, and history, teachers must choose which to do in depth and which more quickly. But whether deeply or lightly studied, the learning of any topic calls for a mixture of classroom and outside work. History and social science cannot be comprehended by classroom exercises alone.

Much is rightly said of student-centered pedagogy, active learning, and collaborative classroom projects. But far too little is said about students' responsibility to work with their minds outside of school hours, and about the importance, the rewards and, as the habit grows, the pleasure of private concentration. Studying history and social science requires that students take the time to read, note, reflect, and write about what they have read and heard, just as in studying literature or philosophy. To pretend otherwise is giving up on any chance to cultivate young minds.