Part One:

How to educate democracy?

As he worried about French and American politics in the mid-1830s, de Tocqueville declared in the opening pages of *Democracy in America* that the "first of the duties that are at this time imposed upon those who direct our affairs is to educate democracy." But how to do it? Despite our electronic age and the supposed "transformation" of life and learning that makes yesterday's knowledge obsolete, today's answers are the same as his. Citizens, he said, have to learn three things: One, how the political system works, by going out and working at it. Two, how well or badly political ideas and action turned out in the past, by reading history. Three, what virtues a free society cannot do without, by reflecting on religion, ethics, law, biography, and again history. Moreover, the three must be kept in one's head at the same time, since none prevails by itself. Political cunning alone can be short-sighted, self-promoting, corruptible. Desk-bound erudition is barren. And against the power of fanatics and special interests, virtue alone has no defense. Shifting from quill pen to computer does not transform these fundamentals.

Educating democracy, then, runs deeper than the conventional civics training pressed by those who want to cure political apathy in the young. They are right, of course, to insist on more and livelier civic instruction in school and more community service outside of it. We all need to know how government is supposed to work and how to be adroit, not only well-intentioned, in helping others. But citizens need much more: the critical judgment gained from knowing past and present politics and the fortitude to act bravely in hard times when turning away is easier and often more profitable.

Lest straw men arise, let us be clear. In asking how well state standards can help ready people for democratic politics, we do not dream that schools have the power to do that alone. We thankfully recognize that citizens are nurtured outside classrooms by family, church, civic associations, community work, candid journalism, and the better acts of government. And we know how limited is schooling's power to free students from the "virtual reality" and data glut brought by the information age. Schools are also in daily battle with the folly and distractions of popular culture, such as the new technological toys and mass entertainments that turn youngsters' attention away from healthy play and learning.

What should be in a civic core?

The essential ingredients for a political education were briefly summarized in *Education for Democracy: A Statement of Principles*. The issues it posed in 1987 are still with us:

> Are the ideas and institutions—and above all the worth—of democracy adequately conveyed in American schools? Do our graduates come out of school possessing the mature political judgment Jefferson hoped for, an ability to decide for themselves "what will secure or endanger" their freedom? Do they know of democracy's short, troubled tenure in human history? Do they comprehend its vulnerability?

What should citizens know? *Education for Democracy* offered a concrete answer to the question educators usually answer in the abstract. It recommended specifics that students should be offered in school. They should know the fundamentals of civics—the principles and workings of federal, state, and local government, of the law and court systems, the rights and duties of citizens, and how the United States Constitution and its resulting institutions and practices are like and unlike those of other societies. As a guide to writing standards and local curricula, the *National Standards for Civics and Government* published by the Center for Civic Education (Calabasas, CA, 1994) are clear and balanced. Most of their content is teachable in the time schools have. The Standards offer central themes and questions on free, constitutional government to be posed across the grades. In addition, a senior capstone course in civics should once more be required in all school districts. (See Appendix B for one idea of how secondary schools can find the time to teach a civic core and still allow time for other teaching in the social studies.)

Political education, however, requires more than mastery of civics itself. To sustain the principles, institutions, and practices of democracy, citizens need to understand why and how they came into being, the conditions that allowed them to be established, as well as the ideas

and forces that have been supportive or destructive of them over time. What, then, should citizens know of United States and world history? *Education for Democracy* answered plainly, proposing common curricular content along three lines.

First, the sources of our eighteenth-century founders' political vision, that "patriotism of principles" holding us together as one people of diverse origins, cultures, and personal beliefs. Good civics standards ask students to know basic political documents and practices: the Mayflower Compact, colonial town meetings and assemblies, protests invoking English principles violated by English rule, the Declaration of Independence, state constitutions, the U. S. Constitution, Federalist and anti-Federalist arguments, the Bill of Rights, free speech, press, assembly, and religion. But to comprehend the founders' vision fully and reflect on its condition today, students must also know much of what the founders knew: the faith, learning, experience, and memories behind their debates and decisions.

When did their ideas first arise, where and in whose minds? What conditions of life led earlier generations, elsewhere in the world, to think of them? How did earlier people see human nature, its possibilities and its limits? What notions of good and evil, honor and shame, justice and oppression, did they hold? American students cannot seriously debate today's questions in ignorance of the mixed, highly contentious legacy left by the ancient Greeks, Romans, Jews, Christians, and Muslims, by the very diverse history of the Middle Ages, by thinkers and doers of the Renaissance and Reformation, the English Revolution (ancestor to ours), the Scientific Revolution, the Enlightenment, and the French Revolution (cousin to ours). These studies bring students to the end of the eighteenth century.

Second, they need to remember true stories of how people here and across the world have fought to turn democratic ideas into practice, from the eighteenth century to now. Throughout, it is essential that students examine vital, continuing themes and questions that should be carried across the grades and repeatedly posed for different times and people. What antidemocratic ideas and impulses had to be overcome to build freer, more just societies? What old practices had to be ended? What new institutions put in place? Who defended them and how? Who tried to destroy them and why? What conditions of people's lives—economic, social, religious, military, educational—helped democracy take root and survive? What conditions undermined it? And, in turn, what political decisions made things better or worse? Repeated study of these overarching themes and questions brings students up to yesterday.

Third, citizens need a "worried awareness" of today's economic and social conditions, of political ideas and forces across the world. The above themes and questions still apply. Which ideas and forces threaten democracy and the conditions favoring it, here and elsewhere? They need to know their own society's inner workings, the balances of power behind the headlines. To see their own lives sensibly, they need to know other societies, those free and prosperous—some of them ahead of us in social and educational matters—and those where the many live and die in misery and deadly oppression. Put together with studies of geography, history, and biography—and, we hope, arts and literature—global awareness opens grown-up perspectives that ward off envy, self-pity, self-glorification, and other low obsessions bad for any society and death for democracy.

A proper civic core is a tall order: a study of American society and politics, and other people's ideas and lives, past and present, from kindergarten through high school. Not easy, it asks for greater intensity of study than American schools have up to now expected of the mass of students. Teachers of history/social studies should no longer think themselves failures if all students do not take to it, any more than all of them will take to the tough—but, in fact,

Citizens need a "worried awareness" of today's economic and social conditions, of political ideas and forces across the world.

less difficult—work of learning chemistry or calculus. A civic core asks students to recall and even to understand a very great deal of human reality. There are no memorizable formulas, which is why it is easier to train a doctor or engineer than to educate a citizen. And there is no way to tell ahead of time which students will take to what subject, at what age, or under what circumstances. Democratic educators bear the responsibility to offer equal substance to all of them.

A civic core for the secondary grades: Vital topics

Essential topics fall into two categories: those revealing dangers to democracy, and those teaching its foundations and sources of support. Neither can be taught in general, but should draw upon well-selected, true stories of men and women caught up in the suspense-filled, unending drama of democracy's adventure. To engage students, the core should highlight the episodes that capture unforgettably the conditions, impulses, and actions that have proven toxic to democracy, (or to any society seeking a measure of decency). Among them are plutocracy and poverty, with their ensuing class fears and hatreds; slavery of any degree; exploitation, corruption, or the evasion of public service and taxes by the privileged; inflation or depression, both ruinous to the "middle" classes; ethnic, racial, and religious fanaticism; militarism and the appetite for empire; secret government; the malign effects of both victory and defeat in war; waste of resources; mass escapism in hard times; prominent evidence of cultural or moral decay; ill-prepared and impulsive leaders; imbalance of power groups within society; a subdued press; rigged elections; demagoguery and the political illiteracy it feeds upon. Some of these are found in all eras, places, and peoples—unhappy signs of human equality.

Among such topics would be the self-imposed ruin and disappearance of Athenian democracy and the Roman Republic; the corruption and decline of the Roman Empire; Cromwell's dictatorship in seventeenth-century England; the failure of French liberal regimes in the 1790s and 1848; the United States' civil war in the 1860s; the crushing of Russia's reformist provisional government by the Bolsheviks in 1917; the Weimar Republic's collapse under Nazi assault in 1933, opening the way to World War II and the Holocaust; the failure of semi-paralyzed Western democracies to build collective security to halt aggression in the 1930s. These and other episodes are stories Americans need. Each has its own mix of toxins. But students should also see that, except for 1917 Russia, all happened in societies advanced

for their time, not so hobbled as are new nations now struggling for democracy. Of them, England, France, and the United States had high literacy rates, ample resources, political and administrative experience, and relative security from outside enemies. Yet the average delay between the onset of revolution and final settlement was nearly 90 years: in England, 1603 to 1689; in France, 1789 to 1875; and in the U.S., 1775 to 1865, after a civil war bloodier than all of Europe's nineteenth-century revolutions put together.

On the other hand, and constantly interspersed, must be the ideas, people, conditions, and actions that nourished democracy and won its survival. First among them are the teachings of the major world religions and ethical systems: human dignity and equality; free will and responsibility of the individual; fair dealing; charity; fortitude; the obligation to ameliorate earthly life now and for posterity. Then they must learn the origins and evolution of political democracy: the political ideas and innovations of Athenian democracy and Roman republicanism; the feudal balance of armed power among king, nobles, and clergy necessary to contracts such as the Magna Carta and to parliaments limiting royal power; the much-ignored reformist side of Machiavelli, in his plea for competent leaders for the Florentine Republic; the forces of geography, economics, personality, and tradition behind Parliament's victory in England's seventeenth-century revolution.

From the eighteenth century, there is the rarely cited mixture of religious principles and Enlightenment reason that animated American and French revolutionary leaders; the personalities and favorable conditions that helped the American colonies to win their war for independence and allowed the new federal government to establish itself on the basis of the Constitution. In the nineteenth century, the early achievements of several British and European reform movements in adapting Enlightenment ideas to the surging economic and social changes of the Industrial Revolution; the emergence in several Western societies of the three countervailing powers of business, labor, and representative government; the advances in science, technology, medicine and surgery, sanitation, housing and diet, and free public education that stirred optimism in the Western world before 1914. In the twentieth century, the resources and leadership that helped Western democracies to overcome the corrosive effects of the Great Depression and to beat back totalitarian assaults. Overall the civic core needs to make clear that democracy's birth, growth, and survival have demanded great patience, vision, courage, sacrifice, brainwork, and some luck.

The samples of a detailed civic core and its timing and articulation across the grades that appear in Appendices A and B are, of course, only one of many possible patterns a core could take. It centers on narrative history courses about the United States and the world that bring together and give life to the concepts and influence of geography, economics, and politics. Across the middle and high school grades, it treats three eras in order: the origins of democratic ideas and institutions to 1800, that is, through the establishment of the Republic; democracy's advances and setbacks across the world, c.1800 to 1945; and the United States and the rest of the world since World War II.

To engage students, the core should highlight the episodes that capture unforgettably the conditions, impulses, and actions that have proven toxic to democracy.

Origins of democratic ideas and institutions to c.1800, after the American and French Revolutions

Here, as in the two following eras, are many topics critical to American political education. Other themes should and can appear in history/geography courses on the United States and the world. But since preparing citizens is the proclaimed purpose of the social studies, politi-

cal topics ought to enjoy a clear priority. As they study this period, students need to be reminded that the ideas, events, turning-points, and personalities of ancient, medieval, and early modern history were known to all literate people in the eighteenth century and nourished the political thought of America's founders. Regardless of their own religious practices, they knew well the principles of Judaism and Christianity that were applicable to political, economic, and social life.They were steeped in the thought of ancient Greece and Rome and their fates, in the medieval origins of constitutional (i.e., contractual) government, in Renaissance humanism, in the Protestant revolution of the sixteenth century and the English revolution of the seventeenth. For them, the discoveries and political implications of the Scientific Revolution were as fresh and contentious as are the Internet and globalization today. They took part in the Enlightenment and lived through the American and French Revolutions and their early effects on the rest of the world.

The founders' political vision was shaped by their historical perspective, focused by their lives as American colonists. Teachers will find that the Declaration of Independence, the Constitution and Bill of Rights, and the Federalist and anti-Federalist writings are indispensable primary sources from which students may grasp the basic principles of our government and why they emerged as they did at the time. They may add the Northwest Ordinance, excerpts from state constitutions, court decisions, and civil rights laws. From all these, students will understand the main principles: popular sovereignty, the people's ultimate authority over government, and the necessity for democracy of limited constitutional, representative government in the hands of elected executive and legislative branches, which together shape a federal judiciary, making a three-way separation of powers for checks and balances. More important than the separation of powers at the center, they should understand that a balance of power within the society at large is the only guarantor of free and meaningful elections and of political and personal rights.They will see that the main features of the Constitution itself—the overriding American "contract"—grew out of the balance of power among the states represented in Philadelphia. Later, they will see that the constitutions of Napoleon I and the Soviet Union included elections, assemblies, the separation of powers, separate courts, etc. But only one real power roamed each land—Napoleon's army and police in France and the Communist party apparatus in the Soviet Union. Admirable words meant nothing, proving only that the American and French revolutions had forced tyrants to adopt a new vocabulary. Behind the window dressing there were no rights to a fair trial in defense of one's life, liberty, or property, no freedom of the press, speech, religion, assembly, or even travel about the country—all things that we and other citizens of democracies take for granted.

Democracy's advances and setbacks, c.1800-1945, world revolutions to the end of World War II

Topics for this era should begin with the lasting global effects of the American and French Revolutions. They told the world that three great transformations were not only possible but "natural," inevitable: One, national revolution, to win each people's right to an equal, independent place among nations. Two, political revolution, for free self-government, civil rights and civic equality under law made by honestly elected representatives. Three, social revolution, to advance economic and social justice for all classes. Nothing since has halted this triple revolution. How each people pursued it—what revolution they put first, and with what result—is at the heart of American and world history to this day. Instances where nationalism

is divorced from individual rights and the rule of law, where "social justice" is said to exist in the absence of civil rights and citizen self-rule—these are stories that are played out daily in international news coverage. Standards should make students acutely aware of the three revolutionary drives. Whether we like their aims or means does not lessen their force or our need to deal with them, here and abroad. If any one of them is frustrated for long, masses of otherwise well-meaning people can turn to fury, self-pity, and a search for scapegoats, Caesars, and violent solutions.

In United States history, the prior era, from the first colonies to the "peaceful revolution" of Jefferson's election over John Adams in 1800, culminated in the American Revolution and Constitution. The nineteenth century begins on precedents set by Washington, Adams, Jefferson, Madison, Hamilton, Marshall, and Monroe as shapers of the executive branch, federal initiatives, the judiciary and foreign policy. Main topics then move onto pre-Civil War reform attempts, the promises and realities of Jacksonian democracy, slave life and abolitionism, the Civil War and the failure of its sacrifices and of Reconstruction to make a Union lawful to ex-slaves.Then industrialization, waves of immigration, urbanization, the battles between labor and business in the Gilded Age, the origins of American imperialism, the Progressive era, the Great Depression and the two World Wars.

In world history from 1800 to 1945 are many topics vital to the political sophistication of citizens, from the failure of Latin American revolutions to reach even quasi-democracy, to the effect of the Industrial Revolution on social classes and ideas, and from nineteenth-century European revolutions and reforms (including the emancipation of Russian serfs making a lively contrast to ours), to Europe's imperial drive and the responses of the Africans, Arabs, Indians, Japanese, and Chinese. Western societies celebrated 1900 with lofty hopes for the new century. But the Great War of 1914-1918 drew a black curtain across the scene, and its effects darkened the rest of the 20th century: Bolshevik, Fascist, and Nazi revolutions, the Great Depression, the Second World War, the Cold War, and the spread of ever more destructive weaponry.

Overall the civic core needs to make clear that democracy's birth, growth, and survival have demanded great patience, vision, courage, sacrifice, brainwork, and some luck.

The United States and the world since 1945

However subjects are taught across the grades, students, citizens, and teachers are more easily engaged by what they hear of today. Standards and their accompanying curricula must bring history up to date, lest students see it as over and done with, rather than what it is: a force flowing into their lives, both opening and limiting their choices and those of their society. High school United States and world history courses must get to today well before the year ends. To leave time for that, and for teaching some topics in depth, the standards must not be overstuffed. One imperative here is that states abandon one-year surveys of national and world history, futilities avoided in other nations' schools.

Of the three eras, the post-World War II years most need to focus on democracy's gains and retreats—and, too often, its destruction by murderous dictatorships. Otherwise, ceaseless global change in all spheres of life and the glut of news about it are disorienting, and it can be hard to discern recent history's main lines. Students need to grasp the cold war's effects and the significance of its end as the context for many countries' moves toward or away from liberty and stability. Where was ethnic conflict, corruption, and tyranny unleashed? Where did democracy, equality, justice, and the rule of law take hold and why? And what are the prospects for the further amelioration of human suffering as expressed in the United Nations

Universal Declaration of Human Rights (a basic document for the civic core, along with our Bill of Rights and the French Rights of Man and the Citizen)?

Identifying strong standards: Five criteria

At education summits of governors and CEO's, standards-based school reform has mainly been promoted as vital to American economic survival in a competitive world. But what gives it life for teachers, parents, and many citizens is summed up in Lawrence Cremin's words from a generation ago: Anything less than a common core of learning is "ultimately destructive of democracy." Proponents hope that studies of the best from each school subject will finally provide every child with an equal chance to learn—thus ending our century-long acceptance of vacuous, undemanding (and usually under-funded) school programs that have left masses of children at a personal, social, and economic disadvantage, a triage often along lines of race, class, neighborhood and native language.

What are "standards" or "essentials" and what are not? In civics, economics, geography, and history, they are specific topics. They are the ideas, forces or conditions, persons or places, stories, institutions, or turning-points that are significant to—and explanations of—larger, continuing themes. They are not textbook chapter headings, abstract concepts, or wholesome attitudes to be memorized. Nor do they fall to small detail. An "essential" may ask students to grasp the causes of World War II, with an eye to Axis aggression, to its leaders, to the political, geographical, economic, and ideological forces bringing them to power, together with Western passivity and the memories and conditions behind it. On one hand, they do not ask

Examples of strong and weak standards

Strong standards

- Examine the differing conditions behind the differing outcomes of the American and French Revolutions.
- How did the Great Depression bring about new government agencies?

Weak standards

- Explain the historical development of forms of government.
- Describe how governments and their institutions change.

students to "analyze the character of twentieth-century conflict." On the other, they do not ask them to recall every episode or player—though teachers may use such detail to open an essential topic with lively stories. Writers of standards (and tests—and they probably should be the same people) must ask themselves the question teachers, students, and parents will ask: "So what?" When a standard cannot be explained to the young, to teachers, or to an educated public, it is either too vague or too mired in detail.

For this report, we reviewed official state standards and framework documents listing the middle and high school topics and skills to be studied in social studies, civics, economics, geography, and history. All documents were evaluated according to the five criteria below.

Writers of standards must ask themselves the question teachers, students, and parents will ask: "So what?" When a standard cannot be explained, it is either too vague or too mired in detail.

Criterion #1:
Do the standards contain the topics essential to a common core of learning for the political education of citizens? Do they feature the content from United States and world history, civics, geography, and economics that could help raise students' comprehension of democracy's complexity? Are the topics specific and written in clear English, not general or merely implied by broad headings? Viewed as a whole, do the standards embody a common core of learning that equips citizens to make informed decisions—a core worthy of teacher and student effort, meeting the prime purpose of standards-based reform: equal opportunity to learn? Standards writers should have decided what is most important for citizens of all backgrounds to know and think about. This is step one, the "input" without which very little useful "output" can occur.

Criterion #2:
Are the required topics teachable in flexible and imaginative ways across the secondary grades, including a selected number in depth, within the limits of time that teachers actually have? There are roughly 180 school days per year, many of which are used for purposes other than instruction—i.e., testing and exams, discussion of students' writing assignments, back-to-school orientation periods, etc. In many districts, each daily class period is no longer than 45 minutes, of which the first and last five are rarely on the subject. Here, state standards can fail in one of two ways. One is by listing an encyclopedic array of specific topics, without priorities. The other is by offering an array of general headings, "themes," or "concepts" that could not be taught or understood without an equally encyclopedic list of topics that go unmentioned.

Criterion #3:
Do the standards documents mandate or suggest an orderly sequence of courses that articulate the essential content across the grades, avoiding needless repetition but also making time for the review of vital learning from earlier grades? Such articulation can be designed effectively only by seasoned teachers of the subject and scholars wise in the ways of schools, working as equals across the K-12 spectrum. To do this requires mending the jagged disconnections between schools and universities and among elementary, middle, and high school teachers—and even teachers in the same building.

Criterion #4:
Are the courses that carry the essential content of civic/political education actually required of all students regardless of school "track"? If not, equal opportunity to learn is betrayed; schools

are allowed to retreat to the old habit of giving substance to some and only seat time to the rest—as though real preparation for citizenship could ever be "separate but equal." All citizens need the ability to work at public issues on an equal footing with others.

Criterion #5:
Are the vital ideas, insights, and topics of civics, economics, and geography presented, whenever appropriate, in the context of the historical narrative of people in real times and places? Students need to see the forces flowing into each era from the several spheres of human life and history: the scientific, technological, economic, social, cultural, religious and philosophical, geographic, political. They must grasp the political debate around a given event—not just the fact of the event itself. No war or peace, no era of upheaval or stability, no story of repression or liberation will be understandable or hold students' interest without the dramatic interactions of specific individuals in specific times and conditions. Standards often fail here, isolating each subject in its own "strand," as though the others did not exist. In many states, strand teams work apart, not relating their content or adding up the time their separate lists of topics would consume.

General problems in state standards and frameworks

Most of *Educating Democracy's* terms and related topics appear in detailed state standards, but are often buried in long unprioritized lists of topics, subtopics, and skills. Documents show that writers fail to distinguish the important from the unimportant. If they try specifics, they seem unable to stem the flow of endless topics. If they avoid specifics, they turn to sweeping questions whose answers would need at least as many topics. In each case, they propose more than can be taught in the time teachers have. Writers forget a few simple numbers that limit teachers' work: fewer than 180 days a year for instruction; the three purposes of schooling; the eight or so subjects the three purposes require (arts, civics, English language, math, literature, geography, history, and science—other nations add foreign language). All subjects take time, but many standards writers do not stop to ask each other whether all their items, taken together, could possibly be stuffed into the school hours available.

The resulting state standards are rarely "coverable," much less teachable in ways the standards documents themselves declare as ideal: that is, in both breadth and depth, with much writing, inquiry and "active learning," group projects, simulations, debates, seminars, and exhibits. It follows that neither student nor teacher potential is measurable by standardized

tests as now composed. Problems are at their worst in history and social studies, where standards-setting can be highly contentious, but are often overlooked by education leaders, testers, and policy makers who work in worlds different from the classroom.

If a civic core is to work, two things need doing. Mountains of fact and concept in social studies must somehow be cut to a teachable number of priorities widely agreed upon across states and districts. And state tests must allow choice, especially in essay questions. As yet, no state has fully accomplished either one. Rather than rely on nonaligned standardized tests, states may well have to mobilize teams of their own teachers and scholars to design statewide assessments and to evaluate student performance on them, as in the Advanced Placement program. Otherwise, tests external to the schools will distort and narrow what is taught and how it is taught, and will not come close to measuring the deeper understandings citizenship calls for.

This unresolved dilemma is destructive. States shrink from setting firm priorities or addressing controversial topics in social studies, which limits the possibility of designing meaningful assessments. Yet state tests with high stakes (student graduation; public rankings of districts, schools, even classrooms; local realty values) have become the rule. What to do? Many state boards, supported by business and public officials, have decided to limit state assessments to the subjects they think essential to the workplace: math and English skills. Put aside are citizenship and personal development, as though these are not also important to conscientious work and the larger economy. As those on the front line—principals and teachers—are pressured to teach to what is tested, the social studies and humanities lose time and resources, diminishing the already limited potential of vague state standards to raise the quality of education and of civic life.

No war or peace, no era of upheaval or stability, no story of repression or liberation will be understandable or hold students' interest without the dramatic interactions of specific individuals in specific times and conditions.

The place of world history

The greatest weakness of state standards is in world history. Civics and U.S. history fare better. Both have long been required, and taught by most social studies teachers; they are familiar to teachers and administrators from their own years in school. Newspapers and television often allude to American history and politics. Civics courses stress well-known documents, the workings of government, and public issues. United States history is the story of half a continent over only 500 years and all states give it at least two years of study, some three.

World history, including Western civilization, is different. It was not much required until recently. Before 1990, probably no more than a third of middle and high school students studied it. Two-thirds of social studies teachers had not taught it, and most had taken little of it in college. Like the rest of us, teachers and school officials hear few allusions to it in daily

life. Media coverage of world events tends to be spasmodic, hopping from crisis to crisis with little background or context. And world history ranges over millennia and all the continents. Many standards writers—commonly not teachers or scholars of world history—are unequipped to be selective and lose themselves in numberless topics.

Another difficulty for world history is that understanding democracy's struggles requires that political history take center stage.That is, political history taught with economic, social, and intellectual history, as good teachers have always done, but focused on the drama of political choice and its consequences. Unhappily, for thirty years the social studies and historical fields have played down political history, on a notion wildly contrary to democracy: namely, that it concerns only the elite. United States history standards also suffer from this confusion, but the damage is worse in world history, where limited time demands rigorous selection of topics. Political ideas and actions—and their effects—are hard to find amid countless items and abstract concepts in most world history standards.

Writers of world history standards also play down Western civilization in documents already weak on politics. It is an old habit. The College Board's 1985 booklet for teachers of college-bound students, titled *Academic Preparation in the Social Studies,* urged that ancient and Western civilization be left to electives "since only some of the topics treated in them bear the test of worldwide import." Among the topics thus dismissed as lacking import were Judaism, Greco-Roman history and political ideas, Christianity, feudalism, Islam, Renaissance Humanism, the Enlightenment, the English, American, and French Revolutions, liberalism, capitalism old and new, industrialism, democracy, socialism, imperialism, communism, fascism, Nazism, two world wars, modern science, and technology. For the education of young citizens, there are rather few topics of greater import.

If left unaddressed, this view could seriously weaken the College Board's case for promoting its Advanced Placement courses as the "standard of excellence"[§] for high school curriculum across the nation. Indeed, a new AP course in world history limits Western civilization to 30 percent of its content. And that 30 percent is short on Western political, religious, and intellectual history. Close study begins only in 1000 AD, skimming the origins and basic ideas of the major religions and ethical systems and the political ideas and institutions of all ancient civilizations, not only those of the West. It also embodies some 250 required topics. Schools that try to squeeze it into a single year take a long step backward, especially since many states have finally decided to give world history two years of course work—still markedly less than European and East Asian schools do.

§ College Board (February 22, 2002). "Findings in Report by National Academy of Sciences on AP Program Support the College Board's Own Calls for Improvements," press release.

The balance between Western and non-Western studies

Not much of any story can be told in states holding to one-year surveys of the world's past.

Setting the right balance between Western and non-Western studies in the education of American citizens requires more than wearisome assaults on "rootless multiculturism" or "elitist Eurocentrism." At stake here is only a part of learning, a core to prepare students for political democracy, some of which non-Western students study in their own countries. Advocates for "global studies," asking equal time for all world civilizations, forget that the story of democratic institutions—and of their most virulent enemies—until recently has been a largely Western story, and not always pretty or elitist. Advocates for the West alone forget that a great many non-Westerners have treasured and fought for human dignity, freedom, and justice since ancient times. Failing to tell the two stories misprepares Americans of all backgrounds. But how to combine them in the time schools have? Few standards writers, national or state, ask how much of each story needs to be told, can be told, and at what cost to other stories.

To begin with, not much of any story can be told in states holding to one-year surveys of the world's past. But even three years is not enough to teach everything. The case for relative stress on Western history is that America's democratic ideas and practices are rooted in the Judeo-Christian, Greco-Roman, and Anglo-European past. The significance of Western civilization to Americans of any origin is not that it is "ours" and we "see ourselves" in it. In fact, the peasant ancestors of European-Americans were no closer to high Western thought, culture, or politics than their African, Asian, and pre-Columbian counterparts. Nor can Western civilization be honestly taught as treasure alone, a saga of progress, superior in all ways to the legacies of other civilizations. It has given birth to some of the very best and worst in politics, economics, culture, class and race relations. It is the legacy we live with every day, genes of the mind inherited just as the body inherits immunity or vulnerability to certain diseases. The West has never had a single "canon," but rather a ceaseless warfare of ideas and ambitions across ethnic, religious, linguistic, social, and cultural divides and limitless economic and political appetites. We study it to know who we are and what to expect from each other, given such a conflicted heritage.

It is not all we need to know. Global educators rightly warn us to study other peoples. The globe is not yet a village, and soon half of us will have non-European roots. Good standards pay attention to each major civilization. The question for teachers is how much attention. What should Americans of any origin know of "others" abroad and arriving? What should Chinese-Americans, African-Americans, and Franco-Americans know, in common, beyond American society and each other's experiences of it? None needs the detail of ancient Chinese dynasties, or African kingdoms, or Merovingians and Carolingians. But they should know the main ideas and experiences of each other's ancestors. They should have an idea of the beauty each people created as well as the oppression they suffered or imposed on others, and their lasting traditions and memories—in short, what we should want other peoples to know of us. Alongside a civic core, state standards may well include the following topics, and note—as we must do for the Western past—what in them could promote or obstruct democracy.

Alongside a civic core, the better state standards include pre-modern topics such as these:

India's civilization: The beliefs, spiritual and moral teachings of Hinduism and Buddhism; the spread of Buddhism to Southeast Asia, China, Korea, Japan; successive waves of nomadic and Muslim invasion, turmoil, and recovery; art and architecture.

China's civilization: The ethical, social, and political teachings of Confucius; the values of personal integrity, centrality of the family, and the Mandate of Heaven; the complementary ideas of Taoism; Chinese inventions and innovations; Mongol invasion and rule; Ming expeditions and trade; the turn inward.

Byzantine Empire: Constantine's shift of Rome's capital to the East; Justinian's code; the Eastern Orthodox Church and its relations with the Western church; the conversion of the Slavs; the Ottoman Empire conquest.

Islam and Muslim civilization: Beliefs and moral teachings; relationship to Judaism and Christianity; Muhammad the Prophet in the line of Moses and Jesus; the Qur'an; personal morality and social justice; Muslim expansionism, from Western Europe to India; arts, science, medicine; the transmittal of Greek works to Europe.

Medieval Russia: The Kievan conversion to Orthodox Christianity; the Mongol conquest ("Tartar Yoke"); the rise and liberation of Muscovy; Moscow as the "Third Rome" after the fall of Constantinople; Russia's tenuous, often hostile, relations with Western Europe.

Pre-Columbian societies in the Americas: The geographical, economic, cultural, and political contrasts among the Mayan, Aztec, and Incan civilizations; the first North Americans; significant geographical, economic, social, political, and military contrasts across the continent.

Japan's civilization: The Chinese influence: Buddhism, Confucianism, language and arts; Japanese feudalism compared with Europe's; the "divine wind" (kamikaze) foils the Mongol invasion; national unity under the Tokugawa; Japanese arts and literature.

African city-states, empires, and local societies: The vast geographical variations as bases for economic, political, and social structures; Ghana as the first African empire; the spread of Islamic religion, arts, and learning; the empires of Mali and Songhai; trans-Saharan trade in gold, salt, and slaves.

In the early modern era, the significant turning-points and cultural works of these civilization should not be pushed aside by the "rise of the West," Europe's explorations, conquests and colonizing. The same is true of the nineteenth century's era of "new imperialism" fired by European nationalism and the Industrial Revolution. In both eras, the arts, ideas, and literature of non-Europeans stirred Western artists and scholars to new directions. In turn, the varied patterns of African, Asian, and Middle Eastern adaptation and resistance to Western ideas and power help to raise the political sophistication of American students. Most important, they need acute awareness of today's conditions and anxieties in each others' ancestral lands. Three years of World history and geography can teach much of this. It will not end debate on a "right' 'balance, but it will make room for livable compromise.

All world history cannot be told. For our time, the first lesson to be learned from it is the never-ending struggle of people inside each society to limit greed and aggression, to apply morality and law, to keep peace and render justice. Students can see both the glory and the agony in this struggle and how often it has been lost. And since human evil is real, good intent has never been enough. Against the twin follies of wishful thinking and cynicism, history proves that tragedy is real and that civilization has a high price, but that it, too, is real and has triumphed from time to time. As they select "essentials," standards writers can focus on stories that students cannot help but see are true to life, and worth remembering.

State standards compared: An overview

The fifty standards fall into three categories. First are those that build upon the National Council for the Social Studies' (NCSS) model standards in *Expectations of Excellence* (1994). These are not organized by subject (history, geography, economics, civics), but under ten abstract, overlapping themes. State documents that follow this model are the weakest on specifics and tend not to offer a common core of learning. Contrary to the social studies' announced aim—competent citizenship—they have very little political history and are weak on religious and ethical teachings, as well as on the political, economic, social, and cultural ideas of all world civilizations, including Western.

Second are those that build upon the other "national" standards—those on civics by the Center for Civic Education in *National Standards for Civics and Government* (1994); on geography by the National Council for Geographic Education in *Geogra phy for Life* (1994); on economics by the National Council on Economic Education in *Voluntary Content Standards in Economics* (1997); and on United States and world history by the National Center for History in the Schools in its *National Standards for History* (revised edition, 1996). State standards modeled on these documents are the most specific, but with the partial exception of civics, they are usually over-loaded with topics. In addition, the history, geography, and economics standards that are patterned on the national models tend to be made dull by adopting the overly academic terms of university specialists.

Third, some states try to combine some or all of the social studies themes and language with specific topics chosen from the four disciplinary standards above. These vary widely in the number of topics included, in the care given to their selection, and in their relevance to educating democracy. As already noted, many also separate the subjects from one another in unrelated strands, rather than pulling their content and insights together to engage students through a "thick narrative" of human adventures in real times and places

The criteria and state standards

The following pages briefly sum up the five criteria for judgment set forth earlier and how the states fared. Under each criterion, states are grouped at three levels: Largely Met, Partially Met, and Not Met. Separate individual state reports, detailing strengths and weaknesses of each document are to be found in Part Two of this report, with the titles and dates of the state publications consulted.

Criterion #1, Content for a Civic Core, Specified Clearly: Do they contain the most important topics in specific terms, not merely implied by general headings, from civics, economics, geography, United States and world history to create a common core of learning about democracy for the political education of citizens?

Group One.. Largely Met: Twelve state documents carry all or nearly all critical topics, mostly in clear English and presented as essentials needing to be touched upon, not merely as examples or suggestions. They are from Alabama, Arizona, California, Indiana, Kansas,

Maryland, Massachusetts, Nebraska, New Mexico, New York, Oklahoma, Texas, and Virginia.

Among these, Arizona is typical of many states. Its civics and United States history items are fuller and more specific, and thus more helpful to teachers in designing their courses, than those for world history. The same imbalance is true of most states, including others of the twelve above and states having insufficient, or almost no, specific topics. For all three fields, California's standards are among the best, but only if its two documents are read together, for the Standards of 2000 omit critical topics from the Framework of 1987. Finally, all state documents in Group One contain more topics than can be taught in the time schools have, those from Massachusetts and New York especially so.

Group Two. Partially Met: Thirteen have a fair number of ostensibly required topics, but not enough to build adequate civic cores: Colorado, Delaware, the District of Columbia, Georgia, Maine, Missouri, Nevada, New Hampshire, Ohio, South Carolina, South Dakota, Tennessee, and Texas. Some, including Colorado, leave many important topics to lists of optional examples or activities. Others, including Nevada and South Dakota, have numerous civics and United States history topics, but are nearly empty of world history items. A good many, including Delaware and New Hampshire, have general headings much like textbook tables of content or chapter titles, most of them too broad, especially in world history, and lacking chosen particulars to help teachers open their study.

Group Three. Not Met: The remaining 25 documents contain none or nearly none of the needed topics: Alaska, Arkansas, Connecticut, Department of Defense schools, Florida, Hawaii, Idaho, Illinois, Kentucky, Louisiana, Michigan, Minnesota, Mississippi, Montana, New Jersey, North Carolina, North Dakota, Oregon, Pennsylvania, Utah, Vermont, Washington, West Virginia, Wisconsin, and Wyoming. Many, but not all, of these build upon the 1994 standards of the National Council for the Social Studies. Common in them are sweeping topics or "benchmarks" which would require numberless topics and weeks to study. In Wyoming, for example, one of only four benchmarks for 11th-grade history (called "Time, Continuity, and Change") asks students to "explain how history, governments, cultures, and economics have contributed to the interpretation of the past and present, and assist in planning for the future." Minnesota asks students to know "the significance of key people, events, places, concepts, and themes in the historical development of one or more world cultures by: a survey of world history including early civilizations, classical traditions, major empires, institutions; expansions of trade and encounter; intensified hemispheric interactions; the first global age; the age of revolutions; and the twentieth century; or [sic] a comprehensive, in-depth focus on a single culture, nation, movement, or time period."

Most states which "Largely Met" Criterion #1 deserve credit for earnest attempts to include important topics and may be pardoned for going somewhat too far. Their topic lists probably could be pared down quickly by expert teachers working with university scholars who know the school classroom. Most of the standards which "Partially Met" this criterion could be augmented or certain of their examples selectively turned into requirements. But the states in the "Not Met" category have little choice but to start over from the beginning. In general, the standards that are characterized by vast, generalized topic headings are even less teachable than those with over-long topic lists—which teachers can always select from—with the added offense of tempting teachers and students to believe that vague, imprecise understandings are sufficient. Nothing is more contrary to preparing citizens of sound judgment.

Criterion #2, Teachability: Can the required or suggested topics be taught, in effective

ways, within the fewer than 180 days that typically are available for classroom instruction each year?

Not Met: To date, none of the 50 sets of standards reviewed satisfies this criterion. In no detailed document are the topics listed for history, economics, and geography teachable in any but hurried, superficial ways in the school time available. In non-specific documents, as already noted, the many unnamed topics needed to explore their broad questions would also overflow the teaching hours at hand. As in the case of the national standards, civics topics are a partial exception. In state documents they tend to be less pretentious and the least vague. And it helps that many of their salient points can be taught in the context of United States and world history, provided these courses are segmented by era across the grades to allow for sufficient instructional time. One-year surveys will necessarily desiccate all of the four central subjects.

Here again world history is a problem. Even when dividing it across grades, states try to squeeze too much into one year of high school. The Alabama standards, which come closest to satisfying all criteria, begins at c. 1500, as do the documents from Arizona, Delaware, Maryland, Missouri, Pennsylvania, and others. Five-century sweeps do not allow close teaching of topics in world and Western history for a civic core, and they make almost certain that the high school course will not come close to the present. Starting with eighteenth-century Enlightenment ideas and the American and French Revolutions is difficult enough, as Mississippi and California are finding. Worst, of course, are states that claim to cover all of world history since human origins in only one year.

Unrealistic overloading also occurs in American history. In several states, among them Indiana, Massachusetts, Nebraska, New York, and Virginia, courses at the high school level are far too heavy. Massachusetts' main standards for the yearlong course from 1877 to 2002 embody 210 substantial topics. Virginia and New York still try single-year survey courses, the former embracing some 200 separate topics and the latter well over 300.

Overload is worse in states with content segregated into isolated strands for civics, economics, geography, and history, often written by separate teams. Rather than capture the advantages of linking—and the help it offers to teachers—each draws up its own wish list. Kansas is a case in point. Its economics and geography lists are over-heavy with topics drawn from the national standards, which are repeated across the fifth through twelfth grades—even though geography has grade seven to itself and economics is a course for seniors. The imbalance of topics is worse in those "eligible" for state testing. Each writing team was allowed to decide which of its own items to designate as eligible. As a result, fifth-grade U.S. history and sixth-grade world history only have thirteen test-eligible topics together, while economics and geography have 21 each. Eighth grade's nineteenth-century Kansas and U.S. history course has 25 eligible topics against 32 for civics, economics, and geography. None of them are specific to the nineteenth century, though many could have been, enlivening all four subjects. In many "strand" states, economics and geography standards amount to introductory university courses pressed down into middle and high school, complete with the academic vocabulary of the national standards.

Along with Kansas, other states have tried to meet the problem of overload by designating only certain topics as eligible for testing. Among them are Maryland, Missouri, Texas, and Wisconsin. Unsurprisingly, with schools and teachers under pressure to raise scores by emphasizing what is tested, these starred items or separate documents tend to displace the state's originally published standards. This is problematic because, to date, most lists of test-

Overload is worse in states with content segregated into isolated strands for civics, economics, geography, and history, often written by separate teams.

eligible topics reflect neither the general balance of the original standards nor a desirable emphasis on civic, political, and historical content.

As noted above, overstuffing is not limited to detailed standards. Standards that are vague and sweeping are at least as unteachable. Montana asks students to "interpret how selected cultures, historical events, periods, [and] patterns of change influence each other." The standards for Department of Defense schools ask students to "Describe how the perception of time affects culture and society." Illinois asks middle school students to "Explain relationships

Educating Democracy: State standards at a glance

	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?
ALABAMA	★	☆	★	★	★
ALASKA	☆	☆	☆	☆	☆
ARIZONA	★	☆	½	☆	☆
ARKANSAS	☆	☆	½	☆	☆
CALIFORNIA	★	☆	★	½	★
COLORADO	½	☆	★	☆	½
CONNECTICUT	☆	☆	☆	☆	☆
DELAWARE	½	☆	½	½	☆
D.C.	½	☆	★	★	☆
D.O.D.	☆	☆	★	½	☆
FLORIDA	☆	☆	½	☆	☆
GEORGIA	½	☆	★	½	½
HAWAII	☆	☆	½	☆	☆
IDAHO	☆	☆	★	½	☆
ILLINOIS	☆	☆	☆	½	☆
INDIANA	★	☆	★	½	★
IOWA	☆*	☆*	☆*	☆*	☆*
KANSAS	★	☆	★	½	☆
KENTUCKY	☆	☆	½	½	☆
LOUISIANA	☆	☆	½	½	☆
MAINE	½	☆	½	☆	☆
MARYLAND	★	☆	½	½	☆
MASSACHUSETTS	★	☆	★	☆	★
MICHIGAN	☆	☆	☆	½	☆
MINNESOTA	☆	☆	½	☆	☆
MISSISSIPPI	☆	☆	★	½	★

Standards that largely meet the criteria are designated with a full star [★]; standards that partially meet the criteria are designated with a half star [½]; and standards that have not been developed* or do not meet the criteria are designated with an empty star [☆] (with and without an asterisk, respectively).

among the American economy and slavery, immigration, industrialization, labor, and urbanization, 1700 to the present."The loose, repetitive Illinois standards offer no common core of ideas or events, contrary to its introduction's promise of "the same standards for all students" to "provide fair and equitable educational opportunities."

Criterion #3,Scope and Sequence: Do the standards mandate or suggest an order and scope for courses across the middle and high school grades by which to convey a civic core?

Group One Largely Met: Fourteen standards set a specific grade-by-grade sequence:

	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?
MISSOURI	½	☆	½	½	☆
MONTANA	☆	☆	½	☆	☆
NEBRASKA	★	☆	½	½	★
NEVADA	½	☆	☆	☆	☆
NEW HAMPSHIRE	½	☆	½	½	½
NEW JERSEY	☆	☆	☆	☆	☆
NEW MEXICO	★	☆	★	½	½
NEW YORK	★	☆	★	½	★
NORTH CAROLINA	☆	☆	★	½	☆
NORTH DAKOTA	☆	☆	☆	☆	☆
OHIO	½	☆	★	½	☆
OKLAHOMA	★	☆	½	½	½
OREGON	☆	☆	☆	½	☆
PENNSYLVANIA	☆	☆	½	☆	☆
RHODE ISLAND	☆*	☆*	☆*	☆*	☆*
SOUTH CAROLINA	½	☆	★	½	☆
SOUTH DAKOTA	½	☆	★	½	½
TENNESSEE	½	☆	★	½	½
TEXAS	★	☆	★	½	★
UTAH	☆	☆	★	½	☆
VERMONT	☆	☆	½	☆	☆
VIRGINIA	★	☆	½	½	½
WASHINGTON	☆	☆	½	☆	☆
WEST VIRGINIA	☆	☆	★	½	½
WISCONSIN	☆	☆	☆	½	☆
WYOMING	☆	☆	☆	☆	☆

Standards that largely meet the criteria are designated with a full star [★]; standards that partially meet the criteria are designated with a half star [½]; and standards that have not been developed* or do not meet the criteria are designated with an empty star [☆] (with and without an asterisk, respectively).

Alabama, California, Department of Defense schools, District of Columbia, Georgia, Idaho, Kansas, Mississippi, New York, North Carolina, Ohio, South Carolina, Utah, and West Virginia. Seven others do so for middle school (usually grades five through eight) but not for high school: Colorado, Indiana, Massachusetts, New Mexico, South Dakota, Tennessee, and Texas. Of these twenty states, most test achievement at the end of various grade clusters, though there is a trend toward end-of-course tests, particularly at the high school level where scores may wholly or partly determine students' eligibility for graduation.

Group Two. Partially Met: Twenty-one states partially suggest a sequence or arrange their topics into grade clusters, such as kindergarten to fourth grade, grades five through eight, and grades nine through twelve. These are Arizona, Arkansas, Delaware, Florida, Hawaii, Kentucky, Louisiana, Maine, Maryland, Minnesota, Missouri, Montana, Nebraska, New Hampshire, Oklahoma, Pennsylvania, Vermont, Virginia, and Washington.

Group Three, Not Met: Nine states set no clear sequence for teaching the content of standards: Alaska, Connecticut, Illinois, Michigan, New Jersey, Nevada, North Dakota, Oregon, Wisconsin, and Wyoming. Many of these states, however, do indicate that early U.S. history (usually to 1877) and early world history (the end date varies) belong in middle school, with later eras to be taught in high school.

Criterion #4: Courses Required: Are the courses carrying the essential content for a civic core required of all students, ensuring an equal opportunity to learn?

Whether or not their standards include essential content, states are hard to pin down on what is or is not a requirement. Very few plainly say that their schools are required to teach, and students required to study, the specific content listed. Alabama is the most explicit: "Content standards in this document are minimum and required." Local districts may add standards "to reflect local philosophies" and decide on methods and activities, but reaffirms common expectations with assessments. The District of Columbia also requires a sequence of courses for middle and high school. The DOD schools offer a list of vague course descriptions, while Indiana requires two high school courses and is planing further common learning, enforced through new statewide tests. More candor is needed. Most states avoid the "requirement" word but already do, or plan to do, statewide testing, while still claiming to honor local control of what is taught. The evasive documents do not help; testing is the only, but far from dependable, guide to what is required. States vary, and often change, policies on testing students in vocational schools, charter schools, or private schools. They vary and waver on whether their tests determine promotion or graduation. Some with respectable standards then leave certain courses optional, or untested, even at the high school level, such as world history in Indiana, Massachusetts, and Texas. On the critical matter of requirements—at the heart of equal opportunity to learn—the picture is almost too fuzzy to apply the terms Largely Met, Partially Met, and Not Met.

In eighteen states, the most that can be said is that statewide tests for history/social studies at the high school level suggest that the content of the published history/social studies standards is, or could be, required of most students—at least a partial fulfillment of the criterion: California, Georgia, Illinois, Kansas, Kentucky, Louisiana, Maryland, Michigan, Mississippi, Missouri, New Mexico, New York, North Carolina, Oklahoma, Oregon, Texas, Virginia, Wisconsin. As noted above, several of these fail badly on the quality of the standards themselves. Fourteen states use high school tests that are variously aligned with their published standards: Arkansas, Delaware, Idaho, Maine, Montana, Nebraska, New Hampshire, North Dakota, Ohio, South Carolina, South Dakota, Tennessee, Utah, and West Virginia.