

CivicsAlliance

from NATIONAL ASSOCIATION of SCHOLARS

State Social Studies Standards: American Birthright

State standards are the single most influential documents in America's education system. State education departments use them to provide guidance to each public K-12 school district and charter school as they create their own courses. State standards also influence what textbook authors write and what assessment companies such as the College Board test for in their advanced placement examinations. They affect teacher training and they provide the framework for teachers' individual lesson plans. Private schools and homeschool parents also keep an eye on state standards.

The Civics Alliance wants to improve every aspect of American social studies instruction by inspiring America's state education departments to provide social studies standards that teach American students their birthright of liberty.

Every student should be educated to be another Harry Truman—a high-school graduate who, without ever graduating from college, has a solid grasp of history and is capable of serving as an officer, a judge, a senator, and president.

American Birthright: The Civics Alliance's Model K-12 Social Studies Standards teaches students to *identify* the ideals, institutions, and individual examples of human liberty, individualism, religious freedom, and republican self-government; *assess* the extent to which civilizations have fulfilled these ideals; and *describe* how the evolution of these ideals in different times and places has contributed to the formation of modern American ideals.

Above all, *American Birthright* teaches about the expansion of American liberty to include all Americans, the contributions that Americans from every walk of life have made to our shared history of liberty, and America's championship of liberty throughout the world. Students will learn of heroes of liberty such as Abraham Lincoln, Susan B. Anthony, Martin Luther King, Jr., and Ronald Reagan.

American Birthright will prepare our children for college and career because it provides comprehensive content knowledge in History, Geography, Civics, and Economics, as well as sustained coverage of Western Civilization, World History, United States History, and Civics. *American Birthright* integrates its standards with a series of primary source documents, so students can learn the actual materials of history. *American Birthright's* straightforward structure makes it easy for teachers to use

and easy for parents to hold teachers accountable for how well they teach social studies. *American Birthright's* intensive content standards also facilitate reliable assessment, whether by state-level testing or tests by school districts and individual teachers.

American Birthright will especially benefit the most disadvantaged students. Disadvantaged students benefit from intensive content instruction even more than better-off students, who receive large amounts of content knowledge from their families and peers. Content standards that abbreviate content foster an unequal society because they especially harm the education of disadvantaged children. *American Birthright's* intensive content standards fulfill America's promise of equal educational opportunities for everyone.

The Civics Alliance encourages all citizens to get in touch with state policymakers, to call for adopting some or all of *American Birthright* as a state social studies standard.

States and school districts should create social studies standards modeled on *American Birthright* because it teaches American students their birthright of liberty.

Learn more at <https://civicsalliance.org/american-birthright/>