

## Transferable Concepts in Social Studies (examples)

Agriculture	Geography	Political, Politics
Artifact(s)	Government	Population
Belief	Heritage	Producers
Cause, Effect	Ideology	Region
Citizenship	Immigration	Regulation
Civilization	Independence	Religion
Change	Innovation	Republic
Colony, Colonial	Interaction	Resource(s)
Communication	Interdependence	Ruler
Competition	Invention	Scarcity
Conflict	Isolation	Slavery
Constitution	Law(s), Rule(s)	Social
Continuity	Legality	Society
Cooperation	Location	Source(s)
Cost	Market	Strata
Culture	Media	System(s)
Custom(s)	Monarchy	Technology
Democracy	Monopoly	Time
Diversity	Mores	Traditions
Economics	Needs	Transportation
Ethnicity	Opportunity	Trend(s)
Evolution	Pattern(s)	Tribe
Expansion	Perspective	Values
Exploitation	Place	Wants
Freedom	Policy	War

## Overarching Essential Questions in Social Studies (examples)

### **History/Historical Analysis and Interpretation**

- What happened in the past?

- How can we know if we weren't there?
- Why study history? • What can we learn from the past?
- How am I connected to those in the past? • In what ways is the past about me?
- How do we know what *really* happened in the past?
- Whose “story” is it?
- Whom do we believe and why?
- Is history the story told by the “winners”?
- Is history inevitably biased?
- How do people create their history?
- Does history make the man or does the man make history?
- Who were the “winners” and who were the “losers” in \_\_\_\_\_? (*for any historical event*)
- Was anyone at fault? (*for examining any historical or literary event*)
- What causes change? • What remains the same?
- What can we legitimately infer about the artifacts we find?
- What should we do when the primary sources disagree?
- How does the legacy of earlier groups and individuals influence subsequent generations?
- How do patterns of cause/effect manifest themselves in the chronology of history?
- How has the world changed and how might it change in the future?
- Is it true that those who do not learn from history are doomed to repeat it?

### **Civics/Government**

- How are governments created, structured, maintained, and changed?
- What are the roles and responsibilities of government?
- How do the structures and functions of government interrelate?
- What would happen if we had no government?
- What are the roles and responsibilities of citizen's in a democracy?
- What kinds of things to “good” citizens do?
- How do personal and civic responsibilities differ?
- Can an individual make a difference?
- How do citizens (both individually and collectively) influence government policy?

- What is power? • What forms does it take?
- How do competing interest influence how power is distributed and exercised?
- How is power gained, used, and justified?
- How can abuse of power be avoided?
- Who should govern/rule? • Should the majority always rule?
- When should society control individuals?
- Why do we have rules and laws? • What would happen if we didn't?
- Who should make the rules/laws?
- Is it ever o.k. to break the law?
- What are “inalienable rights”?
- How do governments balance the rights of individuals with the common good?
- Should \_\_\_\_\_ be restricted/regulated? (*e.g., immigration, alcohol/drugs, media, etc.*) When? Who decides?
- How do different political systems vary in their toleration and encouragement of change?

### **Economics**

- Why do we have money?
- What is the difference between ‘needs’ and ‘wants’?
- How does something acquire value? • What is it worth?
- How much should it cost? • Who decides?
- Who should produce goods and services?
- What impact does scarcity have on the production, distribution, and consumption of goods and services?
- How does the free market system affect my life? ...our community? ...our society? ...the world?
- Who should produce goods and services?
- Should government regulate business/economy or be its partner?
- Why do people to work? • Should everyone be expected to work?
- What does it mean to “make a living”?
- What is the ‘best’ job for you?
- How does technological change influence people's lives? ...society?
- What social, political and economic opportunities and problems arise from changes in technology?
- What goods and services should government provide? Who should pay for them? Who should benefit from them? Who should decide?

- How do different economic systems vary in their toleration and encouragement of change?

### **Geography**

- Why is “where” important?
- Why is/was \_\_\_\_\_ located there? (*e.g., capitol, factory, battle, etc.*)
- What makes places unique and different?
- How does geography, climate and natural resources affect the way people live and work?
- How does *where* I live influence *how* I live?
- Why do people move?
- What do we mean by ‘region’?
- What story do maps and globes tell?
- How and why do maps and globes change?
- How do maps and globes reflect history, politics, and economics?

### **Culture**

- What does it mean to be “civilized”? • What makes a civilization?
- How have civilizations evolved
- Are modern civilizations more ‘civilized’ than ancient ones?
- Why should we be interested in/study other cultures?
- Who are the “heroes” and what do they reveal about a culture?
- How and why do we celebrate holidays? • Who and what do we memorialize?
- What are the significant symbols and icons of civilizations/cultures? What function(s) do they serve?
- Do the arts reflect or shape culture?
- What can we learn about a culture through its art forms?
- What happens when cultures collide?
- Why do people fight? • Is conflict inevitable? ...desirable?
- What is worth fighting for? • Is there such a thing as a “just” war?
- What is a revolution?
- What causes people to ‘revolt’?
- Are revolutions inevitable?
- How are all religions the same?
- How does belief influence action?
- How and why do beliefs change?

## **Essential Questions from the NATIONAL COUNCIL of SOCIAL STUDIES**

### **CULTURE**

What is civic participation and how can I be involved? How has the meaning of citizenship evolved? What is the balance between rights and responsibilities? What is the role of the citizen in the community and the nation, and as a member of the world community? How can I make a positive difference?

### **TIME, CONTINUITY, CHANGE**

Who am I? What happened in the past? How am I connected to those in the past? How has the world changed and how might it change in the future? Why does our personal sense of relatedness to the past change? How can the perspective we have about our own life experiences be viewed as part of the larger human story across time? How do our personal stories reflect varying points of view and inform contemporary ideas and actions?

### **PEOPLE, PLACES, ENVIRONMENT**

Where are things located? Why are they located where they are? What patterns are reflected in the groupings of things? What do we mean by region? How do landforms change? What implications do these changes have for people?

### **POWER, AUTHORITY, GOVERNANCE**

What is power? What forms does it take? Who holds it? How is it gained, used, and justified? What is legitimate authority? How are governments created, structured, maintained, and changed? How can we keep government responsive to its citizens' needs and interests? How can individual rights be protected within the context of majority rule?

### **PRODUCTION, DISTRIBUTION, CONSUMPTION**

What is to be produced? How is production to be organized? How are goods and services to be distributed? What is the most effective allocation of the factors of production (land, labor, capital, and management)?

## **SCIENCE, TECHNOLOGY, SOCIETY**

Is new technology always better than that which it will replace? What can we learn from the past about how new technologies result in broader social change, some of which is unanticipated? How can we cope with the ever-increasing pace of change, perhaps even with the feeling that technology has gotten out of control? How can we manage technology so that the greatest number of people benefit from it? How can we preserve our fundamental values and beliefs in a world that is rapidly becoming one technology-linked village?

## **CIVIC IDEALS and PRACTICES**

What is civic participation and how can I be involved? How has the meaning of citizenship evolved? What is the balance between rights and responsibilities? What is the role of the citizen in the community and the nation, and as a member of the world community?

## **Topical Essential Questions in Social Studies**

*(a random collection)*

- Why was the Industrial Revolution really a social revolution?
- How did the Industrial Revolution in the U.S. create an economic dependency between the regions?
- Who were the "winners" and "losers" as a result of the Industrial Revolution?
- In what ways are the Industrial Revolution and the Information Age similar and different?
- In what ways did the Industrial Revolution...
  - change the 19th century American family?
  - "liberate" women?
  - deepen the bondage of African Americans and the impoverished?
- Why is the U.S. economy no longer grounded in manufacturing?
- What role did geography, climate and natural resources play in the industrial expansion in the North and the agricultural expansion in the South?

Why was the Industrial Revolution really a social revolution? How did it affect people's lives -owners, workers, consumers, parents, children?

How did the Industrial Revolution give Western nations the means and motives to colonize non-industrial nations?

Why have maps of Europe changed over the past three centuries?  
What caused the race riots of the late 1960s? Can the racial divisions that have plagued American society be erased?  
Was Paul Revere a Patriot or a Traitor?  
Can a society as diverse as the current United States ever fairly balance majority rule with minority rights?  
How do members of a community interact to help each other meet their basic needs?  
Does technology help or harm the ability of a living thing to survive?  
Is there a global common good or just the common good of the most powerful?  
Is world peace possible or desirable?  
What is the cost of world peace?  
Can the art of diplomacy be taught?  
How and why has Japan become a major economic power in the late 20th century?  
Is the idea that “all men are not angels” a profound insight or a needlessly cynical basis for our government?  
Why was Hitler so popular?  
Why do nations set immigration quotas?  
What does it mean to live in a “civilized” society?  
How did civilizations influence one another in the ancient world?  
How do members of a civilization (“insiders”) relate to non-members (“outsiders”)?  
How has the experiences of ancient civilizations influenced life in the modern world?  
How does knowledge change my perception of the world?  
How does understanding concepts like unity, isolation, adaptation, expansion, and exploitation affect my knowledge of history?  
What are the roles of the citizen in the American democracy?  
How have the concepts of equality and liberty evolved in American history?  
How have important, long-standing conflicts shaped American history?  
Who does one develop and express well informed positions?  
How do contemporary non-western cultures address human needs?  
How have selected historical events shaped aspects of the contemporary non-western world?  
How do the problems of contemporary not-western cultures impact on

the American society and world?

Where in the world are the nations of the contemporary non-western world?

Why should an American be interested/study Western Civilization?

How/Why is Western Civilization unique?

How did Wurope become so powerful and why isn't it as powerful today?

What is the business cycle? Is it inevitable?

What is a 'war crime'?

Should power be shared?

Why and how should we protect the environment?

Should the government promote economic growth?

How do people come to power?

How does government avoid abuse of power?

How do govts. Balance the rights of individuals with the common good?

How do individuals/societies adapt to change?

What causes the mind to kick into discrimination mode? Is it reasonable to discriminate?

What happens when external and internal sources of power are in conflict?

What is the difference between status and power? (Can a person have one and not the other?)

To what extent are we the nation we set out to be?

Has the Constitution enabled us to become the nation we set out to be?

Why do we need government?

What is necessary for a government to be successful?

How do past experiences and ideas shape ideals?

How has democracy evolved in 20th centruy America?

How has modern Amreica evolved socially, economically, and politically?

How has geography shaped 20th centruy America?

What is the relationship of the United States to other nations and to world affairs?

What is the ideal woman?

How have the roles and rights of women in America changed?

Who are some female heroes?

What issues face women in America today?

Why is a special course on women needed?

Why do people apper to need religion in their lives?

How does religion attempt to answer the great questions of human existence?

How has religion influenced history?

How has religion influenced the development of political institutions?

How does religion attempt to help people lead morally and ethically correct lives?

Do our stated American ideals cause progress or mask hypocrisy?

Can fairness be achieved in the judicial system in an atmosphere of fear.

Is it possible for different religious, ethnic, cultural and racial groups to coexist peacefully in a democratic society?

Is public safety or individual freedom more important in a democratic society?

Can government enforce morality on its citizens in a free democratic society?

Should government regulate business or be its partner?

Does consumer debt increase or decrease the standard of living?

Does society place too much importance on sports and sports stars?

Should a President be blamed for the behavior of his cabinet?

Is immigration an overall positive or overall negative policy for the United States?

What motivates a person's job choice: money or interest?

How much should it cost? How is price determined?

What is it worth? Who decides?

What goods and services should government provide? Who should pay for them? Who should benefit from them? Who should decide?

Why do we have money?

Does technology increase the standard of living or is the change sometimes too disruptive for society?

Can the racial divisions that have plagued American society be erased?

How can we come to understand a culture so seemingly distant from us?

How can we come to understand a culture so seemingly distant from us?

Can we - how can we - come to new perceptions of an issue we already have strong opinions on?

How do race, gender, and class shape American history?

How has civil and international conflict shaped American history?

\* What are the common characteristics between civilizations and what distinguishes civilizations from each other?

What are the lasting contributions of early civilizations?

What is a "just and moral" war?

Is history always biased? What historical account is correct?

In what way is any recount of history °\*false°±? Can you ever have the whole picture?

Is brainwashing possible? Could you be brainwashed? (Are you already brainwashed?)

What is truth in the media? What sources of information can we trust to tell us the truth?

Should government regulate business/economy or be its partner?

Should a society have the ability to control individuals?

How does society control individuals?

What are the effects of society's control over individuals? (pos. & neg.)

When should society control individuals?

How can society know where to place limits on control?

What is scarcity and what causes it?

What impact does scarcity have on the production, distribution, and consumption of goods and services?

How does the free market system affect life in our community?

How does the process of supply and demand affect the price of goods and services?

What is truth?

\*Is nonfiction more true than fiction?

What is the relationship between truth and nonfiction?

What is the relationship between truth and fiction?

What is different and what is the same between biography and autobiography?

Can power ever truly be balanced?

-Are we, as citizens, responsible for the success or failure of our government?

-Does the Constitution promote civic virtue?

How do I get people to think like I do?

What can we learn from the past?

Why do we memorialize?

How and why do we celebrate holidays?

How do we know where we are? How to get there?

What are basic needs and wants?

How do people get goods?

How and why have communities changed over time?

How does *where* we live influence *how* we live?