

2020 New Jersey Student Learning Standard for Social Studies

The Role of Essential Questions

Key essential questions recur throughout the study of history. They provoke inquiry and lead to deeper understanding of the big ideas that enable students to better comprehend how the past connects to the present. Curriculum writers and educators are encouraged to use essential questions (or develop their own) to inform the creation of their social studies curriculum and learning experiences.

Civics, Government, and Human Rights

- How do citizens, civic ideals, and government institutions interact to balance the needs of individuals and the common good?
- How have economic, political, and cultural decisions promoted or prevented the growth of personal freedom, individual responsibility, equality, and respect for human dignity?

Geography, People, and the Environment

- How do physical geography, human geography, and the human environment interact to influence or determine the development of cultures, societies, and nations?

Economics, Innovation, and Technology

- How can individuals, groups, and societies apply economic reasoning to make difficult choices about scarce resources? What are the possible consequences of these decisions for individuals, groups, and societies?
- How have scientific and technological developments over the course of history changed the way people live and economies and governments function?

History, Culture, and Perspectives

- How do our interpretations of past events inform our understanding of cause and effect, and continuity and change, and how do they influence our beliefs and decisions about current public policy issues?
- How can the study of multiple perspectives, beliefs systems, and cultures provide a context for understanding and challenging public actions and decisions in a diverse and interdependent world?