

# Social Studies: What's New?

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## K–9 curriculum

The Social Studies K–9 draft curriculum, posted in 2013, received a great deal of feedback from educators. Most feedback was positive, particularly regarding the building of curriculum competencies around a set of thinking concepts. This expanded focus on developing students' thinking skills was very well received and continues to be the major change in the redesigned curriculum. However, educators also identified some key areas for revision.

First, many middle school teachers expressed concern about the loss of the global citizenship topics in the existing Grade 6 curriculum. Many teachers mentioned that their schools have a variety of successful action projects related to the global citizenship content, which might not be easy to continue if the connections in the redesigned curriculum are not as direct. Similarly, several teachers felt that the draft curriculum had too much of a history focus and not enough content related to current Canadian and world issues. In response to these concerns, the team returned the Grade 6 global issues theme and compressed the historical content.

Another major concern identified was that the intent of some of the topics in the redesigned curriculum was not always clear, especially to people without formal education in history and geography. In order to help clarify these topics for teachers, a large set of Elaborations was developed for both the Content and Curricular Competencies learning standards. The Elaborations provide a number of sample topics and key questions to help teachers when planning units and lessons.

Educators also provided additional suggestions for improving a number of areas of the curriculum, including Aboriginal content, environmental education, and the amount of content related to geography, civics, and economics. To address these suggestions and increase the representation of these topics, numerous additions and revisions were made to both the learning standards and the elaborations.

Many of the topics in the existing Social Studies curriculum are included in the redesigned curriculum. Feedback from many teachers indicated that they felt there were no major issues with the topics in the existing curriculum and that schools and school districts already had a large number of educational resources aligned with the existing curriculum. The development team has tried to respect this feedback as much as possible, and there is a great deal of overlap in topics and grades between the redesigned and existing curriculum.

In addition, the basic content and structure of the Social Studies discipline has remained largely the same. While there is an increased focus on thinking skills, the Social Studies curriculum still focuses largely on topics drawn from history, geography, civics, and economics.

## Proposal for Grade 10–12 curriculum

The Social Studies Grade 10 draft curriculum maintains the K–9 curriculum structure and format and is proposed as the last Social Studies course that all British Columbia students are required to take. The Grade 10 draft curriculum finishes the sequence started in the Grade 7 curriculum and finishes in the present day with issues in modern Canadian and world history.

The Social Studies Grades 11–12 draft curriculum recommends a number of provincial optional curricula and outlines provincially developed courses largely similar to those that are currently available. While the content would vary from course to course, the thinking skills would remain a consistent part of the Curricular Competencies, varying slightly from discipline to discipline.

The proposed Grades 11–12 provincial optional curricula currently include:

- Contemporary First Peoples Issues
- 20th Century World History
- Human Geography
- Physical Geography
- Law Studies
- Social Justice

Additional courses may be added in response to feedback and suggestions from educators. As well, the curriculum proposal supports flexibility for teachers and students by providing a variety of options for creating new courses, through the combination of elements of different provincially developed courses into a new course or the creation of a locally developed course based on a provincial template.

### Discipline-Specific *or* Interdisciplinary Study

