

NINTH – TWELFTH GRADE OVERVIEW

Ninth- through twelfth-grade students are sophisticated learners who are developmentally capable of abstract reasoning, critical thinking, and creative problem solving. At the high school level, a comprehensive curriculum of fundamental social studies content builds on prior knowledge gained in earlier grades to challenge students to be knowledgeable and engaged citizens. The four strands of economics, geography, history, and civics and government are interwoven into the Grades 9-12 social studies program to help students further develop the essential base of knowledge and critical-thinking skills required for responsible civic participation at local, state, and national levels. All social studies content at the high school level is aligned with standards addressed by national social studies organizations.

All Alabama high school students must earn four credits in social studies for graduation. As part of these requirements, students must complete the one-credit World History: 1500 to the Present course, the one-credit United States History I course, the one-credit United States History II course, the half-credit United States Government course, and the half-credit Economics course. Core courses described in this document provide fundamental content to be learned by all high school students that enables them to become responsible citizens and active participants in local, state, national, and global societies. In addition to the courses required for Grades 9-12, local school systems may offer elective social studies courses. These may include, but are not limited to, a study of psychology, sociology, contemporary and geography. Content for four elective courses intended to enrich development of civic responsibility is included in Appendix A of this document.

High school students learn best in an effective instructional environment that provides opportunities for authentic learning through analyzing and debating complex issues, conducting social science research, participating in civic affairs, and developing historical-thinking skills. Students also benefit from differentiated instruction that includes student presentations, use of primary sources, written analyses of information, collaborative group activities, simulations, and interactions with electronic and print media.