

# WISCONSIN ESSENTIAL ELEMENTS

FOR

## Social Studies



WISCONSIN DEPARTMENT OF  
**Public Instruction**

Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction  
Jill K. Underly, PhD, State Superintendent  
Madison, Wisconsin

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**Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction  
125 South Webster Street  
Madison, WI 53703  
(608) 266-8960**

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### **Disclaimer**

The *Wisconsin Essential Elements for Social Studies* were created based on the *Wisconsin Standards for Social Studies* (2018) by Wisconsin social studies and special education educators. The *Wisconsin Essential Elements for Social Studies* were not created nor are they a derivative work of the Dynamic Learning Maps (DLM) Consortium .

## Introduction

All students, including a student with a most significant cognitive disability, deserve and have a right to a quality educational experience, including engagement in social studies. This right includes, to the maximum extent possible, the opportunity to be involved in and meet the same challenging expectations that have been established for all students.

The *Wisconsin Essential Elements for Social Studies* are aligned with college, career, and community ready expectations and include rigorous content and application for students with the most significant cognitive disabilities. These alternate achievement standards are clearly linked to Wisconsin's Academic standards for Social Studies, promote access to the general education curriculum, reflect professional judgement of highest expectation possible and provide current knowledge expected for each level of proficiency.

Social studies is the integrated study of economics, geography, history, political science, and the behavioral sciences of psychology, sociology, and anthropology to promote civic competence. The standards outlined in this document provide an important foundation to prepare students to become engaged, informed participants committed to the ideas and values of our democratic republic, able to apply the skills of inquiry, collaboration, decision making, and problem solving (adapted from the National Council for the Social Studies definition). The Vision for Wisconsin Social Studies was written in 2015 by the State Superintendent's K-12 Social Studies Advisory Committee: Wisconsin students will become civically-engaged problem-solvers who critically examine their roles in local, regional, state, national, and global communities. Through the study and application of the individual disciplines of social studies (behavioral sciences, economics, geography, history, and political science), students become lifelong learners able to collaborate and thrive in our interdependent world.

The *Wisconsin Essential Elements for Social Studies* were written by a committee of educators, professors, community members, advocates, and parents from across the state. This team was tasked with writing alternate achievement standards aligned to the Wisconsin Social Studies Standards.

## **Social Studies Strands**

### **Social Studies Inquiry Practices and Processes**

Advances in human knowledge come about not because people can memorize factoids or are great at filling out worksheets in school; rather, they come about when people ask questions and pursue those questions in reasoned self-critical ways. This is the essence of inquiry, beginning with questions to be answered and the work needed to begin to answer them, and is the reason that the social studies C3 document, developed by 15 professional social studies and content area associations, is built around the “inquiry arc” (developing questions, students learning to use disciplinary tools and concepts, evaluating sources and using evidence, communicating conclusions).<sup>\*</sup> Teaching our social studies content incorporating the inquiry arc offers students the opportunity to investigate questions in a deep and engaging manner, and offers our students the opportunity to work collaboratively, as well as individually, on significant questions within the social studies disciplines. Inquiry can and should be used within all social studies disciplines and, as such, is an “umbrella strand” covering all content strands. Teaching with the inquiry arc is a process that can move from teacher-structured inquiries to guided individual inquiry. The proper use of the inquiry arc within our classrooms, along with other thoughtful social studies strategies, will help our students build the intellectual habits of mind that will be with them long after the content is forgotten. It can create in our students the confidence in their own skills to make sense of an increasingly complex world.

<sup>\*</sup> National Council for the Social Studies, *Social Studies for the Next Generation: Purposes, Practices, and Implications of the College, Career, and Civic Life (C3) Framework for Social Studies State Standards* (Silver Spring, MD: NCSS, 2013).

### **Behavioral Sciences Strand**

Learning about the behavioral sciences helps students understand people in various times and places. By examining cultures, students are able to compare our ways of life and those of other groups of people in the past and present. As citizens, students need to know how institutions are maintained or changed and how they influence individuals, cultures, and societies. Knowledge of the factors that contribute to an individual’s uniqueness is essential to understanding the influence on self and on others.

### **Economics Strand**

Individuals, families, businesses, and governments must make complex economic choices as they decide what goods and services to provide and how to allocate limited resources for distribution and consumption. In a global economy marked by rapid technological change, students must learn how to be better producers, consumers, and economic citizens.

### **Geography Strand**

Students gain geographical perspectives of the world by studying the earth and the interactions of people with places where they live, work, and play. Knowledge of geography helps students to address the various cultural, economic, social, and civic implications of life in earth's many environments.

### **History Strand**

Students need to understand their historical roots and those of others, and how past events have shaped their world. In developing these insights, students must know what life was like in the past and how things change and develop over time. Reconstructing and interpreting historical events provides a needed perspective in addressing the past, the present, and the future.

### **Political Science Strand**

Knowledge about the structures of power, authority, and governance and their evolving functions in contemporary society is essential if young citizens are to develop civic responsibility. Young people become more effective citizens and problem solvers when they know how local, state, and national governments and international organizations function and interact.

## Standards Structure

The *Wisconsin Essential Elements for Social Studies* follow a specific structure.

### Standards Formatting

- Content Area (Strand): History
- Standard: Broad statement that tells what students are expected to know or be able to do
  
- Content areas for social studies in this code structure include:
  - Inq—Inquiry
  - BH—Behavioral Sciences
  - Econ—Economics
  - Geog—Geography
  - Hist—History
  - PS—Political Science

### Content Area: History (Hist)

<b>Wisconsin Standards for Social Studies:</b>
<b>SS.Hist1:</b> Wisconsin students will use historical evidence for determining cause and effect.
<b>Essential Element:</b>
<b>EE.SS.Hist1:</b> Wisconsin students will use historical evidence for determining cause and effect.
<b>Target Level:</b> Wisconsin students will use historical evidence for determining cause and effect.
<b>Precursor Level:</b> Wisconsin students will explain a cause and effect for a given event.
<b>Initial Level:</b> Wisconsin students will identify a cause and effect for a given event.

Levels: Each learning level is aligned to the Essential Element/Alternate Achievement Standard

- **Target level** is the Essential Element/Alternate Achievement standard, which is aligned to the state standard.
- Students who have not yet met the Target level may be at the **Precursor level**, which precedes the Target level.
- Students who have not yet met the Precursor level may be at the **Initial level**.

# Essential Elements for Social Studies (Grades K-12)

## Content Area: Inquiry Practices and Process (Inq)

<b>Wisconsin Standards for Social Studies:</b> SS.Inq1: Wisconsin students will construct meaningful questions that initiate an inquiry.
<b>Essential Element:</b> EE.SS.Inq1: Wisconsin students will construct meaningful questions related to a social studies topic.
<b>Target Level:</b> Wisconsin students will construct meaningful questions related to a social studies topic.
<b>Precursor Level:</b> Wisconsin students will recognize the difference between open- and closed-ended questions, and identify follow-up questions on a social studies topic.
<b>Initial Level:</b> Wisconsin students will develop closed-ended questions on a social studies topic.

## Content Area: Inquiry Practices and Process (Inq)

<b>Wisconsin Standards for Social Studies:</b> SS.Inq2: Wisconsin students will gather and evaluate sources.
<b>Essential Element:</b> EE.SS.Inq2: Wisconsin students will gather and select reliable sources related to a social studies topic or issue.
<b>Target Level:</b> Wisconsin students will gather and select reliable sources related to a social studies topic or issue.
<b>Precursor Level:</b> Wisconsin students will identify what constitutes a reliable source in regards to a social studies topic or issue.
<b>Initial Level:</b> Wisconsin students will identify sources related to a social studies topic or issue.

## Content Area: Inquiry Practices and Process (Inq)

**Wisconsin Standards for Social Studies:**

**SS.Inq3:** Wisconsin students will develop claims using evidence to support reasoning.

**Essential Element:**

**EE.SS.Inq3:** Wisconsin students will develop claims to answer an inquiry question.

**Target Level:** Wisconsin students will develop claims to answer an inquiry question.

**Precursor Level:** Wisconsin students will use multiple pieces of evidence to support their claim (opinion).

**Initial Level:** Wisconsin students will use one piece of evidence to support their claim (opinion).

## Content Area: Inquiry Practices and Process (Inq)

**Wisconsin Standards for Social Studies:**

**SS.Inq4:** Wisconsin students will communicate and critique conclusions.

**Essential Element:**

**EE.SS.Inq4:** Wisconsin students will communicate and critique conclusions of a claim.

**Target Level:** Wisconsin students will communicate and critique conclusions of a claim.

**Precursor Level:** Wisconsin students will explore strengths and weaknesses of a claim.

**Initial Level:** Wisconsin students will communicate conclusions of a claim.

## Content Area: Inquiry Practices and Process (Inq)

**Wisconsin Standards for Social Studies:**

**SS.Inq5:** Wisconsin students will be civically engaged.

**Essential Element:**

**EE.SS.Inq5:** Wisconsin students will be civically engaged.

**Target Level:** Wisconsin students will be civically engaged.

**Precursor Level:** Wisconsin students will identify potential solutions to issues of importance.

**Initial Level:** Wisconsin students will identify issues of importance.



## Content Area: Behavioral Science (BH)

### Wisconsin Standards for Social Studies

**SS.BH1:** Wisconsin students will examine individual cognition, perception, behavior, and identity (Psychology).

### Essential Element:

**EE.SS.BH1:** Wisconsin students will examine individual learning, perception, behavior, and identity (Psychology).

**Target Level:** Wisconsin students will examine individual learning, perception, behavior, and identity (Psychology).

**Precursor Level:** Wisconsin students will examine biological and environmental factors that influence a person's perception and identity.

**Initial Level:** Wisconsin students will examine a person's learning, behavior, or identity.

## Content Area: Behavioral Science (BH)

### Wisconsin Standards for Social Studies

**SS.BH2:** Wisconsin students will investigate and interpret interactions between individuals and groups (Sociology).

### Essential Element:

**EE.SS.BH2:** Wisconsin students will investigate interactions between individuals and groups (Sociology).

**Target Level:** Wisconsin students will investigate interactions between individuals and groups (Sociology).

**Precursor Level:** Wisconsin students will identify examples of cultural expression.

**Initial Level:** Wisconsin students will compare and contrast different groups of people.

## Content Area: Behavioral Science (BH)

### Wisconsin Standards for Social Studies

**SS.BH3:** Wisconsin students will assess the role that human behavior and cultures play in the development of social endeavors (Anthropology).

#### Essential Element:

**EE.SS.BH3:** Wisconsin students will examine how human behavior and cultures can influence people, events, and other cultures (Anthropology).

**Target Level:** Wisconsin students will examine how human behavior and cultures can influence people, events, and other cultures (Anthropology).

**Precursor Level:** Wisconsin students will examine how human behavior and cultures can influence people, events, or other cultures.

**Initial Level:** Wisconsin students will explore how human behavior and cultures can influence people.

### Wisconsin Standards for Social Studies

**SS.BH4:** Wisconsin students will examine the progression of specific forms of technology and their influence within various societies.

#### Essential Element:

**EE.SS.BH4:** Wisconsin students will examine the progression of specific forms of technology and their influence within various societies or cultures.

**Target Level:** Wisconsin students will examine the progression of specific forms of technology and their influence within various societies or cultures.

**Precursor Level:** Wisconsin students will examine the influence of a given form of technology within various societies or cultures.

**Initial Level:** Wisconsin students will explore given technologies and identify their intended purposes in relation to how it assists them.

## Content Area: Economics (Econ)

<b>Wisconsin Standards for Social Studies</b> <b>SS:Econ1:</b> Wisconsin students use economic reasoning to understand issues.
<b>Essential Element:</b> <b>EE.SS.Econ1:</b> Wisconsin students use economic reasoning to understand issues.
<b>Target Level:</b> Wisconsin students use economic reasoning to understand issues.
<b>Precursor Level:</b> Wisconsin students will identify how costs, benefits, and incentives affect decision-making.
<b>Initial Level:</b> Wisconsin students will differentiate between a want and a need, and provide an example of an opportunity cost.

## Content Area: Economics (Econ)

<b>Wisconsin Standards for Social Studies</b> <b>SS.Econ2:</b> Wisconsin students will analyze how decisions are made and interactions occur among individuals, households, and firms/businesses (Microeconomics).
<b>Essential Element:</b> <b>EE.SS.Econ2:</b> Wisconsin students will understand how decisions are made and interactions occur among consumers (i.e., individuals and households) and producers (firms/businesses)(Microeconomics).
<b>Target Level:</b> Wisconsin students will understand how decisions are made and interactions occur among consumers (i.e., individuals and households) and producers (firms/businesses)(Microeconomics).
<b>Precursor Level:</b> Wisconsin students will differentiate between demand and supply, and identify the factors of production.
<b>Initial Level:</b> Wisconsin students will identify the relationship between a consumer and producer and identify products that consumers would receive from a given producer.

## Content Area: Economics (Econ)

### Wisconsin Standards for Social Studies

**SS.Econ3:** Wisconsin students will analyze how an economy functions as a whole (Macroeconomics).

### Essential Element:

**EE.SS.Econ3:** Wisconsin students will identify how an economy functions as a whole (Macroeconomics).

**Target Level:** Wisconsin students will identify how an economy functions as a whole (Macroeconomics).

**Precursor Level:** Wisconsin students will identify how the economy can affect people in both positive and negative ways.

**Initial Level:** Wisconsin students will recognize that prices change over time and explore the value of saving money as it relates to changes in the economy as a whole.

## Content Area: Economics (Econ)

### Wisconsin Standards for Social Studies

**SS.Econ4:** Wisconsin students will evaluate government decisions and their impact on individuals, businesses, markets, and resources (Role of Government).

### Essential Element:

**EE.SS.Econ4:** Wisconsin students will identify government decisions and their impact on individuals, businesses, markets, and resources (Role of Government).

**Target Level:** Wisconsin students will identify government decisions and their impact on individuals, businesses, markets, and resources (Role of Government).

**Precursor Level:** Wisconsin students will identify how economic policies and government decisions affect others.

**Initial Level:** Wisconsin students will identify how economic policies affect their individual or families' lives.

## Content Area: Geography (Geog)

### Wisconsin Standards for Social Studies

**SS.Geog1:** Wisconsin students will use geographic tools and ways of thinking to analyze the world.

#### Essential Element:

**EE.SS.Geog1:** Wisconsin students will use geographic tools and ways of thinking to explore the world.

**Target Level:** Wisconsin students will use geographic tools and ways of thinking to explore the world.

**Precursor Level:** Wisconsin students will use geographic tools and identify geographic ways of thinking to explore the world.

**Initial Level:** Wisconsin students will explore the use of geographic tools to explore the world.

## Content Area: Geography (Geog)

### Wisconsin Standards for Social Studies

**SS.Geog2:** Wisconsin students will analyze human movement and population patterns.

#### Essential Element:

**EE.SS.Geog2:** Wisconsin students will explore and identify human movement and population patterns.

**Target Level:** Wisconsin students will explore and identify human movement and population patterns.

**Precursor Level:** Wisconsin students will identify patterns of migration and explore population distribution patterns.

**Initial Level:** Wisconsin students will explore the movement of people.

## Content Area: Geography (Geog)

### Wisconsin Standards for Social Studies

**SS.Geog3:** Wisconsin students will examine the impacts of global interconnections and relationships.

#### Essential Element:

**EE.SS.Geog3:** Wisconsin students will identify the effects of global distribution of resources and geographic networks.

**Target Level:** Wisconsin students will identify the effects of global distribution of resources and geographic networks.

**Precursor Level:** Wisconsin students will identify how they access resources and the social and economic inter-relationships between states, regions, or countries.

**Initial Level:** Wisconsin students will identify a renewable resource and ways that people, things, and ideas move across spaces.

## Content Area: Geography (Geog)

### Wisconsin Standards for Social Studies

**SS.Geog4:** Wisconsin students will evaluate the relationship between identity and place.

#### Essential Element:

**EE.SS.Geog4:** Wisconsin students will examine the relationship between identity and place.

**Target Level:** Wisconsin students will examine the relationship between identity and place.

**Precursor Level:** Wisconsin students will identify how the human characteristics of a place affect the people who live there.

**Initial Level:** Wisconsin students will identify how the physical characteristics of a place affect the people who live there.

## Content Area: Geography (Geog)

### Wisconsin Standards for Social Studies

**SS.Geog5:** Wisconsin students will evaluate the relationship between humans and the environment.

### Essential Element:

**EE.SS.Geog5:** Wisconsin students will examine the relationships between humans and the environment.

**Target Level:** Wisconsin students will examine the relationships between humans and the environment.

**Precursor Level:** Wisconsin students will identify unintentional (positive and negative) effects of human actions on our natural resources and physical environment.

**Initial Level:** Wisconsin students will identify intentional (positive or negative) effects of human actions on our natural resources and physical environment.

## Content Area: History (Hist)

**Wisconsin Standards for Social Studies:**

**SS.Hist1:** Wisconsin students will use historical evidence for determining cause and effect.

**Essential Element:**

**EE.SS.Hist1:** Wisconsin students will use historical evidence for determining cause and effect.

**Target Level:** Wisconsin students will use historical evidence for determining cause and effect.

**Precursor Level:** Wisconsin students will explain a cause and effect for a given event.

**Initial Level:** Wisconsin students will identify a cause and effect for a given event.

## Content Area: History (Hist)

**Wisconsin Standards for Social Studies:**

**SS.Hist2:** Wisconsin students will analyze, recognize, and evaluate patterns of continuity and change over time and contextualization of historical events.

**Essential Element:**

**EE.SS.Hist2:** Wisconsin students will recognize patterns of continuity and change over time, and contextualization of historical events.

**Target Level:** Wisconsin students will recognize patterns of continuity and change over time, and contextualization of historical events.

**Precursor Level:** Wisconsin students will identify patterns of continuity and change over time, and identify the context of a given historical event.

**Initial Level:** Wisconsin students will explore patterns of continuity and change over time, and identify the context of a given historical event.



## Content Area: History (Hist)

**Wisconsin Standards for Social Studies:**

**SS.Hist3: Wisconsin students will connect past events, people, and ideas to the present; use different perspectives to draw conclusions; and suggest current implications.**

**Essential Element:**

**EE.SS.Hist3:** Wisconsin students will connect historical events, people, and ideas to the present, identify different perspectives; and identify current implications.

**Target Level:** Wisconsin students will connect historical events, people, and ideas to the present, identify different perspectives; and identify current implications.

**Precursor Level:** Wisconsin students will identify different historical perspectives of a given event and identify an effect of a given historical event on the lives of other people living in the present.

**Initial Level:** Wisconsin students will explore historical people or events and identify how the person or event had an impact on their own life.

## Content Area: History (Hist)

**Wisconsin Standards for Social Studies:**

**SS.Hist4: Wisconsin students will evaluate a variety of primary and secondary sources to interpret the historical context, intended audience, purpose, and/or author's point of view (Historical Methodology).**

**Essential Element:**

**EE.SS.Hist4:** Wisconsin students will examine a variety of primary and secondary sources to identify the historical context, intended audience, purpose, and/or author's point of view (Historical Methodology).

**Target Level:** Wisconsin students will examine a variety of primary and secondary sources to identify the historical context, intended audience, purpose, and/or author's point of view (Historical Methodology).

**Precursor Level:** Wisconsin students will differentiate between primary and secondary sources and identify the intended audience, purpose, and point of view (POV) of a given primary or secondary source.

**Initial Level:** Wisconsin students will identify the intended audience and author's point of view of a given primary source.

## Content Area: Political Science (PS)

<b>Wisconsin Standards for Social Studies</b> SS.PS1: Wisconsin students will identify and analyze democratic principles and ideals.
<b>Essential Element:</b> EE.SS.PS1: Wisconsin students will identify democratic principles and ideals.
<b>Target Level:</b> Wisconsin students will identify democratic principles and ideals.
<b>Precursor Level:</b> Wisconsin students will explain the importance of a rule or law.
<b>Initial Level:</b> Wisconsin students will identify rules or laws.

## Content Area: Political Science (PS)

<b>Wisconsin Standards for Social Studies</b> SS.PS2: Wisconsin students will examine and interpret rights, privileges, and responsibilities in society.
<b>Essential Element:</b> EE.SS.PS2: Wisconsin students will identify differences between a right, a responsibility, and a privilege.
<b>Target Level:</b> Wisconsin students will identify differences between a right, a responsibility, and a privilege.
<b>Precursor Level:</b> Wisconsin students will investigate the rights, privileges and responsibilities in a society.
<b>Initial Level:</b> Wisconsin students will identify basic rights and responsibilities of being a good community member.

## Content Area: Political Science (PS)

<b>Wisconsin Standards for Social Studies</b> <b>SS.PS3:</b> Wisconsin students will analyze and evaluate the powers and processes of political and civic institutions.
<b>Essential Element:</b> <b>EE.SS.PS3:</b> Wisconsin students will identify the roles and processes of political and civic institutions.
<b>Target Level:</b> Wisconsin students will identify the roles and processes of political and civic institutions
<b>Precursor Level:</b> Wisconsin students will explore federalism, political parties, and identify civic institutions.
<b>Initial Level:</b> Wisconsin students will explore the role people have in elections, the effect of media on elections, and the branches and powers of government.

## Content Area: Political Science (PS)

<b>Wisconsin Standards for Social Studies</b> <b>SS.PS4:</b> Wisconsin students will develop and employ skills for civic literacy.
<b>Essential Element:</b> <b>EE.SS.PS4:</b> Wisconsin students will develop and employ skills for civic literacy.
<b>Target Level:</b> Wisconsin students will develop and employ skills for civic literacy.
<b>Precursor Level:</b> Wisconsin students will identify a credible source and provide examples of diplomacy.
<b>Initial Level:</b> Wisconsin students will identify relevant information from provided credible sources to a topic, and identify examples of a current or historic compromise.