

Georgia Performance Standards for Social Studies

Frequently Asked Questions Regarding the DOE Curriculum Maps

(Answers by Dr. Bill Cranshaw, Social Studies Program Manager and
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- **If the state is creating curriculum maps, why should systems make their own?**
More important than the end product is the process used to create the curriculum maps. The posted maps are intended to be guides and examples. No one map will satisfy the needs and desires of every teacher and if changes need to be made, it is necessary to know how to go about making those changes. Think of it like a car. When something on a car breaks, most people have to take it to a specialist or mechanic because they don't know how to correct the problem or do not have the materials to correct it. If you have no experience putting together the curriculum map, selecting the themes, or organizing the standards, it will be more difficult to manipulate or change items. The statewide GPS training for Social Studies has focused on this process and the DOE is here to help teachers through this process.
- **Do we have to use the Social Studies Curriculum Maps posted to georgiastandards.org?**
No. They are simply provided as guides or examples.
- **Can I keep the same themes, but change the enduring understanding?**
Yes. The enduring understandings currently attached to each theme are just one example. One theme can literally have dozens of enduring understandings. Keep in mind that enduring understandings are to be broad, applicable to multiple units and courses, and written in present tense. It is recommended that the wording of the enduring understanding remain constant throughout a course. It is beneficial if it can remain very similar across courses as well.
- **Are the curriculum maps correlated to the state mandated tests?**
State tests (CRCT, EOCT, GHSGT) in Social Studies are bound solely to the GPS. The curriculum maps provide an organizational method for the GPS. The balanced assessment plan and the performance tasks in the Frameworks are not assessable on state tests.
- **If I use your maps will I have higher test scores?**
There are many factors that go into student achievement. Simply organizing your course in a particular way is not a guarantee of higher test scores. What you should notice, if the themes-based approach is used correctly, is greater student involvement and a greater understanding of Social Studies in general. When these two things improve, achievement is likely to follow.
- **I like your ideas for organization, but my system (or district) has a different approach, what can I do?**
The DOE cannot change any planning or organizational method used by systems. However, ANY course map can be taught conceptually. We can help teachers in this situation choose themes and offer guidance for how to incorporate themes.

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- **How many themes should I have for my course?**
There is no set number. Too many themes means an overly complex organizational design that may be confusing for students. Too few themes leads to forcing some standards or elements into places they don't really fit. We have courses that range from four (Economics) to ten (US History). It depends on the course, the comfort level of the teacher, and possibly the type of scheduling the course is being taught around.
- **Are your curriculum maps designed for block or traditional schedules?**
The focus of the curriculum maps is on clear, logical organization of the standards and elements. Most maps should work with either schedule with some modifications.