

Unit Overview: Californians and Government

California History-Social Science Grade 4, Standard 5: Students understand the structures, functions, and powers of the local, state, and federal governments as described in the U.S. Constitution.

1. Discuss what the U.S. Constitution is and why it is important (i.e., a written document that defines the structure and purpose of the U.S. government and describes the shared powers of federal, state, and local governments).
2. Understand the purpose of the California Constitution, its key principles, and its relationship to the U.S. Constitution.
3. Describe the similarities (e.g., written documents, rule of law, consent of the governed, three separate branches) and differences (e.g., scope of jurisdiction, limits on government powers, use of the military) among federal, state, and local governments.
4. Explain the structures and functions of state governments, including the roles and responsibilities of their elected officials.
5. Describe the components of California’s governance structure (e.g., cities and towns, Indian rancherias and reservations, counties, school districts).

Historical and Social Sciences Analysis Skills

Chronological and Spatial Thinking

- Students place key events and people of the historical era they are studying in a chronological sequence and within a spatial context...

Research, Evidence, and Point of View

- Students differentiate between primary and secondary sources.
- Students pose relevant questions about events they encounter in historical documents...

Historical Interpretation

- Students conduct cost-benefit analyses of historical and current events.

Focus Questions:

Lesson 1	What is the basic structure of the United States Government? What is the U.S. Constitution and why it is important? What are the powers of the federal, state and local governments?
Lesson 2	What is the purpose of the California Constitution? What are the basic structures and functions of California’s Government?
Lesson 3	Why is civic participation an important aspect of government? What can we do to participate in our local community?

Assessment: Prompts and Rubrics

Standard	Lesson	Title	Teacher Directions	Handout for students with the prompt and rubric
4.5	1	Summary Writing: Structures, Functions and Powers Government	pages 4-5	page 9, Handout # 1.3
4.5	2	Compare and Contrast the United States Constitution and the California State Constitution – a Three Tab Booklet	page 12-13	page 15, Handout # 2.2
4.5	3	Civic Participation Project	pages 21-22	page 25, Handout # 3.3

Additional assessments for the unit include:

Lesson 1

- Work in a group to complete the “Who Makes the Rules” matrix (Handout #1.1)
- Construct a layered look book or a circle book and on each layer or circle, identify the function of one branch of government and other facts learned about that branch.
- Sort phrases related to government into local, state, and national categories (Handout #1.2)

Lesson 2

- Read the textbook selection about California’s Constitution and explain the purpose of the state constitution.
- Working in a group, create a list of the functions of one branch of state government and present the section as others take notes to complete the *California State Government Retrieval Chart* (Handout #2.1).
- Research the symbols of California and complete the *Symbols of California* chart (Handout #2.3).
- Participate in a choral reading of the state song, *I Love You California* (Handout # 2.4).

Lesson 3

- Read the textbook selection about California’s Constitution and explain the purpose of the state constitution.
- Participate in a Neighborhood Problem simulation and complete a *Neighborhood Problem Planning Sheet* (Handout #3.1) Activity # 1
- Analyze the costs and benefits for the budget of “your town” and make an economic decision. (Activities # 3 and #4)
- Explain why civic participation is an important aspect of government. Activities #1-5

Resources

In this unit, reference is made to specific page numbers in Harcourt’s *Reflections: California A Changing State*. The same activities and strategies may be completed using any of the state-adopted social studies textbooks.

Literacy Links: The following skills from the *Grade 4 English-Language Arts Content Standards for California Public Schools* are applied in this unit:

Reading

- Identify structural patterns found in informational text (e.g., summarize) to strengthen comprehension.
- Use appropriate strategies when reading for different purposes (e.g., full comprehension, location of information, personal enjoyment).
- Make and confirm predictions about text by using prior knowledge and ideas presented in the text itself, including illustrations, titles, topic sentences, important words, and foreshadowing clues.
- Evaluate new information and hypotheses by testing them against known information and ideas.
- Compare and contrast information on the same topic after reading several passages or articles.
- Identify the main idea and supporting details
- Compare and contrast information about the structures of government and the levels of government after reading several passages or articles.
- Engage in research using a variety of print and internet resources
- Develop and use new academic content-specific vocabulary

Writing

Research

- Quote or paraphrase information sources...
- Take notes and record information based on research on to a retrieval chart
- Locate information in reference texts by using organizational features (e.g., prefaces, appendixes).
- Use various reference materials (e.g., reference books, encyclopedia, online information) as an aid to writing.

Speaking

Organization and Delivery of Oral Communication

- Present effective introductions and conclusions that guide and inform the listener's understanding of important ideas and evidence.
- Use traditional structures for conveying information
- Emphasize points in ways that help the listener or viewer to follow important ideas and concepts.
- Use details, examples... to explain or clarify information.
- Use volume, pitch, phrasing, pace, modulation, and gestures appropriately to enhance meaning.