

# SCHOOL DISTRICT OF THE CHATHAMS

## Social Studies

Grade 8

Full Year

### Course Overview

Focused on the goal of developing informed and engaged citizens, the 8<sup>th</sup> grade Social Studies course, Civics, inspires student interest through active learning activities applied to “real world” issues in order to develop a broad understanding of fundamental concepts of democracy and an appreciation of the responsibilities of citizenship in a national and global context.

8<sup>th</sup> Grade Civics builds understandings of the origins, development and exercise of power and authority in the United States. The course introduces students to the principles, functions, and organization of various levels of government in the United States. This includes the origins of the American political system; the roles, rights, responsibilities of United States citizens; and methods of active citizen participation. Particular attention is paid to the relationships, both individual and global, that drive public policy and the manner in which public opinion develops and changes within the 21<sup>st</sup> century marketplace of ideas.

Students investigate the debates of the Constitutional Convention to explore our country’s perennial struggle to provide for the common good while protecting the rights of individuals. Likewise, they study how fundamental civil rights outlined in the Bill of Rights are applied by the justice system and the Supreme Court in landmark decisions. Students develop their understanding of civil liberties in authentic learning experiences such as formal debates and mock trials.

Civics also promotes “civic” literacy through investigations of the operational framework of our democracy as well as the development of public opinion and the role it plays in the political process. Students develop and exercise critical thinking skills while they view issues from multiple perspectives, and disassemble strategies employed by politicians, political campaigns, interest groups and individuals to exercise power and authority. By developing their ability to ask informed questions, and build reasoned judgements based in fact or well-grounded theory, students recognize the importance of active citizenship, the value of critical thinking, and their own essential role in public affairs.

### New Jersey Student Learning Standards

The New Jersey Student Learning Standards (NJSLS) can be located at [www.nj.gov/education/cccs/2020/](http://www.nj.gov/education/cccs/2020/).

#### Revolution and the New Nation (1754–1820s)

6.1.8.CivicsPI.3.a: Cite evidence to evaluate the extent to which the leadership and decisions of early administrations of the national government met the goals established in the Constitution.

6.1.8.CivicsPI.3.b: Evaluate the effectiveness of the fundamental principles of the Constitution (i.e., consent of the governed, rule of law, federalism, limited government, separation of powers, checks and balances, and individual rights) in establishing a federal government that allows for growth and change over time.

6.1.8.CivicsPI.3.c: Distinguish the powers and responsibilities of citizens, political parties, interest groups, and the media in a variety of governmental and nongovernmental contexts.

- 6.1.8.CivicsPI.3.d: Use data and other evidence to determine the extent to which demographics influenced the debate on representation in Congress and federalism by examining the New Jersey and Virginia plans.
- 6.1.8.CivicsPD.3.a: Cite evidence to determine the role that compromise played in the creation and adoption of the Constitution and Bill of Rights.
- 6.1.8.CivicsDP.3.a: Use primary and secondary sources to assess whether or not the ideals found in the Declaration of Independence were fulfilled for women, African Americans, and Native Americans during this time period.
- 6.1.8.CivicsHR.3.a: Explain how and why constitutional civil liberties were impacted by acts of government during the Early Republic (i.e., Alien and Sedition Acts).
- 6.1.8.CivicsHR.3.b: Evaluate the impact of the institution of slavery on the political and economic expansion of the United States.
- 6.1.8.CivicsHR.3.c: Construct an argument to explain how the expansion of slavery violated human rights and contradicted American ideals.
- 6.1.8.EconET.3.a: Identify the effect of inflation and debt on the American people and evaluate the policies of state and national governments during this time.
- 6.1.8.HistoryCC.3.b: Explain how political parties were formed and continue to be shaped by differing perspectives regarding the role and power of federal government.
- 6.1.8.HistoryCC.3.d: Compare and contrast the Articles of Confederation and the United States Constitution in terms of the decision-making powers of national government.
- 6.1.8.HistoryUP.3.a: Use primary sources as evidence to explain why the Declaration of Independence was written and how its key principles evolved to become unifying ideas of American democracy.

#### Era 5. Civil War and Reconstruction (1850–1877)

- 6.1.8.HistoryUP.5.a: Analyze the effectiveness of the 13th, 14th, and 15th Amendments to the United States Constitution from multiple perspectives.

#### Civics, Government, and Human Rights

- 6.3.8.CivicsPI.1: Evaluate, take, and defend a position on why government is necessary, and the purposes government should serve.
- 6.3.8.CivicsPI.2: Evaluate the extent to which different forms of government reflect the history and values of various societies (e.g., monarchy, democracy, republic, dictatorship).
- 6.3.8.CivicsPI.3: Use a variety of sources from multiple perspectives to examine the role of individuals, political parties, interest groups, and the media in a local or global issue and share this information with a governmental or nongovernmental organization as a way to gain support for addressing the issue.
- 6.3.8.CivicsPI.4: Investigate the roles of political, civil, and economic organizations in shaping people's lives and share this information with individuals who might benefit from this information.
- 6.3.8.CivicsPD.1: Deliberate on a public issue affecting an upcoming election, consider opposing arguments, and develop a reasoned conclusion.
- 6.3.8.CivicsPD.2: Propose and defend a position regarding a public policy issue at the appropriate local, state, or national level.
- 6.3.8.CivicsPD.3: Construct a claim as to why it is important for democracy that individuals are informed by facts, aware of diverse viewpoints, and willing to take action on public issues.
- 6.3.8.CivicsDP.1: Identify an issue of inequality, develop multiple solutions, and communicate the best one to an appropriate government body.
- 6.3.8.CivicsDP.2: Make a claim based on evidence to determine the extent and the limitations of First Amendment rights (e.g., U.S. Supreme Court decisions).
- 6.3.8.CivicsDP.3: Use historical case studies and current events to explain why due process is essential for the protection of individual rights and maintenance of limited government.
- 6.3.8.CivicsPR.1: Analyze primary sources to explain how democratic ideas in the United States developed from the historical experiences of ancient societies, England, and the North American colonies.

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- 6.3.8.CivicsPR.2: Evaluate the effectiveness of the fundamental principles of the Constitution (i.e., consent of the governed, rule of law, federalism, limited government, separation of powers, checks and balances, and individual rights) in establishing a federal government that allows for growth and change over time.
- 6.3.8.CivicsPR.3: Take a position on an issue in which fundamental ideals and principles are in conflict (e.g., liberty, equality).
- 6.3.8.CivicsPR.4: Use evidence and quantitative data to propose or defend a public policy related to climate change.
- 6.3.8.CivicsPR.5: Engage in simulated democratic processes (e.g., legislative hearings, judicial proceedings, elections) to understand how conflicting points of view are addressed in a democratic society.
- 6.3.8.CivicsPR.6: Seek the perspectives of multiple stakeholders with diverse points of view regarding a local budget issue and take a position on proposed policy.
- 6.3.8.CivicsPR.7: Compare how ideas become laws at the local, state, and national level
- 6.3.8.CivicsHR.1: Construct an argument as to the source of human rights and how they are best protected.

### Economics, Innovation, and Technology

- 6.3.8.EconET.1: Using quantitative data, evaluate the opportunity cost of a proposed economic action, and take a position and support it (e.g., healthcare, education, transportation).
- 6.3.8.EconET.2: Assess the impact of government incentives and disincentives on the economy (e.g., patents, protection of private property, taxes).

### Technology Standards

- 9.4.8.IML.1: Critically curate multiple resources to assess the credibility of sources when searching for information.
- 9.4.8.IML.2: Identify specific examples of distortion, exaggeration, or misrepresentation of information.
- 9.4.8.IML.3: Create a digital visualization that effectively communicates a data set using formatting techniques such as form, position, size, color, movement, and spatial grouping
- 9.4.8.IML.7: Use information from a variety of sources, contexts, disciplines, and cultures for a specific purpose
- 9.4.8.IML.12: Use relevant tools to produce, publish, and deliver information supported with evidence for an authentic audience.
- 9.4.8.IML.13: Identify the impact of the creator on the content, production, and delivery of information.
- 9.4.8.IML.14: Analyze the role of media in delivering cultural, political, and other societal messages.
- 9.4.8.IML.15: Explain ways that individuals may experience the same media message differently

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- 9.1.8.CR.4: Examine the implications of legal and ethical behaviors when making financial decisions.
- 9.1.8.EG.5: Interpret how changing economic and societal needs influence employment trends and future education.
- 9.1.8.EG.6: Explain the economic principle of the circular flow of money in different situations regarding buying products or services from a local or national business and buying imported or domestic goods.
- 9.1.8.EG.8: Analyze the impact of currency rates over a period of time and the impact on trade, employment, and income.
- 9.4.8.GCA.1: Model how to navigate cultural differences with sensitivity and respect (e.g., 1.5.8.C1a).
- 9.4.8.GCA.2: Demonstrate openness to diverse ideas and perspectives through active discussions to achieve a group goal.
- 9.4.8.CI.3: Examine challenges that may exist in the adoption of new ideas

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9.4.8.CT.3: Compare past problem-solving solutions to local, national, or global issues and analyze the factors that led to a positive or negative outcome.

### **Career Ready Practice**

CRP5. Consider the environmental, social and economic impacts of decisions.

CRP6. Demonstrate creativity and innovation.

CRP8. Utilize critical thinking to make sense of problems and persevere in solving them.

CRP11. Use technology to enhance productivity increase collaboration and communicate effectively.

CRP12. Work productively in teams while using cultural/global competence.

### **Interdisciplinary Connections**

#### **English Language Arts**

- RI.8.1. Cite the textual evidence and make relevant connections that most strongly supports an analysis of what the text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text.
- RI.8.4. Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in a text, including figurative, connotative, and technical meanings; analyze the impact of specific word choices on meaning and tone, including analogies or allusions to other texts.
- RH.6-8.1. Cite specific textual evidence to support analysis of primary and secondary sources.
- RH.6-8.2. Determine the central ideas or information of a primary or secondary source; provide an accurate summary of the source distinct from prior knowledge or opinions.
- RH.6-8.3. Identify key steps in a text's description of a process related to history/social studies (e.g., how a bill becomes law, how interest rates are raised or lowered).
- RH.6-8.4. Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in a text, including vocabulary specific to domains related to history/social studies.
- RH.6-8.5. Describe how a text presents information (e.g., sequentially, comparatively, causally).
- RH.6-8.6. Identify aspects of a text that reveal an author's point of view or purpose (e.g., loaded language, inclusion or avoidance of particular facts).
- RH.6-8.7. Integrate visual information (e.g., in charts, graphs, photographs, videos, or maps) with other information in print and digital texts.
- RH.6-8.8. Distinguish among fact, opinion, and reasoned judgment in a text.
- RH.6-8.9. Analyze the relationship between a primary and secondary source on the same topic.
- RH.6-8.10. By the end of grade 8, read and comprehend history/social studies texts in the grades 6-8 text complexity band independently and proficiently.
- W.8.1. Write arguments to support claims with clear reasons and relevant evidence.
  - A. Introduce claim(s), acknowledge and distinguish the claim(s) from alternate or opposing claims, and organize the reasons and evidence logically.
  - B. Support claim(s) with logical reasoning and relevant evidence, using accurate, credible sources and demonstrating an understanding of the topic or text.
  - C. Use words, phrases, and clauses to create cohesion and clarify the relationships among claim(s), counterclaims, reasons, and evidence.
  - D. Establish and maintain a formal style.
  - E. Provide a concluding statement or section that follows from and supports the argument presented.
- W.8.2. Write informative/explanatory texts to examine a topic and convey ideas, concepts, and information through the selection, organization, and analysis of relevant content.
  - A. Introduce a topic and organize ideas, concepts, and information, using text structures (e.g., definition, classification, comparison/contrast, cause/effect, etc.) and text features (e.g., headings, graphics, and multimedia).
  - B. Develop the topic with relevant, well-chosen facts, definitions, concrete details, quotations, or other information and examples.

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- C. Use appropriate and varied transitions to create cohesion and clarify the relationships among ideas and concepts.
- D. Use precise language and domain-specific vocabulary to inform about or explain the topic.
- E. Establish and maintain a formal style/academic style, approach, and form.
- F. Provide a concluding statement or section that follows from and supports the information or explanation presented.
- SL.8.1. Engage effectively in a range of collaborative discussions (one-on-one, in groups, and teacher-led) with diverse partners on grade 8 topics, texts, and issues, building on others' ideas and expressing their own clearly.
  - A. Come to discussions prepared, having read or researched material under study; explicitly draw on that preparation by referring to evidence on the topic, text, or issue to probe and reflect on ideas under discussion.
  - B. Follow rules for collegial discussions and decision-making, track progress toward specific goals and deadlines, and define individual roles as needed.
  - C. Pose questions that connect the ideas of several speakers and respond to others' questions and comments with relevant evidence, observations, and ideas.
  - D. Acknowledge new information expressed by others, and, when warranted, qualify or justify their own views in light of the evidence presented.
- SL.8.4. Present claims and findings, emphasizing salient points in a focused, coherent manner with relevant evidence, sound valid reasoning, and well-chosen details; use appropriate eye contact, adequate volume, and clear pronunciation.
- SL.8.5. Integrate multimedia and visual displays into presentations to clarify information, strengthen claims and evidence, and add interest.

### Computer Science and Design Thinking

- 8.1.5.DA.1: Collect, organize, and display data in order to highlight relationships or support a claim.
- 8.1.5.DA.3: Organize and present collected data visually to communicate insights gained from different views of the data
- 8.1.5.DA.5: Propose cause and effect relationships, predict outcomes, or communicate ideas using data.

<b>Units of Study</b>
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#### Course Essential Questions:

- How does perspective shape what citizens consider the most valuable rights and responsibilities of citizenship?
- How should citizens determine the best way to provide for the common good while protecting the rights of individuals?
- How can examining many different viewpoints from individuals, groups and people of various cultural and socio-economic backgrounds help us explain the actions of others and better understand ourselves?
- How important is trust and tolerance in an open and free society? How is trust threatened and what thoughts, words and actions promote trust?
- In what ways are the strengths and challenges faced by our society and system of government the same and different from others around the world?

Unit 1: Power, Authority & Government (~22 classes)

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- How does an exploration of the differences between power and authority help build an understanding of how people operate in groups?
- How should we determine whether the benefits of a form of government are worth its costs?
- How accurate are the labels used to identify different forms of government?
- How do groups and institutions get formed and how do they both change and stay the same over time?
- How do individuals change and get changed by groups and institutions?
- Why are there disagreements within and among states, nations and governments?
- How does perspective influence how a citizen evaluates the effectiveness of government?
- What is an “active citizen” and how can one make government more effective?

#### Unit 2: Civics Literacy (*~24 classes*)

- How can our understanding of the techniques used by speakers, writers, and content creators help us improve ourselves, our society and our government?
- What roles do commercial and private media play in shaping people’s understandings of people, events, ideas, society and government?
- What are the most effective tools and techniques for accessing information, verifying its accuracy and determining its usefulness?
- How can we be more certain of what we know about society, economics, public opinion and government? Why is that important?
- Why are logical fallacies, misinformation, and disinformation so commonplace in public and private conversations about society and government?
- What is public opinion and why is it important? How is it measured?

#### Unit 3: Knowing and Understanding the Constitution (*~22 classes*)

- How are the challenges faced by the founding generation similar to and different from the challenges we face today? Is the Constitution adequate to meet today’s challenges?
- How are principles expressed in the foundational documents of the United States reflected in its form of government?
- Do the checks and balances devised by the founders of the Constitution provide an adequate balance of power in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century?
- What elements of the Constitution need to be flexible to adapt to different time periods and which should never change?
- Should the implied powers of the Constitution government be interpreted broadly or narrowly? Why?
- How does each branch of government impact the lives of citizens?

#### Unit 4: Political Ecosystem (*~22 classes*)

- How do elected officials and their staff, government agencies, interest groups, citizens organizations, lobbyists, and corporate media interact in complex relationships of competition and mutual dependence like living organisms in an ecological ecosystem?
- What is the relationship between lobbyists, political parties, and the government? Which plays the most influential role in making decisions and causing change?
- How do individuals, groups, corporations, governments and agencies affect change?
- How do political parties bring people together and drive them apart? What purpose do they serve? Are they necessary?
- How and why do political parties change over time?
- What role do economic forces play within the political ecosystem?

#### Unit 5: State and Local Government (*~22 classes*)

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- What level of government has the greatest influence on people's lives?
- Where does the power of the federal government end and the power of state government begin?
- In what ways can the decisions of state and local governments impact citizens' lives directly?
- What is the purpose of having different levels of government?
- How do state and local governments operate?

#### Unit 6: Civil Liberties (~22 classes)

- What are the best ways to balance individual rights with the common good?
- How should individuals demonstrate responsible citizenship?
- How important is civic engagement to American constitutional democracy?
- How should the government protect our natural rights?
- In what ways are natural and civil rights connected? In what ways are they disconnected?
- How and why do civil liberties change over time?

<h3>Learning Objectives/Discipline Standards of Practice</h3>
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#### Learning Objectives:

- Students will understand what history is
  - History is a discipline of inquiry and analysis of the evidence of the past to create useful understandings of the human experience.
- Students will understand how history is practiced
  - The historical practice creates historical understandings through an active process of posing insightful questions of the past, finding, analyzing and synthesizing historical evidence and sources, and drawing defensible conclusions based on evidence (interpretation).
- Students will understand what critical thinking is
  - Critical thinking is the process of analyzing and evaluating our thinking in order to improve it.
  - Thinking consists of separate steps and processes. Paying attention to the separate steps and processes of thinking and understanding how they work improves our thinking.
- Students, alone and in groups, will be able to:
  - Engage in Chronological Thinking
    - Construct timelines of the events occurring during major eras.
    - Explain how major events are related to one another in time.
  - Engage in Spatial Thinking
    - Select and use various geographic representations to compare information about people, places, regions, and environments.
    - Use maps and other documents to explain the historical migration of people, expansion and disintegration of empires, and growth of economic and political systems.
  - Engage in Critical Thinking
    - Compare and contrast differing interpretations of current and historical events
    - Assess the credibility of sources by identifying bias and prejudice in documents, media, and computer-generated information.
  - Engage in Presentation Skills
    - Select and analyze information from a variety of sources to present a reasoned argument or position in a written and/or oral format.
  - Students will develop habits & dispositions
    - Be curious and attentive to people, thoughts, ideas and events and appreciate their

- power to change individuals and groups.
  - Be suspicious and thorough in research and the interpretation and corroboration of evidence.
  - Be mindful of the provisional nature of knowledge, and the limitations of egocentric and sociocentric thinking.
  - Be aware of the elements of their thinking and the intellectual standards by which those elements can be assessed.
  - Be confident of their reasoning and comprehensive in their conclusions.
  - Be responsible in their thoughts and actions, demonstrate honesty, mutual respect, cooperation, and attention to multiple perspectives.
- Students will develop skills to
  - Ask Questions about people, thoughts, ideas and events
  - Research, vet and corroborate evidence.
  - Interpret, analyze and synthesize evidence and ideas in primary and secondary sources.
  - Apply conceptual tools of social studies such as continuity and change over time, context and perspective, causality, contingency and complexity.
  - Prove a thesis of defensible conclusions based on the application of evidence in writing, discussion and presentation.

#### Discipline Standards of Practice:

- Developing Questions and Planning Inquiry
  - Developing insightful questions and planning effective inquiry involves identifying the purposes of different questions to understand the human experience, which requires addressing real world issues. Inquiries incorporating questions from various social science disciplines build understanding of the past, present and future; these inquiries investigate the complexity and diversity of individuals, groups, and societies.
- Gathering and Evaluating Sources
  - Finding, evaluating and organizing information and evidence from multiple sources and perspectives are the core of inquiry. Effective practice requires evaluating the credibility of primary and secondary sources, assessing the reliability of information, analyzing the context of information, and corroborating evidence across sources. Discerning opinion from fact and interpreting the significance of information requires thinking critically about ourselves and the world.
- Seeking Diverse Perspectives
  - Making sense of research findings requires thinking about what information is included, whether the information answers the question, and what may be missing, often resulting in the need to complete additional research. Developing an understanding of our own and others' perspectives builds understanding about the complexity of each person and the diversity in the world. Exploring diverse perspectives assists students in empathizing with other individuals and groups of people; quantitative and qualitative information provides insights into specific people, places, and events, as well as national, regional, and global trends.
- Developing Claims and Using Evidence
  - Developing claims requires careful consideration of evidence, logical organization of information, self-awareness about biases, application of analysis skills, and a willingness to revise conclusions based on the strength of evidence. Using evidence responsibly means developing claims based on factual evidence, valid reasoning, and a respect for human rights.
- Presenting Arguments and Explanations



- Using a variety of formats designed for a purpose and an authentic audience forms the basis for clear communication. Strong arguments contain claims with organized evidence and valid reasoning that respects the diversity of the world and the dignity of each person. Writing findings and engaging in civil discussion with an audience provides a key step in the process of thinking critically about conclusions and continued inquiry.
- Engaging in Civil Discourse and Critiquing Conclusions
  - Assessing and refining conclusions through metacognition, further research, and deliberative discussions with diverse perspectives sharpens the conclusions and improves thinking as a vital part of the process of sensemaking. Responsible citizenship requires respectfully listening to and critiquing claims by analyzing the evidence and reasoning supporting them. Listening to and understanding contrary views can deepen learning and lay the groundwork for seeking consensus.
- Taking Informed Action
  - After thoroughly investigating questions, taking informed action means building consensus about possible actions and planning strategically to implement change. Democracy requires citizens to practice discussion, negotiation, coalition seeking, and peaceful conflict resolution. When appropriate, taking informed action involves creating and/or implementing action plans designed to solve problems and create positive change.

### **Instructional Resources and Materials**

*Whole class resources have been identified with an asterisk.*

*A broad diversity of historical evidence of the past in the form of primary source materials as well as secondary source interpretations of the past are assigned or recommended by teachers in the course of instruction. Primary source materials in text, art, photographs, images, film, audio recordings, and statistical data include, but are not limited to, correspondence, diaries, census and court records, legislation, manuscripts, maps, memoirs, music, art, news stories, oral histories, speeches and sound and film recordings. Secondary sources to support student learning in the discipline of history include, but are not limited to, book excerpts, articles, essays, video clips, maps, charts, photographs, art, music, and web-based digital materials.*

*Instructional materials are recommended by and included in Units of Study resources and vary in order to explore essential questions and meet the learning needs of students.*

### **Resources**

*We the People: The Citizen & the Constitution, Center for Civic Education, 2007*

### **Supplemental Materials**

- Possible Supplemental Online Instructional Materials:
  - AllSides
  - Civic Online Reasoning - Stanford University
  - CrashCourse
  - C-Span.org
  - Gale In Context
  - GovTrack
  - iCivics
  - Infobase Publishing: Facts On File
  - Khan Academy
  - Library of Congress

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- NJ State Legislature
- National Constitution Center
- New Jersey Center For Civic Education
- Oyez - Illinois Institute of Technology's Chicago-Kent College of Law
- PBS Learning Media
- Worldbook Online

### **Assessment Strategies**

*Assessment is designed to measure a student's mastery of a course standard and learning objective. Assessment can be used for both instructional purposes (formative assessment) and for evaluative purposes (summative assessment).*

*Teachers may choose to have students practice and demonstrate their understanding of concepts and performance of disciplinary practices through a variety of means including, but not limited to those listed below:*

- Discussion and dialogue in whole-class discussions.
- Discussion, dialogue and collaboration in small-group and paired conferences.
- Performative, project-based, activities such as live or recorded presentations, mock trials, historic role plays and debates.
- Guided question responses in structured analysis of primary and secondary sources.
- Annotation, notation and analytical mark-ups of primary and secondary source, text, images, and maps.
- Drawings, digital infographics, image collages and sketched representations of historical concepts, developments, and events.
- Written responses to Document-Based Questions.
- Quizzes and tests with traditional assessment tools such as short answers, identification questions and persuasive paragraphs.