

Minnesota Academic Standards in History and Social Studies

HISTORY

What is History?

The study of History (Minnesota, U.S., and World) helps students to see how people in other times and places have grappled with the fundamental questions of truth, justice, and personal responsibility, to understand that ideas have real consequences, and to realize that events are shaped both by ideas and the actions of individuals.

The study of U.S. History helps students understand the democratic traditions of the United States and how these traditions were established and how they continue in the present. U.S. History also helps students understand that the United States is a nation built on ordinary and extraordinary individuals united in an on-going quest for liberty, freedom, justice, and opportunity. It helps students understand how much courage and sacrifice it has taken to win and keep liberty and justice.

The study of World History helps students understand the major developments in the civilizations of Europe, the Middle East, Africa, Asia, and the Americas. World History helps students recognize the “common problems of all humankind, and the increasing interactions among nations and civilizations that have shaped much of human life” and how individuals and nations have successfully or unsuccessfully met the challenges of human nature and their environment.

Why study History?

American History should be studied because, as Kenneth T. Jackson - chair of the Bradley Commission on History in the Schools - states, “Unlike many other peoples, Americans are not bound together by a common religion or a common ethnicity. Instead, our binding heritage is a democratic vision of liberty, equality, and justice. If Americans are to preserve that vision and bring it to daily practice, it is imperative that all citizens understand how it was shaped in the past, when events and forces either helped or obstructed it, and how it has evolved down to the circumstances and political discourses of our own time.”

World History should be studied because of the increasing global connections in the areas of commerce, politics, technology and communications, transportation, and migration and resettlement. These increasing connections make an understanding of the history of the world’s many cultures especially important in fostering the respect and understanding required in a connected and interdependent world.