

# Picture Yourself In Local Government

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A Student Guide To California Local Government

TEACHER  
REFERENCE  
GUIDE



**PARTICIPATING  
IN LOCAL  
GOVERNMENT**

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# About The Institute For Local Self Government...

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**E**stablished in 1955 as a nonprofit, nonpartisan and tax-exempt organization, the Institute for Local Self Government is affiliated with the League of California Cities. The Institute is engaged in research and education to promote and strengthen local self-governance. Its research projects are both privately and publicly funded, with projects that include public safety delivery systems, telecommunications, children and family issues and curricular materials.

As we prepare to enter the new century, the vitality and success of our local governments depend more than ever before on people who understand the philosophical and historical framework of local government and the opportunities and importance of participating in local government.

This student guide, "Picture Yourself In Local Government," and the cityscape poster, videotape and teacher's guide are components of the Institute's "Participating In Local Government" project — a resource project for teachers and students designed to provide an understanding of local self-governance and civic participation.

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# Introduction

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**W**hat would happen if we turned the traditional civics curriculum upside-down and stressed community politics and government instead of national government? By becoming involved in local issues, students learn the impact of local government on their lives, an appreciation of various ideas and viewpoints, the value of compromise and the importance of making informed choices. They also learn that individual voices, votes and actions can make a difference.

The *Picture Yourself In Local Government* student guide has been prepared with the assistance of classroom teachers who have been using local government as a focal point in their classes. They have found that this approach is an effective way to motivate their students, teach them an understanding of and commitment to our democratic form of government and encourage them to become active, involved citizens.

These materials assume that teaching and learning about government is a worthwhile task because in this country people have to govern themselves: Self government by free and equal people is the foundation of the United States. The specific purpose of these materials is to point to local government as an ideal place to begin the journey toward effective self government.

Local government has long been regarded as the missing link in typical curriculum materials. Recognizing this, the Institute for Local Self Government, the educational arm of the League of California Cities, and our partner, the Citizenship and Law-Related Education Center, have been actively involved in providing materials, exercises and lessons to bridge this gap. The student guide is designed to be easy to use, to contain activities which are interesting and informative for both students and teachers, and to provide a means by which your community becomes integral to your classroom instruction.

The American democratic system does work. We have the oldest continuous form of government in the world. Democratic institutions and processes must be used if they are to remain vital and responsive. The task at hand is to provide a readily accessible, dynamic laboratory to teach students how to become effective citizens. The first step is to equip students with the knowledge, skills and attitudes they will need. That step is in your hands.

Welcome to the student guide: *Picture Yourself in Local Government*. We invite you and your students to take an exciting trip through the level of government closest and most accessible to all of us – local government.

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Welcome, not only to the **Picture Yourself In Local Government** student guide, but also to your own community. We hope that your students will learn the processes and procedures of local govern-

ment, and will also, by extension, learn fundamental principles of government at all levels. And if we entice some students or teachers to become more actively involved in the community, so much the better!

## STUDENT BOOKLET UNIT ORGANIZATION

**U**nits I through V of the student booklet have been designed to result in student performances or showcases that are clearly linked to the unit goal and objectives – what we want the students to know and be able to do as a result of the activities and instruction contained in the unit. Each of the first five units is designed as follows:

- **Beginning scenario** . . . An imaginary scene to motivate students.
- **Background information** . . . Readings to increase student knowledge.
- **New Words** . . . Words in the unit that are listed in the Glossary.
- **Activity 1: Imagine That** . . . Individual student or group activity.
- **Activity 2: In Your Community** . . . Group or class activity.
- **Activity 3: A Class Showcase** . . . Class project for a community showcase. (The “Showcase” is designed to serve as a performance assessment of the students’ learning.)
- **Check Your Understanding** . . . Student self-assessment questions which can be used in a variety of ways:
  - a pre- and post-check
  - a reading guide
  - a review game
  - an individual self-check
  - the basis for teacher-designed essay questions
- **Quotations** . . . Each chapter contains sidebar quotations that can be used as motivators or to stimulate discussion.

**Unit VI** is designed as a culminating activity for the previous five units. The class is divided into five groups, each responsible for researching and planning one element of a city. Each of the tasks is based on one of the first five units: History, Structure, Players, Services and Finances.





# A Framework for Local Government: Making the Fit

The California History-Social Science Framework has been used as a primary reference document in the preparation of this student guide to local government. The three goals of the History-Social Science Framework are: knowledge and cultural understanding; democratic understanding and civic values; and skills attainment and social participation.

The *Picture Yourself In Local Government* student guide is designed to address all three of the framework goals. Step into the community laboratory to encourage your students to become knowledgeable, ethical and involved citizens. The specific framework connections with grades seven through twelve are as follows:

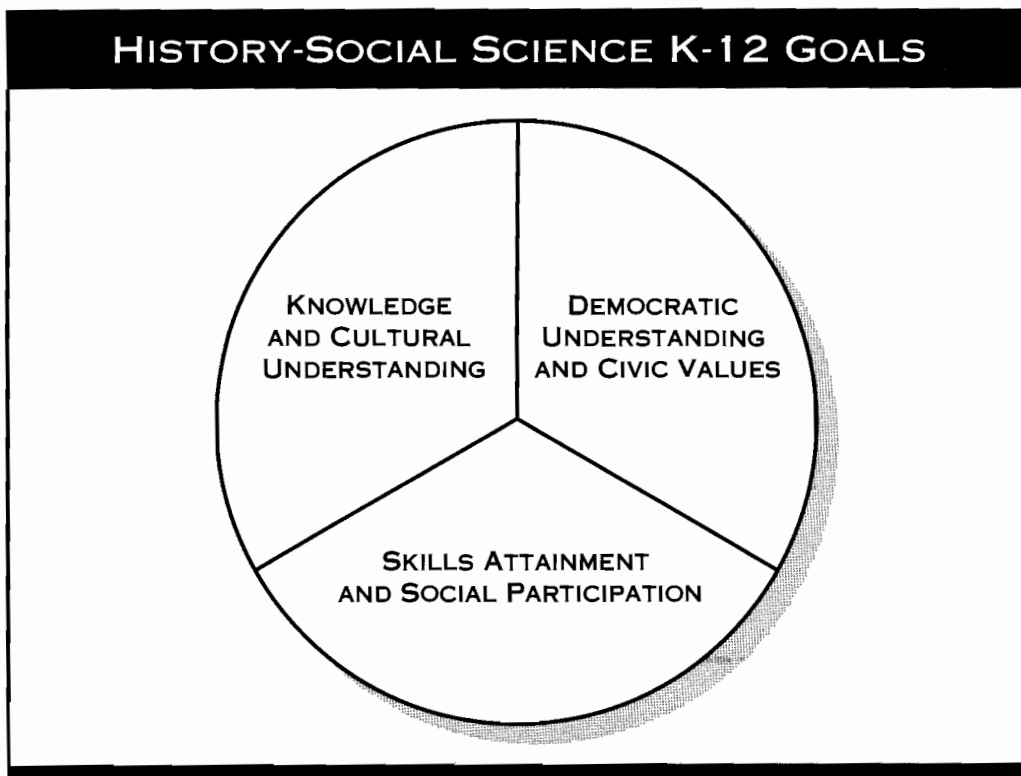
## GRADE SEVEN

### *7.2 Connecting with Past Learnings: The Fall of Rome*

“Critical thinking skills can be developed by students as they compare citizens’ civic duties as taught by Roman Stoic philosophers with citizens’ civic responsibilities in America today. Such skills also can be developed by comparing modern-day public works, architecture and technology with those of the Roman Empire.” Page 62-63

### *7.11 Linking Past to Present*

“This study will conclude with a examination of the political forces let loose in the Western world by the rise of capitalism and the Enlightenment and the impact of the ideas of this period on



Western society in the future, especially on the young American republic that the students will be studying in grade eight. To carry this theme into modern times, students will consider the ways in which these ideas continue to influence our nation and the world today, for example the importance of . . . the effort to solve problems rationally in local, state, national, and international areas; . . .". Page 68

## GRADE EIGHT

### 8.3 *The Constitution of the United States*

"In this unit students concentrate on the shaping of the Constitution and the nature of the government that it created. Students should review the major ideas of the Enlightenment and the origins of self-government in the Magna Carta, the English Bill of Rights of 1689, the Mayflower Compact, the Virginia House of Burgesses, and the New England town meeting . . .". Page 69

#### 8.4 *Launching the Ship of State*

"Students should discuss the belief of the nation's founders that the survival of a democratic society depends on an educated people."

"Students also should examine the daily life of ordinary people in the new nation...". Page 70

#### 8.5.1 *The Divergent Paths of the American People: 1800-1850*

"The West . . . Alexis de Tocqueville's nine-month visit to the United States at this time, seeking to identify the general principles of democracy in America, can provide students an opportunity to compare his description of national character in the 1830s with American life today."

#### 8.5.2 *The Northeast*

"Students should imagine what life was like for young people in the 1830s in order to appreciate Horace Mann's crusade for free public education for all. Students should read excerpts from original docu-

ments explaining the social and civic purposes of public education." Page 71-72

#### 8.5.3 *The South*

Students should review their seventh-grade studies of West African civilizations before the coming of the Europeans and compare the American system of chattel slavery, which considered people as property, with slavery in other societies. Attention should be paid to the daily lives of slaves on the plantations, the inhuman practices of slave auctions, the illiteracy enforced on slaves by law, . . .". Page 72

"Attention should be given to what blacks did themselves in working for their own freedom: their organizations, which mobilized legal action; . . .". Page 72

#### 8.7 *The Rise of Industrial America: 1877-1914*

"They should consider the political programs and activities of Populists, Progressives, settlement house workers, muckrakers and other reformers."

"The consolidation of public education in the United States and the dramatic growth of public high school enrollments should be noted." Page 74

#### 8.8 *Linking Past to Present*

". . . Teachers should encourage discussion of the citizen's ethical obligation to oppose discrimination against individuals and groups and the converse obligation to work toward a society in which all people enjoy equal rights and a good life. In this unit students should ask themselves: How have things changed over time? Why did these changes occur? They should discuss how citizens in a democracy can influence events and, through participation, apply ethical standards to public life." Page 75

## GRADE NINE

### 9.1 *Our State in the Twentieth Century*

"Opportunities should be included for students to become familiar with the local community through field studies, special community projects, interviews and other

participation activities. In addition, teachers are encouraged to use the community as a major resource for speakers.

In studying California's government, students should learn the organization and function of local, county and state political systems and their relation to the federal government. The role of public education should be included.

These studies should focus on contemporary California issues and controversies in such fields as:

- The conflict between increased economic growth and environmental priorities
- The increasing diversity within every aspect of the state: Economic, social, cultural and political
- The types of job opportunities available and the education needed to be employed successfully . . .". Page 78

#### 9.12 Law-Related Education

"They should become aware of current issues and controversies relating to law and the legal system and be encouraged to participate as citizens in the legal system. Students should be given opportunities to consider their attitudes toward the roles that lawyers, law enforcement officers and others in the legal system play in our society. In addition, students should be exposed to the many vocational opportunities that exist within our legal system." Page 83

### GRADE TEN

#### 10.2 *Connecting with Past Learnings:* *The Rise of Democratic Ideas*

"Students need to know the source of the ideas by which we judge ourselves as a political system and a society. Close attention will be paid to the evolution of democratic principles . . . the search for social systems that ensure the freedom to make individual moral choice; and the duty of each to work for morally just communities.

Students should read selections from Plato's **Republic**, Aristotle's **Politics** and

books concerning political life in the city-state of Athens." Page 84

### GRADE ELEVEN

#### 11.1 *Connecting the Past Learnings: The Nation's Beginnings*

"In the first review unit, students should draw on their earlier studies of . . . the rise of democratic ideas as the context in which this nation was founded. . . . Special attention also should be given to the framing of the Constitution as background for understanding the contemporary constitutional issues raised throughout this course." Page 93

#### 11.5 *The Great Depression*

"The administration of Franklin D. Roosevelt and his New Deal should be studied as an example of the government's response to economic crisis. The efforts of the Roosevelt Administration to alleviate the crisis through the creation of social welfare programs, regulatory agencies, and economic planning bureaus should be carefully assessed." Page 96

#### 11.9 *The Civil Rights Movement in the Postwar Era*

"The Brown decision stimulated a generation of political and social activism led by black Americans pursuing their civil rights. Momentous events in this story illumine the process of change . . . the clash in Little Rock, Arkansas, between federal and state power; the student sit-in demonstrations that began in Greensboro, North Carolina; the "freedom rides"; the march on Washington in 1963; the Mississippi Summer Project of 1964; and the march in Selma, Alabama, in 1965. Students should recognize how these dramatic events influenced public opinion and enlarged the jurisdiction of federal courts."

"The successful example of the black civil rights movement encouraged other groups — including women, Hispanics, American Indians and the handicapped — in their campaigns for legislative and judicial recognition of their civil equality.

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Major events in the development of all these movements and their consequences should be noted.” Page 99

11.11 *The United States in Recent Times*

“Much of the national political debate of the past two decades has been concerned with the expansion of the power of the federal government and the federal courts. This unit is intended to help students understand the extent to which such issues are rooted in the Progressive Era, the New Deal and the civil rights movement.” Page 101

## GRADE TWELVE

### 12.1.4 *Federalism: State and Local Government*

“In this unit students analyze the principles of federalism. Students should learn how power is divided among federal, state and local governments. What kinds of issues does each level of government handle? What happens when there is an overlapping of jurisdiction; for example, on matters such as transportation and housing? How do people get involved in state and local government? How do state and local regulatory agencies differ from those at the federal level?

By analyzing a significant school policy issue, students should learn how public education is governed and financed and how policies that affect schools are influenced and decided. Students should examine topics such as the role of the local school boards, state legislation, California initiatives affecting the schools, and the budgetary priorities of elected state officials. Students should analyze the importance of their vote in influencing the quality and future of public education in California and consider ways of becoming actively involved in issues that affect education. Page 105

Students should become aware of the important areas (for example, criminal justice, family law, environmental protection and education) that remain largely

under state and county control. They should discuss the important functions that are retained by localities, such as police and fire protection, sanitation, local public school, and other services.

... Time should be devoted to a study of the ways in which individuals can become participatory citizens through voting, jury service, volunteerism, and involvement in community organizations. Resource people from local agencies and organizations can be invited to visit classrooms and facilitate site visits to demonstrate the work they do and reinforce the vital role the individual plays in community life. In addition, students should be given opportunities to volunteer for community service in their schools and communities.” Page 105

### 12.1.6 *Contemporary Issues in the World Today*

“This course should conclude with an activity in which students analyze a major social issue. This activity might be a research paper in which students analyze a problem, marshal historical and social science evidence, provide a critique of alternative positions, and present their own position on the issue. A student could prepare this research as if the student were developing reasons for choosing among candidates.”

“... Students should pay attention to the global context of these issues as well as their importance in local, state, or national affairs.”

“At the conclusion of this unit, a school-wide consortium might be planned in which students present their papers in open forum and debate or discuss the issues from alternative viewpoints.” Page 107

*Special thanks to Rod Atkinson, Consultant, History-Social Science Unit, California Department of Education, for compiling the above Framework links to local government.*