



Guide to Civics GSEs Resource Alignment

*How to align resources, educational materials,
or programs to the Civics GSEs*

Rhode Island Department of Elementary and Secondary Education

Overview of this Guide

- ❖ Resource alignment is relatively straightforward: align the big ideas (themes) and student outcomes of your resource, material, or program with the applicable Grade Span Expectations (GSEs).
- ❖ Steps One through Five will break down that process if you're not quite sure where to start. The PDF accompanying this powerpoint walks through an example of a resource's GSE alignment process.
- ❖ If you have aligned your resource to the relevant GSEs, go directly to Step Six for some tips on creating a concordance document.

Please keep in mind:

- The Civics GSEs do *NOT* measure knowledge of facts or other “textbook” information (e.g., U.S. or World History dates, people, places, events, or eras).
- They were created as a standard for student demonstration of civic attitudes, civic knowledge, and historical thinking skills.
- The GSEs focus on the how the “big ideas” and dominant themes throughout history can also be applied today.



Overview (cont.)

Example of a concordance (created specifically for this powerpoint):

Resource Name / Title	Page / Section / Web site	Topic(s)	Theme(s)	Relevant GSEs
Lincoln and the Civil War	p.27 of textbook	Lincoln, Civil War, Politics	Lincoln's actions during his Presidency influenced the course of the Civil War.	
Politics and Lincoln during the Civil War	http://www.lincoln.net/test-resource.pdf	Lincoln's Presidency during the Civil War; politics and events leading up to the Civil War	Studying the political climate and other events leading up to the Civil War can provide insight to other historical or current events.	

Diagram annotations:

- Step One**: A yellow box with arrows pointing to the 'Topic(s)' and 'Theme(s)' columns.
- Step Two**: A yellow box with an arrow pointing to the 'Relevant GSEs' column.
- Steps Three, Four, Five**: A yellow box with arrows pointing to the 'Theme(s)' and 'Relevant GSEs' columns.
- Step Six**: A yellow box with arrows pointing to the entire table.

For a step-by-step example of the creation of a concordance (following the model above), download the following document as a reference for this powerpoint:

http://www.ride.ri.gov/Instruction/DOCS/CIVICS/Civics_GSEs_Resource_Alignment_Guide_doc-FINAL.pdf



Step One: Define Topics and Themes

The topics and themes provide a framework for alignment.

- Define the overall topic(s) or theme(s) for this educational resource, material, or program, and create a list.
- Be as specific as possible as it will help in choosing the applicable GSEs.
- From that list, create one “big idea” statement for each theme.

Step Two: Determine Student Outcomes

Student outcomes are the foundation for alignment to the GSEs.

- For each topic or theme of your resource, ask yourself what the student outcome will be (use the following questions for ideas).
 - What skills will students be able to demonstrate that they have learned at the end of the program, unit, or lesson, or by using the resource?
 - What do you expect students to do with the knowledge/skills the resource imparts?
 - What will students be able to do after using the resource or educational material, or participating in the program?
 - If you are aligning a program, what civic attitudes, skills, knowledge, historical thinking skills, etc., will the program measure?
- List the student outcomes for each topic/theme.
You will use these student outcomes as the base for your alignment to the GSEs. (See the accompanying PDF for an example.)

Step Three: The Civics GSEs

Familiarity with the Civics GSEs is integral to this process.

The K-12 Civics GSEs can be found here:

http://www.ride.ri.gov/instruction/DOCS/CIVICS/RI_Civics_GSEs_K-12_Final_Version.pdf

<http://www.ride.ri.gov/instruction/gle.aspx#civics>

1. Read the first three pages of the K-12 Civics GSEs (Introduction, “Sample GSE...”, and the Overview/Table of Contents)
2. Pay particular attention to the “Statement of Enduring Knowledge” (aka, “Big Idea”) and the “stems” in the Table of Contents.
3. Read through the Civics GSEs for your grade if you are not familiar with them.
4. Study the following slides for an in-depth look at the structure of the Civics GSEs.

Pieces of a Civics Grade Span Expectation (GSE)

An overarching Statement of Enduring Knowledge identifies the “big ideas” of the discipline.

C&G 2: The *Constitution* of the United States establishes a government of limited powers that are shared among different levels and branches.

Enduring Knowledge is defined as understandings that:

- have enduring value beyond a single lesson, unit of study, or grade level;
- are at the heart of the discipline (“doing” the subject);
- uncover abstract, complex, or often misunderstood ideas; and
- can be used to frame *essential questions for learning* (e.g., What are the purposes and functions of government? How does one become a citizen?)

Pieces of a Civics Grade Span Expectation (GSE)

Grade Spans instead of Grade Levels

C&G 2: The *Constitution* of the United States establishes a government of limited powers that are shared among different levels and branches.

Grades 7- 8

Grades 9-12

GSEs cover several (at least two) grades, rather than a single grade.

Grade Spans are used instead of Grade Levels to respect the local control of curriculum where a particular topic or skill could be taught at any of the grades listed.

Pieces of a Civics Grade Span Expectation (GSE)

A statement in bold, called the “stem,” is the first part of each GSE.

C&G 2: The *Constitution* of the United States establishes a government of limited powers that are shared among different levels and branches.

Grades 7- 8

Grades 9-12

C&G 2 (7-8) –1

Students demonstrate an understanding of government (local, state, national) by...

C&G 2 (9-12) –1

Students demonstrate an understanding of government (local, state, national) by...

Each “stem” is the same across the grades for a given GSE, and is meant to communicate the main curriculum and instructional focus across the grades for the related big idea.

There are often several stems for each big idea.

Pieces of a Civics Grade Span Expectation (GSE)

The non-bold text within a GSE is called an “indicator.”

- An “indicator” shows how the GSE is specified at a given grade span.
- There are often several indicators for each GSE stem.
- Don’t forget to read each indicator (a, b, c, etc.) WITH the stem.
- **Differences between adjacent grades** are underlined.

(Note: Sometimes nothing is underlined within a GSE. In these situations, differences in adjacent grades assume increasing complexity or perhaps broadening the scope of the content or skills.)

C&G 2 (7-8) –1

Students demonstrate an understanding of government (local, state, national) by...

a. explaining how and why power is divided and shared among the levels of government (federalism)

C&G 2 (9-12) –1

Students demonstrate an understanding of government (local, state, national) by...

a. analyzing the basic structures of government in the (e.g., national, state, local; branches of federal government) through researching a current or historical issue or event

Step Four: Align Big Ideas

Aligning the ‘big ideas’ will make it easier to find the exact GSEs that fit with your resource’s themes.

- Align your “big idea” statements to corresponding “Big Ideas” (Statements of Enduring Knowledge) in the GSEs and/or to particular stems.

***Note:* If you can’t find a good fit easily, mark your particular “big idea” statement for follow-up – you may run across an applicable GSE while aligning other statements.

- Your alignment should clearly illustrate how your resource’s topics fit with the GSEs.
- Once all (or most) of your statements are aligned, you now have an idea of how your resource’s topics fit with the GSEs.

Step Five: GSE Alignment

- What you will be doing: selecting the GSE(s) that are applicable to the student outcomes you just listed for each “big idea” statement you identified for your resource.
- First, go to the section in the GSEs that you selected in Step Three as a potential fit for your theme/topic.
- Read down the indicators in the appropriate grade-span column for that section, searching for key words and phrases that fit the student outcomes you determined in Step Four.
- If you can't find an applicable GSE within your grade level, check the grade spans above and below for potential alignment.
**Note:* If you go too far “afield” from your grade level (e.g., a Grades 3-4 GSE for a Grade 7 unit), the GSE won't be a good alignment, or perhaps your resource could be adapted to use at that other grade level.
- If you still can't find the right fit, try other sections of the GSEs.



Step Six: Creating a Concordance

A concordance document will help teachers who use your resource to see how it covers the GSEs they are required to teach in their curriculum.

- Once you have aligned all (or most) of your statements, you can create an easy-to-read concordance document.
- Your concordance can take whatever form works best for your particular resource(s):
 - A table is usually the easiest to read if you have a lot of smaller pieces and no single curriculum document, or if you want to create a quick overview of a larger resource (like the Lincoln History Box example on the next slide) or longer document.
 - If you already have a curriculum or program document, you could instead list the GSE codes (e.g., HP 2 (9-12) - 1.a; rather than the entire GSE) where they fit within their particular sections.
- Make sure to include key elements like title, page number (if applicable), topic / theme, potential lesson topics (if a resource), and relevant GSEs in your concordance. (See the sample concordance on the next page, and the example in the accompanying PDF, for ideas.)



Example of a Concordance

Abraham Lincoln: People, Places, Politics – History in a Box ... Section 3

PAGE	Title (<i>Subsections in italics</i>)	Description	Suggested GSE(s)	Potential lesson themes
45	Lincoln and the Election of 1860	-	C&G 2 (7-8) 1.b; C&G 4 (5-6) 1.a; C&G 4 (9-12) 1.c,d; C&G 5 (7-8) 2.b; C&G 5 (9-12) 2.b; HP 1 (7-8) 2.a,b; HP 1 (9-12) 2.a,b; HP 2 (5-6) 2.a,b; HP 2 (7-8) 2.a,b	the political climate at the time of Lincoln; how campaigning, voting and elections have changed over time; the importance of the Election of 1860 to the future of the US (esp. in terms of the future of slavery); federalism in the time of Lincoln
47	<i>Lincoln and the Election of 1860</i> by Harold Holzer	Introduction to section	C&G 4 (5-6) 1.a; C&G 4 (7-8) 1.d	the political climate at the time of Lincoln; how campaigning, voting and elections have changed over time; the importance of the Election of 1860 to the future of the US (esp. in terms of the future of slavery)
48	<i>Timeline</i>	Timeline	HP 1 (7-8) 2.a,b; HP 1 (9-12) 2.a,b; HP 2 (5-6) 2.a,b; HP 2 (7-8) 2.a,b	-
49	<i>The Cooper Institute Address</i>	Subsection introduction	C&G 2 (7-8) 1.b; C&G 5 (7-8) 2.b; C&G 5 (9-12) 2.b	federalism in the time of Lincoln; why the issue of slavery was such a key point in the election
50	Abraham Lincoln, Cooper Institute Address, February 27, 1860	Speech	-	-
53	<i>The 1860 Election</i>	Subsection introduction	C&G 4 (9-12) 1.c,d	campaigning, voting, and elections; the importance of the Election of 1860 to the future of the US (esp. in terms of the future of slavery)
53	"Popular Vote for President, 1860," a Detail from <i>Lloyd's New Political Chart</i>	Picture	-	-
54	Biographies of Lincoln and Military Leaders Plus National Statistics, a Detail from <i>Lloyd's New Political Chart, 1861</i>	Picture	-	-
55	<i>Leaving Springfield</i>	Subsection introduction	-	-
56	Photograph Lincoln Family Home, Springfield, Ill., 1860	Photograph	-	-
57	<i>The Political Quadrills. Music by Dred Scott, 1860</i>	Description and picture	C&G 4 (9-12) 1.c	comparing political cartoons and advertisements then and now

The complete concordance above can be found at
[http://www.ride.ri.gov/instruction/DOCS/CIVICS/2010_Institute/Lincoln History Box-Concordance with GSEs.pdf](http://www.ride.ri.gov/instruction/DOCS/CIVICS/2010_Institute/Lincoln_History_Box-Concordance_with_GSEs.pdf)

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