

# Reading Public Schools

*Instilling a joy of learning and inspiring the innovative leaders of tomorrow*



History & Social Sciences Curriculum Guide

Course: Democracy in the Age of Social Media

## Course Description

This one semester elective course analyzes the ethical journalistic and media practices of a healthy democracy, where speech can be shared freely on a vast and speedy scale. The premise of the courses is that the role of the press is to hold truth to power, but that all media is biased. When information can be shared widely and cheaply using robust and easily accessible technology--students face real challenges, especially in locating and evaluating information; discerning real news from fake news; uncovering bias; interrogating the ethical use of digital media, understanding how the business model of the media platform influences content, and determining how race, class, and gender influence perspective.

### Content Standards

#### Massachusetts Curriculum Frameworks Standards for History & Social Science

1. Demonstrate civic knowledge, skills, dispositions;
4. Analyze the purpose and point of view of sources; distinguish opinion from fact;
5. Evaluate the credibility, accuracy, and relevance of sources.
6. Argue or explain conclusions using valid reasoning and evidence

### Practice Standards\*

- INCORPORATION OF MEDIA LITERACY
- INCORPORATING DIVERSE PERSPECTIVES/PERCEPTIONS IN ANALYZING MEDIA AND INFORMATION
- RESEARCH, REASONING, AND CRITICAL THINKING; DICERNING FACTS FROM OPINIONS; CONTENT FROM ADVERTISING
- USING DATA ANALYSIS AND DIGITAL TOOLS FOR RESEARCH /PRESENTATIONS

### Literacy Standards\*

- Read and comprehend texts exhibiting complexity appropriate for junior and senior students.
- Cite specific textual evidence to support analysis of primary and secondary sources.
- Write informative/explanatory texts; initiate and participate effectively in a range of collaborative discussions.

*\*Not intended as an exhaustive list . Incorporation of Literacy and Practice Standards is fluid and ongoing.*

Three Pillars of the History and Social Science Framework



Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education

| Units  | Essential Questions   | Key Activities <u>may</u> include:   |
|--|---|--|
| <p><b>Unit I: Why does media literacy matter?</b></p>          | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What is old media and what is new media?</li> <li>• How has technology, especially social media, changed the creation and dissemination of news and information?</li> <li>• In the copy/paste world, why does citation and documentation matter?</li> <li>• How do we evaluate media?</li> </ul>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Analysis of primary source documents, scholarly sources, &amp; connections between history and current events</li> </ul>  |
| <p><b>Unit II: The role of “The Media” in a Democracy</b></p>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Why does the First Amendment guarantee a free press?</li> <li>• Why is the ethical use of information important to a democracy?</li> <li>• What are the limits of free speech and censorship?</li> <li>• How has new media exploited the limits of free speech?</li> <li>• How have BIPOC and exploited social media to direct attention to injustices ignored by mainstream media?</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Comparing and contrasting historical and contemporary issues.</li> <li>• Development of active reading strategies such as annotating, sourcing, contextualizing, corroborating, and close reading</li> <li>• Participation in class debates and Socratic-seminar style discussions</li> </ul> |
| <p><b>Unit III: The intersection of commerce and media</b></p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How do media outlets make money?</li> <li>• How does profit influence content?</li> <li>• What is surveillance capitalism?</li> <li>• Why do media platforms collect your data?</li> <li>• What is the impact of sponsored content on influence, bias, and neutrality?</li> <li>• Who is responsible for regulating “the internet”</li> </ul>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Conducting short-term as well as more sustained research projects .</li> <li>• Utilizing a variety of sources and databases to inform writing and research.</li> </ul>  |
| <p><b>Unit IV: Objectivity and Bias in the Media</b></p>       | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What is the media bias spectrum?</li> <li>• What are the 7 types of bias?</li> <li>• How is bias exploited to change behavior?</li> <li>• How do algorithms used in search engines capitalize on bias?</li> </ul>  |  |
| <p><b>Unit V: Ethical Use of Information</b></p>               | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How has new media influenced the ethical use of information?</li> <li>• How are BIPOC represented in the Media?</li> <li>• What is the responsibility of entrepreneurs and media platforms for the outcomes of their technology?</li> </ul>  |  |



## History & Social Sciences Curriculum Guide Overview

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|----------------------------|--|
| <b>Curriculum Guide</b>    | Curriculum guides are public documents aligned with the Massachusetts Department of Education Curriculum Frameworks. They focus on the set of standards that students will learn within certain disciplines at appropriate grade levels. Curriculum Guides are intended for teachers, parents, and the wider school community as an overview document of the course of study for the year.   |
| <b>Curriculum Map</b>      | Curriculum maps are internal documents utilized as planning tools for teachers. Curriculum maps keep a focus on the end-of-year standards and chart a course for the teaching and learning over the year. They are typically organized in a grade-level overview organized by month or marking period. Curriculum maps typically include: standards and expectations for the grade/content, essential skills/concepts, methods of assessment, and major content resources. Maps are never “done” as ongoing work of educators include revisions, additions, and revisits to the maps. They provide an overview for the year while also allowing educators to see a vertical picture of how the content develops as students progress through each grade. |
| <b>Guiding Principles</b>  | These nine principles serve as the foundation for all History and Social Science education in Massachusetts. They can be viewed here:<br><a href="http://www.doe.mass.edu/frameworks/hss/2018-12.pdf">http://www.doe.mass.edu/frameworks/hss/2018-12.pdf</a>   |
| <b>Literacy Standards</b>  | In studying this content, students apply grade-appropriate reading, writing, speaking, and listening skills.   |
| <b>Content Standards</b>   | The Content Standards describe what students should know and be able to do within each grade-level.  |
| <b>Practice Standards</b>  | These are “designed for integration with the Content Standards and Literacy Standards for History and Social Science, the seven practices encompass the processes of inquiry and research that are integral to a rich and robust social science curriculum and the foundation for active and responsible citizenship.” <a href="http://www.doe.mass.edu/frameworks/hss/2018-12.pdf">http://www.doe.mass.edu/frameworks/hss/2018-12.pdf</a>   |
| <b>Essential Questions</b> | Essential questions are questions that are not answerable with an easy answer or a simple instruction. The purpose of essential questions is to provide opportunities for inquiry into the learning and act as an umbrella to anchor the unit/lesson.  |
| <b>Key Activities</b>      | Key Activities identified in Curriculum Guides are not intended to be exhaustive, nor are they intended to be prescriptive. The activities identified may function as a menu of curriculum resources from which educators identify the most appropriate tools to utilized in their classrooms. More specifics about identified resources are identified within the curriculum map documents.   |