# Unifying Themes of Social Studies

These ten unifying Social Studies themes represent different lenses that can be applied to the teaching and learning of the Key Ideas and Conceptual Understandings within the 2012 Social Studies framework across all grades, K-12.

## Themes at a Glance

1. **Individual Development and Cultural Identity**
2. **Development, Movement, and Interaction of Cultures**
3. **Time, Continuity, and Change**
4. **Geography, Humans, and the Environment**
5. **Development and Transformation of Social Structures**
6. **Power, Authority, and Governance**
7. **Civic Ideals and Practices**
8. **Creation, Expansion, and Interaction of Economic Systems**
9. **Science, Technology, and Innovation**
10. **Global Connections and Exchange**

## Themes with Context

### 1. Individual Development and Cultural Identity

- ❖ Role of social, political, and cultural interactions in the development of identity
- ❖ Personal identity is a function of an individual's culture, time, place, geography, interaction with groups, influences from institutions, and lived experiences

### 2. Development, Movement, and Interaction of Cultures

- ❖ Role of diversity within and among cultures
- ❖ Aspects of culture such as belief systems, religious faith, or political ideals as influences on other parts of a culture such as its institutions or literature, music, and art
- ❖ Cultural diffusion and change over time as facilitating different ideas and beliefs

### 3. Time, Continuity, and Change

- ❖ History as a formal study that applies research methods
- ❖ Reading, reconstructing, and interpreting events
- ❖ Analyzing causes and consequences of events and developments
- ❖ Considering competing interpretations of events

4. **Geography, Humans, and the Environment**

   ❖ Relationship between human populations and the physical world (people, places, and environments)
   ❖ Impact of human activities on the environment
   ❖ Interactions between regions, locations, places, people, and environments

5. **Development and Transformation of Social Structures**

   ❖ Role of social class, systems of stratification, social groups, and institutions
   ❖ Role of gender, race, ethnicity, education, class, age, and religion in defining social  structures within a culture
   ❖ Social and political inequalities
   ❖ Expansion and access of rights through concepts of justice and human rights

6. **Power, Authority, and Governance**

   ❖ Purposes, characteristics, and functions of various governance systems as they are practiced
   ❖ Individual rights and responsibilities as protected and challenged within the context of majority rule
   ❖ Fundamental principles and values of constitutional democracy
   ❖ Origins, uses, and abuses of power
   ❖ Conflict, diplomacy, and war

7. **Civic Ideals and Practices**

   ❖ Basic freedoms and rights and responsibilities of citizens in a democratic republic
   ❖ Role of the citizen in the community and nation and as a member of the global community
   ❖ Civic participation and engagement
   ❖ Respect for diversity
   ❖ Civic ideals and practices in countries other than our democratic republic
   ❖ Struggle for rights, access to citizenship rights, and universal human rights

8. **Creation, Expansion, and Interaction of Economic Systems**

   ❖ Production, distribution, and consumption
   ❖ Scarcity of resources and the challenges of meeting wants and needs
   ❖ Supply/demand and the coordination of individual choices
   ❖ Economic systems
   ❖ Trade, interdependence, and globalization
   ❖ Role of government in the economy
   ❖ Personal finance

9.  **Science, Technology, and Innovation**

    ❖ Scientific and intellectual theories, findings, discoveries, and philosophies
    ❖ Applications of science and innovations in transportation, communication, military  technology, navigation, agriculture and industrialization
    ❖ Relationship between science, technology, and innovation and social, cultural, and  economic change

10. **Global Connections and Exchange**

    ❖ Past, current, and likely future global connections and interactions
    ❖ Cultural diffusion, the spread of ideas, beliefs, technology and goods
    ❖ Role of technology
    ❖ Benefits/consequences of global interdependence (social, political, economic)
    ❖ Causes of and patterns of migration of people
    ❖ Tension between national interests and global priorities