

# Guide to Civics GSEs Resource Alignment – Supplement

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

## INTRODUCTION

This document is a step-by-step example of how to align a resource to the Civics GSEs. The resource used as an example here was created for use with this particular exercise. The “resource” represents a multi-page, multi-section comprehensive document on the Civil War that was researched and written by several scholars from a reputable historical organization. Each section examines a particular theme (e.g., one section is on Lincoln himself, one is on Lincoln’s Presidency, one is on politics and their effect on events, one is on the foreign perspective at the time to the Civil War). The alignment is for a high school U.S. History course.

An example of a concordance for this resource may look like this:

Page	Title of section	Main theme	Potential Topics for Instruction	Relevant GSEs
3	<i>Lincoln</i>	The events and people in Lincoln’s life helped shape his character as a great President by influencing his perspective and motivation to act in certain ways.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Daily life during the Civil War</li> <li>- Lincoln’s life</li> <li>- Comparison between then and now: daily life</li> </ul>	HP 2 (9-12) – 2.b HP 2 (9-12) – 3.a HP 3 (9-12) – 2.b
10	<i>The Presidency</i>	Lincoln’s actions during his Presidency influenced the course of the Civil War.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Election of 1860</li> <li>- Lincoln’s acts and policies as President</li> <li>- Correspondence and speeches</li> <li>- Civil War decisions</li> <li>- Comparison between then and now: government</li> </ul>	C&G 4 (9-12) – 1.d C&G 5 (9-12) – 3.b HP 2 (9-12) – 1.a HP 2 (9-12) – 1.b
21	<i>Politics</i>	The political climate and political actions influenced the events that led up to the Civil War.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Major events and their political causes</li> <li>- Political issues in the 1850s-60s</li> <li>- Political parties in that time period</li> <li>- Comparison between then and now: politics</li> </ul>	HP 1 (9-12) – 2.a HP 2 (9-12) – 1.a HP 2 (9-12) – 1.b C&G 4 (9-12) – 1.e
29	<i>Foreign Perspective</i>	The Civil War affected the world as a whole, not just the United States.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Outsiders’ perspective on the Civil War, Lincoln, politics</li> <li>- Facts and myths according to perspective</li> <li>- Effect on the world (political, economic, etc.) of the Civil War</li> <li>- Comparison between then and now: global effect of domestic events</li> </ul>	C&G 5 (9-12) – 2.a C&G 5 (9-12) – 2.b HP 1 (9-12) – 1.c

For an example of a more detailed concordance that is not related to this “resource,” please see the Lincoln History Box *Concordance to the Civics GSEs* 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).

The steps listed in this document align to the steps in the “Guide to Civics GSEs Alignment” powerpoint which can be found at:

[http://www.ride.ri.gov/instruction/DOCS/CIVICS/Civics\\_GSEs\\_Resource\\_Alignment\\_PPT.ppt](http://www.ride.ri.gov/instruction/DOCS/CIVICS/Civics_GSEs_Resource_Alignment_PPT.ppt)

## STEP ONE

- Thinking about the following questions when describing your resource can be a useful way to tie it to the Civics GSEs:
  - What is its purpose in the classroom?
  - How will engaging with this resource affect students' attitudes, knowledge, or skills, and why is this important?

### Example:

- What are the overall topics or themes for this educational resource, material, or program?
  1. Civil War
  2. Lincoln
  3. Lincoln's Presidency
  4. Politics and events
  5. Foreign perspective
- More specifically, since the Civil War is the overarching topic, the particular themes are:
  1. Lincoln's history and character; his life during the Civil War
  2. Lincoln's actions during his Presidency and the Civil War
  3. Politics and events leading up to, during, and after the Civil War
  4. Foreign perspective on the Civil War and what attitudes were
- "Big idea" statement for each topic:
  1. The events and people in Lincoln's life helped shape his character as a great President by influencing his perspective and motivation to act in certain ways.
  2. Lincoln's actions during his Presidency influenced the course of the Civil War.
  3. The political climate and political actions influenced the events that led up to the Civil War.
  4. The Civil War affected the world as a whole, not just the United States.
- You could also frame the big ideas from a "why and how" ("study and insight") perspective. This can be a good reference for what students will do and also can
  1. Studying the outside influences in Lincoln's life can provide insight on determining the sources of influence and their effects on people's actions today.
  2. Studying Lincoln's actions within their context can provide some insight into how the actions of presidents influence the path of historical or current conflicts.
  3. Studying the influence of politics on the events leading up to the Civil War can provide insight into the effect of politics on other historical or current events.
  4. Studying how the Civil War affected the world as a whole can provide insight into how current domestic issues have an effect on the global community.

## STEP TWO

- For each topic or theme of your resource, list the student outcomes (see the questions on the slide). You will use the student outcomes as the base for your alignment to the GSEs.

(From here on out, this document will use only Theme #3 to simplify the process, but you should do this for each “big idea” you list.)

### Example:

3. The political climate and political actions influenced the events that led up to the Civil War.
  - o Students will:
    - be able to explain the connection between the events and their outcomes
    - be able to apply the same analysis to current and/or controversial issues
    - understand the different viewpoints of the various political parties and political/regional groups on certain key issues

## STEP THREE

- Read the first three pages of the K-12 Civics GSEs carefully to get an understanding of what the GSEs are and are not. Also review the slide in the powerpoint which provides another example of the GSE structure.
- If you are not familiar with the content or feel of the Civics GSEs, take the time to read (or skim) through the GSEs that apply to the grade(s) that your resource/program is geared for:
  - o Grades K-2, 3-4, and 5-6 for elementary
  - o Grades 5-6 and 7-8 for middle school
  - o Grades 9-12 and Ext for high school

This is important since it will give you an understanding of what the GSEs measure (and don't measure) and how they are worded.

## STEP FOUR

- Using the Table of Contents, align your “big idea” statements to corresponding “Big Ideas” in the GSEs and/or to particular stems.
- The key words and ideas from your statement may not be an exact fit at this stage, so be prepared to “think big picture” about more general ideas if there isn't an immediately obvious fit with the GSEs.

### Example:

3. The political climate and political actions influenced the events that led up to the Civil War.
  - o GSE “big ideas”:
    - HP 1 – 2 (*read as “Historical Perspectives Strand 1, Stem 2” or “HP One Dash Two”*)
    - HP 2 – 1 (*read as “Historical Perspectives Strand 2, Stem 1” or “HP Two Dash One”*)

- If your “big idea” statements each fit with at least one strand, you can move on to Step Five.

## STEP FIVE

- Go to the section(s) in the GSEs selected in Step Four as a potential fit (in this case, HP 1 – 2 and HP 2 – 1) and read through the GSEs in the appropriate grade-span column(s).  
Make sure to first read the stem (bold text; first half of the statement), then the indicator (non-bold text; second half of the statement), to get a complete understanding of each GSE.
- Search for key words and phrases (or ideas) within those indicators that fit your student outcomes from Step Two.

### Example:

3. The political climate and political actions influenced the events that led up to the Civil War.

- GSE “big ideas”
    - HP 1 – 2
    - HP 2 – 1
  - Students will:
    - be able to explain the connection between the events and their outcomes
      - HP 1 (9-12) - 2.a
    - be able to apply the same analysis to current and/or controversial issues
      - HP 2 (9-12) - 1.a,b
    - understand the different viewpoints of the various political parties and political/regional groups on certain key issues
      - C&G 4 (9-12) - 1.e
- \*NOTE... This outcome did not fit with any GSEs from the two HP strands that were first selected. The GSE was selected by following the process in Step Four.

- You may find more than one GSE for each student outcome. Keep in mind that it’s not the quantity of GSEs that fit your resource, it’s the quality – so only pick the one(s) that show the BEST fit.
  - As a rule, if you are aligning an educational material that has specific steps/processes and specific outcomes, only list the GSE(s) that have the strongest alignment (at most two or three).
    - Educational material: e.g., lesson plan, unit of study, educational program, educational activity, online activities or educational web sites with “built-in” lessons/activities
    - Teachers want to teach to the one or two GSEs which allow for a straightforward application and/or assessment; not to the four other GSEs that are a “weak” fit.
  - An exception to that rule is a resource that does not have ANY educational materials tied to it.
    - Resource: e.g., stand-alone text (book, article or set of articles), stand-alone DVD, educational or reference web site that only provides the information (not ways to use it)
    - You still need to make sure that each GSE is a strong (if slightly more generalized) fit.
    - Teachers will use your list of GSEs to see where they can use your resource in a lesson or unit they already teach, or else to find a quality resource from which to create a new lesson on a particular topic and/or that is aligned to a particular GSE.
- Once you complete this process for each of your “big ideas,” your resource has been aligned to the GSEs. If you would like to create a concordance, go to Step Six. Otherwise, list the “codes” for the GSEs in the “Education Standards” section of your resource’s overview (be sure to list the GSE with the section it represents to make it easy for teachers to see which GSE applies to which section).

## STEP SIX

- List the content you would like to show in your concordance... Some basic elements include:
  - o Page number (if a book or text) or Description/Type (if part of a kit)
  - o Title of section or chapter or educational material
  - o Topics / themes
  - o Relevant GSEs
  
- The example is a resource with no curriculum materials associated with it. Therefore, its concordance can include the header “potential topics for instruction” instead of “topics covered”.
  
- Since the example is a single entity – a multi-page, multi-section document – the concordance doesn’t need a table of contents as it would for a curriculum materials kit with multiple pieces, or for a program with separate activities. This concordance will be organized by section (and/or theme).
  
- For example, the concordance’s format may look something like this:

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21	<i>Politics</i>	The political climate and political actions influenced the events that led up to the Civil War.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Major events and their political causes</li> <li>- Political issues in the 1850s-60s</li> <li>- Political parties in that time period</li> <li>- Comparison between then and now: politics</li> </ul>	HP 1 (9-12) – 2.a HP 2 (9-12) – 1.a HP 2 (9-12) – 1.b C&G 4 (9-12) – 1.e
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- Along with the concordance itself, be sure to have an overview that describes your resource, educational material, or program.