

Purpose

The American Promise Teaching Guide has become a part of the growing national movement to enhance the social studies curriculum and restructure classes in order to teach students the practical skills, knowledge, and values of active citizenship.

This movement, called service learning, unites the concepts and ideas of citizenship and democracy with civic action. Students are expected to learn responsible citizenship by acting as responsible citizens.

Service learning has become part of the National Standards for Civics and Government. More and more states are incorporating service learning into their curriculum frameworks and requiring participation in service projects for graduation.

The American Promise was designed with service learning firmly in mind. This section of the Teaching Guide shows how the program can be used in developing and implementing service learning programs in elementary and secondary social studies classrooms.

While other sections of the binder focus on individual acts of *The American Promise* series and how they can be used in a variety of classroom settings and subjects, this section focuses on service learning and draws from all acts in the series. It presents a clear model for developing service learning projects and for guiding students in research and community problem solving. There are classroom-tested exercises to prepare students for service projects as well as suggestions for evaluating their projects.

“The goal of education in civics and government is informed, responsible participation in political life by competent citizens committed to the fundamental values and principles of American constitutional democracy...”

– National Standards for Civics and Government

Acknowledgments

This section was developed by John Minkler. In 26 years as a social studies teacher in California, he guided hundreds of students through service learning projects. He is the author of *Active Citizenship, Empowering America's Youth* and coordinator of the California Department of Education Character Education Clearinghouse and of the Fresno Youth Service Council.

Douglas E. Miller, of the Stanford Teacher Education Program, has been an advisor to *The American Promise* since the program's inception, and provided invaluable guidance for this section.