

Brief Introduction to Social Science Textbooks (8-12<sup>th</sup> grade) with focus on gender, conflict transformation, soft skills, environment, critical thinking, media literacy and project-based approaches

Social Science, 8<sup>th</sup> Grade, 2007 (A. Khachatryan, S. Petrosyan, T. Tovmasyan)

The book draws upon the topics such as nature, cognition and logic, human being and self-knowledge, society and democracy. Section 1 (Nature), in particular, aims to complete students' understanding of the nature. It refers to questions, such as how one defines nature, philosophical approaches to the basis of the unity of nature, eras of the supremacy of nature, of gradual opposition to nature, of domination over nature, and valuation and preservation of nature. It also addresses the question of the necessity of public life, of how human society should treat nature in order for future generations to be able to live in a clean and safe environment.

Section 2 is about cognition and logic. It covers sensory cognition and aims to expand the understanding of the process of thinking through the analysis of concrete examples. How does one know about the world? We see, we hear things. During the lesson, an attempt is made to understand what thinking is, what role it plays in a person's life. The book also covers biological sex, the relationship between male and female roles in history and in modern times. It quotes from the Constitution that discrimination is prohibited and states that inequality between men and women still prevails.

Communication and conflict resolution through effective communication is also discussed. It presents a comparative table of negative and positive conflict groups (ex., negative – conflicts are a headache, positive - conflict as a way to solve problems). Intelligence (rationality) is presented as the key to conflict resolution and effective communication. Identity matters, such as what forms our identity, what is Armenian identity is touched upon. The book ends with a section on democracy and core values. It highlights, that it is important for people to be the bearers of enduring values because we make our decisions based on values. It discusses democracy in Armenia, freedom, responsibility, tolerance.

Overall, the lessons are designed to include a text for discussion and a practical part – role plays, group works, questions for discussion, tasks including talking to others and researching on certain matters.

Social Science, 8<sup>th</sup> Grade (Edition) (K. Harutyunyan, A. Gyulbudaghyan, T. Tovmasian)

The textbook for the Social Science 8<sup>th</sup> grade textbook (newer edition) mainly focuses on an assembly of individuals that form classes, communities, nations, societies with specific cultures, customs and traditions, within clearly defined territorial borders. Combined with these notions, values and long-term evolution lie down the foundations of democratic governance, in which values like tolerance, freedom (protection) and justice reinvent themselves as guarantors of rejuvenation of democratic component to the governance. Chapters also provide the scenarios in which such principles are required to combat power abuse, corruption, etc.

Social Science, 9<sup>th</sup> Grade, 2018 (G. Ghazinyan, A. Vagharshyan)

In any field of public life, a person with any profession needs legal knowledge. That is, what rights do people have, what is society, a state, how are they governed? The book covers topics of a democratic society, public policy, citizenship, civil society, economic system, fundamental rights and freedoms.

The book starts with the concept, principles and values of democracy, a historical overview, forms of democracy, the importance of democratic elections, the need for guarantees for democracy. Human qualities as a guarantee of democracy, constitutional guarantees of human rights as a pillar of democracy are discussed and state responsibility to respect, protect and fulfil human rights are presented. Under sections, there are questions for food of thoughts and practical exercise (election of a president of the class, for example). There is a brief introduction to democracy and international human rights (including the basic norms of humanitarian law). In the public policy system, a graph by David Easton is presented and explained. Lessons 8-11 do not provide theoretical knowledge, but rather concentrate on practical exercises to be an active citizen. A number of tasks are provided to decide on the topic of research, gathering information, mapping solutions, developing own solutions/opinions for solving problems, and developing an action plan. Both classroom actions and homework is assigned (for example, discussing problems in their environment, answering provided questions as a group work in the classroom and an assignment to carry out interviews, work with printed sources and monitor TV and radio programs as homework). In section 3, civics and leadership are discussed. Characteristics of 'a real citizen' is discussed, where being law-abiding, not being indifferent towards what happens in the homeland, positively affecting the state, supporting those who faced injustice, being tolerant is highlighted. Civil society is defined as a legal, liberal-democratic, self-governing, pluralistic, open society composed of free individuals who pursue their interests equally within the framework of common law. NGOs and the role of media are also discussed. A practical exercise to help students be a part of public administration follows the theoretical lessons on the state budget, protection of consumers' interests, the role of the state in the economy. Human rights are widely discussed in section 6 (definitions of human rights, freedom and dignity at the core of human rights, natural rights, etc.), followed by a brief introduction to the right to life, the right to personal liberty, equality before the law, right to physical and mental immunity, private life, freedom of movement, freedom of expression, right to property, etc.

Social Science, 10<sup>th</sup> Grade, 2014 (S. Petrosyan, S. Khachatryan, H. Khachatryan, K. Vardanyan, H. Aghajanyan)

Themes for the 10<sup>th</sup> grade Social Science textbook are concerning Aesthetics, Ethics, Psychology and Economy. The first part of the textbook, aesthetics, begins with the introduction of numerous definitions of the phenomenon, setting up the context for understanding notions of aesthetical ideal and taste for later application and revaluation in everyday life and different forms of the arts.

The second part of the textbook reflects on defining morality, moral values, its relations to positive norms, as well as relations of a moral concept vis-à-vis its counter-weight (for example, good and evil; responsibility and (or) conscience, encouragement and punishment, etc.) .

After defining the discipline of psychology and the scope of its analysis, the third part reveals the methods of analysis of the discipline and its intersection with other disciplines. Focusing on an

individual, this part of the textbook focuses on the human psyche, its development through its triggers, emotionality, memory, and activities ranging from interpersonal communications and socialization to individual traits. Family, as a combination of individuals, as well as conflicts among and between individuals, are also covered.

The final part of the 10<sup>th</sup>-grade textbook is a brief introduction to economy and its core ideas, aiming at elaborating the driving forces of the evolution and development of economy. Themes include the objectives and scope of economy, factors conditioning the production, money, supply and demand, etc.

#### Social Science, 11<sup>th</sup> Grade, 2010 (G. Ghazinyan, A. Vagharshyan, A. Gyulbudaghyan)

As a logical continuation to the textbook for 9<sup>th</sup> grade, the Social Science textbook for grade 11 is predominantly normative right and political science-oriented. In this textbook, through the chapters, notions of courts, police, judges and lawyers are introduced, later going more detailed on civil, marital, labour rights. The second part of this chapter provides a brief introduction to political science, followed by a narrow focus on nation-state as a key player in realist interpretation of international relations. Not only does this include chapters about the regime, social security, sovereignty and more, but also elaborates political parties, political ideologies, foreign policy, national interest and war (with examples of South Caucasus conflicts, and drawing focus on Nagorno-Karabakh conflict).

#### Social Science, 12<sup>th</sup> Grade, 2011 (S. Petrosyan, S. Khachatryan)

The focus of the textbook designed for 12<sup>th</sup> grade is a human being in general (homo sapiens). After the introduction to philosophy and its scope of analysis, the following chapters cover human being, its ontology and reasoning, as well as its existential problems in currency, especially in digital era. Having this said, it must not be assumed, that chapters include notions of media literacy and methods of protection from false or fake information. Rather, the textbook briefly mentions the risk of encountering such misleading content.

Overall, environmental and gender issues are discussed in Social Science 8<sup>th</sup> Grade textbook. The textbook also covers about thought activity. Project-based approaches are well integrated into the 9<sup>th</sup> grade textbook, where students are given a practical exercise to follow the steps provided and research, do homework, gather information, etc. Communication and conflict resolution topics are covered both in 8<sup>th</sup> grade and 10<sup>th</sup> grade textbooks. In the first case, it is discussed in the context of a person living in a society. In the latter, conflicts in a person's life are discussed in more detail, and psychological traits of conflicts, ways to prevent and overcome inter-personal conflicts are presented. Critical thinking is not discussed as a separate topic in any of the textbooks. However, questions provided and practical classroom exercises in various topics discussed in the textbooks could be assumed to trigger student's ability to question things. A slight reference to media literacy is provided in the 12<sup>th</sup> grade textbook. In particular, a section on "Informative Society" makes one think about the positive and negative aspects that internet and social media can have, and touches upon disinformation and risks associated with it.

## Analysis of the Criteria of “The Surrounding World and I”

### Introduction

Elements of civics are present in school subjects other than the Social Science taught in grades 7-12. For example, “The surrounding world and I” is a subject taught in 2-4 grades at schools. The main objective of the subject is the socialization of the child, the development of one's cognition, and the independence of acquiring knowledge about the surrounding world. The subject aims to help students to explore things and draw conclusions, contributes to the formation of media literacy, upbringing of love, respect and attitude towards saving and preserving the nature, people, Armenian language, to instill conscious and responsible attitude towards one's own and others' health, the desire to preserve historical and cultural heritage.

Elements of civics are also integrated into classes in grades 5 and 6. School subjects “Homeland Studies” (hayrenagitutyun) and “Natural Sciences” (bnagitutyun) are taught based on the knowledge and as a continuation of the “Surrounding World and I”. These subjects cover topics such as Armenian language, faith, myths, culture, health, rules of a healthy lifestyle, bad habits and their consequences. A few elements of civics are also included in Geography and Armenian History classes. However, the topics covered in Social Science (human rights, civil society etc.) are not taught in grades 5 and 6 in detail and separately. From 6th grade, students are also taught “Informatics”, which includes classes on media literacy.

Relevant to a 10-year old, the courses and topics taught in the 4<sup>th</sup> grade in frames of “The Surrounding World and I” are presented below:

grade	topic	# hours	Brief description
4	I am safe	8	Through group work, assignments, role and simulation games, discussions and other interactive means the course aims to help students understand the importance of healthy food for physical and mental health, to highlight the importance of water for the metabolism of the human body, to explain that some infectious diseases can be spread through water, explain the importance of first aid knowledge, help to realize that a person's health largely depends on his behaviour and decisions.
4	People and I: My homeland (10), The World Changes (9)	19	Through group work, creating drawings, charts and diagrams, fieldwork and assignments, excursions, creating small video products, the course aims to help expand students' knowledge about the symbols of Armenia, nature, cities, villages, inhabitants, history, famous people, heroes, to develop love, responsibility for one's homeland, to promote the formation of the Armenian identity. The course also aims to form an idea about some of the ancient civilizations, to form a basic idea about the economy and its branches, to help form a personal budget, to have an idea about the exchange of goods, the origin of money and its significance.
4	Let's respect each other:	6	Through the use of study games, situational analysis, discussions, role-plays, debates, written and oral presentations, the course

	Rights, Conflict		aims to give an idea of the diversity of perceptions due to cultural, gender, age and other differences, to help understand the interconnectedness of rights and responsibilities, to explain that equality, justice, honesty, the pursuit of friendship and peace are important in human relationships. It also aims to explain the importance and universal value of tolerance, to help realize that the world is rich in diversity, that diversity cannot lead to discrimination, to present the negative nature of stereotypes and prejudices.
4	The Nature and I	8	This course aims to explain how animals and plants get their food, strengthen the importance of water, explain how dirty water is dangerous for people, animals and plants, explain with examples how human activity affects the environment and biodiversity. Different study games, assignments, observations, small project implementations, movie screenings and discussions, group work and experiments are suggested to be included in the methodology.
4	The Universe and I	7	This course aims to strengthen the students' knowledge of the rotation of the earth, to explain the eclipses, to give an idea of the speed of light, to complete the idea of energy by interpreting the vital role of solar energy.

Brief Introduction to Social Science Textbooks (8-12th grade) with Focus on Gender, Conflict Transformation, Soft Skills, Environment, Critical Thinking, Media Literacy and Project-Based Approaches

**Introduction**

The subject "Social Science", according to the new draft proposal, will be taught in grades 7-12. The content of the course includes sociology, psychology, law, economics, political science, philosophy, which enables the perception of social phenomena in a multifaceted and integrated way. The teaching of the subject will be carried out on a spiral basis, which means that every year the program will include topics related to 6 disciplines. The main ideas of the subject are (1) Individual, (2) Society, (3) Values, and (4) Global issues of humanity. The relevance of the subject is based on three components of learning: cognitive, social and personal.

The subject will be taught in the following 3 approaches (methods): (1) Teaching concepts and principles, which will allow understanding the content of the subject, (2) Research, which allow to understand that many problems do not have clear solutions and thus constant searches are inevitable. Due to this, it will be possible to apply the acquired knowledge, and (3) Project-based teaching, which aims to develop teamwork skills, offer alternative solutions to problems and acquire skills to apply knowledge.

grade	topic	# hours	Brief description	Corr. w/ textbook
7	Human and Nature	3	The topics discussed in the course are human beings as a part of nature and the evolution of human-nature relations. The aim is for students to understand the interconnectedness of nature, humans and society and will use examples to illustrate the interdependence of nature and society. Educational methods are analysis, conversations and situational issues.	
7	Human-family-community-social environment	4	In frames of the course, peculiarities of public life, the social composition of the society, groups, layers, and communities will be discussed. It is expected that the students will realize the interconnectedness of human beings and society, similarities and differences between large and small groups and strata of society. Methods include self-analysis, conversations, interviews and situational issues.	
7	Human-thinking-social-emotional skills	5	The content of the course is focused on (1) Thinking, key thinking skills, (2) Emotions, (3) The connection between thinking, emotions and behaviour, (4) Prejudices, stereotypes and influences. The aim of the course is for students to understand the importance of thinking, social skills, and emotional maturity in a person's life, to enrich their self-awareness and the skills to respond adequately to the situation through	

			analysis of concrete examples and situations. Teaching methods include essays, discussion of content-related images, Q&As.	
7	Human-morality-value	5	The content of the course includes the following topics: (1) The significance of moral norms. The golden rule of morality, (2) Honesty and lie, (3) Cooperation and competition. Egoism and altruism, (4) Individualist-collectivist perceptions of moral values. Shame and sin, and (5) Considerations on moral issues and decision making. The aim of the course is for students to substantiate the necessity of moral norms, explain the key concepts of morality (ethics), and be able to make judgments by analyzing specific situations. Teaching methods include situational issues (for ex., describe situations where the same person exudes selfishness and altruism) and discussions (for ex., what would happen if there were no moral norms?).	
7	Human-taste-culture	3	The aim of the course is for students to describe beauty by looking at it in the context of art, nature and human being. The course discusses the concepts of 'beautiful' and 'taste', the aesthetic perception of the environment around us, and beauty in art. As part of the learning process, students will give examples of the perception of beauty by different nations, examples of basic aesthetic concepts from works of art.	
7	Human being and Rights	3	The content of the course covers the concept, nature and origin of rights (norms, rules and rights), and fundamental human rights and freedoms. Through performing simple analysis and writing essays, group work, discussions, introduction to and work on core human rights documents (UDHR), students will gain knowledge of fundamental human rights and freedoms and develop analytical skills and attitudes towards these documents.	
7	Human and Economy	3	The course covers topics on economic decision making, the problem of scarcity, our needs and desires, personal budget, income distribution, savings. The aim of the course is for students to be able to combine their needs, wants and desires with the resources available to meet them, and to be able to interpret the problem of scarcity, to form a personal-family budget, and to value the role of savings. Teaching methods include discussions, brainstorming and exercises.	
7	Human and Politics	2	The course aims at enabling students to interpret the significance of politics in public relations, in the life of	

			an individual, to show the role of a person in politics through examples. Students shall be able to demonstrate the connection of politics with other spheres of public life, the impact of politics on a person and his social environment and the influence of individuals and groups on political processes through the example of situation discussion tasks.	
8	Values	7	This course aims at students to know what value is, to understand the guiding role of values in expressing a position, making decisions, expressing behaviour, showing sensitivity, empathy. The content covers (1) the concept of freedom, manifestations of freedom and limitations, (2) Justice types of justice, the moral and legal aspects of justice, (3) Equality, social and legal equality, (4) Responsibility: the value and necessity of responsibility, rights and responsibilities, (5) Tolerance and limit of tolerance.	
8	Human Rights	7	The content of the course covers (1) The main components of human rights (inalienable, indivisible, universal, interconnected), absolute rights, generations of human rights, (2) Civil and Political Rights, (3) Social, economic and cultural rights, (4) Collective rights and freedoms, (5) Digital rights and hate speech, (6) The rights of individual groups (women, PLWD, child rights). During the course, students are expected to conduct simple research, define research questions, objectives and do analysis providing links to underlying human rights documents, using the vocabulary contained in those documents. By exploring social media networks, students will also expose obvious and hidden hate speech and make comparisons with the right to freedom of expression. Discussions, debates and role-plays are also considered for teaching the course.	
8	Thinking, emotional intelligence and behaviour	7	The content of the course covers (1) Thinking, Deduction & Induction, (2) Logical delusions, (3) Cognitive illusions, (4) Emotion management and maturity, (5) Manifestations of behaviour, cooperation, competition, conflict as components of public life and driving forces. The course aims at students to form an opinion on solid facts, analyze causal links and make decisions.	
8	Teamwork and Project-based learning	8	In frames of the course, students will realize the importance of leadership and the team, be able to formulate problems through teamwork, suggest solutions, using the effective use of resources. The	

			content of the topic includes (1) Work in teams, stages of team formation, (2) Leadership, (3) Questions, (4) Problem formulation and solution steps, (5) Project work, and (6) Resource management.	
9	State: Introduction	6	Through learning about the features, functions of the state and state-citizen relation, students are expected to be able to explain the importance of the state, as well as assess the citizen-state relationship.	
9	State and Culture	7	The content of the course is as follows: The influence of culture on public life, culture as a way of life - a set of material, spiritual values, the culture of Armenia in the context of world culture, and culture as a driving force or an obstacle to the process of social change. Students are expected to also study and present about other cultures, including cultural samples of national minorities living in Armenia.	
9	State and Civil Society	16	The topics covered in the course are (1) Public Good, (2) Components and functions of civil society, (3) Advocacy and pluralism, (4) Mass Media and Human Rights, (5) Civil society and state interactions, (6) Corruption: causes, types and impact on public life. The course envisages a project approach, where students will study community issues through civil society institutions and media publications, and highlight the importance of sound awareness in shaping civil society.	
9	State and Economy	7	In frames of this course, students are expected to be able to explain what the economy is, how economic decisions are made, what features it has in Armenia. They will comment on the scarcity, supply and demand, list the participants of the Armenian economic and financial system, and present the roles of the latter through examples. They will realize the role of the state in economic growth and the economic and social welfare of the society.	
9	State and Politics	18	In frames of this course, students are expected to (1) be able to define the concepts of "state order", "structure", "governance" by making a comparison between "other states" and Armenia, (2) be able to assess the impact of the political culture and system on the realization of citizens' rights, freedoms and legitimate interests, (3) to enlist and compare the main functions of the branches of state power in Armenia through examples. The course also includes research work to be conducted by students (for example, they will have to substantiate the influence of political	

			culture types on public relations, research about the impact of democratic and undemocratic systems on public relations.	
10	Human and Society	N/A	Through in-class discussions and take-home research assignments, the chapter aims at analyzing humans, their definitive characteristics, characterization from aesthetical, moral, psychological, economic, political, positive and philosophical lenses. Moreover, the chapter aims at discovering human-society relations, human interest versus public interest, and factors affecting the evolution of society as a whole.	
10	Reasoning	N/A	Through thematic problems, essays, in-class or take-home research assignments, students are expected to master the skills of systemic and critical thinking, emphasize the importance of critical and creative thinking, critically assess the impact of artificially constructed illusions (for example, through advertisements) on reality.	
10	Economy	N/A	Through thematic problems, group and individual research, the chapter aims at introducing the allocation of economic resources and production factors, analyze the supply-demand relation and competition. It is expected from students to be capable of defining competitive market, internal and external factors affecting the market.	
10	Personal Finances	N/A	Through graphs, tables, movie screenings, brainstorming, group works and study visits to organizations handing credits, the chapter aims at developing skills to perform logical and wise financial decisions in short and long-terms.	
10	The origins of right	6	Through group works, document analyses, role-plays and simulations, the chapter aims at introducing different theories of right, its branches and sources.	
10	Political parties and interest groups	6	Through group discussions and individual research, the chapter aims at introducing differences and similarities of political parties and interest groups, explain their functions and role within democratic regimes.	
11	Components to human life	N/A	Through interviews and research, the chapter aims at analyzing the interdependence of games, education, job, leisure, happiness, faith, love and moral values, and to emphasize the differences of such interdependence (balance) across different time periods.	
11	Patterns of Social life	N/A	Through thematic problems and in-class discussions, the chapter aims at emphasizing the importance of	

			individual responsibility and self-awareness in producing a public good. Also, students are expected to enlist and analyze the necessary traits of society in order to resist present-day challenges	
11	The role of the state in the economy	N/A	Through movie screenings, research and tailored exercises, this chapter aims at developing comparative skills in students. For example, to underline differences between developing and developed economies, describe inflation, unemployment, occupation and their follow-up consequences. Students also will be able to enlist the policies of regulating supply and demand, comment on their role and implementation mechanisms.	
11	State and right	N/A	Through simulations, discussions, real-life examples and debates, this chapter aims at introducing the operation and functions of the justice system and judicial branch of a country.	
12	Political Ideologies	6	Through individual research, essays and in-class work with charts, the chapter aims at introducing the importance of the role of political ideologies in social life, differentiate the classic and modern interpretations of a certain ideology and their possible impact on human socialization/organization of public life.	
12	Human psychology and inclusive society	N/A	Through Research, this chapter aims at introducing the students to the composition of the human psyche, its functions, psychological processes, individual traits of a man. With this, students will be able to assess inclusion as one of the values serving as a foundation of human development.	
12	Philosophy	N/A	Through reflective essays and individual research, the chapter aims at introducing the students to the main problems in philosophy and media literacy, leading to the development of critical thinking.	
12	International commerce, economy of development	N/A	Through research, the chapter introduces the basics of international trade, the role of state intervention in free trade, as well as economic characteristics of development.	
12	International law	N/A	Through research, the chapter introduces the main sources of international law, relations of a state and international law. Acquired knowledge later to be applied to Armenia.	
12	International relations and foreign policy	12	Through group discussions and work with charts, the chapter introduces the basics of the international system and main ways of relations of its actors. Later, students will be able to enlist and analyze main	

			characteristics of big, medium and small states' foreign policies.	
12	Global challenges to humanity	N/A	Through group discussions and group projects, the chapter aims at developing the skills of assessment among students. For example, to analyze positive and negative influences of globalization, ways to overcome them, and help them to reevaluate the harmonious co-existence between humans and nature.	