A nation should require all of its students to study the same national curriculum until they enter college.

Write a response in which you discuss your views on the policy and explain your reasoning for the position you take. In developing and supporting your position, you should consider the possible consequences of implementing the policy and explain how these consequences shape your position.

The issue of whether education should be standardized for the entire country is a contentious one. It is in the government's best interests to ensure its population is literate, and some would argue that having the same national curriculum until college is a way to achieve this. However, in my opinion, I mostly disagree with this sentiment for a number of reasons. There are three main aspects of this issue that must be considered.

First, if the curriculum is the same for the entire country, it becomes easier for the government to get rid of subjects or topics that they believe to harm their political interests. They may modify or simply remove such material, and all schools of the country would have to follow through with this. Consider the edits and changes made in Indian textbooks in 2023: A chapter in the 9th grade science textbook called 'Heredity and Evolution' was edited to remove the topic of evolution, with a rename to 'Heredity'. While proponents of the change argue that such topics have been covered in other chapters, opponents have claimed that the ruling political party did so because of its supposed religious disagreements with Darwin's theory, and that such a measure would fundamentally affect students' ability to think scientifically. This was one of many edits and removals that led many to believe that the government was determined to push its political agenda. In some cases, even history textbooks were changed to exclude riots that were once caused by the current ruling party. Since India has multiple education boards, such decisions did not affect every single student or board. Thus, requiring all students to study a nationalized curriculum could allow governments to abuse their power.

Second, in the case of a more distributed system with different education boards, boards and associated schools would be able to better customize their education for the local student population. In countries with high amounts of language diversity, schools in a non-centralized system could better meet the needs of their students, while appreciating and embracing their own culture. In the case of India, the benefits of such a scheme are visible: Students of Northern states generally study Hindi, English, and an optional third language like Sanskrit, while Southern students study English, a choice between their state language and Hindi, and an optional third language. In this case, a student hailing from the South can study English, Hindi, and, say, Kannada; they can study English and Hindi while not having to sacrifice learning and mastering their own mother tongues.

Finally, one could argue that in a highly varied education system, it would be hard for students who move across the country to adapt to the local curriculum. This is a reasonable concern, but is one that could be addressed in other ways, by perhaps standardizing only a portion of national curriculum to include national languages. Education boards can also take measures to ensure that students in high school are taught a variety of subjects to some minimum level of depth, so as to encourage them to go to college. While changes in environment would be enormous for a student who moves across the country, this does not warrant standardizing the curriculum of a nation.

In conclusion, I mostly disagree with the prompt's claim. The power of a government in changing the contents of a national curriculum are huge, and rewriting history would change the perceptions of young people, whose best interests must be looked after in taking such a decision. Distributed systems could permit students to learn more about their city and state, while also learning about their country and the world. It is important for students to learn and embrace their culture, and a distributed system would greatly help them in doing so.