

POSITION STATEMENTS

Instructional Strategies

Research-based studies have determined that students have a variety of learning styles. Therefore, it is essential for teachers to use a differentiated approach to instruction in order to meet the needs of all students. Students learn and retain information more effectively when they are actively involved in the learning process. Instruction should stimulate critical-thinking skills that enable students to analyze, critique, and evaluate data. Primary sources, the most current technology, literature, the arts, group and individual projects, current events, and community service are all appropriate instructional strategies for the social sciences classroom. Effective teachers find ways to model inquiry-based learning concepts that help students gain independence as they develop strong study habits and accept responsibility for their own learning.

In an ever-changing world, it becomes even more critical for students to develop an understanding of how today's world developed, the reasons from which conflict grows, and why and how differing peoples relate to each other and their world views. Facts, including historical dates, events, people, and places, are critical to an understanding of history. There is an implied understanding throughout this document that facts must be taught and mastered for students to have a foundation from which to develop historical reasoning. Content standards are developed to require an increase in rigor of the curriculum beyond the level of rote memory; however, this does not indicate that classroom instruction should not require students to learn key points.

It is also important for students to memorize and recite as part of their class work. The shared core knowledge of our common history is indispensable in a modern culture. Recitation of the Preamble to the Constitution, speeches from politicians and soldiers, poetry, or letters from a period in history build in each student an appreciation of the cost of history to a people.

Primary Sources

Primary sources enrich the social studies program and enable students to visualize and empathize with people of other times and places. Content standards throughout this course of study can be enhanced by incorporating primary sources into classroom instruction. Modern technology has made access to primary sources virtually unlimited. Teachers are encouraged to actively search for resources and Web sites that meet the needs of students. The United States Library of Congress provides a wealth of historical data that documents our nation's history. Museums, libraries, and cultural centers open doors to the arts, writings, and imaginings of people throughout the world. The richness of primary source materials expands the social studies class by broadening student learning and making history a living concept.

Literature and the Arts

The goal of a comprehensive education is the development of a literate student. Literature has a substantial place, not just in the English class, but also in the social sciences class. Novels, stories, poems, biographies, and autobiographies open doors to varied times, places, and events and encourage students to become immersed in those stories. Good literature enables students to explore issues or ideas in a safe environment as they learn to make judgments about actions and emotions of others. The National Council for the Social Studies (NCSS) provides a printed as well as Web site listing of suggested readings for young people.

The arts, including music, dance, drama, and visual art, provide rich resources for gaining knowledge and understanding of our own as well as other cultures. Instruction in the social sciences classroom should provide opportunities for students to explore all aspects of the arts. At the lower grade levels, the arts are the perfect vehicle for thematic-based teaching in the social sciences while students in the upper grades benefit from cross-curricular experiences. Teachers are encouraged to conduct research for connecting the historical period and place being studied to appropriate arts topics, including live arts experiences that expand student understanding of that moment in time. In addition, arts education organizations throughout the state provide another arts resource for the social sciences classroom.

Global Connections

The NCSS deems it essential for students to develop an understanding of the realities of global interdependence among world societies and the United States' place in a global society. Students need to be able to address international issues such as human rights, the environment, and economic competition and interdependence. In order for the United States to maintain its competitive edge, students need an understanding of the peoples of many cultures and civilizations who developed ideas, institutions, and ways of life that are both different from and similar to their own.

Activities that encourage students to examine events from the perspectives of other cultures and religions are essential in helping students clarify their understandings and broaden their viewpoints. These activities also allow students to appreciate differences and similarities among citizens of the United States and how these bind them together in unity as a free people. Through the study of others, students can better understand themselves and can better achieve the goal of becoming responsible citizens of this nation and of today's global society.

Service Learning

Service learning is a teaching and learning method that connects meaningful community service experiences with academic learning and personal growth. Students in Grades K-12 can utilize the knowledge and skills learned in the classroom to address real needs in the community. Teachers should encourage students to work toward developing service-learning projects that seek to address actual needs of the community in an innovative manner. In this way, students gain valuable learning experiences that deepen their understanding not only of the curriculum, but also of civic responsibility, including what it means to be responsible community members. The National Service-Learning Clearinghouse's Web site is an excellent resource for teachers and students seeking to find information and projects to help make a difference in the life of the community.

Current Events

Knowledge about and analysis of current events are vital to responsible citizenship. The inclusion of current events is an essential element of the K-12 social studies program. Current events should be incorporated at each grade level in all social studies courses, and teachers should make every effort to relate the curriculum being studied to events occurring in the community, state, nation, and world. Traditional media, social networking outlets, podcasts, blogs, and other reliable options from the World Wide Web are among the many resources that can be used in obtaining and integrating current events into classroom instruction.

Technology

Technology influences all areas of education. It enables teachers to teach and students to learn in ways not previously possible. If applied appropriately, technology can allow teachers to extend learning experiences beyond the traditional textbook through a variety of resources and methods of instruction. In addition, technology provides opportunities for students to construct and enhance their own knowledge and to develop lifelong learning skills.

As technology is constantly evolving and while equipment and resources are increasingly available to both the teacher and the student, it is incumbent upon instructors to remain current in curriculum planning as well as in instructional methodology. A variety of technological equipment and resources is available to both teachers and students. As technology continues to be an important tool in our everyday lives, it is essential that teachers model and emphasize ways for students to use and manage technological equipment and resources. Instruction that incorporates multiple ways for obtaining information serves to better prepare students for responsible citizenship. In addition, teachers have a responsibility to help students learn to evaluate the validity of information they find in their research, including the sites they visit, and to appropriately attribute information used from the Internet.

Criteria for Advanced Classes Junior High

The Social Studies Department uses the following criteria to recommend students for advanced classes:

1. Test Scores:
 - SAI 125/94%
 - Reading comprehension 95thile or above
 - Language achievement 95thile or above
 - Social Studies achievement (6th only) 93-99

2. Grades:
 - Social Studies Semester Average 92 Advanced/95 Regular
 - English Semester Average 92 Advanced/95 Regular

3. Exhibits organizational skills through a strong work ethic:
 - Establishes priorities
 - Time management
 - Independence
 - Punctuality
 - Exceeds minimum standards

4. Exhibits a positive attitude toward reading and learning:
 - Displays an interest in the Social Studies
 - Positively contributes to class discussions
 - Demonstrates leadership within the class and in smaller groups
 - Enjoys reading

Criteria for Advanced/AP Classes High School

The following criteria are considered when recommending students for advanced or AP classes.

1. Student record:
 - standardized test scores (PSAT) of 85th percentile or above (and/or)
 - grade average of A or B in humanities classes (and/or)
 - current or past success in advanced or AP social studies and/or English classes

2. Professional staff recommendations based on the above criteria.

For all advanced and AP classes the student must maintain a 74 average or above to remain in the class.

Social Studies Outside Reading List

5th Grade

*These books are in addition to those on the Language Arts Outside Reading List.

Blood on the River, Elisa Carbone

The Woods Runner, Gary Paulsen

6th Grade

*All 6th grade books are also on Language Arts Outside Reading List.

Ruby Holler, Sharon Creech

Out of the Dust, Karen Hesse

Bud, Not Buddy, Christopher Paul Curtis

Esperanza Rising, Pam Munoz Ryan

Roll of Thunder Hear My Cry, Mildred Taylor

The Cay, Theodore Taylor

Four Perfect Pebbles, Marion Blumenthal Lazen

Daniel's Story, Carol Matos

The Watsons Go to Birmingham, Christopher Paul Curtis

7th grade

When My Name was Keoko, Linda Sue Park

9th Grade

All Quiet on the Western Front, Erich Maria Remarque

9th Grade Advanced Only

The Prince, Niccolo Machiavelli

11th Grade Outside Reading, AP United States History:

Killer Angels, Michael Shaara

The Jungle, Upton Sinclair

Up From Slavery, Booker T. Washington

Sister Carrie, Theodore Dreiser

How the Other Half Lives, Jacob Riis

Profiles in Courage, John Kennedy

The American Dilemma, Gunnar Myrdal

Band of Brothers, Stephen Ambrose

The Lonely Crowd, David Riesman

The Affluent Society, John Kenneth Galbraith

12th Grade Outside Reading, US Government

The Ugly American, William Lederer & Eugene Burdick

12th Grade Outside Reading, Economics (Regular)

Murder at the Margin, Marshall Jevons

The Invisible Heart: An Economic Romance, Russell Roberts

12th Grade Outside Reading, AP Economics

The Fatal Equilibrium, Marshall Jevons

Literacy Standards for Grades 6-12: History/Social Studies, Science, and Technical Subjects

College and Career Readiness Anchor Standards for Reading

The Grades 6-12 standards on the following pages define what students should understand and be able to do by the end of each grade span. They correspond to the College and Career Readiness (CCR) anchor standards below by number. The CCR and grade-specific standards are necessary complements—the former providing broad standards, the latter providing additional specificity—that together define the skills and understandings that all students must demonstrate.

Key Ideas and Details

1. Read closely to determine what the text says explicitly and to make logical inferences from it; cite specific textual evidence when writing or speaking to support conclusions drawn from text.
2. Determine central ideas or themes of a text and analyze their development; summarize the key supporting details and ideas.
3. Analyze how and why individuals, events, or ideas develop and interact over the course of a text.

Craft and Structure

4. Interpret words and phrases as they are used in a text, including determining technical, connotative, and figurative meanings, and analyze how specific word choices shape meaning or tone.
5. Analyze the structure of texts, including how specific sentences, paragraphs, and larger portions of the text (e.g., a section, chapter, scene, or stanza) relate to each other and the whole.
6. Assess how point of view or purpose shapes the content and style of text.

Integration of Knowledge and Ideas

7. Integrate and evaluate content presented in diverse formats and media, including visually and quantitatively, as well as in words.*
8. Delineate and evaluate the argument and specific claims in a text, including the validity of the reasoning as well as the relevance and sufficiency of the evidence.
9. Analyze how two or more texts address similar themes or topics in order to build knowledge or to compare the approaches the authors take.

Range of Reading and Level of Text Complexity

10. Read and comprehend complex literary and informational texts independently and proficiently.

*See College and Career Readiness Anchor Standards for Writing, “Research to Build and Present Knowledge,” on page 149 for additional standards relevant to gathering, assessing, and applying information from print and digital sources.

College and Career Readiness Anchor Standards for Writing

The Grades 6-12 standards on the following pages define what students should understand and be able to do by the end of each grade span. They correspond to the College and Career Readiness (CCR) anchor standards below by number. The CCR and grade-specific standards are necessary complements—the former providing broad standards, the latter providing additional specificity—that together define the skills and understandings that all students must demonstrate.

Text Types and Purposes*

1. Write arguments to support claims in an analysis of substantive topics or texts using valid reasoning and relevant and sufficient evidence.
2. Write informative/explanatory texts to examine and convey complex ideas and information clearly and accurately through the effective selection, organization, and analysis of content.
3. Write narratives to develop real or imagined experiences or events using effective technique, well-chosen details, and well-structured event sequences.

Production and Distribution of Writing

4. Produce clear and coherent writing in which the development, organization, and style are appropriate to task, purpose, and audience.
5. Develop and strengthen writing as needed by planning, revising, editing, rewriting, or trying a new approach.
6. Use technology, including the Internet, to produce and publish writing and to interact and collaborate with others.

Research to Build and Present Knowledge

7. Conduct short as well as more sustained research projects based on focused questions, demonstrating understanding of the subject under investigation.
8. Gather relevant information from multiple print and digital sources, assess the credibility and accuracy of each source, and integrate the information while avoiding plagiarism.
9. Draw evidence from literary or informational texts to support analysis, reflection, and research.

Range of Writing

10. Write routinely over extended time frames (time for research, reflection, and revision) and shorter time frames (a single sitting or a day or two) for a range of tasks, purposes, and audiences.

*These broad types of writing include many subgenres.