



**Kansas Standards
For
History
Government
And
Social Studies**

Adopted April 16, 2013

Best Practices and Literacy Expectations

The following expectations are the foundation for quality History, Government, and Social Studies instruction and learning.

America's greatness is reflected in its ability to innovate, analyze complex problems, ask cogent questions, assemble and evaluate critical data, and seek creative solutions, going beyond the recall of factual information. These are the skills of a democratic citizen, and failure to teach them threatens the future of the United States. To be an American citizen requires developing a democratic mind—the intellectual ability to entertain contradictory or opposing ideas, hold tentative judgments, and make decisions based on facts supported by evidence.¹ This critical thinking is essential to the study of many subjects, but is particularly important when studying history, civics, geography, and economics. None of us are born with this capability. Author Sam Wineburg describes this sort of critical thinking as an “unnatural act.”² So it must be taught. Thomas Jefferson wrote in 1824, “The qualifications for self-government in society are not innate. They are the result of habit and long training.”³

To prepare students to become effective twenty-first-century citizens requires more than a traditional knowledge of content. We must go beyond simple recitation of foundational information and instead encourage the application of that information in authentic and realistic situations. Inquiry in social studies involves using information from a variety of sources and analyzing that information with increasingly sophisticated disciplinary strategies and tools. The following practices and expectations can assist in the design of high-quality instructional lessons and units. The practices and expectations reflect the Kansas College and Career Standards for English Language Arts & for Literacy in History/Social Studies, Science, and Technical Subjects⁴ often referred to as the Common Core, and current research in discipline-specific best practices. Framed in the Benchmarks, these expectations exist in all grade levels and in increasing degrees of sophistication.

Effective Instruction Promotes

Reading a variety of primary and secondary sources so that it is possible to

- determine the meaning and main idea, identifying and analyzing evidence, relationships, and supporting details.
- interpret words, discipline-specific phrases, analyze text structure, identify purpose, bias, and point of view.
- evaluate an argument or claim citing evidence in support of, or against, the argument or claim.
- analyze two or more texts on the same topic drawing conclusions about the similarities and differences.
- comprehend complex and difficult text within the discipline.
- identify and evaluate critical information communicated in multiple forms of media.

Writing clearly and coherently

- to support a claim, or make an argument using evidence, logic, and reasoning.
- to inform or explain an event, relationship, position, or opinion.
- to tell a story.
- so that each example is open to revision and rewriting.
- by applying the appropriate technologies for the purpose and audience.
- by gathering multiple sources of information and integrating them into short and long term projects.

Communicating effectively by

- preparing and collaborating with diverse partners in conversations about topics within the discipline.
- evaluating information from various formats.
- presenting information and evaluation to others in a manner that is not totally written text.
- gathering and organizing information and evidence.
- designing and delivering a presentation on a specific topic.
- using multiple modes of communication and adjusting presentations to meet the requirements of the task or audience.

Effective instruction includes

Multiple perspectives and disciplines

Using multiple perspectives, points of view, and the principles of history, economics, civics, geography, and the humanities, supports students' ability to empathize, to develop alternative solutions to problems, and to self-assess their own position.

Multiple causes and consequences

Identifying and defending a variety of possible causes of events, and the resulting consequences, encourages appropriate decision-making and helps students understand the complexity of the various disciplines.

The use of primary sources

Requiring students to analyze and interpret a variety of primary sources in traditional and digital formats provides the opportunity for students to recognize the discipline's subjective nature, directly touch the lives of people in the past, and develop high level analytical skills.

Authentic intellectual work

Learning that supports realistic situations and college and career-ready pathways has value beyond the classroom, engaging students in the construction of knowledge, disciplined inquiry, and connection to the real world.

Higher order thinking

Grappling with content knowledge beyond remembering and understanding, to applying, analyzing, evaluating, and creating.

Literacy within the Social Studies

Reading, comprehending, analyzing, and interpreting complex texts and media from various social studies disciplines.

Multiple means of communication

Communicate relevant information through speaking, writing, and the creation of digital and print media.

Research and construction of knowledge

Students must be able to collect and organize information in order to construct an understanding of relevant evidence as it applies to a particular topic. These skills must include the ability to use both traditional and digital formats and media types.

1. Davis, James E., Hartoonian, H. Michael, Van Scotter, Richard D., & White, William E. (2012) "Restoring Civic Purpose in Schools," Education Week.
2. Wineburg, S. S. (2001). *Historical thinking and other unnatural acts: charting the future of teaching the past*. Philadelphia: Temple University Press.
3. Bergh, A. E., & Lipscomb, A. (1903). *The Writings of Thomas Jefferson*. Washington D.C.: Thomas Jefferson Memorial Association of the United States. 20 vols. 16:20-22.
4. Kansas State Department of Education. (2010). Kansas College and Career Ready Standards for English Language Arts & Literacy in History/Social Studies, Science, and Technical Subjects. Pages 60-66.

Kansas History, Government, and Social Studies Standards

Standard # 1 Choices have consequences.

Benchmark:

- 1.1 The student will recognize and evaluate significant choices made by individuals, communities, states, and nations that have impacted our lives and futures.
- 1.2 The student will analyze the context under which choices are made and draw conclusions about the motivations and goals of the decision-makers.
- 1.3 The student will investigate examples of causes and consequences of particular choices and connect those choices with contemporary issues.
- 1.4 The student will use his/her understanding of choices and consequences to construct a decision-making process and to justify a decision.

Standard # 2 Individuals have rights and responsibilities.

Benchmark:

- 2.1 The student will recognize and evaluate the rights and responsibilities of people living in societies.
- 2.2 The student will analyze the context under which significant rights and responsibilities are defined and demonstrated, their various interpretations, and draw conclusions about those interpretations.
- 2.3 The student will investigate specific rights and responsibilities of individuals and connect those rights and responsibilities with contemporary issues.
- 2.4 The student will use his/her understanding of rights and responsibilities to address contemporary issues.

Standard # 3 Societies are shaped by beliefs, ideas, and diversity.

Benchmark:

- 3.1** The student will recognize and evaluate significant beliefs, contributions, and ideas of the many diverse peoples and groups and their impact on individuals, communities, states, and nations.
- 3.2** The student will draw conclusions about significant beliefs, contributions, and ideas, analyzing the origins and context under which these competing ideals were reached and the multiple perspectives from which they come.
- 3.3** The student will investigate specific beliefs, contributions, ideas, and/or diverse populations and connect those beliefs, contributions, ideas and/or diversity to contemporary issues.
- 3.4** The student will use his/her understanding of those beliefs, contributions, ideas, and diversity to justify or define how community, state, national, and international ideals shape contemporary society.

Standard # 4 Societies experience continuity and change over time.

Benchmark:

- 4.1** The student will recognize and evaluate continuity and change over time and its impact on individuals, institutions, communities, states, and nations.
- 4.2** The student will analyze the context of continuity and change and the vehicles of reform, drawing conclusions about past change and potential future change.
- 4.3** The student will investigate an example of continuity and/or change and connect that continuity and/or change to a contemporary issue.
- 4.4** The student will use his/her understanding of continuity and change to construct a model for contemporary reform.

Standard # 5 Relationships among people, places, ideas, and environments are dynamic.

Benchmark:

- 5.1 The student will recognize and evaluate dynamic relationships that impact lives in communities, states, and nations.**
- 5.2 The student will analyze the context of significant relationships and draw conclusions about a contemporary world.**
- 5.3 The student will investigate the relationship among people, places, ideas, and/or the environment and connect those relationships to contemporary issues.**
- 5.4 The student will use his/her understanding of these dynamic relationships to create a personal, community, state, and/or national narrative.**