

Instructional Vision for Social Studies

Foundational Beliefs

1. Social studies instruction is built upon posing important questions that drive inquiry for students.
2. Social studies must ask students to view events through multiple perspectives to help the student better understand his/her place in society.
3. Social studies instruction must blend the teaching of higher level thinking skills, with an emphasis on critical analysis, around the content that shapes our past, present and future.
4. Social studies instruction must place the student at the center and ensure all students engage in authentic learning experiences aligned to the *Kentucky Academic Standards (KAS) for Social Studies*, including analysis, democratic discourse, writing and resolution.
5. Students are challenged to engage with difficult social studies concepts.
6. Social studies instruction should be made relevant to the students by making implicit and explicit connections to the life of the student.

Priorities for Curriculum Design

- Units of study are designed around a compelling question that creates cognitive dissonance for students and drives instruction. Additional supporting questions will be created by the PLC and used to scaffold student learning to engage with the unit's compelling question.
- Compelling and supporting questions will challenge students to explore concepts with a goal of drawing conclusions grounded in relevant evidence. In order for students to explore compelling questions, they must be exposed to a variety of sources (i.e. primary texts, visual representations, audio recordings). To support students in drawing and communicating conclusions, they must have access to a variety of primary and secondary sources from multiple perspectives.

Priorities for Tier 1 (Core) Instruction

- The goal of all Social Studies instruction in Woodford County is for students to understand, explain and challenge human behavior in the past, present and future. All students should be able to read, write and talk about social studies. Reading, listening, claim making, informed debate and writing prevail as the core of social studies instruction.
- Modeling of close reading practices and discipline specific writing with feedback are frequently in place in the classroom. Interactive lectures, clear modeling of thinking

and explicit connections made for students remain a part of teaching and learning in the social studies classroom to support the core of social studies instruction.

- This can be accomplished by communicating conclusions, constructing arguments around compelling questions and engaging in the inquiry practices in the *KAS for Social Studies*.

Priorities for Assessment

- The majority of assessments in social studies should focus on asking students to synthesize information and communicate that understanding through authentic formative and summative assessment.
- Authentic assessment experiences will range from students constructing an argument in response to compelling questions such as, “Do rules make Kindergarten better?” at a primary level to creating arguments around deeper topics such as, “Does the United States intervene in the conflicts of other nations equally, equitably or neither?” at the secondary level.
- Students should come to conclusions through completing a series of formative tasks in response to supporting questions (i.e. writing, debates, t-charts, structured discussions). Students will then complete a summative performance task in response to the compelling question.
- Summative assessment tasks should emphasize the ability of the student to take information from a variety of sources and use them to craft logical arguments in various forms (i.e. speech/podcast, essay, poster).
- Assessments can be extended in the form of a policy writing activity, documentary or perspective-taking exercise. Peers should be provided the opportunity to review and provide feedback to each other on these authentic assessments.
- Assessment in social studies allows for traditional assessment. Foundational events and dates that must be stored in memory in order to apply to literacy, future historical events and aid in general comprehension through life. These assessments should be used appropriately and not in lieu of authentic assessments but rather as formative checks within units.