

SOCIAL STUDIES INQUIRY: WHAT TO LOOK FOR

The categories below represent best practices in inquiry-based instruction for Social Studies.

QUESTIONING

Students are guided through the inquiry process by an essential/compelling question that is open-ended, includes transferable ideas, requires justification, recurs over time.

Every inquiry includes opportunities for student questioning, teacher questioning, & follow up questions that reach higher level thinking.

SWIRL

Students make their thinking visible through multiple modalities:

- speaking
- writing
- illustrating*
- reading
- listening

*Illustrating could mean analyzing a visual or creating an illustration.

SOURCE ANALYSIS

Students analyze primary and secondary sources from multiple perspectives and in different formats. Possible sources could include:

- articles, diaries, letters, & legal documents
- photos, timelines, charts, cartoons, & artwork
- artifacts, objects, maps, & globes
- audio, field trips, speakers, & experiential learning

CIVIC & CIVIL DISCOURSE

Students communicate their thoughts and take informed action by:

- using reliable evidence
- constructing relevant explanations and viable claims
- critiquing the credibility and relevance of their own as well as other's use of evidence, explanations, and claims
- assessing the impact of their ideas and actions on a wide array of audiences

DISCIPLINARY THINKING

Students exercise disciplinary thinking, make claims, and support their thinking with evidence throughout the inquiry process:

- asking questions like a historian, geographer, political scientist, economist, etc.
- analyzing sources/making observations to find patterns, trends, & relationships
- sourcing and using multiple perspectives
- establishing context and corroborating evidence
- communicating using the formats and tools of the disciplines