

TRUTHS IN ELEMENTARY SOCIAL STUDIES

SOCIAL STUDIES TRUTHS WE MUST LIVE BY

We know that...

Social Studies is a **discipline**, not a content area. Instruction should be **driven by inquiry** that employs **content as a vehicle for understanding larger concepts and developing specific skills**.

Social studies should be part of **daily** instruction at all grade levels.

Social studies **cannot solely be taught through the Common Core ELA modules** and domains.

Local **curriculum maps** and the **NYS Social Studies K-12 Framework** define what social studies content, concepts, and skills should be taught at each grade level. **Textbooks do not dictate** instructional progressions.

We are responsible for implementing instruction aimed to satisfy the requirements of both the Common Core and the **NYS Social Studies Learning Standards**.

So...

We must design learning experiences that ask students to **develop social studies-specific skills and build understandings of broad social studies concepts** as they use content to create **answers to essential questions**. We don't want kids to just memorize content for content's sake.

We must structure our plans to incorporate social studies content, concepts, and skills in an **integrated and cohesive** way. This does not mean we must only do social studies for exactly 40 minutes within an isolated standalone period every day.

We must look for times when social studies content, concepts, and/or skills line up with ELA and build off of that foundation to optimize student learning. We must also look for when the social studies curriculum isn't covered by ELA and **plan in an equally thoughtful way to cohesively address those gaps**.

We have to use **authentic sources, documents, and artifacts** to engage students in learning about the **required curriculum** at the grade levels we teach.

We must be sure that we **plan instruction that touches on each aspect of our report card indicators during every 10-week marking period**. Our report card indicators are aligned with NYS Standards.

HOW ARE OUR NYS SOCIAL STUDIES LEARNING STANDARDS TIED TO OUR REPORT CARD INDICATORS?

We most often work with four major disciplines in social studies: history, geography, government, and economics. Our elementary report card indicators for social studies tie directly to these disciplines and to the practices listed in our NYS K-12 Social Studies Framework as follows. While there may be a particular focus area or emphasis in class depending on the time of year, we should be planning learning experiences that touch on, and we should be issuing a grade for, each of the report card indicators every marking period.

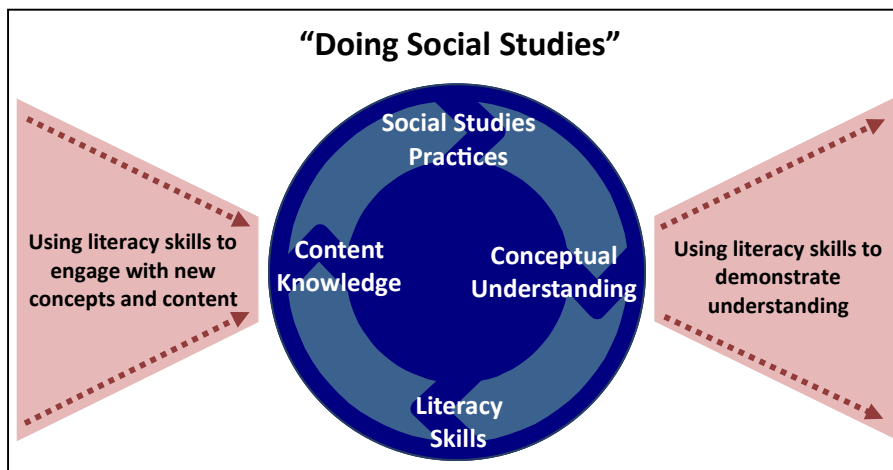
New York State Social Studies Practices

- Gathering, Using, & Interpreting Evidence
- Chronological Reasoning & Causation
- Comparison & Contextualization
- Geographic Reasoning
- Economics & Economic Systems
- Civic Participation

RCSD Elementary Report Card Indicators

- Gathering, Using, & Interpreting Evidence
- Historical Thinking
- Geographic Reasoning
- Social & Political Participation
- Economics & Economic Systems

DOING SOCIAL STUDIES IS TEACHING LITERACY...



Authentic social studies instruction is inherently based on a foundation of critical literacy skills. The only way to engage in learning new content, make meaning of broad concepts, or develop specific social studies skills is to employ the skills outlined in the Common Core standards for literacy (reading, writing, listening, etc.). Likewise, the only ways to demonstrate true understanding or mastery is through critical Common Core literacy skills (speaking, presenting, writing, creating, etc.).

... BUT TEACHING LITERACY IS NOT ALWAYS DOING SOCIAL STUDIES

While "Doing Social Studies" is inherently an exercise in critical literacy, we must remember that engaging students in literacy instruction does not mean we are engaging them in true social studies. For instance, we could be reading about the United States Constitution for information (content-based), but if we're only reading for comprehension, we cannot call that social studies. If we take that content about the Constitution and discuss it in context of the time it was written or an event today (the social studies skill of contextualization or perspective-taking), or link that content to big ideas like government or human rights (social studies concepts), then we are really "Doing Social Studies".



THE STRUCTURE OF SOCIAL STUDIES CURRICULUM

The New York State K-12 Social Studies Framework defines the concepts, content, and skills that should be the focus of our work with students (<http://www.engageny.org/resource/new-york-state-k-12-social-studies-framework>). This curriculum spirals up through the grade levels, asking students to engage in more complex thinking as they progress through their school careers. The repetition of particular content and concepts is intentional. As students become more sophisticated learners, they examine our past and present in a multifaceted way, looking at events using multiple perspectives and viewpoints. Many core concepts are revisited throughout the years while specific content varies at each grade level. The New York State Social Studies Curriculum is sequenced as follows:



Grade 12: Participation in Government and Economics, the Enterprise System, & Finance

Grade 11: US History and Government

Grade 10: Global History and Geography II

Grade 9: Global History and Geography I

Grade 8: History of the United States and New York II

Grade 7: History of the United States and New York I

Grade 6: The Eastern Hemisphere

Grade 5: The Western Hemisphere

Grade 4: Local History and Local Government

Grade 3: Communities Around the World

Grade 2: My Community and Other Communities

Grade 1: My Family and Other Families, Now and Long Ago

Kindergarten: Self & Others