

ESSENTIAL SOCIAL STUDIES SKILLS AND STRATEGIES

SOCIAL STUDIES SKILLS AND STRATEGIES enables students to apply knowledge proficiently in a variety of contexts in repeated performances. They promote the participation of studies in civic life and develop their ability to address societal conflicts and problems. Throughout pre K-12 education, such skills and strategies must be developed through sequential systematic instruction and practice. These should be continually and applied through a process of extension, expansion, and illumination in greater complexity that takes advantage of students' academic progress and growth. Curriculum documents and classroom materials should emphasize these skills and strategies, which include:

<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Literacy Skills• Critical Thinking Skills• Research-Based Literacy Strategies for Teachers	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Learning Strategies• Personal Interaction and Civic Engagement Strategies
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SKILLS

Literacy Skills

A strong emphasis must be placed on various types of literacy, from financial to technological, from media to mathematical, from content to cultural. Literacy may be defined as the ability of an individual to use information to function in society, to achieve goals, and to develop her or his knowledge and potential. Teachers emphasize certain aspects of literacy over others, depending on the nature of the content and skills they want students to learn. The following literacy skills for social studies are intended to be exemplary rather than definitive.

- Listens, read, write, and speak with comprehension and clarity
- Define and apply discipline-based conceptual vocabulary
- Describe people, places, and events, and the connections between and among them
- Arrange events in chronological sequence
- Differentiate fact from opinion
- Determine an author's purpose
- Determine and analyze similarities and differences
- Analyze cause and effect relationships
- Explore complex patterns, interactions and relationships
- Differentiate between and among various options
- Develop an ability to use and apply abstract principals
- Explore and/or observe, identify, and analyze how individuals and/or institutions relate to one another
- Locate, analyze, critique, and use appropriate resources and data
- Evaluate sources for validity and credibility and to detect bias, propaganda, and censorship
- Use a wide variety of media to access, analyze, evaluate, and create messages and reports
- Investigate, interpret, and analyze multiple historical and contemporary sources and viewpoints
- Articulate and construct reasoned arguments from diverse perspectives and frames of reference
- Present solutions to problems by analyzing conflicts and evaluating persistent issue

Critical Thinking Skills

Critical thinking skills demonstrate the ability to reflect on content in order to form a solid judgment based on both evidence and common sense. Critical thinkers gain knowledge through reading, observations, and experience, which enables them to identify relationships and determine the accuracy, clarity, reliability, relevance, and importance of what they learned.

The practice of these skills requires the ability to conduct research and obtain information through a variety of technologies, and to interpret, analyze, synthesize and evaluate information.

RESEARCH, INFORMATION AND TECHNOLOGY SKILLS

Locate Information

- Use library, online, or other search tools to locate sources
- Use key words, tables, indexes, and bibliographies to locate information
- Use sources of information in the community

Explore Information

- Use relevant parts of a text, document, visual, electronic, or audio source
- Conduct interviews of individuals in the community
- Evaluate sources of information – print, visual, electronic, audio
- Use maps, globes, graphic, representation and tools, and geographic information systems
- Interpret the social and political message of cartoons
- Interpret history through artifacts

Organize information in usable forms

- Construct outlines
- Make summaries
- Compile bibliographies
- Prepare other products that organize information

Use computer-based technology and media/communication technology

- Operate input devices
- Operate other media/communication technology
- Operate appropriate multimedia sources for directed and independent learning activities
- Use internet based information networks
- Utilize tools and resources to manage and communicate information including correspondence, finances, data, charts, and graphics
- Use online information resources and communities to meet the need for collaboration, research, publications and communication
- Use tools for research, information analysis, problem-solving, and decision making in learning

Interpret Information

- State relationships between categories of information
- Draw inference from factual material
- Predict likely outcomes based on factual information
- Recognize and interpret different points of view
- Recognize instances in which more than one interpretation is valid
- Transfer knowledge into new contexts

Analyze information

- Form a simple organization of key ideas related to a topic
- Separate a topic into major components according to appropriate criteria
- Examine relationships between and among elements of a topic critically
- Detect bias in data presented in various forms
- Compare and contrast the credibility of differing ideas, elements, or accounts

Synthesize information

- Propose a new plan of operation, system, or scheme based on available data
- Reinterpret events by related knowledge from several disciplines
- Present information extracted from one format in a different format, e.g., print to visual
- Communicate concisely both orally and in writing

Evaluate Information

- Determine whether or not sources are valid and credible
- Estimate the adequacy of the information
- Test the validity of the information, using such criteria as source, objectivity, technical correctness, and currency
- Understand legal/ethical issues related to access and use of information

STRATEGIES

Researched-Based Literacy Strategies for Teachers

Research suggests that some broad-based literacy strategies can assist students in their comprehension of a variety of written sources. It is best to teach and practice these while students engage in learning challenging content. These can be divided into three categories, as indicated below:

Before

- Reviewing vocabulary that will be encountered in reading
- Connecting to students prior knowledge
- Making predictions about what the next text might say
- Identifying text features including headings, charts/graphs/tables, illustrations, and maps
- Setting targets or objectives

During

- Drawing a non-linguistic representation, or image
- Asking questions about key ideas
- Identifying unfamiliar ideas, concepts, or words to work with later

After

- Summarizing and note-taking
- Comparing notes with those of other students
- Providing substantive homework and practice
- Reinforcing effort and providing recognition

Learning Strategies

The descriptions of strategies used to learn social studies content, skills, and dispositions that are recorded below are not intended to be prescriptive or comprehensive. Teachers who wish to develop one or more of these learning strategies will be able to find detailed descriptions in reputable sources or through professional development opportunities. While characteristics of some strategies appear similar (e.g., finding factual information), each constitutes a unique skill set when considered as a whole.

Decision-making

- Identify a situation in which a decision is required
- Secure need factual information relevant to making the decision
- Identify alternative courses of action, and predict likely consequences of each
- Define the criteria to be met for one of the alternatives to emerge as the best alternative
- Make decisions based on the criteria and the data obtained
- Take action to implement the decisions
- Examine and evaluate consequences

Inquiry Learning

- Be curious, and ask powerful and complex questions
- Observe, investigate, and explore to develop understanding
- Organize, create, and communicate ideas and results
- Discuss, connect, and/or compare with other works
- Reflect to monitor progress, and self-evaluate

Issue Analysis

- Define the issue and identify key opposing positions
- Find and present information support each position
- Determine conflicting values or beliefs
- Defend and justify a position
- Summarize an opposing position
- State ways to persuade others to adopt your position

Problem-based learning

- Introduce and discuss a real-world problem
- Collaboratively, determine what is known and what must be learned
- Develop and articulate a problem statement
- Identify possible solutions
- Research, analyze, and resolve
- Present solutions and supporting documentation

Service/Community Learning

- Prepare – involve stakeholders in developing the project
- Collaborate – build partnerships and gather support
- Integrate – connect with academic skills and content

Service/Community Learning

- Prepare – involve stakeholders in developing the project
- Collaborate – build partnerships and gather support
- Integrate – connect with academic skills and content
- Service – contribute skills and talents to make the community a better place
- Reflect – relive or recapture the service to develop new understandings
- Celebrate – honor and renew the commitment of those involved

Personal Interaction and Civic Engagement (PICES)

Personal Interaction and Civic Engagement Strategies help young people to acquire and apply skills and dispositions that will prepare them to become competent and responsible citizens.

Personal

- Exhibit honesty and integrity
- Convey creativity and ingenuity
- Communicate personal beliefs, feelings, and convictions
- Demonstrate self-direction when working towards and accomplishing personal goals
- Demonstrate flexibility as goals and situations change
- Adjust personal behavior to fit the dynamics of various groups and situations
- Respect and be tolerate of others' beliefs, feelings and convictions

Collaborative

- Contribute to the development of a supportive climate in a group
- Participate in making rules and guidelines for group activities
- Assist in setting, working towards, and accomplishing common goals for a group
- Participate in delegating duties, organizing, planning, making decisions, and taking action in group settings
- Participate in persuading, compromising, debating, and negotiating in the resolution of conflicts and differences
- Utilize diverse perspectives and skills to accomplish common goals

Civic Engagement

- Understand the fundamental process of democracy
- Identify and understand public and community issues
- Dialogue with others who have different perspectives
- Participate in communities through organizations working to address and array of cultural, social, political, and religious interests and beliefs
- Act to accomplish public purposes through group problem solving, public speaking, petitioning and protesting, and voting
- Exhibit moral and civic virtues such as concern for the rights and welfare of others, social responsibility, tolerance and respect, and belief in the capacity to make a difference.