

Social Studies Grades 4 through 8- South Carolina Palmetto Assessment of State Standards

Analysis of 2016 Test Result Data

Areas of Strength (Continued Focus)

- Students were strong in their understanding of the American Revolution and good in their understanding of the Civil War. (grade 4)
- Students demonstrated excellent knowledge of World War II. (grade 5)
- Students continue to show mastery in content areas of ancient Greece and Rome (grade 6)
- Students continued to be able to locate colonial claims on maps (grade 7)
- Understanding of Eastern Woodlands culture continues to be an area of strength. (grade 8)

Areas Needing Additional Attention

- Students may need assistance in reaching conclusions about the big ideas at all levels. This involves planning instruction that addresses the intent of the standard and its enduring understandings. (all grades)
- Instruction should focus on building student literacy skills while concurrently teaching content. (See appendix A.) In the standards document, the most relevant literacy skills are specified (in boxed format) following the presentation of each standard. Student performance indicates that students need to become familiar with different ways of presenting information. Practice using maps will enable students to better utilize maps when they occur in instructional materials or tests. This practice will also improve students' ability to develop mental maps when needed. Regular work using stimuli, especially primary sources, will improve students' ability to summarize and infer. Students should have frequent practice with using graphic organizers to stimulate the deeper understanding that comes from integrating background knowledge, making connections and asking "why?" (all grades)
- Students need to practice close reading of each question in its entirety (including titles and options!), using context clues when they are provided. Students should be encouraged to practice careful-reading of primary sources, paying special attention to vocabulary and building reading stamina.
- Students should also be very familiar with the concept behind the term. Do students understand what the Columbian Exchange was? What a turning point is? Have they looked at the origins of descriptive words like "colonial period" or "muckraker" to assist in mastering meaning? While concepts like "the 3 g's" (gold, God and glory) are helpful ways to remember, students must be able to apply this knowledge in different contexts. (all grades)

- The focus of instruction about events, especially battles and wars, should be on their significance and the reasons the events occurred. Student knowledge often appears to be limited to the fact that the event occurred. (all grades)
- Careful attention should be paid to pacing so that “all standards are taught prior to the test.” (all grades)
- Focus on examining relationships among groups, such as competition/ collaboration for a scarce resource (like land) that often occurs with new settlement (e.g., settlement of Native Americans, Europeans, and Africans in the colonial period or Native Americans, Migrants and Immigrants in the West.) (grades 4 and 5)
- Fourth graders continued to have difficulty with topics of slavery, political parties, and the differences between the Articles of Confederation and the Constitution.
- Students should be provided ample “real world” problems and connections so that associations are understood. Examples include the connections between the Middle East and oil (and oil=gas) or the Middle East and religious differences and how these issues have led to the US presence in the Middle East (grades 5, 7 and 8)
- Fifth graders had difficulty with the decisions of the Supreme Court, land competition among groups in the West, and the Progressive Era.
- World History courses should continue to insure that the course is not, in fact, a Western Civilization course. Greater emphasis on African, Asian and American history and religion may need to occur in some classrooms. (grade 6)
- Sixth graders exhibited some difficulty with concepts relating to the following: moving to gather food vs. settlement and food planting; the use of water for irrigation/transportation; Buddhism; Mansa Musa; Confucius; the spread of Islam and the Arabic language; the development of math in India; the role of the Church in promoting learning; Renaissance art; and Henry VIII’s “reformation” of the Church.
- Often the most difficult concepts involve the thread of enduring understanding in grade seven—that of the Enlightenment and Revolutions. The role of Enlightenment thought in movements for independence and national identity throughout the world and in history should be strongly emphasized. (grade 7)
- Seventh graders often confuse the first and second world wars and often have difficulty with topics concerning World War II.
- Eighth graders exhibited difficulty with the topic of the State Development Board and the concepts of abolition and the events that led to the Civil War (and their effect of encouraging sectionalism.) (grade 8)
- General overall observations:
 - “We are also seeing much of what the committee last year noted.”
 - “Don’t forget to continue working on the suggestions from last year, too...remember that the tests are different each year.”
 - “Focus on having students draw inferences and conclusions with appropriate knowledge.”

- “Pay attention to the part of the Standards that addresses previous and future knowledge to guide teaching approaches...think of ways to build upon previous knowledge and to lay groundwork for future instruction....”
- “Use the literacy skills noted at the bottom of each indicator to assist you with focus.”
- “The items (questions) appear to be fair, aligned [to the Standards and the Support Document], and straightforward, while they required understanding/ conceptual knowledge (Appendix C) and the Literacy Skills [for Social Studies] (Appendix A).”
- “In grade 6, the intent of the standards is to compare civilizations and their characteristics.”
- “Relate South Carolina history (grade 8) to real world experiences and things still in SC today.”
- “Think about utilizing generative questions in classrooms.”
- “Have students ... (when analyzing quotes)... consider the subject, occasion, audience, purpose, speaker and tone.”