

## Ledyard Public Schools

### Social Studies Curriculum Introduction

#### How does Ledyard define inquiry?

Inquiry is defined as a way of seeking information, knowledge, or truth through questioning. Inquiry is a way for a learner to acquire new information and data and turn it into useful knowledge. Inquiry involves asking good questions and developing robust investigations from them. Inquiry also involves considering possible solutions and consequences. A third component of inquiry is separating evidence-based claims from common opinion, and communicating claims with others, and acting upon these claims when appropriate. Questions lead to gathering information through research, study, experimentation, observation, or interviews. During this time, the original question may be revised, a line of research refined, or an entirely new path may be pursued. As more information is gathered, it becomes possible to make connections and allows individuals to construct their own understanding to form new knowledge. Sharing this knowledge with others develops the relevance of the learning for both the student and a greater community. Sharing is followed by reflection and potentially more questions, bringing the inquiry process full circle.

#### The Inquiry Arc in Social Studies

The revised Social Studies Curriculum now includes an inquiry design model for effective teaching and learning, and demonstrates how teachers can apply this model in their planning and delivery. Drawing on the *Connecticut Elementary Social Studies Framework* and the *College, Career and Civic Life (C3) Framework for Social Studies Standards* (National Council for Social Studies, 2013); the curriculum incorporates critical instructional shifts, and include:

- Inquiry should be the primary form of instruction in all social studies classes
- Students and teachers should craft investigative questions that matter
- Teachers should establish a collaborative context to support student inquiry
- Teachers should integrate content and skills meaningfully
- Teachers should help students articulate disciplinary literacy practices and outcomes (thinking, reading, writing, speaking like a historian, like a geographer, etc.)
- Teachers should provide, and help students communicate conclusions and tangible opportunities to take informed action

<http://www.sde.ct.gov/sde/lib/sde/pdf/board/ssframeworks.pdf>

[http://www.c3teachers.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/10/IDM\\_Assumptions\\_C3-Brief.p](http://www.c3teachers.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/10/IDM_Assumptions_C3-Brief.p)

The social studies curriculum is designed around the Inquiry Arc of the C3 Framework. The Inquiry Arc highlights the structure of and rationale for the organization of the Framework's four Dimensions. The Arc focuses on the nature of inquiry in general and the pursuit of knowledge through questions (College, Career and Civic Life (C3) Framework for Social Studies Standards, 2013). The four dimensions below center on the use of questions to spark curiosity, guide instruction, deepen investigation, acquire rigorous content, and apply knowledge in real world settings to enable students to become active and engaged citizens in the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

**TABLE 1: C3 Framework Organization**

DIMENSION 1: DEVELOPING QUESTIONS AND PLANNING INQUIRIES	DIMENSION 2: APPLYING DISCIPLINARY TOOLS AND CONCEPTS	DIMENSION 3: EVALUATING SOURCES AND USING EVIDENCE	DIMENSION 4: COMMUNICATING CONCLUSIONS AND TAKING INFORMED ACTION
Developing Questions and Planning Inquiries	Civics	Gathering and Evaluating Sources	Communicating and Critiquing Conclusions
	Economics		
	Geography	Developing Claims and Using Evidence	Taking Informed Action
	History		

[www.socialstudies.org/sites/default/files/c3/C3-Framework-for-Social-Studies.pdf](http://www.socialstudies.org/sites/default/files/c3/C3-Framework-for-Social-Studies.pdf)

**Specific notes to teachers addressing all of the units of studies**

- In every unit, it is critical to engage each dimension of the instructional arc and provide students with opportunities to communicate what they learn in relation to what they wonder. While strategies and activities may vary among teachers, the essential elements of focused inquiry should drive the instructional planning. All inquiries should be linked to the compelling question, which should be the same for all students within each grade level. The units are “living documents” as teachers will have the flexibility to use resources that support the interests of their students.
- For each unit, as teachers find additional “Suggested Instructional Activities” in Dimension 2, those activities must align directly to the supporting questions, which are linked to the content. Additional Featured sources should also be linked to those same supporting questions.
- Teachers will utilize the formative assessment process within Dimensions 2 and 3. If the assessment included in the unit does not meet the student needs, grade level teams have the option to make necessary revisions. However, these assessments should, again, be linked to the supporting questions.
- Grade level teams also have the option to make revisions to the summative assessment and taking informed action of Dimension 4 if the assessment included does not meet student needs.

<b><u>Component/Purpose</u></b>	<b><u>Explanation</u></b>
<p><b>Compelling Question</b> Frames the unit of study</p>	<p>The Social Studies Curriculum Team developed compelling questions. These are open-ended, have more than one correct answer, can cross-disciplinary 'lenses', and time periods. These should be thought provoking and intellectually engaging in nature. At the end of the unit, teachers may choose to incorporate a summative task that will answer the compelling question.</p>
<p><b>Staging the compelling question</b> Builds student interest</p>	<p>In staging the question, teachers need to create an instructional space in which students are able to find merit, relevance, and interest in the investigation. The Question Formulation Technique is one way teachers can engage students in convergent and divergent thinking while generating student interest and tapping into student curiosity.</p>
<p><b>Supporting Questions</b> Develops the key content</p>	<p>These questions focus student inquiry into specific disciplinary concepts or lines of inquiry. They are more specific in nature than compelling questions and often have more direct, concrete answers to them.</p>
<p><b>Disciplinary Concepts</b> Provides the Disciplinary grade level content</p>	<p>Content can be used as a tool for addressing a particular line of inquiry (supporting questions or compelling questions or both). Depth of content depends on its relationship to the line of questioning established by the teacher and students.</p>
<p><b>Strategies and Activities</b> Guides the opportunities to learn content using various learning protocols (i.e., fishbowl, small group, debates, etc.)</p>	<p>Suggested strategies and activities were generated by curriculum teams as tools to engage students in inquiry and align to <i>Connecticut Core Standards</i> and the <i>Connecticut Elementary Social Studies Framework</i>.</p>
<p><b>Featured Sources</b> Provides opportunities to generate curiosity, build knowledge and construct arguments</p>	<p>These sources were compiled by curriculum teams and include additional readings, links to digital sources and extension lessons that can be adapted to fit grade level instruction.</p>
<p><b>Formative Assessments</b> Demonstrates understanding of the supporting questions</p>	<p>These assessments were generated by curriculum teams and designed to evaluate student progress and inform further instruction. This is list should be considered a living document and changed based on student and teacher needs.</p>
<p><b>Summative Task</b> Demonstrates understanding of the compelling question</p>	<p>These tasks were created by curriculum teams to demonstrate student understanding of compelling questions, supporting questions, disciplinary concepts and evaluate student skill development.</p>
<p><b>Taking Informed Action</b> Offers opportunity for civic engagement</p>	<p>Taking informed actions include a range of venues and a variety of forms (e.g., discussions, debates, policy analyses, video productions, and portfolios). The manner in which students work to create their solutions can differ. Students need opportunities to work individually, with partners, in small groups, and within whole class settings. Through these actions, students apply what they learned through focused inquiry to real world civic actions. Taking Informed Action is not always going to be about the particular content, but rather the larger implications it has on the human experience.</p>