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## Understanding the College, Career, and Civic Life (C3) Framework for Social Studies State Standards



In the *College, Career, and Civic Life (C3) Framework for Social Studies State Standards*, the call for students to become more prepared for the challenges of college and career is united with a third critical element: preparation for civic life. Advocates of citizenship education cross the political spectrum, but they are bound by a common belief that our democratic republic will not sustain unless students are aware of their changing cultural and physical environments; know the past; read, write, and think deeply; and act in ways that promote the common good. There will always be differing perspectives on these objectives. The goal of knowledgeable, thinking, and active citizens, however, is universal.

—College, Career, and Civic Life (C3) Framework for Social Studies State Standards, 2013

## **What the C3 Framework is NOT.**

The College, Career, and Civic Life (C3) Framework is not a set of national standards designed to replace state level standards and expectations. Rather, as the name implies, the C3 is a general framework for states to upgrade their social studies standards and enhance the rigor of the social studies.

## **What the C3 Framework IS?**

The result of a three year state-led collaborative effort, the College, Career, and Civic Life (C3) Framework for Social Studies State Standards was developed for two purposes: for states to upgrade their state social studies standards, and for local school districts to strengthen their social studies programs.

Its objectives are to enhance the rigor of the social studies disciplines, to build the critical thinking, problem-solving, and participatory skills necessary for students to become engaged citizens, and to align academic programs to the Common Core State Standards for English Language Arts and Literacy in History/Social Studies.

## **What are the basic principles of the C3 Framework?**

The C3 is driven by the following principles:

- Social studies prepares the nation's young people for college, careers, and civic life.
- Inquiry is at the heart of social studies.
- Social studies involves interdisciplinary applications and welcomes integration of the arts and humanities.
- Social studies is composed of deep and enduring understandings, concepts, and skills from the disciplines.
- Social studies emphasizes skills and practices as preparation for democratic decision-making.
- Social studies education should have direct and explicit connections to the Common Core State Standards for English Language Arts and Literacy in History/Social Studies.

## How is the C3 organized?

- The Four Dimensions highlighted below center on the use of questions to spark curiosity, guide instruction, deepen investigations, acquire rigorous content, and apply knowledge and ideas in real world settings to enable students to become active and engaged citizens.
- **Dimension 1: Developing Questions and Planning Inquiries**
- **Dimension 2: Applying Disciplinary Tools and Concepts**
  - Civics, Economics, Geography, History
- **Dimension 3: Evaluating Sources and Using Evidence**
  - Gathering and Evaluating Sources
  - Developing Claims and Using Evidence
- **Dimension 4: Communicating Conclusions and Taking Informed Action**
  - Communicating and Economics Critiquing Conclusion
  - Taking Informed Action

## Why is the C3 Framework necessary?

Abundant research bears out the sad reality that fewer and fewer young people are receiving a high quality social studies education, despite the central role of social studies in preparing students for the responsibilities of citizenship.

The loss of instructional time at the elementary level and the narrowing of instruction in response high-stakes testing has significantly impacted time, resources, and support for the social studies. The introduction of the Common Core State Standards provided an opportunity for social studies educators to reframe instruction to promote disciplinary literacy in social studies to allow for a more balanced and elevated role in the K-12 curriculum.

Children and adolescents quickly become disengaged when instruction is limited to reading textbooks to answer end-of-chapter questions and taking multiple-choice tests that may measure content knowledge but do little to measure how knowledge is meaningful and applicable in the real world. The C3 Framework addresses this issue in fundamental ways, creating active and responsible citizens, with significantly enhanced preparation for college, career, and civic life.

## Connections to the Common Core State Standards (CCSS) for ELA and Literacy in History/Social Studies

The C3 Framework changes the conversation about literacy instruction in social studies by creating a context that is meaningful and purposeful. Reading, writing, speaking and listening and language skills are critically important for building disciplinary literacy and the skills needed for college, career, and civic life.

Each of the Four Dimensions is strategically aligned to the Common Core State Standards for English Language Arts and Literacy in History/Social Studies.



For more information visit: [www.socialstudies.org/C3](http://www.socialstudies.org/C3)

