

## What is history and social science?

*Assumptions we have about the disciplines:*

- History and the social sciences are not just a list of factual information to be memorized. There is often no single story of the past or present.
- The study of history and social sciences is rooted in analysis of artifacts and texts that offer insight into the questions we pursue and generate new questions.
- Given the importance of reading and analysis, as well as speaking and communicating, literacy is central to history and the social sciences.

*“High-Leverage Content” in history and social sciences.* We identify three particular disciplinary practices as high-leverage content that is foundational to the social studies, relevant across grade levels, fundamental to student learning, and potentially new to prospective teachers.

- Evaluating and interpreting sources. The study of history and social sciences is rooted in analysis of sources. Sources can range from diaries, letters, speeches, to statistics on voting trends, maps, political cartoons, essays or books from experts, children’s tradebooks, current and past newspaper articles, paintings, photographs, etc. These data must be questioned and critiqued in order to develop interpretations of historical and social phenomena. This is a core practice across all disciplines within social studies and is highlighted as one of four dimensions in the C3 Framework for Social Studies State Standards.
- Developing and supporting arguments. The driving purpose of history and the social sciences is to develop and support interpretations, or arguments. Through an inquiry process, experts and students construct arguments that are supported by reliable evidence. This is a core practice across all disciplines within social studies and is highlighted as one of four dimensions in the C3 Framework for Social Studies State Standards. Students and Teachers who see social studies as a discrete list of places, terms, and events often struggle to present opinions about our government, our economic system, or the past. Students must be supported through the work of organizing and selecting evidence and crafting an original and coherent argument.
- Recognizing multiple perspectives and context. Social studies is a school subject that asks students to understand human motivations, actions, and beliefs. Often the people or societies under study are very different from students themselves. Therefore, students must work to recognize the perspectives of these people and the contexts in which they live or lived. Additionally, two people may have markedly different interpretations of the same event, law, or principle depending on their perspective. Perspective recognition is identified as one of the core disciplinary tools in the History subsection of the C3 framework.

