

# College Readiness Skills

It should be the goal of the teacher to foster the development of Social Studies thinking and process skills. The application of these skills allows students to understand and investigate important issues in the world around them. Inquiry-based units of study will include many or most of the following skills. These skills should be incorporated into students' instruction as developmentally appropriate.

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- Historical Thinking Skills**
- getting information from a variety of primary and secondary sources
  - interpreting information
  - analyzing and evaluating information
  - handling diversity of viewpoints and interpretations
  - distinguishing fact vs. opinion
  - synthesizing information from historical sources
  - understanding chronology
  - contextualizing information
  - recognizing historical trends and categorizing information
  - building and defending a theory
  - analyzing and interpreting maps, graphs and tables related to history and geography
  - understanding and making appropriate interdisciplinary connection

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- Historical Writing Skills**
- taking notes
  - synthesizing and applying information
  - communicating and defending a position clearly
  - developing and supporting a thesis with detailed paragraphs and conclusion
  - citing sources
  - engaging the reader
  - producing and presenting research projects and papers

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- Media Literacy Skills**
- accessing and utilizing vast array of online resources
  - evaluating online resources
  - utilizing appropriate software in research and presentations

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- Communication Skills**
- identifying assumptions and values
  - recognizing and avoiding stereotypes
  - participating in group and individual discussions and projects
  - cooperating to accomplish goals
  - assuming responsibility to carry out tasks
  - communicating a position clearly
  - actively listening to a variety of positions

## Learning Experiences to Develop College Readiness and High Level Thinking

In order to improve college readiness for all students through social studies, it is important to introduce instructional strategies that develop students' higher level analytical and communication skills.

The most effective social studies curriculum involves a continuum of learning between classes and across grade levels from year to year. The New York City 9-12 Scope and Sequence is an extension of the K-8 Scope and Sequence as it builds on knowledge and skills previously introduced. It offers students challenging content which will require them to complete sophisticated assignments and be exposed to college readiness skills. Following are some important strategies for college readiness:

- Engage students in a **rigorous** social studies curriculum. Create a path of inclusion rather than exclusion. Rigorous classes that are intellectually challenging should be the goal for all students.
- Provide increased opportunities and exposure to **analytical thinking and communication** necessary for academic success in social studies. Strategies can focus on the interpretation and analysis of primary and secondary sources.
- Develop in students a **sense of chronology** and deep understanding of **chronological thinking**.
- Ensure students analyze and **interpret historical sources** from a variety of perspectives and from multiple points of view, utilizing maps, graphs, charts, and tables. Strategies such as concept categorization, evaluation, and generalization are also important.
- **Provide multiple exposures to writing** in social studies through the implementation of skills focusing on thesis development and other qualities of good persuasive writing as well as essays that focus on both **free response and document-based questions**.
- Provide students with rigorous learning in both **individual and collaborative/cooperative** settings in the social studies classroom.

*Contributed by: College Board*