

Five things to expect from your social studies content

Finding the right content for your classrooms is no easy feat. Classrooms are continuing to get larger with learners of different levels, while more and more states are mandating that schools include new diversity-driven content. These rapid changes lead to gaps in social studies curriculum and cause purchased materials to become outdated overnight. And while search engines make fresh content readily available, finding appropriate and vetted materials for the classroom can be challenging, especially as legacy materials are continuing to fall short.

With these challenges in mind, we've rounded up the 5 things you should expect from your social studies materials so you get the best content for your classroom.



AUTHENTIC AND REPRESENTATIVE

Students should be able to see themselves reflected in the texts they read. Provide teachers with ample first-hand accounts and diverse perspectives in their classroom. With real world, relatable materials teachers can build connections between the past and present and encourage students to think critically about why history and civics matters to their lives.



TIMELINESS AND UP-TO-DATE

With the rapid pace of news and globalization, legacy materials are no longer making the cut. History is happening every day and materials should reflect that. With active, up-to-date content, students can learn to think analytically about the world they live in and make connections between the past, present, and future.



TRUSTWORTHINESS

While search engines may make content readily available, that doesn't always mean it is the right fit for the classroom. Teachers should source content that comes from trustworthy, reliable sources that are appropriate and have been vetted for the classroom.



ACCESSIBILITY

Primary sources, such as founding documents and Supreme Court cases, used in social studies classrooms can be challenging concepts. Make sure content used in your classrooms is differentiated so students can access the materials regardless of their reading level. Engaging and differentiated content lets students read at their own level, while also building background knowledge and allowing them to participate in the same classroom discussion.



ALIGNED TO STANDARDS

Content should not only be aligned to state social studies standards and national frameworks, but also extend beyond the requirements. Teachers should utilize content that is rich enough to foster opportunities to create meaningful connections so that they can support their school or district's instructional goals without having to sacrifice student engagement.

USE THE RUBRIC BELOW TO EVALUATE HOW YOUR SOCIAL STUDIES CONTENT IS DOING:

	1 POINT	2 POINTS	3 POINTS
<p>AUTHENTIC AND REPRESENTATIVE</p> <p>Does our content resonate with students in our community?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Does not include texts from authentic primary and secondary sources Provides a singular narrative and does not include diverse voices 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Includes some texts from authentic primary and secondary sources Provides a few narratives and includes some diverse voices 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Includes a variety of authentic primary and secondary sources Features a range of diverse voices and perspectives and allows students to see themselves and their communities reflected in the text <p style="text-align: right;">/3</p>
<p>TIMELY</p> <p>Is our content reflective of the world today?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Is not recently published Has not been updated since publication Does not reflect recent scholarship, perspectives, and events 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Has been somewhat recently published, but is not up-to-date with current events Is not refreshed on a regular basis 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Has been recently published Is automatically and frequently refreshed Reflects recent scholarship, perspectives, and the world today <p style="text-align: right;">/3</p>
<p>TRUSTWORTHY</p> <p>Does our content promote media literacy?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Is not well-sourced or cited Only provides a single point of view or presents strong bias Removes context and presents inaccurate details 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Has some citations, but not all sources are reputable or verified Provides multiple points of view and perspectives on some topics, but not all 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Is well-sourced and properly cited Provides multiple points of view across all topics Sets topics in context and is factually accurate <p style="text-align: right;">/3</p>
<p>ACCESSIBLE</p> <p>Is our content both approachable and rigorous?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Is not developmentally appropriate Does not address complex topics or themes, or provide adequate background knowledge or instructional support Not differentiated at different reading levels 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Is inconsistently developmentally appropriate Addresses complex topics or themes, but oversimplifies them or does not provide adequate instructional support Has some differentiation, but not enough for all students 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Is developmentally appropriate Covers a wide range of complex topics themes with extended instructional support Is rigorously differentiated, including extensions and remediations for students <p style="text-align: right;">/3</p>
<p>ALIGNED</p> <p>Is our content aligned to our district's learning objectives, as well as state and national standards?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Is not aligned to state and national standards Does not provide sufficient opportunities to apply skills across topics, texts, formats, and sources Does not enable teachers to use research-backed instructional strategies 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Is aligned to state and national standards Provides some opportunities to apply skills across topics, texts, formats, and sources Allows teachers to enable some research-backed instructional strategies 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Fosters opportunities to create meaningful connections that extend beyond requirements Supports vertical alignment across grade levels and alignment with cross-disciplinary standards Provides a range of opportunities to apply skills across topics, texts, formats, and sources

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Newsela's content is published daily from trusted and vetted sources at 5 different reading levels. Teachers can find a wide range of diverse perspectives and authentic voices to support instruction aligned to state social studies standards and the C3 National Framework.



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