

Overview of **Social Studies** in Lincoln Public Schools

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Prepared by:

Jaci Kellison, K-12 Social Studies Curriculum Specialist

Reference: [Nebraska Revised Statute 79-724](#)

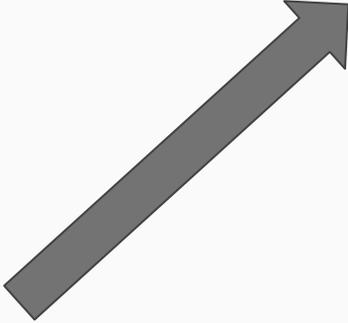
Nebraska State Statute 79-724

- It is the responsibility of society to ensure that youth are given the opportunity to become competent, responsible, patriotic, and civil citizens to ensure a strong, stable, just, and prosperous America.
- Schools should help prepare our youth to make informed and reasoned decisions for the public good.
- A central role of schools is to impart civic knowledge and skills that help our youth to see the relevance of a civic dimension for their lives.

Critical Race Theory

The academic framework of Critical Race Theory does not appear in any LPS Social Studies Standards and Objectives.

Sociology



Course Objectives

The course supports the [National Standards for Sociology](#) from the American Sociological Association and uses these four domains:

- The Sociological Perspective and Methods of Inquiry
- Social Structure: Culture, Institutions, and Society
- Social Relationships: Self, Groups, and Socialization
- Stratification and Inequality

Note: Critical Race Theory does not appear in any of the LPS Curriculum Standards and Objectives for Sociology. The textbook used for the course includes a plethora of theories used by Sociologists as they seek to understand the causes and consequences of human behavior. Within this context, the term Critical Race Theory is mentioned as a modern offshoot of Conflict Theory. It is possible a student in Sociology will encounter the term within the textbook. If students have questions about Critical Race Theory teachers will approach it as they do any unplanned topic (see below). Sociology is not a required course for LPS students.

What is our approach in LPS?

- Students analyze issues with open minds, investigate and consider various positions, weigh alternative viewpoints, organize and present arguments and draw intelligent conclusions.
- Students engage with multiple perspectives to dispel the notion of “a single story” of American History.
- Historically marginalized voices are given agency and not presented as stories of victimhood or unrelenting tragedies.

“The Organization of American Historians remains dedicated...to encouraging informed public discussion of and engagement with historical questions that are critical to understanding both the **triumphs** and **tragedies** of our nation’s past. It is only through purposeful interrogations of our national story that we can appreciate the history of the United States in its full complexity and utilize our knowledge of it to inform our present and build a better future.”

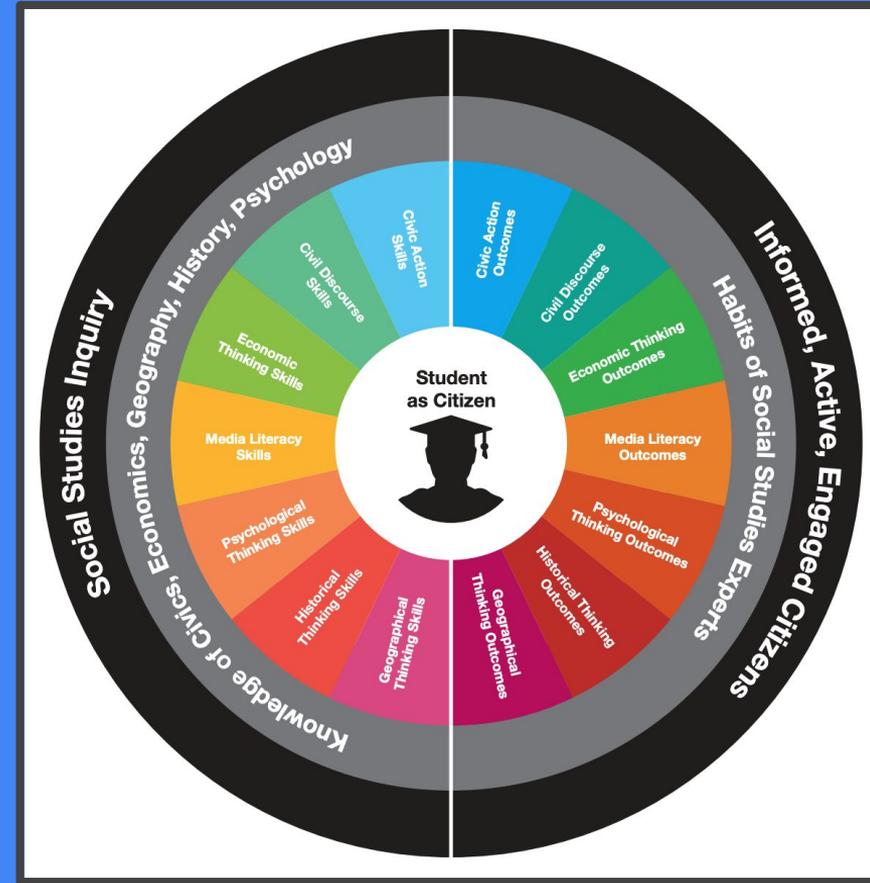
- Organization of American Historians, 2020

The Lincoln Public Schools

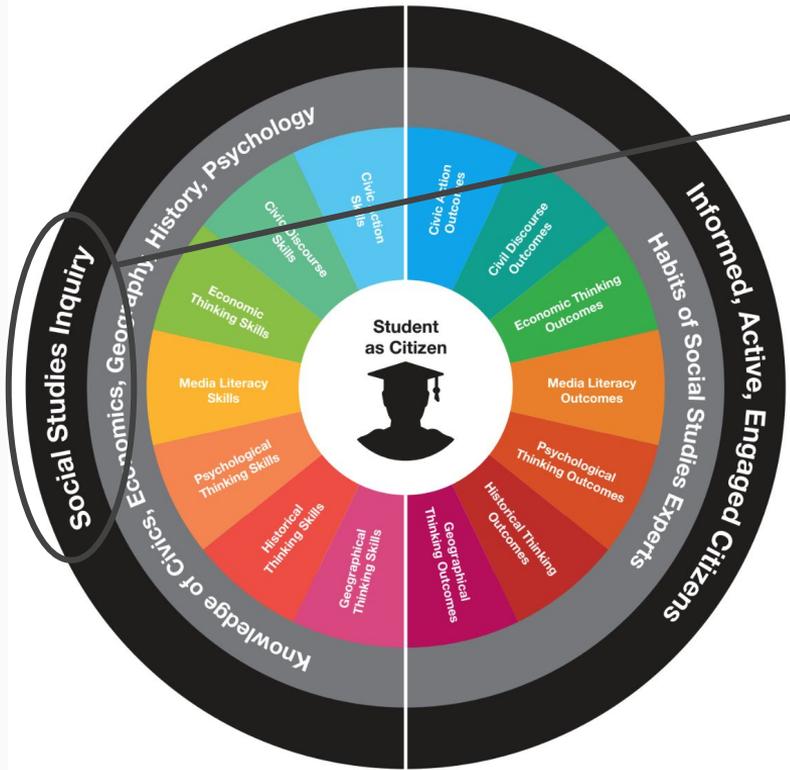
Social Studies Blueprint

provides a frontpage for important resources for social studies teachers while also representing a design for the integration of social studies content and skills across a student's career as a social studies learner.

The "Student as Citizen" reminds us that student learning is at the center and emphasizes a broad definition of "citizen" that includes all students as participants in their communities, nations, and world. Students learn to become informed, active, and engaged citizens.

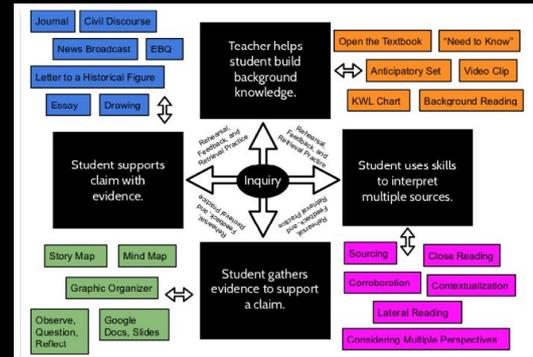


Social Studies Inquiry



Learning through Social Studies Inquiry

Learning through Social Studies Inquiry is a lesson design structure that includes explicit instruction to help students encode, recall, and think about the background knowledge relevant to social studies inquiry questions. Students use this background knowledge and social studies thinking skills to develop their evidence based answers to important social studies questions.



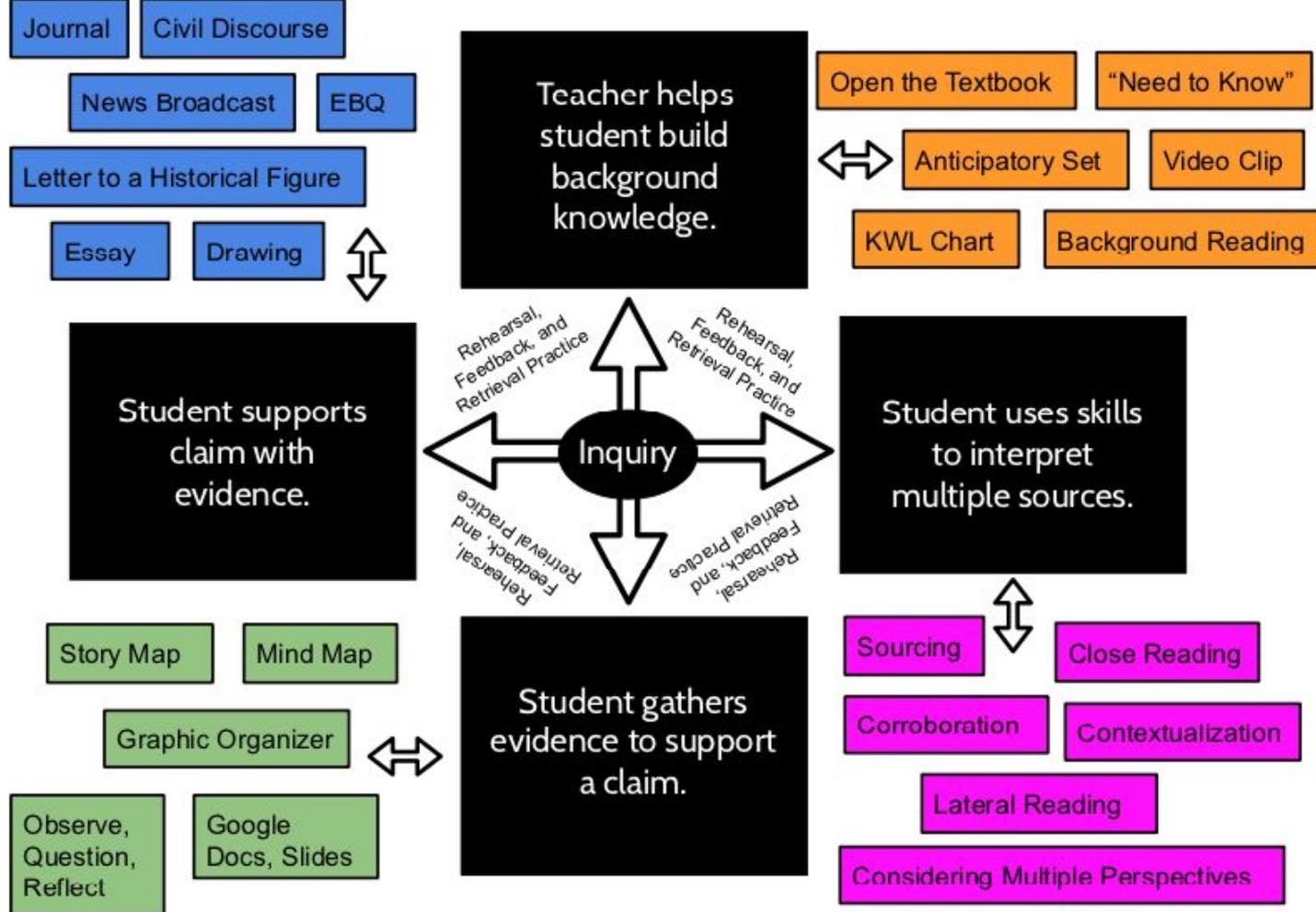
Goals of Social Studies Inquiry Lessons in Lincoln Public Schools

Core Principles:

- [Knowledge Matters](#)
- [Into, Through, Beyond](#)
- [Using Feedback to Close the Loop](#)

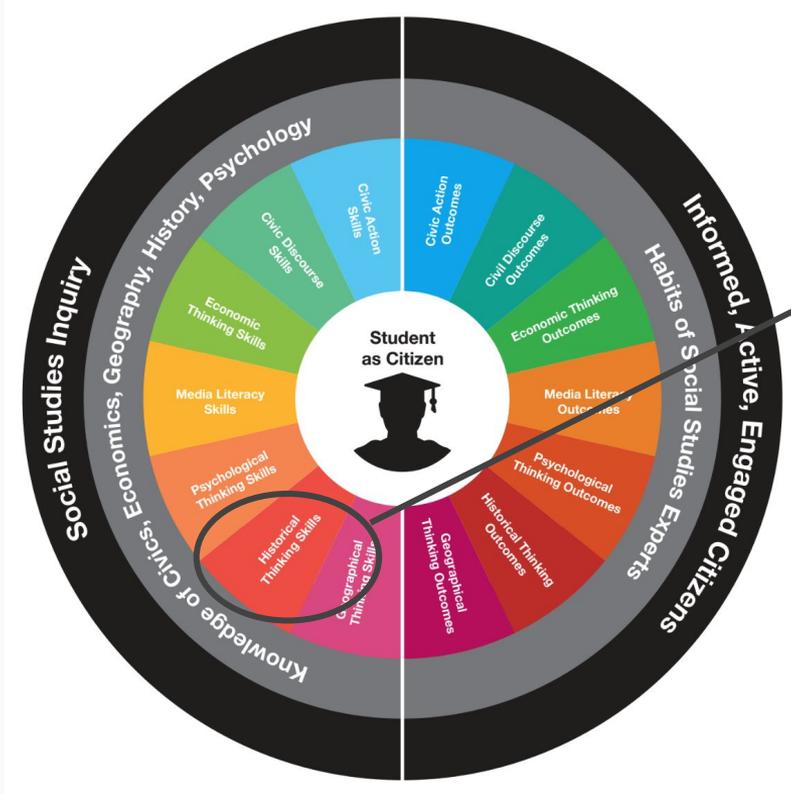
Core Principle: Knowledge Matters

Knowledge Matters in social studies instruction because social studies disciplines are driven by both process skills and content knowledge. Students use content knowledge to interpret information and answer important questions. Without knowledge, we risk stripping documents



Goals of Social Studies Inquiry Lessons in Lincoln Public Schools

Historical Thinking Skills & Outcomes



Historical Thinking	
Purpose of Historical Thinking	
<p>Historical Thinking involves the skills, habits, and aptitudes necessary to "do" history similar to professional historians. The expectation is for students to be able to read and think like historians. Students gather information, analyze sources, and make meaning from facts as opposed to simply being asked to memorize them devoid of context. Historical Thinking skills engage students in understanding how we discover new knowledge and make sense of the past, including how historians make and support claims about past events.</p>	
The Skills of Historical Thinking	
Close Reading	This skill involves noticing the choices an author made when creating a text, including a primary document, textbook, article from historical research, documentary, or museum exhibit. This skill allows us to access the other skills used in critical thinking. Teachers should apply strategies that help students engage more deeply in making meaning from a text. Generally, we want to help students get into, through, and beyond a text.
Sourcing	This skill involves making inferences about how the identity of an author may influence what is in a text and testing those inferences as we read. It relates closely to author's purpose and author's perspective. Ultimately, sourcing is about determining the reliability and limits of a text.
Contextualization	The skill of being able to connect evidence from a text to factors related to the time and place of its creation. We place a source in context when we are able to connect extratextual knowledge to the choices the author made in the text. For instance, students might connect chronology to the source ("The author is saying x because y had just occurred").
Corroboration	The skill of comparing multiple sources, noticing the similarities and differences, and making judgments about reliability and trustworthiness.
Considering Multiple Perspectives	The skill of considering how the documents and resources we have access to may not allow us to see the "whole story." Consider how the sources we have might ignore or silence some voices.
<small>Adapted from the Stanford History Education Group with some key revisions.</small>	
Outcomes of Historical Thinking	
Historical Context	Historians use multiple sources of evidence to explain historical developments both specific to their time and place or by comparing different places. For example, consider how a political speech was written to appeal to specific groups of voters.
Chronological Reasoning	Historians weigh evidence to make claims about how and why historical change or historical continuity occurs and understand causation as it relates to historical events. For example, understand the causes of a war or whether a particular event did or did not cause a subsequent event.

Considering Multiple Perspectives

“Considering multiple perspectives” is the frame used for LPS Social Studies courses in order to dispel the notion of a single story.

We emphasize perspectives as individual and do not group perspectives into overgeneralized and broad categories.

Multiple Perspectives & Historical Thinking

As students consider multiple perspectives, they engage with the following skills:

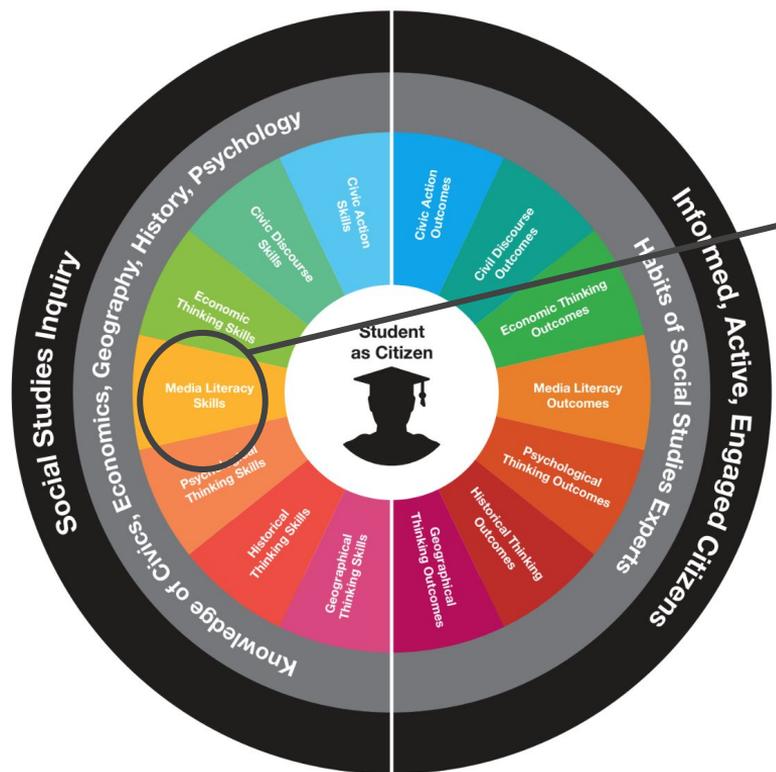
Close Reading

Sourcing

Contextualization

Corroboration

Media Literacy



Media Literacy

Purpose of Media Literacy

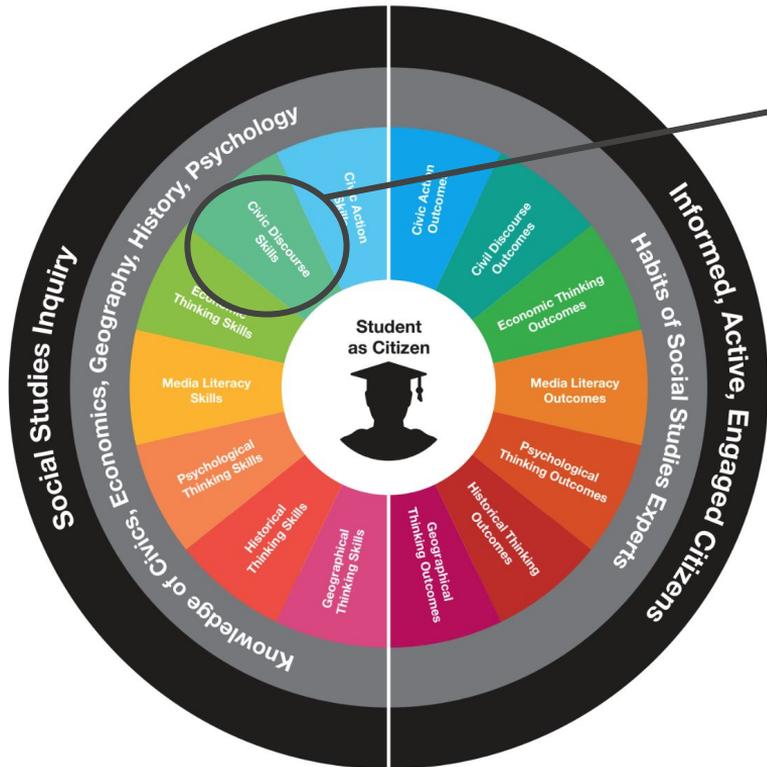
Media Literacy involves the skills, habits, and aptitudes necessary to interpret and understand information from the media platforms and sources we use to access information in our contemporary media environment. The goal is for students to develop process skills so we can release responsibility and allow them to activate the skills independently. Across the social studies disciplines, we focus on the aspect of Media Literacy referred to as Civic Online Reasoning. Civic Online Reasoning is the ability to effectively search for and evaluate social and political information online, which is a prerequisite skill for informed citizenship.

Civic Online Reasoning Skills

Lateral Reading	This skill involves answering the question, "Who is behind this information?" When reading laterally, we gather information about the original source to help us understand its reliability, purpose, and perspective. Identify the source, open a new tab, and find out what other sources say about the original source. The Crash Course series on evaluating online information has a Lateral Reading video with further details.
Vertical Reading	This skill involves answering the questions, "What are the major claims made by this source?" and "What is the evidence used to support the claims?" Teachers should apply close reading strategies that help students engage more deeply in making meaning from a source. Students should notice what type of evidence is used to support claims (e.g. eyewitness accounts, statistics, statements from experts or authorities.)
Fact-Checking	This skill involves answering the question, "Is the evidence accurate?" This skill requires the use of corroborating evidence. Often, opening additional tabs and searching for multiple sources that either confirm or contradict the original evidence. The Crash Course series on evaluating online information has a Fact-Checking video with further details.
Click Restraint	This skill involves reviewing search results carefully to make an informed decision about which websites are likely to yield accurate information. Students should not immediately click the first search result, but instead should consider their options to make informed decisions about which websites to visit (while being cognizant of confirmation bias as they make their choices). The Crash Course series on evaluating online information has a Click Restraint video with further details.

Adapted from the [Stanford History Education Group](#).

Civil Discourse



Civil Discourse

Purpose of Civil Discourse

A Civil Discourse is an inquiry entered into by two or more people related to a matter of public interest or public deliberation. Students practice and model the elements of a healthy democracy. In addition to being polite, fair, and respectful, civil discourse should rely on reason, logic, evidence, and experience as the arena for discussion. Diverse viewpoints are invited into the discourse so that we can learn from people whose experiences are different from our own. While reasoning should be informed by personal values and beliefs, facts and evidence take precedent over unsupported statements, personal attacks, and unchallenged assumptions.

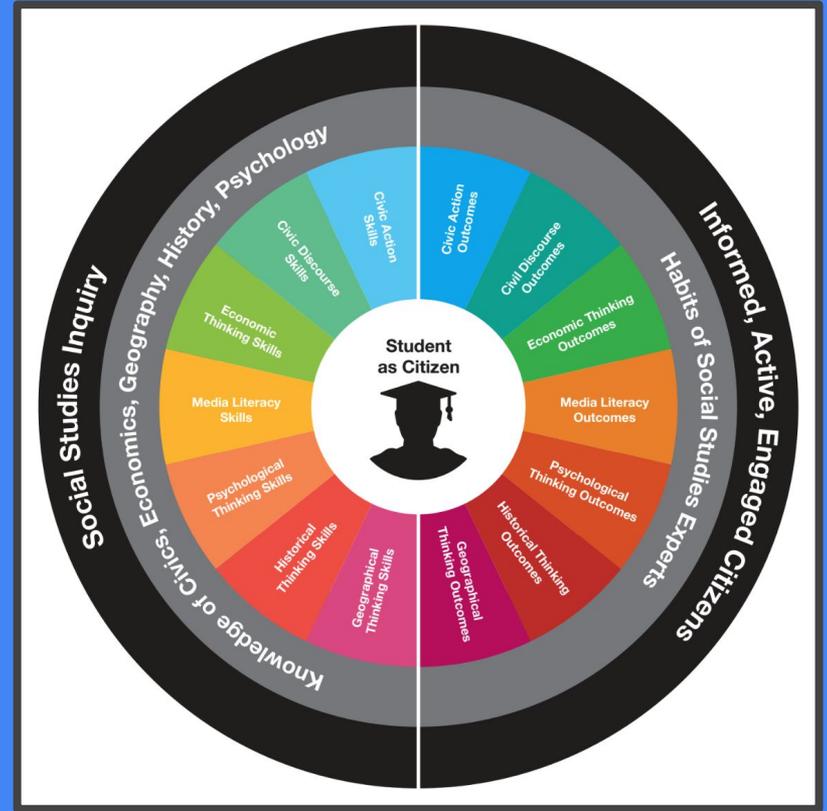
Skills for Engaging in a Civil Discourse

Preparation	A civil discourse relies on participants having developed knowledge and understanding about the topic. Students should rely on disciplinary skills appropriate to the inquiry (close reading, sourcing, lateral reading, corroboration, etc.) to build their understanding <i>before</i> engaging in a civil discourse.
Listening & Attending	Listening involves hearing what others are saying for the purpose of understanding other's positions, as opposed to simply responding. Attending involves accurately noting and recording the positions of others so they are represented accurately.
Understanding & Responding	Understanding involves grasping the meaning of what another person is seeking to convey, and responding to that meaning as opposed to making assumptions or potentially mischaracterizing another person's position. Students grow in their understanding of the issue and each other.
Considering Multiple Perspectives	A discourse is successful only when all participants have heard, understood, considered, and engaged with other positions. For this reason, a civil discourse includes the possibility of multiple reasonable conclusions.

Outcomes of Civil Discourse

Debate: Practice Healthy Democracy	Debate is the notion that through adversarial, but respectful, argument we might arrive at a more nuanced understanding or discover the correct answer to a question. For example, the American justice system is largely premised on the notion of adversarial arguments moderated by a judge. <i>Students practice healthy democracy.</i>
Discourse:	Discourse is an exchange characterized by careful and respectful listening that allows

Informed, Active, Engaged Citizens



Why is it Important to Vote?

OVERVIEW

Grade Level/Subject: 6th, 7th and 8th Social Studies

Overview of Lesson: This lesson is designed to help students understand the importance of voting. Students will evaluate excuses used for not voting and find counterpoints for those excuses. Students assess documents from Ronald Reagan and Barack Obama on the importance of voting.

Essential Background: Students should be aware they are going to be participating in Student Vote 2020. It is vital for students to understand how civic engagement is a responsibility of citizenship. Ways to demonstrate a level of involvement is to be an informed voter and understand the importance of voting. They should also be aware of what political offices and issues are included on the ballot for this Student Vote cycle.

Length of Lesson: 2-3 days

Alignment with LPS Curriculum Guide: Student Vote Election Year Resources

Objectives:

Students will:

- Know why their vote matters.
- Understand the importance of voting.
- Be able to identify problems with excuses for not voting.

Materials:

- [Why is it Important to Vote - Google Slides Presentation](#)
- [7 Reasons Not to Vote Video](#)
- [7 Reasons Not to Vote Graphic Organizer](#)
- [Tennessee Suffrage Story Video](#)
- [Document Guided Questions](#)
- [Reagan's Radio Address on Voter Participation Document A](#)
- [Obama's Turning Point for Real Change Document B](#)
- [Why We Vote Video](#)

Key Vocabulary:

- Electoral College
- Suffrage
- Ronald Reagan
- Barack Obama

Example:

Why is it important to vote?

Overview of Lesson

Ronald Reagan, "Radio Address to the Nation on Voter Participation" delivered from Camp David, MD, October 18th, 1986

Radio Address to the Nation on Voter Participation (modified)

My fellow Americans:

Well, in just a few weeks, we Americans are once again going to show the world the one thing that, more than any other, is the source of our strength. We'll go to the polls, and as a free people, we'll vote. This year we'll be voting in many States for Senators, Governors, and other officials; and everywhere we'll be voting for a new House of Representatives. But just as important as how we vote is that we vote. Every vote cast on election day means that we the people have taken a hand in shaping our nation's future. Every time we vote we're grabbing a hold of a lifeline that's 3,000 miles long and more than two centuries old and, with millions of others, helping to pull America forward into the future. Yes, every time we vote we're standing up, side by side, with the Founding Fathers, with the men of Valley Forge, with patriots and pioneers throughout our history, with all those who dedicated their lives to making this a nation of the people, by the people, and for the people. Every time we vote we help to make America stronger.

I'm sure you've heard friends say, "Oh, my vote won't matter." Well, the next time someone says that to you, I hope you'll remember that time and again, over the years, elections have turned on a handful of ballots. In 1960 President Kennedy was elected by, on average, just one vote in each precinct (voting location) around the nation. In 1976 the Presidential election turned on two States: one was won by six votes a precinct; the other by only a single vote a precinct. And in the last 26 years more than 50 U.S. Senate and House races have been won by fewer than a thousand votes. But even when elections aren't that close, your ballot counts, because in voting, you're accepting your part in the greatest decision making body the world has ever known, the American people. And as someone who's stayed up late on many election nights waiting to hear how the American people had decided, I can tell you that from where I sit -- whether elections are close or not -- every vote is important.

I've also visited with many young people around our country. Nothing could be more inspiring than to hear them talk about the future. And yet I've found that too many of them don't vote. If you're one of our nation's young people, I hope you'll remember that America needs your optimism, your patriotism and idealism, your thirst for opportunity in shaping the decisions of the years to come. Those decisions are going to shape your life, too. And they're too important for you to give up any part of your role in making them. So, please vote.

Barack Obama. "How to Make this Moment the Turning Point for Real Change," 2020

How to Make this Moment the Turning Point for Real Change (modified)

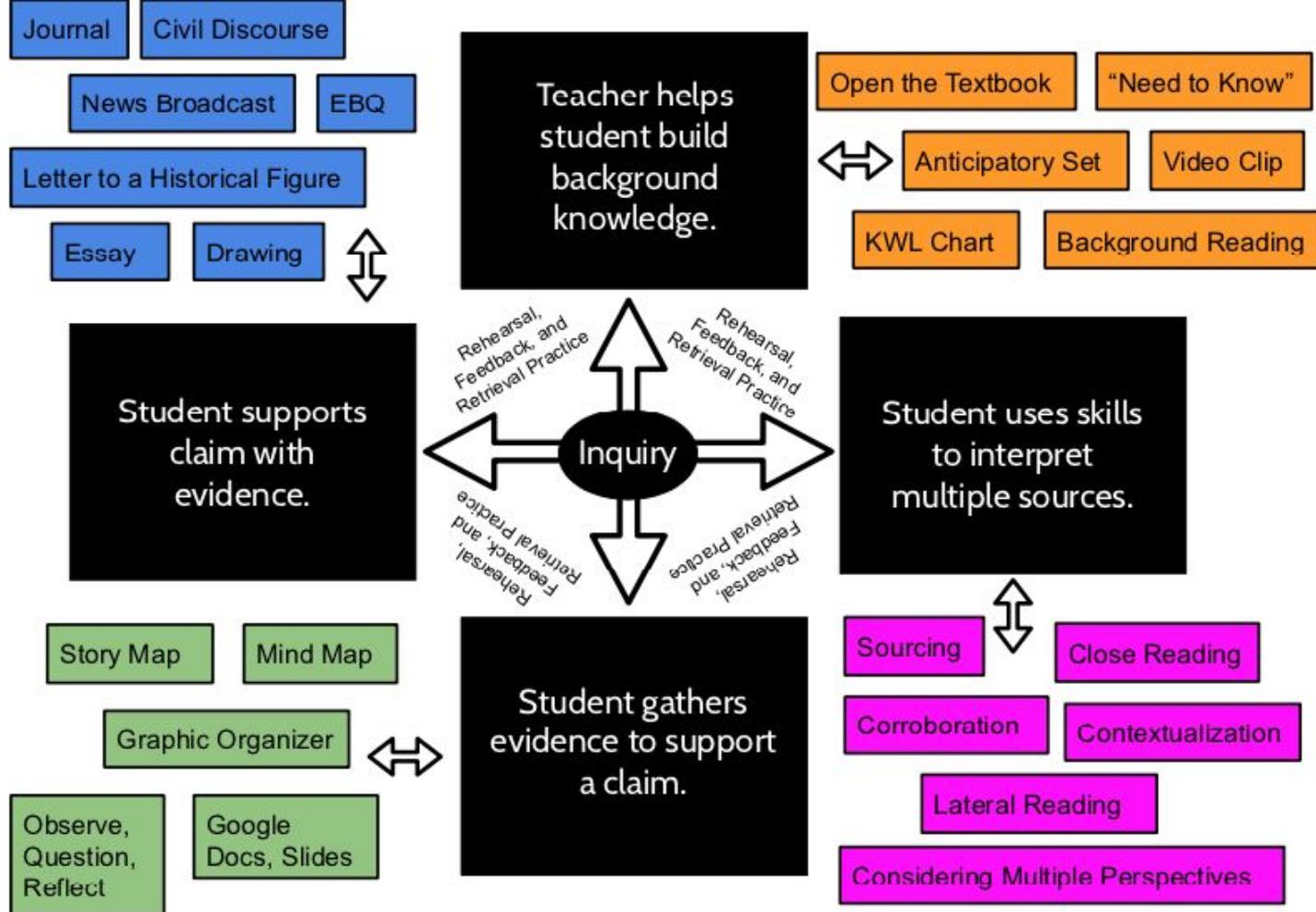
Barack Obama

As millions of people across the country take to the streets and raise their voices in response to the killing of George Floyd and the ongoing problem of unequal justice, many people have reached out asking how we can keep momentum to bring about real change.

First, the waves of protests across the country represent a frustration over a decades-long failure to reform police practices and the criminal justice system in the United States. The overwhelming majority of participants have been peaceful, courageous, responsible, and inspiring.

On the other hand, the small minority of folks who've resorted to violence in various forms, whether out of genuine anger or opportunism (just to take advantage of the situation), are putting innocent people at risk, increasing the destruction of neighborhoods that are often already short on services and investment and hurting the larger cause. I saw an elderly black woman being interviewed today in tears because the only grocery store in her neighborhood had been trashed. If history is any guide, that store may take years to come back. So let's not excuse violence, or rationalize it, or participate in it. *If we want our criminal justice system, and American society at large, to operate on a higher ethical code, then we have to model that code ourselves.*

Second, I've heard some suggest that the continuing problem of racial bias in our criminal justice system proves that only protests and direct action can bring about change, and that voting and participation in electoral politics is a waste of time. I couldn't disagree more. The point of protest is to raise public awareness, to put a spotlight on injustice, and to make the powers that be uncomfortable; in fact, throughout American history, it's often only been in response to protests and civil disobedience (peaceful protesting) that the political system has even paid attention to marginalized (poorly treated, ignored) communities. *But eventually, goals have to be translated into specific laws and policies* — and in a democracy, that only happens when we elect government officials who are responsive to our demands.



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