

**National History Standards for Grades 5-12: Standards of Historical Thinking**

Topic and Description	Objectives	Lesson Cues
<p><b>(I) Chronological Thinking</b></p> <p>Chronological thinking is at the heart of historical reasoning. Without a strong sense of chronology--of when events occurred and in what temporal order--it is impossible for students to examine relationships among those events or to explain historical causality. Chronology provides the mental scaffolding for organizing historical thought.</p> <p>Students should be able to analyze patterns of historical succession illustrated, for example, in the development, over time, of ever-larger systems of interaction.</p>	<p>TLW (The Learner Will):</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Distinguish between past, present, and future time.</li> <li>2. Identify the temporal structure of a historical narrative or story: its beginning, middle, and end.</li> <li>3. Establish temporal orders in constructing the students' own historical narrative(s).</li> <li>4. Measure and calculate calendar time by days, weeks, months, years, decades, centuries, and millennia, from fixed points of the calendar system.</li> <li>5. Interpret data presented in time lines and create time lines by designating appropriate intervals of time and recording events according to the temporal order in which they occurred.</li> <li>6. Reconstruct patterns of historical succession and duration in which historical developments have unfolded, and apply them to explain historical continuity and change.</li> <li>7. Compare alternative models for periodization by identifying the organizing principles on which each is based.</li> </ol>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• In developing students' chronological thinking, instructional time should be given to the use of well-constructed historical narratives: literary narratives including biographies and historical literature, and well-written narrative histories that have the quality of "stories well told."</li> <li>• In the middle and high school years, students should be able to use their mathematical skills to measure time by years, decades, centuries, and millennia; to calculate time from the fixed points of the calendar system (BC or BCE and AD or CE); and to interpret the data presented in time lines.</li> <li>• Students should be able to analyze patterns of historical duration, demonstrated, for example, by the more than two hundred years the United States Constitution and the government it created has endured.</li> </ul>

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<p><b>II) Historical Comprehension</b></p> <p>One of the defining features of historical narratives is their believable recounting of human events. Beyond that, historical narratives also have the power to disclose the intentions of the people involved, the difficulties they encountered, and the complex world in which such historical figures actually lived.</p> <p>The skills students will learn include:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Identifying the central question the historical narrative seeks to answer</li> <li>2. Defining the purpose, perspective, or point of view from which the narrative has been constructed</li> <li>3. Reading the historical explanation or analysis with meaning</li> <li>4. Recognizing the rhetorical cues that signal how the author has organized the text.</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. TLW identify the author or source of the historical document or narrative and assess its credibility.</li> <li>2. TLW reconstruct the literal meaning of a historical passage by identifying who was involved, what happened, where it happened, what events led to these developments, and what consequences or outcomes followed.</li> <li>3. TLW identify the central question(s) the historical narrative addresses and the purpose, perspective, or point of view from which it has been constructed.</li> <li>4. TLW differentiate between historical facts and historical interpretations but acknowledge that the two are related; that the facts the historian reports are selected and reflect therefore the historian’s judgment of what is most significant about the past.</li> <li>5. TLW read historical narratives imaginatively, taking into account what the narrative reveals of the humanity of the individuals and groups involved—their probable values, outlook, motives, hopes, fears, strengths, and weaknesses.</li> <li>6. TLW appreciate historical perspectives (see paragraph two in “cues” section)</li> <li>7. TLW draw upon data in historical maps in order to obtain or clarify information on the geographic setting in which the historical event occurred, its relative and absolute location, the distances and directions involved, the natural and man-made features of the place, and critical relationships in the spatial distributions of those features and historical event occurring there.</li> <li>8. TLW utilize visual, mathematical, and quantitative data presented in charts, tables, pie and bar graphs, flow charts, Venn diagrams, and other graphic organizers to clarify, illustrate, or elaborate upon information presented in the historical narrative.</li> <li>9. TLW draw upon visual, literary, and musical sources including: (a) photographs, paintings, cartoons, and architectural drawings; (b) novels, poetry, and plays; and, (c) folk, popular and classical music, to clarify, illustrate, or elaborate upon information presented in the historical narrative.</li> </ol>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Instructional focus should allow students to read historical stories, biographies, autobiographies, and narratives, With comprehension, students must develop the ability to read imaginatively, to take into account what the narrative reveals of the humanity of the individuals and groups involved—their motives and intentions, their values and ideas, their hopes, doubts, fears, strengths, and weaknesses.</li> <li>• Comprehending historical narratives requires, also, that students develop historical perspectives, the ability to describe the past on its own terms, through the eyes and experiences of those who were there. By studying the literature, diaries, letters, debates, arts, and artifacts of past peoples, students should learn to avoid “present-mindedness” by not judging the past solely in terms of the norms and values of today but taking into account the historical context in which the events unfolded.</li> <li>• Comprehending historical narratives will also be facilitated if students are able to draw upon the data presented in historical maps; visual, mathematical, and quantitative data presented in a variety of graphic organizers; and a variety of visual sources such as historical photographs, political cartoons, paintings, and architecture in order to clarify, illustrate, or elaborate upon the information presented in the text.</li> </ul>

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<p><b>(III) Historical Analysis and Interpretation</b></p> <p>Students need to realize that historians may differ on the facts they incorporate in the development of their narratives and disagree as well on how those facts are to be interpreted.</p> <p>To engage in historical analysis and interpretation students must draw upon their skills of historical comprehension. Analysis builds upon the skills of comprehension; it obliges the student to assess the evidence on which the historian has drawn and determine the soundness of interpretations created from that evidence.</p> <p>Well-written historical narrative has the power to promote students' analysis of historical causality--of how change occurs in society, of how human intentions matter, and how ends are influenced by the means of carrying them out, in what has been called the tangle of process and outcomes.</p> <p>Finally, well-written historical narratives can also alert students to the traps of lineality and inevitability.</p> <p>A related trap is that of thinking that events have unfolded inevitably--that the way things are is the way they had to be, and thus that individuals lack free will and the capacity for making choices. Unless students can conceive that history could have turned out differently, they may unconsciously accept the notion that the future is also inevitable or predetermined, and that human agency and individual action count for nothing.</p>	<p>TLW:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Compare and contrast differing sets of ideas, values, personalities, behaviors, and institutions by identifying likenesses and differences.</li> <li>2. Consider multiple perspectives of various peoples in the past by demonstrating their differing motives, beliefs, interests, hopes, and fears.</li> <li>3. Analyze cause-and-effect relationships bearing in mind multiple causation including (a) the importance of the individual in history; (b) the influence of ideas, human interests, and beliefs; and (c) the role of chance, the accidental and the irrational.</li> <li>4. Draw comparisons across eras and regions in order to define enduring issues as well as large-scale or long-term developments that transcend regional and temporal boundaries.</li> <li>5. Distinguish between unsupported expressions of opinion and informed hypotheses grounded in historical evidence.</li> <li>6. Compare competing historical narratives.</li> <li>7. Challenge arguments of historical inevitability by formulating examples of historical contingency, of how different choices could have led to different consequences.</li> <li>8. Hold interpretations of history as tentative, subject to changes as new information is uncovered, new voices heard, and new interpretations broached.</li> <li>9. Evaluate major debates among historians concerning alternative interpretations of the past.</li> <li>10. Hypothesize the influence of the past, including both the limitations and the opportunities made possible by past decisions.</li> </ol>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• One of the most common problems in helping students to become thoughtful readers of historical narrative is the compulsion students feel to find the one right answer, the one essential fact, the one authoritative interpretation. "Am I on the right track?" "Is this what you want?" they ask. Or, worse yet, they rush to closure, reporting back as self-evident truths the facts or conclusions presented in the document or text.</li> <li>• These problems are deeply rooted in the conventional ways in which textbooks have presented history: a succession of facts marching straight to a settled outcome. To overcome these problems requires the use of more than a single source: of history books other than textbooks and of a rich variety of historical documents and artifacts that present alternative voices, accounts, and interpretations or perspectives on the past</li> </ul>

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<p><b>(IV) Historical Research Capabilities</b></p> <p>Perhaps no aspect of historical thinking is as exciting to students or as productive of their growth in historical thinking as “doing history.”</p> <p>Historical inquiry proceeds with the formulation of a problem or set of questions worth pursuing. In the most direct approach, students might be encouraged to analyze a document, record, or site itself. Who produced it, when, how, and why? What is the evidence of its authenticity, authority, and credibility? What does it tell them of the point of view, background, and interests of its author or creator? What else must they discover in order to construct a useful story, explanation, or narrative of the event of which this document or artifact is a part? What interpretation can they derive from their data, and what argument can they support in the historical narrative they create from the data?</p>	<p><b>TLW:</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Formulate historical questions from encounters with historical documents, eyewitness accounts, letters, diaries, artifacts, photos, historical sites, art, architecture, and other records from the past.</li> <li>2. Obtain historical data from a variety of sources, including: library and museum collections, historic sites, historical photos, journals, diaries, eyewitness accounts, newspapers, and the like; documentary films, oral testimony from living witnesses, censuses, tax records, city directories, statistical compilations, and economic indicators.</li> <li>3. Interrogate historical data by uncovering the social, political, and economic context in which it was created; testing the data source for its credibility, authority, authenticity, internal consistency and completeness; and detecting and evaluating bias, distortion, and propaganda by omission, suppression, or invention of facts.</li> <li>4. Identify the gaps in the available records and marshal contextual knowledge and perspectives of the time and place in order to elaborate imaginatively upon the evidence, fill in the gaps deductively, and construct a sound historical interpretation.</li> <li>5. Employ quantitative analysis in order to explore such topics as changes in family size and composition, migration patterns, wealth distribution, and changes in the economy.</li> <li>6. Support interpretations with historical evidence in order to construct closely reasoned arguments rather than facile opinions.</li> </ol>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Historical research inquiries can arise at critical turning points in the historical narrative presented in the text.</li> <li>• They might be generated by encounters with historical documents, eyewitness accounts, letters, diaries, artifacts, photos, a visit to a historic site, a record of oral history, or other evidence of the past.</li> <li>• Worthy inquiries are especially likely to develop if the documents students encounter are rich with the voices of people caught up in the event and sufficiently diverse to bring alive to students the interests, beliefs, and concerns of people with differing backgrounds and opposing viewpoints on the event.</li> </ul>

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<p><b>(V) Historical Issues-Analysis and Decision-Making</b></p> <p>Issue-centered analysis and decision-making activities place students squarely at the center of historical dilemmas and problems faced at critical moments in the past and the near-present. Entering into such moments, confronting the issues or problems of the time, analyzing the alternatives available to those on the scene, evaluating the consequences that might have followed those options for action that were not chosen, and comparing with the consequences of those that were adopted, are activities that foster students' deep, personal involvement in these events.</p>	<p>TLW:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Identify issues and problems in the past and analyze the interests, values, perspectives, and points of view of those involved in the situation.</li> <li>2. Marshal evidence of antecedent circumstances and current factors contributing to contemporary problems and alternative courses of action.</li> <li>3. Identify relevant historical antecedents and differentiate from those that are inappropriate and irrelevant to contemporary issues.</li> <li>4. Evaluate alternative courses of action, keeping in mind the information available at the time, in terms of ethical considerations, the interests of those affected by the decision, and the long- and short-term consequences of each.</li> <li>5. Formulate a position or course of action on an issue by identifying the nature of the problem, analyzing the underlying factors contributing to the problem, and choosing a plausible solution from a choice of carefully evaluated options.</li> <li>6. Evaluate the implementation of a decision by analyzing the interests it served; estimating the position, power, and priority of each player involved; assessing the ethical dimensions of the decision; and evaluating its costs and benefits from a variety of perspectives.</li> </ol>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Because important historical issues are frequently value-laden, they also open opportunities to consider the moral convictions contributing to social actions taken. For example, what moral and political dilemmas did Lincoln face when, in his Emancipation Proclamation, he decided to free only those slaves behind the Confederate lines?</li> <li>• When students are invited to judge morally the conduct of historical actors, they should be encouraged to clarify the values that inform the judgment.</li> <li>• Particularly challenging are the many social issues throughout United States history on which multiple interests and different values have come to bear. Issues of civil rights or equal education opportunity, of the right to choice vs. the right to life, and of criminal justice have all brought such conflicts to the fore. When these conflicts have not been resolved within the social and political institutions of the nation, they have regularly found their way into the judicial system, often going to the Supreme Court for resolution.</li> <li>• As the history course approaches the present era, such inquiries assume special relevance, confronting students with issues that resonate in today's headlines and invite their participation in lively debates, simulations, and Socratic seminars--settings in which they can confront alternative policy recommendations, judge their ethical implications, challenge one another's assessments, and acquire further skills in the public presentation and defense of positions. In these analyses, teachers have the special responsibility of helping students differentiate between (1) relevant historical antecedents and (2) those that are clearly inappropriate and irrelevant. Students need to learn how to use their knowledge of history (or the past) to bring sound historical analysis to the service of informed decision-making.</li> </ul>