HISTORY, GOVERNMENT AND SOCIAL STUDIES

Classroom-Based Assessments Toolkit



KANSAS STATE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

Kansas leads the world in the success of each student.

November 13, 2023

Kansas State Board of Education

900 S.W. Jackson Street, Suite 600 | Topeka, Kansas 66612-1212 | (785) 296-3203 | www.ksde.gov/state-board

Vision

Kansas leads the world in the success of each student.

SUCCESS DEFINED

A successful Kansas high school graduate has the

- Academic preparation,
- Cognitive preparation,
- Technical skills,
- Employability skills and
- Civic engagement

to be successful in postsecondary education, in the attainment of an industry recognized certification or in the workforce, without the need for remediation.

District 1



Danny Zeck, *Vice Chair*
danny.zeck@ksde.gov

District 2



Melanie Haas
melanie.haas@ksde.gov

District 3



Michelle Dombrosky
michelle.dombrosky@ksde.gov

District 4



Connie O'Brien
connie.o'brien@ksde.gov

District 5



Cathy Hopkins, *Chair*
cathy.hopkins@ksde.gov

District 6



Dr. Beryl A. New
beryl.new@ksde.gov

District 7



Dennis Hershberger
dennis.hershberger@ksde.gov

District 8



Betty Arnold
betty.arnold@ksde.gov

District 9

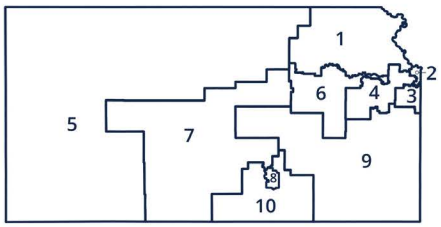


Jim Porter
jim.porter@ksde.gov

District 10



Debby Potter
debbie.potter@ksde.gov



Kansas divided into the ten State Board of Education districts.

KANSAS STATE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

900 S.W. Jackson Street, Suite 102 | Topeka, Kansas 66612-1212 | (785) 296-3201 | www.ksde.gov

Kansas Commissioner of Education



Dr. Jake Steel
jake.steel@ksde.gov

Deputy Commissioner
Division of Fiscal and Administrative Services



Dr. Frank Harwood
frank.harwood@ksde.gov

Deputy Commissioner
Division of Learning Services



Dr. Renee Nugent
renee.nugent@ksde.gov

Deputy Commissioner
Division of Accountability and Technology



Dr. Zach Conrad
zach.conrad@ksde.gov

The Kansas State Board of Education does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, religion, national origin, sex, disability or age in its programs and activities and provides equal access to the Boy Scouts and other designated youth groups. The following person has been designated to handle inquiries regarding the nondiscrimination policies: KSDE General Counsel, Office of General Counsel, KSDE, Landon State Office Building, 900 S.W. Jackson, Suite 102, Topeka, KS 66612, (785) 296-3201.

May 27, 2026

Introduction

This Classroom-Based Assessment (CBA) Toolkit is designed to support educator development and implementation of the state-mandated social studies CBA. This toolkit's information and resources have been designed to position your students for success on CBAs.

Being an informed, thoughtful and engaged citizen in a representative democracy is reflected in a student's ability to go beyond the basic recall of factual information, to analyze complex problems, ask compelling questions, assemble and evaluate critical evidence, and seek creative solutions.

Kansas Social Studies Classroom-Based Assessments (CBAs) are designed to measure student understanding of History, Government and Social Studies standards, benchmarks and skills. CBAs provide Kansas school districts, classroom educators and students with the opportunity to develop their own assessments that best support community decisions concerning content, sources and product choices. CBAs are based on the fourth benchmark outlined in the HGSS standards document. CBAs specifically ask students to create products demonstrating their performance level in advancing a claim/thesis and supporting that claim/thesis using evidence and reasoning.

Strengths of CBAs

- ### Educator and Student Choice
  Educators in the classroom know their students and can best decide how to design and implement CBAs. Educators and students can collaborate throughout the CBA process to create compelling questions and direct product choices.
- ### Student Product Choices
  CBAs allow students to choose how they answer compelling questions through different product choices. Product choices may include, but are not limited to, oral responses, written responses, websites, videos, graphic organizers, exhibits, etc.
- ### Revisions
  Since these are classroom-based assessments, students can take educator feedback and make revisions before each final category score is reported to the state. Educators report the higher score for each respective category score(s).
- ### Implemented in Real Time
  CBAs are implemented at the same time as the standards and connected to the content that is being learned.
- ### Balanced Assessment
  CBAs are a part of a balanced assessment system because they can act as both a formative assessment to inform instruction and a summative assessment to measuring learning.
- ### Differentiation, Accommodations and Supports
  In the same way that you modify, scaffold, translate and adapt resources to support students on a daily basis, Educators should also use these best practices for CBAs.

The toolkit is divided into nine sections:

1. **Introduction**[1]
2. **Compelling Question**[2]**:** What it is, how to craft it, and samples.
3. **Claim/Thesis**[3]**:** What it is, how to create it and how to score it.
4. **Evidence**[4]**:** What it is, how to use it, and how to score it.
5. **Reasoning**[5]**:** What it is, how to create it and how to score it.
6. **Rubrics**[6]**:** Finding rubrics and scoring CBAs.
7. **Student Product Choices**[7]**:** Learn more about a variety of student product choices.
8. **Glossary**[8]
9. **CBA Checklist**[9]

Finding the Rubrics

Find all the rubrics on the KSDE Social Studies page:

- Elementary[10]
- Middle Grades[11]
- High School[12]

1 See page 3.
2 See page 5.
3 See page 8.
4 See page 11.
5 See page 14.
6 See page 16.
7 See page 19.
8 See page 22.
9 See page 23.
10 Elementary Rubric - https://www.ksde.gov/student-success/resources-by-subject-area/history-government-and-social-studies/hgss-classroom-based-assessment
11 Middle School Rubric - https://www.ksde.gov/student-success/resources-by-subject-area/history-government-and-social-studies/hgss-classroom-based-assessment
12 High School Rubric - https://www.ksde.gov/student-success/resources-by-subject-area/history-government-and-social-studies/hgss-classroom-based-assessment

Compelling Question

The question that launches and guides an inquiry/investigation.

Here is What a Compelling Question is:

A compelling question is the question that launches and guides an inquiry/investigation. It can be answered by more than one correct claim/thesis. The compelling question is central to Classroom-Based Assessments (CBAs). Students' performances on completed CBAs are based on how well they understand and answer a question. The answer to a compelling question is dependent upon the correct use and analysis of primary and secondary sources. Compelling questions should be a blend between "rigorous and relevant" (Grant et al., 2015, p. 2913) and should ignite student curiosity. Compelling questions can be created by educators or by students. The questions should not lead to an inhumane claim/thesis where students are defending an indefensible statement.

In the same way that educators modify, scaffold, translate and adapt resources to accommodate students on a daily basis, educators should also use these best practices for CBAs.

Finding the Rubrics

Find all the rubrics on the KSDE Social Studies page:

- Elementary[10]
- Middle Grades[11]
- High School[12]

How to Craft a Compelling Question:

Start by identifying a topic to be the focus of the inquiry/investigation. Consult your standards and local curriculum. Think about topics you already teach that interest students. Start with big ideas and funnel down to a topic that is bigger than a lesson but smaller than a unit. Find common ground between important content and student interest. The topic must be able to be investigated using primary and secondary sources and expose students to diverse perspectives.

Compelling questions do not have a single correct answer, but instead afford students opportunities to make their own claims/thesis based on the evidence.

As you begin to craft a question, you may consider different types of questions (Grant et al., 2015) to guide your thinking. Use the descriptions below of 10 different question types to help you craft a compelling question for the topic you want students to investigate:

1. **Broad-brush:** Appraise big issues often through a case study.
   Example: *What is justice?*
2. **case-study:** Look deeply into ideas, actions or conditions.
   Example: *Did the printing press preserve the past or invent the future?*
3. **Personalized:** Offer opportunities to connect with the real world.
   Example: *Why do I have to be responsible?*
4. **Analytic:** Examine the component dimensions of an idea, event or phenomenon.
   Example: *Did industrialization make life better for everyone?*

13 Grant, S. G., Lee, J., & Swan, K. (2015). The inquiry design model. C3 Teachers.

5. **comparative:** Analyze and compare components of multiple phenomena.
   Example: *How could Americans be happier?*
6. **Evaluative:** Call for a judgment on an issue.
   Example: *Was the American Revolution avoidable?*
7. **Problem-based:** Propose potential solutions to a social problem.
   Example: *Should freedom be sacrificed in the name of national security?*
8. **Wordplay:** Juxtapose different meanings of words and ideas.
   Example: *Is free trade worth the price?*
9. **Ironic:** Consider meanings below the surface of an idea.
   Example: *Is greed good?*
10. **mystery:** Track the elements of an unanswered question.
    Example: *What's the real story behind the purchase of Manhattan?*

If you are wondering if your question is compelling, put it through a "stress test." Ask yourself if you can come up with more than one claim/thesis and more than one reason to support your claim/thesis with supporting evidence. Does it have the potential to go past the surface of the topic? Be open to reworking your compelling question until it meets the expectations of a compelling question.

Tips

- Stay rigorous and relevant.
- Avoid content-heavy questions.
- Be open to reworking compelling questions.
- Ignite curiosity

Sample Compelling Questions and Compelling Question stems that can be adapted across grade levels/contents*

- To what extent is _____ a reliable source of information about _____?
- To what extent do relationships among people, places, ideas and environment influence state and national laws? … Impact a market economy?
- Was there a common experience for _____ during _____ era?
- What was the most/least impactful … ?
- How successful was _____?
- How did _____ shape _____?
- How should _____ be remembered?
- What symbol(s) best represent(s) the United States? … A city? … A state? … A school?
- Do we need rules?
- Do character traits impact leadership?
- How will I make a change?
- How does where you live impact how you live?
- How does how you live impact where you live?
- Does taking care of the environment impact where you live?
- Do the choices of individuals affect society?
- Does technology improve the lives of people?
- What is the role of a citizen?
- How do we shape our environment?
- Were reforms effective at causing change?
- What is the role government should play in our daily lives? (Local, state, tribal, etc.)
- Why is that there?
- Why do issues of sovereignty often lead to conflict?
- Where are we?
- How can local communities solve global problems?
- Does development mean progress?
- Why should all people protect/respect land?
- Do land, air and water have rights?
- Do future generations have land rights?
- Does trade impact culture?
- Are regulations necessary?
- Who is responsible for the land?
- To what extent should the media influence public policy?

* While the suggested compelling questions can be used in classrooms, educators are encouraged to practice writing their own questions. The intent of CBAs is to be classroom-driven, and districts are allowed to have the questions come from classroom-educator input. Educators and students can collaborate throughout the CBA process to create compelling questions and direct product choices.

Claim/Thesis

A statement that answers the compelling question.

Here is What a Claim/Thesis is:

The Classroom-Based Assessment (CBA) rubric states a claim/thesis is "a statement made by a student that answers the compelling question and is supported with evidence." A claim/thesis is a key component that helps to answer a CBA. How a claim/thesis is constructed will differ at the elementary, middle and secondary levels in complexity. The claim/thesis takes a position on the compelling question for a CBA. As students progress through the K-12 curricula, they will grow their ability to support their claim/thesis with evidence. According to the Kansas State Department of Education (KSDE) CBA rubric, a proficient claim/thesis answers the compelling question using specific evidence with reasoning. Students are expected to create a claim/thesis that answers the compelling question and supports it with evidence.

In the same way that educators modify, scaffold, translate and adapt resources to accommodate students on a daily basis, educators should also use these best practices for CBAs.

Students should know that a claim/thesis is a statement that argues a position as it relates to the compelling question. The statement should guide the rest of the response by introducing the reason(s) that will be substantiating their claim/thesis. Students can use some of the same language in the claim/thesis as what is used in the compelling question they are attempting to answer. Students should be open to revising their claim/thesis statements as they encounter additional evidence and consider new perspectives.

Claims/thesis should be focused so that it can be argued. Claim/thesis should not promote contradicting ideas. Reserve counterarguments for later in the response to the question.

Finding the Rubrics

Find all the rubrics on the KSDE Social Studies page:

- Elementary[10]
- Middle Grades[11]
- High School[12]

Here is How to Create a Claim/Thesis:

Have students ...

1. Break apart the compelling question to understand what is being asked.
2. Identify what they already know about the question, and what they need to know to answer the question. Educators should consider how much content/background students need before they begin the inquiry/investigation.
3. Consider additional questions they need answered before they can begin investigating.
4. Brainstorm possible pieces of evidence that they might need to answer the question. Educators or Students can be the ones finding evidence.
5. Evaluate the evidence and begin to craft a response to the question by either directly restating/rephrasing the question into a statement or crafting a response that uses some language from the question and adding your own words.

Here are Strategies for Teaching Claim/Thesis:

- Model how to organize thoughts and evidence to help craft a claim/thesis (e.g. graphic organizers).
- Show students an example claim/thesis. Lead students in an investigation of "What is a claim/thesis?"
- Discuss the different parts of the claim/thesis.
- Model a claim/thesis with at least one reason that answers the compelling question.
- Practice argumentation with students by showing students a photograph and asking them a question about it that would require them to circle three pieces of evidence that help them answer the question. Then, students can explain why they circled the piece of evidence that they did. Then, allow students to change their thesis based on their new thoughts. (This is an example of completing a CBA.)
- Recognize how a claim/thesis supports other content areas (Science, ELA, etc.)
- Embed claim/thesis into your daily routine: analysis, argument, evidence and questioning
- Provide a variety of options to answer the compelling question. Students can then select the option that they wish for their claim/thesis
- Provide students with sentence stem to create a thesis:
  _____ was justified/unjustified (circle one) because _____ reason one from source _____ , _____ reason two from another source _____, _____ reason three from a third source _____.
- Practice identifying problems with a few claims/theses over the same compelling question and revising, (e.g., hosting a gallery walk).

Here is How to Score a Claim/Thesis:

The scoring categories of claim/thesis, evidence and reasoning will be scored separately. It is possible for a student to have a different level of performance for one scoring category than for others. In the noncontent specific example below, we examine the performance levels (1, 2, 3, 4) with an elementary rubric for making a claim/thesis. Please feel free to adapt this example using the middle and high school rubrics.

Example Elementary Rubric: Claim/Thesis

Compelling Question: Does pineapple belong on pizza?

Performance Levels

1-Beginning	2-developing	3-Proficient	4-Exemplary
The **claim/thesis** is absent **OR** is unclear.	The **claim/thesis** is unclear, inaccurate or vague **OR** includes a reason that does not provide support for the argument.	The **claim/thesis** includes a clear and accurate reason that answers the compelling question using evidence.	The **claim/thesis** includes two or more clear and accurate reasons that answer the compelling question using evidence.
A lot of people eat pizza and pineapple.	Pineapple is good.	Pineapple belongs on pizza because it adds valuable nutrients.	Pineapple belongs on pizza because it adds valuable nutrients and creates "flavor layering."

Evidence

The details from the sources that support the claim/thesis and prove it to be true.

Here is What Evidence is:

The Classroom-Based Assessment (CBA) rubric states that evidence is "the details from the sources that support the claim/thesis and prove it to be true," meaning that students need to have evidence-based arguments. Students need to provide evidence from relevant **primary and secondary sources**[14] to answer the compelling question. Students can be introduced to sources that have been curated by the educator and/or discover their own sources to use to support their claim/thesis.

In the same way that educators modify, scaffold, translate and adapt resources to accommodate students on a daily basis, educators should also use these best practices for CBAs.

Finding the Rubrics

Find all the rubrics on the KSDE Social Studies page:

- Elementary[10]
- Middle Grades[11]
- High School[12]

Here is What Students Will Use Evidence for:

- Learn and understand context.
- Develop an initial claim/thesis based on early analysis of evidence.
- Expose students to multiple perspectives.
- Substantiate/strengthen a claim/thesis.
- Rework claim/thesis based on further analysis of evidence.
- Corroborate evidence to support a claim/thesis.
- Identify counterarguments.
- Decide upon a culminating claim/thesis.

Here is How to Analyze Evidence:

Analysis Skills

- **sourcing:** Consider the reliability of the source. Look at who made it? When was it made? For whom? What context? Does this affect its reliability/trustworthiness? Is it credible? What bias might exist?
- **close reading:** Examine the evidence closely. What details are in the source? What is the message of the artifact/source? Who is the intended audience? Ask questions about the details of the source. What is the creator's perspective? Is it reliable/trustworthy?
- **contextualizing:** Consider what else was going on at the time. What happened at the time the source was created that shaped its creation?
- **corroborating:** Finding similarities and differences amongst different sources. How do sources either share a message or challenge a message amongst them?

While working through evidence using analysis skills, students need to consider how new information from the evidence helps to answer the compelling question and rework their claim/thesis.

14 See Glossary on page 24.

Here are Strategies for Teaching Use of Evidence:

- Introduce a variety of sources to include primary and secondary.
- Teach students what appropriate citing for evidence looks like in your classroom.
- Give starter stems to assist in citing evidence:
  - The source says …
  - Based on (source) …
  - One point made in (source) is …
  - According to (source) …
  - (Source) explains/describes/states …
  - (Source) outlines/claims/argues that …
- Preview the entire source for appropriateness before giving to the students.
- Ensure educator-provided and/or student-selected evidence is credible and include multiple perspectives.
- Practice using evidence (primary and secondary) in your daily routine.
- When effective evidence is not used, these are the most common critical problems:
  - Evidence may oppose the claim/thesis.
  - Evidence may be completely irrelevant - not true, connected or pertinent to the claim/thesis.
  - Evidence may be true, but not relevant.

Here is How to Score Evidence:

The scoring categories of claim/thesis, evidence and reasoning will be scored separately. It is possible for a student to have a different level of performance for one scoring category than for others. In the noncontent specific example below, we use a level 3 proficient claim/thesis, and then examine the performance levels (1, 2, 3, 4) with an elementary rubric for using evidence to support that claim/thesis. Please feel free to adapt this example using the middle and high school rubrics.

Example Elementary Rubric: Evidence

Compelling Question: Does pineapple belong on pizza?

Proficient Claim/Thesis: Pineapple belongs on pizza because it adds valuable nutrients.

Performance Levels

1-Beginning	2-Developing	3-Proficient	4-Exemplary
The **Evidence** is absent **OR** is unclear.	The **Evidence** includes some evidence that is vague **OR** is not accurate that inadequately supports the claim/thesis **AND** doesn't tell where the evidence came from and who created it.	The **Evidence** is from at least one relevant, trusted and accurate source that supports the claim/thesis **AND** tells where the evidence came from and who created it.	The **Evidence** is from two or more relevant, trusted and accurate sources that support the claim/thesis **AND** tells where the evidence came from and who created it.
Because I eat pineapple.	You can go to a pizza place and get it on pizza.	Web MD says pineapple is "rich in antioxidants that protect your body from free radicals that can cause chronic diseases."	According to Web MD, pineapple is "rich in antioxidants that protect your body from free radicals that can cause chronic diseases." Additionally, the website Science Meets Food suggests adding pineapple creates "flavor layering," which is pleasing to the brain.

Reasoning

The explanation of the evidence and how it proves the claim/thesis to be true.

Here is What Reasoning is:

Reasoning is the explanation of the evidence and how the individual pieces of evidence support the claim/thesis. When providing reasoning, students seek to answer the question, "Why does this evidence matter?" and "How does it answer the question?"

In the same way that educators modify, scaffold, translate and adapt resources to accommodate students on a daily basis, educators should also use these best practices for CBAs.

Finding the Rubrics

Find all the rubrics on the KSDE Social Studies page:

- Elementary[10]
- Middle Grades[11]
- High School[12]

Here is How to Use Reasoning:

For each piece of evidence, students need to explain HOW their evidence proves or supports their claim/thesis and connects back to it. Reasoning is more than listing random evidence; it answers the compelling question.

- Teach students transition words/phrases that show the connection between the claim/thesis and the evidence.
  - This proves …
  - This supports …
  - This is important because …
  - This confirms that …
  - This is the same as …
  - This information shows …
- Students may recognize and challenge counterarguments based on the evidence.

Here is How to Score Reasoning:

The scoring categories of claim/thesis, evidence and reasoning will be scored separately. It is possible for a student to have a different level of performance for one scoring category than for others. In the noncontent specific example below, we use a level 3 proficient claim/thesis, and a level 3 proficient use of evidence. We then examine the performance levels (1, 2, 3, 4) with an elementary rubric for using reasoning to support that claim/thesis. Please feel free to adapt this example using the middle and high school rubrics.

Example Elementary Rubric: Reasoning

Compelling Question: Does pineapple belong on pizza?

Proficient Claim/Thesis: Pineapple belongs on pizza because it adds valuable nutrients.

Proficient Evidence Example: Web MD says pineapple is "rich in antioxidants that protect your body from free radicals that can cause chronic diseases."

Performance Levels

1-Beginning	2-developing	3-Proficient	4-Exemplary
The **reasoning** is absent **OR** is unclear.	The **reasoning** tries to connect one piece of evidence but the connection isn't clear or is confusing.	The **reasoning** clearly connects at least one piece of primary or secondary evidence to support the claim/thesis.	The **reasoning** clearly connects at least two pieces of primary and/or secondary evidence to support the claim/thesis.
You can tell pineapple is good.	Pineapple is grown in Costa Rica, which proves it's good on pizza.	Since the antioxidants in pineapple may help to prevent chronic diseases, this confirms that pineapple should be added to pizza.	Since the antioxidants in pineapple may help to prevent chronic diseases, this confirms that pineapple should be added to pizza to protect against free radicals. "Flavor layering" between pineapple and other pizza toppings pleases the brain, which proves that eating pineapple on pizza is an enjoyable experience.

Rubrics

How to score the student product:

Each grade level Classroom-Based Assessment (CBA) rubric has three scoring categories: claim/thesis, evidence and reasoning. Each category will be scored with a performance level of 1-4. Students will be evaluated on their ability to make a claim/thesis, support that claim/thesis with evidence, and provide reasoning.

With the help of educators from across the state, KSDE created rubrics for elementary, middle and high school. These rubrics are required when scoring CBAs for state reporting purposes. They can also be used by educators of every grade level throughout the school year to incorporate the CBA process into their everyday instruction.

In the same way that educators modify, scaffold, translate and adapt resources to accommodate students on a daily basis, educators should also use these best practices for CBAs.

Finding the Rubrics

Find all the rubrics on the KSDE Social Studies page:

- Elementary[10]
- Middle Grades[11]
- High School[12]

Scoring Categories within the Rubric

- Claim/Thesis
- Evidence
- Reasoning

Scoring CBAs

Classroom educators are responsible for scoring all student CBA responses. Educators will report the highest score for each student in each category (claim/thesis, evidence and reasoning), for a total of three different scores based on four performance levels: 1–Beginning, 2–Developing, 3–Proficient, 4–Exemplary. Scores will be reported to your district testing coordinator.

Student responses must meet ALL criteria contained within a cell to attain that performance level score.

A proficient level is the target in all three scoring categories:

- Claim/Thesis
- Evidence
- Reasoning

Example (from elementary rubric): If you were grading a student's use of "evidence" and the student fulfilled all criteria under level 2–Developing, but only some of the items in level 3–Proficient, then you would record a score of a 2 for use of "evidence" because not all criteria under a level 3 were met.

	Performance levels				
Scoring category	**1 Beginning**	**2 developing**	**3 Proficient**	**4 Exemplary**	**Score**
Claim/Thesis: A statement that answers the compelling question using evidence.	The **claim/ thesis** is absent **OR** is unclear.	The **claim/ thesis** is unclear, inaccurate or vague **OR** includes a reason that does not provide support for the argument.	The **claim/ thesis** includes a clear and accurate reason that answers the compelling question using evidence.	The **claim/ thesis** includes two or more clear and accurate reasons that answer the compelling question using evidence.	**Claim / Thesis Score:**
Evidence: The details from the sources that support the claim/thesis and prove it to be true.	The **Evidence** is absent **OR** is unclear.	The **Evidence** includes some evidence that is vague **OR** is not accurate, that inadequately supports the claim/thesis **AND** doesn't tell where it came from and who created it.	The **Evidence** is from at least one relevant, trusted and accurate source that supports the claim/thesis **AND** tells where it came from and who created it.	**the Evidence** is from two or more relevant, trusted and accurate sources that support the claim/thesis **AND** tells where it came from and who created it.	**Evidence Score:**
Reasoning: The explanation of the evidence and how it proves the claim/thesis to be true.	The **reasoning** is absent **OR** is unclear.	The **reasoning** tries to connect one piece of evidence, but the connection isn't clear or is confusing.	The **reasoning** clearly connects at least one piece of primary or secondary evidence to support the claim/thesis.	The **reasoning** clearly connects at least two pieces of primary and/or secondary evidence to support the claim/thesis.	**reasoning Score:**

Students can make edits to a CBA or to future CBAs for a higher score. Reminder, educators report the highest score for each student in each category before the reporting deadline.

The following grade levels are required each year to be reported fourth grade, seventh grade and 10th-12th grades.[15] All grade levels are encouraged to incorporate CBAs as a part of quality instruction.

15 For grades 10-12, the district determines one grade (either 10, 11, or 12) to administer and report CBA scores in End of the Year Assessment (EOYA) collection.

Alternate Rubric

The deconstructed/alternate HGSS rubric can be used for students who qualify for the Dynamic Learning Map (DLM) assessment. These modifications are for "students with the most significant cognitive disabilities for whom general state assessments are not appropriate, even with accommodations." This rubric provides students a way to "show what they know and can do" in social studies (Dynamic Learning Maps, 2023).

Student Product Choices

The medium students use to answer the compelling question.

Classroom-Based Assessments (CBAs) are specifically designed to support the standards by measuring a student's ability to appropriately use evidence and reasoning when answering a compelling question aligned to one or more state standards. Now that you have learned about claim/thesis, evidence, and reasoning, let's talk about how a student would put it all together into various student products. The assessment criteria provide students flexibility in the types of final products.

While educators are required to use the state-mandated rubric in scoring student products, there is a lot of freedom in the types of product choices that students can create to demonstrate understanding and answer the compelling question. This means that you and your students have a wide variety of options beyond the traditional written essay. This could also mean that students are encouraged and allowed to develop their own product ideas.

Use the following list to help you and your students brainstorm and adapt possible CBA product choices. Remember that there is not a one-size-fits-all solution - your grade level, academic content and student experience/background should influence what product choices students create.

Here are Some Product Choice Options/Ideas:

- **Storyboard with oral Presentation**
  Students create a storyboard to represent their claim/thesis in pictures, labeling their claim/thesis and evidence with sources. During their oral presentation, students explain how their storyboard supports their claim/thesis, identify their reasoning for the evidence, and explain how the evidence supports the claim/thesis.

- **Infographic**
  Provide examples of infographics, discuss the characteristics of an infographic, and highlight how students can embed a claim/thesis within a visual medium. The first time you use this, you may need to provide students with a template to fill in the parts of their claim, their evidence and reasoning. As you continue to use this type of product, students can begin to create their own designs. You can find template examples at Canva or Adobe Express. You can also explore possible ideas and activities at iCivics[16] and in this article from the National Council for the Social Studies.[17]

16 "Infographic Library: iCivics," https://www.icivics.org/curriculum/infographic-library.

17 Social Studies and the Young Learner ©2019 National Council for the ..., https://www.socialstudies.org/system/files/publications/articles/yl_310415.pdf.

- **Written Essay**
  Ask students to create a traditional written response to your prompt where students include evidence and reasoning. Depending on the grade level, this response could be three paragraphs or three pages. Find examples of what this might look like at Read Inquire Write[18], C3 Teachers[19], Inquiry Kits for Social Studies[20], and Private I History Detectives.[21] All of these sites provide a framework for making a claim/thesis using evidence with reasoning in ways that align to the KSDE rubric.

- **Video Presentation**
  Rather than a written presentation of claim/thesis, evidence and reasoning encourage students to create a video version. Depending on the grade level, this could also include requiring a script or storyboard and an annotated bibliography in addition to the final video. There are multiple tools for creating videos, including mobile apps and cell phones, allowing for student voice and choice. Two simple and free online options are Adobe Express[22] and Flip.[23]

- **Audio Podcast**
  Students can create a podcast about a topic or issue that they have been introduced to in their studies. They will conduct the background research and then present their claim/thesis, along with their data and other pieces of evidence, with reasoning in a podcast form.

- **Public Service Announcement (PSA)**
  Students would create a Public PSA about the issue in your compelling question. Their PSA would use their evidence to support a claim/thesis and cite their sources. This could also include a counterargument to earn full reasoning rubric points. The PSA could be in written, audio or video format.

- **Letter to the Editor, Digital Site, Member of Congress or other Policymaker**
  Students develop a cohesive claim/thesis that includes evidence and reasoning. This activity is a powerful way for your students to address contemporary and authentic topics while encouraging them to connect to past events.

- **Mock Trials, Congressional Hearings and Local Board Meetings**
  Ask students to prepare documentation with a claim/thesis, evidence and reasoning for appearing in front of a variety of legal entities. This could involve just the writing process but could also include actual presentations in front of simulated hearings.

- **Create a map or other Geography Focused Activity**
  Maps "stories" can be used to answer a compelling question. Students can guide viewers from place to place using evidence and reasoning to explain how each location helps to answer the compelling question. Students could use Google MyMaps[24], Google Earth Voyager Projects, ESRI GeoInquiries[25] or other online systems to create maps.

---

18 Studies Classrooms Where Textbooks And Teachers Are The Only Sources Of Knowledge, "Teaching Social Studies Inquiry And," Read. Inquire.Write, https://readinquirewrite.umich.edu/.

19 "Inquiries - C3 Teachers," C3 Teachers - Supporting teaching designing and teaching with inquiry, https://c3teachers.org/inquiries/.

20 "Inquiry Kits for Social Studies," Thinkport.org | Special Collections | Teaching with Primary Sources, https://thinkport.org/tps/inquiry-kits.html.

21 "Private I History Detectives," iCivics, https://www.icivics.org/products/privatei.

22 Adobe Express, https://express.adobe.com/

23 "A Safe Space for Student Expression and Creativity," Flip is a video discussion and sharing app, free from Microsoft., https://flip.com/.

24 Google accounts, https://www.google.com/maps/d/.

25 "Geoinquiries," Standards-Based Inquiry Activities for Teaching Map-Based Content, https://www.esri.com/en-us/industries/k-12-education/geoinquiries.

- **Create your own memorial** (i.e., music, stamp, statue, park, mural, etc.)
  In this example, your compelling question would ask students to make a decision around the importance of an event, person or idea. Students would then make an argument why their selection is supported by evidence and reasoning along with a design for their monument, stamp, statue or way of memorialization.

- **Museum Exhibit**
  In this example, your compelling question would ask students to make an exhibit created around the importance of a region, event, person or idea. Students would then make an argument why their exhibit pieces demonstrate their reasoning.

- **Mock Social Media Campaign**
  Students create a mock social media campaign using social media templates to support their claim/thesis in response to your prompt. Students need to ensure that they include their reasoning, evidence and citations.

- **Structured Academic controversy (SAC)**
  The idea behind a SAC is that students are debating but in a win/win situation. It is a teaching approach that encourages students to take on and argue for, alternately, both sides of a complicated issue, and ultimately, develop a balanced opinion. It is a group activity, but it's a simple extra step to ask students to create a product based on their work together. Learn more at Teaching History[26] and eight examples[27] at the Stanford History Education Group.

- **Shark Tank**
  Educators use a strategy based on the TV show to provide a framework for engaging their students in developing a claim/thesis, supporting it with evidence, and pitching their claim/thesis to a panel of judges. Your prompt could focus on just about anything. Ask students to develop a pitch focused on the most important U.S. history document, event or leader. Ask students to research inventions or regions. Learn more about it can look like:

  - Shark Tank Inspired Ideas for School Projects[28]
  - The Shark Tank: Middle East Competition[29]

26 "Structured Academic Controversy (SAC)," Teachinghistory.org, https://teachinghistory.org/teaching-materials/teaching-guides/21731.

27 "Structured Academic Controversy (SAC) Lessons," Stanford History Education Group, https://sheg.stanford.edu/structured-academic-controversy-sac-lessons.

28 John Poole, "Shark Tank Inspired Ideas for School Projects," Shark Tank Success, August 20, 2023, https://www.sharktanksuccess.com/shark-tank-inspired-ideas-for-school-projects/.

29 Lisa Adeli, "Shark Tank - Middle East Competition," Shark Tank - Middle East Competition | The Center for Middle Eastern Studies, https://cmes.arizona.edu/shark-tank-middle-east-competition.

Glossary

analyzing: Looking closely, making inferences, breaking down into pieces.

balanced assessment: A Balanced Assessment System refers to a collection of varying types of assessments that provide feedback regarding instruction and student learning. It utilizes assessment as a measure for learning and of learning.

benchmark: A measurable expectation of student performance.

claim/thesis: A statement made by a student that answers the compelling question and that can be supported with evidence.

Classroom-Based Assessment (CBA): An assessment that requires students to create a clear claim/thesis accurately using relevant evidence with reasoning that supports their claim/thesis.

compelling question: A compelling question is the question that launches and guides an inquiry/investigation. It is open to being answered by more than one correct claim/thesis. The compelling question is central to a Classroom-Based Assessment (CBA).

contextualize: Consider what else was going on at the time.

corroborate: Finding similarities and differences amongst different sources.

counterargument: A statement or argument that addresses the opposite side of a claim/thesis. Including a counterargument and refuting the counterargument strengthens the original argument and gives it additional credibility.

disciplinary thinking Skills: The critical thinking skills that are specific to the HGSS disciplines. Among others, these include analyzing problems, collecting information, evaluating sources, and creating solutions. It's what the CBA is designed to measure.

evidence: The accurate and reliable information a student uses to support their claim/thesis.

inquiry: The act of asking questions used to investigate compelling questions.

reasoning: The process used by a student to explain how the evidence supports their claim.

performance levels: Scoring system for the categories of claim/thesis, evidence, and reasoning: 1- Beginning, 2- Developing, 3 - Proficient, 4 - Exemplary with 3 - Proficient being the target for each student in all categories.

primary source: Primary sources are the raw materials of history - original documents and objects that were created at the time under study. Any piece of writing, image, video, sound recording or human-made object can be a primary source.

scoring categories: The three main categories of the Classroom-Based Assessment which include claim/thesis, evidence, reasoning.

secondary source: A secondary source does not give original information. It interprets or summarizes information from primary sources. Textbooks, biographies and encyclopedias are examples of secondary sources.

sourcing: Looking at who made it? When was it made? For whom? What context?

standard: An overarching learning goal for students that guides instruction across grade levels.

CBA Checklist

Use the following checklist to help guide your planning and design:

- [ ] **Start with a great compelling question.**
A great compelling question is the foundation on which a quality CBA is built. A poor foundation creates a poor task that will result in student work that does not provide accurate information about their historical thinking skills.

  Learn more about creating great compelling questions in the Compelling Question section of the Toolkit. (And don't be afraid to encourage and allow students to develop their own compelling questions.)

- [ ] **Use interesting and provocative primary and secondary sources**
There's not anything wrong with newspapers, letters, official documents; the regular historical sorts of stuff, such as speeches by Martin Luther KingJr.; photos from June 6, 1944; or letters written by women during their trips to Oregon by wagon.

  But the Kansas State Department of Education (KSDE) will absolutely give you permission to start thinking beyond the regular. So, look for resources from multiple perspectives. Use charts and graphs generated from Google's Public Data Explorer. Use maps. Oral histories. And be sure to include different types of multimedia, such as social media posts, videos, audio clips and artwork.

- [ ] **At the elementary level, connect your compelling question, evidence and task to ELA standards.**
The elementary ELA standards place a premium on students writing to sources, i.e., using evidence from texts to present careful analyses, well defended claims and clear evidence. Rather than asking students questions they can answer solely from their prior knowledge or experience, design your compelling question so that it requires students to explore the evidence. The standards document also requires a command of sequence and detail that is essential for effective argumentative writing. Reading standards focus on a student's ability to read carefully and grasp information, arguments, ideas and details based on text evidence. Students should be able to answer a range of text dependent questions - questions in which the answers require inferences based on careful attention to the text.

- [ ] **Use modified evidence.**
Much of the textual evidence used is often beyond the ability of your students to fully access cognitively. So, you may need to use modified sources or modify them yourself.

  Learn more about modifying evidence by reading an article written by Sam Wineburg and Daisy Martin published in the September 2009 issue of Social Education titled "Tampering with History: Adapting Primary Sources for Struggling Readers." You can access it at: https://www.socialstudies.org/social-education/73/5/tampering-history-adapting-primary-sources-struggling-readers.

  Teaching History also has a useful article titled "Adapting Documents for the Classroom: Equity and Access" at: https://teachinghistory.org/teaching-materials/teaching-guides/23560.

  Educators are also experimenting with using artificial intelligence tools, such as ChatGPT, to modify primary and secondary sources by Lexile reading levels. Other tools to try include are Simplish (https://simplish.org) and ReWordify (https://rewordify.com).

☐ **Create a hook activity that engages students.**
Kathy Swan, professor at the University of Kentucky and one of the designers of the Inquiry Design Model, calls this step "Staging the Question."

A strong hook or staging activity will introduce the inquiry, but more importantly, will engage your students in the process. Use this activity to signal the relevance of the compelling question to the lives of your students. Your activity should pull on students' previous knowledge and experience to build early interest in your topic.

☐ **Allow for student voice and choice.**
Encourage different types of summative products. Written work always works but think about the possibilities of video and audio products, oral presentations, annotated charts and graphs, and 3D projects.

☐ **Plan your task with the end in mind.**
It's not just about content or creativity. It's about the analysis of content and making a claim supported with evidence. Following the rubric is critical at this point. For the student to earn a proficient score, the student's product must make a valid claim, use accurate evidence, and demonstrate high-level reasoning skills.

Be intentional:

- About aligning your compelling question and summative task to at least one of the five state HGSS standards. It should be clear in the student product what standards are being addressed.
- About teaching historical thinking skills; sourcing, contextualizing, close reading, using evidence, evaluating evidence accuracy, and citing sources. You can find more details about what this can look like in the other sections of this toolkit.
- About teaching/supporting reading and writing as part of your CBA's design.

☐ **Do it more than once.**
Yes, KSDE requires just one set of category scores per year in the fourth, seventh and high school levels. A CBA is designed to support inquiry-based instruction throughout the year. So, this should not just be a one-and-done type of assessment that merely checks a box on the year-end building report. You and your students can be using the CBAs structure and process all year long to build student skills.

- [ ] **Evaluate your CBAs before rolling it out to your students.**

Assessments should align with your local district outcomes and curriculum.

Measure this alignment by asking these questions:

- [ ] Does your assessment task have a clear purpose aligned to your curriculum?
- [ ] Is your assessment task appropriate for all students?
- [ ] Can students demonstrate their learning in all the rubric categories?
- [ ] Does the task engage students and improve learning?
- [ ] Do you and students have adequate time to complete the assessment task?
- [ ] Are students aware of the expected learning and task performance?

Ensure that the assessment is accurate, dependable, fair, and attends to issues of accessibility and equity by asking these questions:

- [ ] Does your assessment task demonstrate bias or favor students with a specific cultural or linguistic background?
- [ ] Can accommodations and modifications be made to the assessment task to meet the needs of all students?
- [ ] Are conditions attached to the assessment task that do not measure the required elements highlighted in the rubric?
- [ ] Can the product be scored in a way that provides consistent, dependable and appropriate information about the student's knowledge and skills?

Careful analysis of student performance should yield information that can be used to guide new teaching and learning:

- [ ] Is the manner of analyzing student performance appropriate for all students?
- [ ] Does the assessment process provide feedback that improves student learning?
- [ ] Does the assessment provide feedback that allows you to improve instruction?
- [ ] Are the summative grades and comments reflective of real student learning?
- [ ] Do you feel confident that the score a student receives accurately reflects the level of student learning and performance?

For more information, contact:

Adam Topliff
Humanities Program Manager - HGSS
Career, Standards and Assessment Services
(785) 296-3892
adam.topliff@ksde.gov

Kansans CAN

Kansas State Department of Education
900 S.W. Jackson Street, Suite 102
Topeka, Kansas 66612-1212
www.ksde.gov