HISTORY, GOVERNMENT AND SOCIAL STUDIES

Middle School Rubric

KANSAS STATE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

Kansas leads the world in the success of each student.

September 14, 2023

Kansas State Board of Education

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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.

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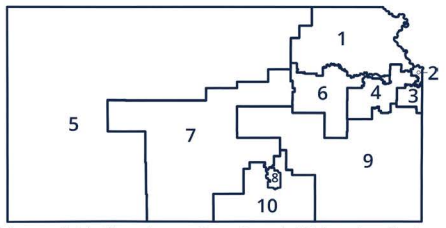


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Kansas divided into the ten State Board of Education districts.

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May 27, 2026

Introduction

The Kansas History, Government and Social Studies (HGSS) Standards document[1] identifies five standards and associated four benchmarks that support the discipline-specific application of content in authentic situations rather than focusing simply on discipline-specific content. The document includes details on effective HGSS classroom instructional best practices and highlights the historical thinking skills that develop when classroom educators successfully integrate these practices into their students' learning.

The Kansas Social Studies Classroom-Based Assessment (CBA) is designed to measure student understanding of these standards, benchmarks and skills while allowing Kansas school districts, classroom teachers, and students the opportunity to develop their own assessment that best supports local decisions concerning content, sources, and products. The CBA is based on the fourth benchmark outlined in the state standards document and specifically asks **middle school students** to create product(s) demonstrating their performance level in advancing a claim/thesis and supporting that claim/thesis using evidence and reasoning.

To prepare learners for the state-level CBA, classroom teachers must provide students with learning opportunities to become proficient in the skills described in the benchmarks under each of the five standards. These expectations are outlined in Benchmarks One, Two and Three:

Benchmark 1:

Recognize and Evaluate

The student is able to recognize and then evaluate one or more of the big ideas from the five standards (i.e., choices, consequences, rights, responsibilities, identities, beliefs, ideas, actions, continuity, change or dynamic relationships).

Benchmark 2:

Analyze Context and Draw Conclusions

The student is able to analyze the circumstances surrounding one or more of the big ideas from the five standards (i.e., choices, consequences, rights, responsibilities, identities, beliefs, ideas, actions, continuity, change or dynamic relationships) and then draw conclusions or make judgments about what they have analyzed.

Benchmark 3:

Investigate and Make Connections

The student is able to investigate one or more of the big ideas from the five standards (i.e., choices, consequences, rights, responsibilities, identities, beliefs, ideas, actions, continuity, change or dynamic relationships) and then make connections to contemporary or real-world issues.

The evaluation of a student's ability to develop a product that answers a locally developed compelling question using evidence and argument satisfies the requirements of the Kansas State Department of Education (KSDE) state assessment mandate. This required state assessment is based on Benchmark Four:

Benchmark 4:

Make a Claim or Advance a Thesis Using Evidence and Argument

1 "HGSS Standards Documents." (2022) Kansas State Department of Education,

HGSS Classroom-Based Assessment description and criteria

Using skills developed during instructional tasks and activities, a student will create a cohesive product using grade-level appropriate communication skills that answer a locally developed compelling question focused on one or more of the big ideas from the five standards (i.e., choices, consequences, rights, responsibilities, identities, beliefs, ideas, actions, continuity, change or dynamic relationships).

To earn a proficient score using the KSDE Classroom-Based Assessment rubric, a student product must include:

- **The Claim/Thesis** includes a clear and accurate argument that answers the compelling question **AND** includes two relevant reasons that support the argument using evidence.
- **The Evidence** is from two relevant primary sources from two perspectives (secondary source as needed). It is credible; clear; accurate; supports the claim/thesis; answers the compelling question, showing an understanding of source material; **AND** is appropriately cited.
- **The Reasoning** provides a clear explanation that connects the evidence to the claim/thesis **AND** answers the compelling question.

Classroom-Based Assessment Definitions

Standard:

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

Benchmark:

A measurable expectation of student performance.

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 is what the CBA is designed to measure.

Compelling Question:

This is the foundation of the CBA. It is the question that launches and guides an inquiry/investigation.

Claim/Thesis:

A statement made by a student that answers the Compelling Question.

Evidence:

The details from the source(s) that support the claim/thesis and prove it to be true.

Reasoning:

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

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.

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.

Middle School CBA Rubric

This rubric will be used to measure student products that **MUST** include Claim/Thesis, Evidence and Reasoning.

Classroom-Based Assessment Compelling Question:

Standard(s) addressed by the Compelling Question:

	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 **AND** includes only one relevant reason **OR** includes a reason or reasons that do not provide support for the argument.	**The Claim/Thesis** includes a clear and accurate argument that answers the compelling question **AND** includes two relevant reasons that support the argument using evidence.	**The Claim/Thesis** includes a detailed and complex argument that answers the compelling question **AND** includes at least three relevant reasons that support and strengthen the argument using evidence.	**Claim Score:**
Evidence: The details from the sources that support the claim and prove it to be true.	**The Evidence** is absent **OR** includes only vague information or background knowledge that is unrelated to the compelling question **AND** is not appropriately cited.	**The Evidence** is unclear, inaccurate, or vague **AND** includes only one relevant and accurate primary and/or secondary source that inadequately supports the claim/thesis **AND** is not appropriately cited.	**The Evidence** is from two relevant primary sources from two perspectives (secondary source as needed). It is credible; clear; accurate; supports the claim/thesis; answers the compelling question, showing an understanding of source material; **AND** is appropriately cited.	**The Evidence** is from three or more relevant and corroborated primary and secondary sources from multiple perspectives. It is credible; clear; accurate; contextualized; supports the claim/thesis; answers the compelling question, showing a comprehensive understanding of source material that advances the argument; **AND** is appropriately cited.	**Evidence Score:**
Reasoning: The explanation of the evidence and how it proves the claim to be true.	**The Reasoning** is absent **OR** does not explain the connection of the evidence to the claim/thesis.	**The Reasoning** provides a vague explanation for using the evidence **OR** does not clearly connect the evidence to the claim/thesis.	**The Reasoning** provides a clear explanation that connects the evidence to the claim/thesis **AND** answers the compelling question.	**The Reasoning** provides a sophisticated explanation that connects the evidence and the claim/thesis **AND** recognizes and includes a counterargument.	**Reasoning Score:**

For more questions, feedback or concerns please contact:

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