Chapter
7

Using Library of Congress Resources in Purposeful Social Studies Assessment

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Assessment plays a vital role in teaching—a much more substantial role than most students realize. Yet many assessments, especially traditional assessments, do little to promote learning (Reich, 2009; VanSledright, 2014). By the time you finish reading this chapter, you should have a clear picture why many traditional history assessments are not appropriate measures in classrooms that promote authentic student inquiry, reading and writing skill development, the disposition to engage civically, and conceptual content knowledge as outlined in the C3 Framework (National Council for the Social Studies [NCSS], 2013). The development of new instructional objectives, such as those promoted by the C3 Framework, creates a need for new types of assessments. This chapter includes examples available on the Library of Congress website to illustrate assessment methods that are suited to 21st-century instructional objectives in standards-based and mastery-based school settings[1] (Ercikan & Seixas, 2015; VanSledright, 2014). I start this chapter with two vignettes contrasting a weak, traditional assessment item with a much stronger model. Studying this chapter should help you consider *why* teachers assess, a concept that, once understood, will make evident the reasons that some frequently used history assessments are inappropriate in 21st-century classrooms. You will next think about a related topic: *what* to assess. You will then consider *when* to assess, focusing on preassessments, formative assessments, and postassessments. Finally, you will get some ideas on *how* to assess, with examples of assessments using resources from the Library of Congress that measure students' mastery of objectives that align with the C3 Framework.

Two Vignettes

A few years ago, I visited the classroom of a teacher candidate I supervised who happened to be giving a test on the day I was there. Out of curiosity, I asked to look at a copy of the exam, which I soon had at my desk. As I perused the multiple-choice questions, I was surprised to find several that assessed obscure historical trivia, such as that shown in Figure 1.

Figure 1. *History Test Question*

1. Who was the unsuccessful Democratic candidate in the presidential election of 1848?
a. Lewis Cass
b. Martin Van Buren
c. Henry Clay
d. James K. Polk
e. None of the above

Note. A question from a history test intended to assess students' recall of historical information.

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1 This chapter applies primarily to school settings that follow a standards-based or mastery-based curriculum with predetermined learning objectives. In educational settings without predetermined objectives, such as some home schooling and some democratic educational settings where student interests guide all instruction, the concepts described in this chapter may or may not apply. An extensive discussion of how to assess in settings without predetermined objectives is beyond the scope of this chapter.

I was curious about the thinking that went into the design of such test items. Was there something of which I was unaware that made the loser of the election of 1848 and other tidbits of historical information important for these 16- and 17-year-olds to know? Later, I asked the student teacher to explain her process in creating the test. "I didn't write the test," she explained. "My mentor teacher makes me use the tests that she wrote and always uses. The election of 1848 was something we talked about in class."

A year or so later, I was in the classroom of a former student who had taught history for only a few years. The day I visited his classroom, he started class with a "bell ringer" activity. As soon as the bell rang to begin class, he displayed a photograph from the National Child Labor Committee Collection of the Library of Congress with accompanying information and prompt (see Figure 2). Included with the picture was the title of the photograph, its source, and a question, which students were asked to respond to in writing.

Figure 2. *Bell Ringer Activity*

Title (written by the photographer): Fank [*sic*] Denato, 6 years old; Tom Denato, 4 years old; Domino Denato, 12 years old. 902 Montrose St., Philadelphia, and Padrone. White's Bog, Browns Mills, N.J. This is the fourth week of school, and the people expect to remain here two weeks more. Witness E.F. Brown.

Location: Browns Mills, New Jersey.

Photographer: Lewis Hine

Date: September 1910

Source: National Child Labor Committee Collection of the Library of Congress

Question: What does this photograph and the information included with it show about child labor and the Progressive Movement? How does the photograph serve as historical evidence of child labor and the Progressive Movement?

Note.   Photograph from Hine, L. (1910, September). *Fank [sic] Denato, 6 years old; Tom Denato, 4 years old; Domino Denato, 12 years old. 902 Montrose St., Philadelphia, and Padrone. White's Bog, Browns Mills, N.J. This is the fourth week of school and the people expect to remain here two weeks more* [Photograph]. National Child Labor Committee Collection. Library of Congress. www.loc.gov/item/2018673881/

When I later asked the teacher about this assessment, he explained that the class had been learning about the Progressive Era. He had also been teaching strategies for thinking critically about historical evidence and using evidence to make and justify interpretations. He said that he wanted to know whether students would simply write about the subject of the photograph—child farm laborers—or whether they would also write about the source of the photograph and use its title to infer the photographer's purpose in taking it. Ideally, students would write about the Progressive Era, pointing out that Lewis Hine took this photograph for the purpose of showing the evils of child labor to promote reform. Students who had learned strategies such as *sourcing*, paying attention to and thinking critically about a document's source (Wineburg, 1991), would point out that the title, written by the photographer, highlighted that the children were working rather than going to school. Hine also explicitly stated the ages of the children. Some students might notice that Hine included the name of a witness of the photograph—further evidence that this photograph was not just a snapshot of something Hine stumbled onto but that he was collecting evidence of the evils of child labor and had a witness to prove that this photograph was not staged. The fact that Hine omits from the title any mention of the conditions of the Black woman in the background further highlights his focus on child labor reform rather than racial equality. At the surface level, the photograph shows child labor in action, but below the surface, the photograph is evidence of the purposes and tactics of progressive reformers who wanted children to attend school instead of laboring on farms or in factories. (For a richer description of the skills associated with historical reading, see Nokes, 2022.)

The teacher explained that he hoped that some students would also write about the choices Hine made in creating this image. Some might point out that Hine positioned his camera to capture a headless overseer standing menacingly over the young children who worked. Instead, Hine could have taken a photograph that included the foreman's head or face. An African American woman works beside the children, representing, perhaps, a subtle allusion to the former enslavement of individuals, suggesting that the conditions of the child laborers smacked of enslavement. The fact that most of the children are shown from the back may have been done to dehumanize them, just as child labor did. The teacher explained to me that the photograph was a wonderful resource for assessing students' ability to analyze historical evidence and evaluate its source, helping him know how he could continue to support their development of content knowledge about the Progressive Era and historical reading and thinking skills. "Ultimately," he concluded, "I want students to recognize how they might use photography to promote social justice reform, like Hine did and as is being done to reveal police brutality—something I will talk about later with them." These two vignettes form a conceptual foundation for much of the remainder of this chapter.

Why Should Social Studies Teachers Assess?

What was the purpose of the teacher candidate in the first example for asking students to name the losing presidential candidate in the 1848 election? I suspect that her primary intent was to identify which students could recall this information from a lecture. She probably expected that many students would miss the question, which would create a range of scores on the test and allow her to give a range of grades. Additionally, she may have thought that a pattern of such questioning on exams might motivate students to listen or study more carefully. She might have thought that such questions might prepare students for similar types of questions on high-stakes exams. It seems unlikely that she would use the results on that question to identify content that should be retaught because it assessed such a trivial fact, as history assessments often do (Reich, 2015; VanSledright, 2015).

Compare these motives with the purposes of the teacher who asked students to analyze the photograph and write about the Progressive Era. His intent was to find out whether students could apply concepts associated with Progressivism to the specific case of child labor shown in the photograph. Students' responses would give him an idea about their ability to use source information to think critically about historical evidence. He would know whether they could make and justify inferences using evidence. Reading the students' responses might show patterns in the errors they made or the skills they lacked. The results of the assessment would help him know whether students had mastered the objectives of the course associated with inquiry and reading and thinking skills. The assessment could inform his instruction in the future. He would identify the students who needed more support when working with evidence and those who did not. He would know whether students understood how reformers were involved in the Progressive Movement. The information about the students that was generated by this assessment would allow him to adapt his instruction to specific students' unique needs.

Two general rationales exist for purposefully assessing students in inquiry-driven classrooms. Purposeful assessments (1) *measure* and *monitor* each student's progress toward the learning of course objectives and (2) are used to *enhance* each student's learning (Popham, 2017), particularly the development of skills that transfer to settings outside of the social studies classroom. To be effective, then, assessments must provide data on how every student is progressing toward the course objectives. Assessment scores should indicate whether students understand important social studies concepts, such as *reform*, and whether they can apply the thinking skills, such as *sourcing*, associated with disciplinary inquiry. Teachers who know where students stand in terms of their conceptual understandings and skill development can then adjust instruction as needed, reduce or increase levels of scaffolding, provide corrective feedback, reteach generally misunderstood concepts or skills,

differentiate instruction for individuals, introduce more abstract and challenging examples, or otherwise tailor instruction to meet students' specific needs. In contrast, assessment items that simply measure students' recall of historical facts, such as the loser of the election of 1848, are much less actionable, particularly when the item that students missed is not important enough to merit reteaching (VanSledright, 2014).

As teachers see assessment as a means of *measuring* students' progress toward important learning goals and *enhancing* students' learning (and their own teaching), they are less likely to use the traditional types of trivia-based questions that provide little useful data for adjusting instruction. Instead, teachers will use prompts and assessment instruments that measure students' progress toward specific course objectives such as historical thinking skills and conceptual content knowledge.

What Should Social Studies Teachers Assess?

Closely related to the reasons *why* social studies teachers should assess is *what* they should assess. Simply put, teachers should assess students' progress toward learning objectives (Boston, 2002; Popham, 2017). Teachers should measure students' learning of the concepts they intend to teach. If their intention is for students to learn skills, they should assess students' development of those skills. Through assessments, teachers should be able to state the level of mastery of every student on each learning objective. Purposeful assessments begin with the creation of clear, worthwhile, culturally relevant learning objectives (Montenegro & Jankowski, 2017). In the examples at the start of this chapter, the first teacher may have intended to have students learn the details of the outcome of the election of 1848, an objective of questionable value. More likely, the test item was not very closely connected to any instructional objective but was merely included on the test, like most other items, to see whether students recalled a historical fact. In contrast, the teacher in the second example had more worthwhile instructional objectives, objectives closely aligned with the Inquiry Design Model promoted by the C3 Framework and applied in the inquiries shared in the chapters of this book. He wanted students to apply their conceptual understanding of reform and the Progressive Movement to child farm labor. He wanted students to analyze the tactics used by successful reformers, a process that would better position them to take informed action. In addition, he wanted students to apply several historical thinking skills, such as sourcing, inferring, and contextualization, which involves imagining the social and physical context of a document's creation (Wineburg, 1991).

Consider, as an example, the following objectives and evaluate how well the assessment (Figure 3) and the scoring guide (Figure 4) would provide data on students' progress toward the stated objectives:

- **Skill objective**: Students will use *corroboration* by comparing and contrasting the information found in two conflicting documents related to a historical question (Wineburg, 1991).
- **Content objective**: Students will describe the extraordinary acts of people who considered themselves ordinary as they took informed action during the civil rights movement.

In particular, the teacher wants students to see in themselves, ordinary teenagers, the potential to become an upstander and to take informed action to promote social justice.

Would the assessment instrument in Figure 3, scored using the guide in Figure 4, provide a teacher with data on each student's mastery of the course objectives, that is, their ability to (a) use corroboration to compare and contrast the information found in two conflicting documents related to a historical question and (b) acknowledge the extraordinary acts of individuals who viewed themselves as ordinary even as they took informed action during the civil rights movement? Could a teacher adjust future lessons based on the data collected from this assessment in order to continue to support students in their learning of both objectives? The answers to these questions depend on students' responses. However, I suspect that students' answers would give the teacher a good sense of each student's progress toward learning objectives, which is *what* the teacher should assess.

Figure 3. *Assessment Designed to Measure Students' Corroboration and Learning of Content Objectives*

Assessment Instrument
Use the following two documents to gather evidence to answer this question: Would Rosa Parks (whose name before she was married was Rosa McCauley) describe herself as an ordinary person or an extraordinary person when she was a young girl? Was her behavior ordinary or extraordinary? What evidence from these two primary sources supports your interpretation? Explain any evidence that contradicts your interpretation.
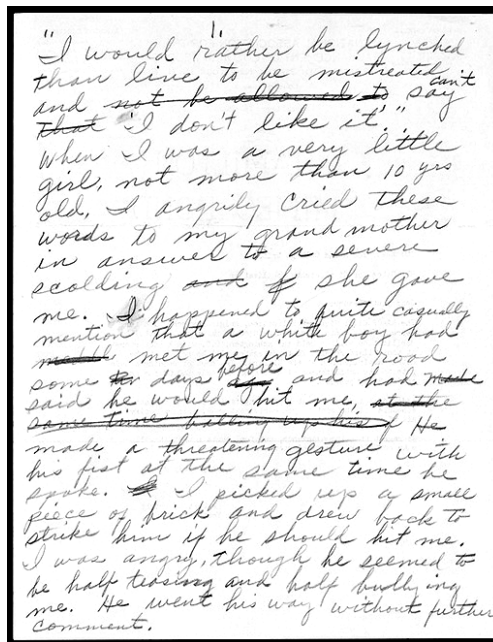
Document 1: Letter written on April 3, 1929 to Rosa McCauley (Parks) by a classmate who had moved to Pennsylvania. From the Library of Congress exhibition, *Rosa Parks: In Her Own Words*, www.loc.gov/exhibitions/rosa-parks-in-her-own-words/about-this-exhibition/early-life-and-activism/letter-from-a-classmate/
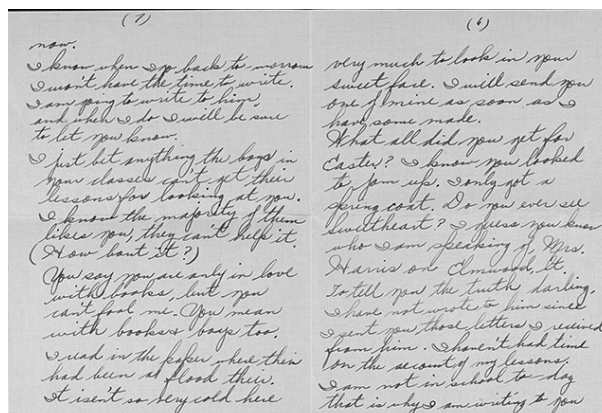
Transcription (starting with first full paragraph on page 6 [on the right]):
What all did you get for Easter? I know you looked to jam up [to dress in stylish clothes]. I only got a spring coat. Do you ever see Sweetheart? I guess you know who I am speaking of, Mrs. Harris on Elmwood St. To tell you the truth darling, I have not wrote to him since I sent you those letters I received from him. I haven't had time on the account of my lessons. I am not in school today that is why I am writing to you now. I know when I go back tomorrow I won't have the time to write. I am going to write to him and when I do I will be sure to let you know. I just bet anything the boys in your classes can't get their lessons for looking at you. I know the majority of them likes you, they can't help it. (How 'bout it?) You say you are only in love with books, but you can't fool me. You mean with books and boys too. I read in the paper where there had been a flood there. It isn't so very cold here.

Document 2: Rosa Parks' memory of an experience she had as a young girl sometime around 1923, when she was 10 years old. Written by her between 1956 and 1958. From the Library of Congress exhibition, *Rosa Parks: In Her Own Words*, www.loc.gov/exhibitions/rosa-parks-in-her-own-words/about-this-exhibition/early-life-and-activism/childhood-encounter/

Transcription: I would rather be lynched than live to be mistreated and can't say "I don't like it." When I was a very little girl, not more than 10 years old, I angrily cried these words to my grandmother in answer to a severe scolding she gave me. I happened to quite casually mention that a white boy had met me in the road some days before and had said he would hit me. He made a threatening gesture with his fist at the same time he spoke. I picked up a small piece of brick and drew back to strike him if he should hit me. I was angry, though he seemed to be half teasing and half bullying me. He went his way without further comment.

Note.   Document 1 is Galatas to Rosa McCauley. (1929, April 3). [Letter]. Rosa Parks Papers, Manuscript Division, Library of Congress. Document 2 is Parks, R. (ca. 1956–1958). Rosa Parks recalls childhood encounter with a white boy who threatened to hit her. Rosa Parks Papers, Manuscript Division, Library of Congress.

Figure 4. *Scoring Guide*

Score	Description	Example
0	Does not use evidence from either document to support an answer	In my opinion, Rosa Parks saw herself as an ordinary person when she was a young girl.
1	Uses evidence from only one of the documents to support an answer	Her story about standing up for herself when being bullied shows that she was an extraordinary girl.
2	Uses similar evidence from both documents to support an answer	The letter from her friend shows that she was an unusually dedicated student and the story from her childhood showed that she would boldly defend herself. Both describe an extraordinary girl.
3	Acknowledges both similarities and differences in the evidence that comes from the documents	The documents give mixed evidence of Rosa Parks' nature. They both show a girl who faced everyday concerns such as liking boys (in the letter) and facing down bullies (in her story). She also faced extraordinary concerns, such as worrying about being lynched as a ten-year-old girl. However, the letter from her friend gives a hint that she might have been an unusually dedicated student.

Table header: **Corroboration Scoring Guide**

Note.   Scoring guide used to evaluate students' use of corroboration on the assessment shown in Figure 3.

When Should Social Studies Teachers Assess?

Another important distinction exists between the two examples given at the start of this chapter besides the format of the questions. In the first example, the question about the election of 1848 was asked on an exam at the end of a unit, when the time for instruction on the election of 1848 had passed and it was time to move on to other topics of study. In contrast, in the second example, the students analyzed the photograph of child labor with the teacher intending to continue instruction on both the Progressive Era and the skills for analyzing historical evidence based upon the data he gathered from the bell ringer. The first question is an example of a postassessment, given after instruction has been completed. In contrast, the second example is a formative assessment, given while instruction is ongoing. The timing of assessments is closely related to their purpose. In this section, I consider purposeful *preassessment*, *formative assessment*, and *postassessment* before showing how they can be used together to monitor students' progress.

Preassessment

One of the most important influences on learning is what a student already knows (Bransford et al., 2000). Teachers who are dedicated to their students' learning of worthwhile learning objectives use *preassessments* before teaching a unit or a lesson to find out what students already know. Preassessments, also known in different contexts as preliminary assessments or screenings, provide teachers with information about students' background knowledge, which can guide teachers' planning and teaching. Preassessments help teachers identify misconceptions in students' understandings, find gaps in their knowledge base, and build on what students already know. Preassessments help teachers design appropriate scaffolding for students by identifying tasks that students can and cannot accomplish without help. Additionally, teachers can use preassessments to identify which students may need substantial support and which need little support to reach the instructional objectives and to engage in inquiry, allowing teachers to differentiate instruction for individual students' needs.

For instance, prior to teaching a unit on 19th-century cultural conflict in the western United States, the teacher might give the preassessment shown in Figure 5 and Figure 6. The purpose of this preassessment is to measure students' ability to (a) use artwork as evidence of historical attitudes, including racially motivated colonialism, (b) identify the role of technology in the encroachment of the United States into the West, and (c) contrast the perspectives and reactions of diverse social groups to the United States' Westward Expansion, some of the instructional objectives of the unit. See two sample student responses in Figure 7 and consider how you might plan instruction to meet the needs of each student. In the assessment, instructions are provided in English (Figure 5) and Spanish (Figure 6) in order to accurately assess students' knowledge and skills regardless of Spanish-bilingual students' proficiency in English.

The students' responses collected through this preassessment, particularly the lack of sensitivity to or awareness of the devastating impact of colonization on Indigenous peoples, would help a teacher plan lessons that would support students who showed differing knowledge and skill levels. For example, Student A seems entirely unaware of the perspective of the Indigenous peoples who resisted the encroachment of the United States. Further, Student A ignores the source information in all four sentences, relies on background knowledge rather than the painting, and does not use any evidence from the painting to support conclusions, even when prompted to do so. In contrast, Student B shows some awareness of the perspectives of Indigenous peoples. In addition, Student B engages in more sophisticated historical thinking by recognizing the perspective of the artist and by acknowledging that the perspectives of Indigenous people were ignored.

Figure 5. *Preassessment Instrument (English)*

Look at the following painting and write one sentence to do each of the following (4 sentences total).

1. Summarize what the painting shows about European Americans' attitudes about Westward Expansion.

2. Explain what the painting shows about how American Indians and Mexican Americans, previously living in the West, might have viewed the United States' Westward Expansion.

3. Explain which features of the painting lead you to those conclusions about diverse peoples' attitudes.

4. Describe what the painting shows about the role of technology in the United States' Westward Expansion.

Painting information

Title: American Progress

Artist: George A. Crofutt (copying an 1872 painting by John Gast)

Year: 1873

Source: Library of Congress Prints and Photographs Division at www.loc.gov/item/97507547/

Figure 6. *Preassessment Instrument (Spanish)*

Mire la siguiente pintura. Escriba una oración explicando los siguientes temas (4 oraciones en total).

1. Resuma lo que muestra la pintura sobre las actitudes de los europeos-estadounidenses sobre la expansión hacia el oeste.

2. Explique lo que muestra la pintura sobre cómo los indios americanos y los mexicoamericanos, que anteriormente vivían en Occidente, podrían haber entendido como sucedió la expansión hacia el oeste de Estados Unidos.

3. Explique cuales características de la pintura les dan sus opiniones sobre las actitudes de diversas personas.

4. Describa lo que muestra la pintura sobre el papel de la tecnología en la expansión del oeste a los Estados Unidos.

Información de pintura

Titulo: Progreso americano

Artista: George A. Crofutt (copiando una pintura de 1872 de John Gast)

Año: 1873

Fuente: División de Impresiones y Fotografías de la Biblioteca del Congreso en www.loc.gov/item/97507547/

Note.   Preassessment shown in Figure 5 as modified for a student who speaks Spanish as a first language.
Crofutt, G. A. (1873). *American Progress* [Print]. Library of Congress. www.loc.gov/item/97507547/

Figure 7. *Two Students' Responses to the Assessment Shown in Figure 5*

Student A Response:
1. This painting shows that White Americans thought the West was a dangerous place.
2. Lots of different people like farmers and miners wanted to go West and take the Indians' land.
3. A lot of pioneers got sick when they were going West on the Oregon Trail.
4. Trains made it quicker for people to go West.

Student B Response:
1. This painting shows that in 1873 many White Americans thought that they had the responsibility to bring civilization and progress to the West.
2. American Indians shown in the painting being driven out, had a perspective that was ignored by Gast in this painting. Gast painted them like he did the wild animals, a very racist view.
3. The artist used light as a symbol of progress (as the title of the painting suggests) with European Americans bringing light and driving out darkness, which ignores what Indians thought.
4. Technology was a key to the United States' ability to expand to the West, with new ways of farming, the telegraph, the railroad, and steamboats all playing a role as shown in this painting.

Note. Two hypothetical student responses to the assessment shown in Figure 5.

Along with careful record keeping, this formative assessment would allow a teacher to differentiate instruction during a subsequent inquiry-based lesson. Student A might work with similarly skilled peers who would receive instruction from the teacher on sourcing and the use of documents as evidence as they investigated a single source representing an Indigenous perspective. For example, Chief Charlot, a Salish leader, like the artist Gast, used light and darkness as symbols when he described the encroachment of the United States into the West: "We were happy when [the white man] first came. We first thought he came from the light: but he comes like the dusk of the evening now, not like the dawn of the morning. He comes like a day that has passed, and night enters our future with him" (Turner, 1974, pp. 253–254). Meanwhile, Student B could work more independently with a group of similarly skilled peers to contrast the perspective shown in 1872 in Crofutt's printing of John Gast's painting *American Progress* with the 1861 painting *Westward the Course of Empire Takes Its Way* by Emanuel Gottlieb Leutze, as well as with Chief Charlot's 1876 quotation. The preassessment allows the teacher to adjust an inquiry lesson to build on each students' prior skill levels.

Formative Assessment

Unlike preassessments given prior to teaching, formative assessments are administered *after* teachers have given some instruction. Teachers use formative assessments, also called diagnostic assessments and assessments for learning, to gather data that will help them know how their teaching has been received and how to adjust their teaching both for individual

students and for the class as a whole (Boston, 2002; Popham, 2017). For instance, formative assessments help teachers decide whether to slow the pace of instruction or speed it up. They help teachers know whether additional concrete examples are needed or whether students are ready to think about concepts in more abstract ways. Formative assessments guide teachers' decisions to remove scaffolding, increase scaffolding, or continue with about the same level of support. They help teachers identify areas of confusion or misconceptions so that they can try again to correct them. Formative assessments help teachers know whether students have developed certain skills or whether they need continued instruction and practice. They help a teacher plan how to differentiate instruction for those students who may need more support and for those who are ready to work independently. In addition, the feedback students receive through formative assessments can help students monitor their own progress toward learning objectives and can remove any surprises on grades when final assessments are administered after instruction.

As mentioned, the second assessment given at the start of this chapter (related to the Hine photograph; see Figure 2) is an example of a formative assessment. The teacher used it after teaching about the Progressive Era to see whether students could identify its major themes, as well as the tactics used by reformers. The assessment also provided data on students' ability to use evidence to support a claim. The teacher might use the scoring guide shown in Figure 8 to create data showing students' level of learning of these two instructional goals. With this data, the teacher can then adjust instruction to continue to nurture students' understanding of the Progressive Era and their ability to use evidence to support a claim.

Figure 8. *Scoring Guide for Assessment Shown in Figure 2*

Score	Description	Example
1	Focuses solely on child labor	This photograph shows how terrible child labor was.
2	Talks about child labor AND the Progressive Movement	This photograph shows how terrible child labor was. The Progressive Movement was a reform movement that tried to end child labor and other problems like dangerous working conditions.
3	Talks about the photograph as evidence of the tactics used by Progressive Reformers	Hine took this photograph because he wanted to make people feel bad for child workers. Progressive reformers supported laws against child labor and other problems, and pictures like this would build support for these laws.

4	Talks about the specific content of the photograph and its source information as evidence of the tactics used by Progressive Reformers	Information about the photograph helps us know Hine's purpose as a progressive reformer. Hine mentioned the children's ages and showed that they should have been in school. He made choices in the photo, like cropping out the head of the supervisor to exaggerate his fearful presence.

Note. Scoring guide for assessing students' responses on the assessment shown in Figure 2.

Postassessment

Postassesments, like the end-of-the-unit multiple-choice test described in the first vignette in this chapter (Figure 1), measure students' mastery of learning objectives *after* instruction has concluded. Postassessments, also called summative assessments or performance assessments, are the most familiar type of assessment, though they are less helpful in promoting students' learning than preassessments and formative assessments (Bransford et al., 2000; Popham, 2017). Like an autopsy—occurring too late to help the deceased, though providing useful information to doctors and family—postassessments do not help students much, but they provide important data for teachers and are a useful instructional tool. Looming posttests motivate some students to study, practicing retrieval strategies that have been shown to improve learning (Roediger et al., 2011). Their results provide a rationale for students' grades and provide data on the effectiveness of the instructional approaches that the teacher used.

Consider Figure 9, a postassessment, designed to measure students' mastery of the skill of *contextualization*, the strategy of considering the physical and social context of a text's creation (Wineburg, 1991). Also consider Figure 10, a scoring guide used to grade the assessment. This assessment might be administered at the conclusion of a unit on World War II, when students have been exposed during a document-based inquiry to the hostility, racism, and discrimination that Japanese Americans faced during the war. With background knowledge concerning the forced relocation of Japanese Americans to internment camps, and after having practiced the skill of contextualization, the teacher now wants to find out whether students can recognize racism and think critically about the post-Pearl Harbor context in which it spread. Because this assessment is designed to evaluate whether students can identify racism, the teacher does not use the term in the prompt. The teacher intends in subsequent lessons to make explicit connections between the paranoia and fear that fostered racism after Pearl Harbor and other contexts when racism and discrimination grew, such as the hostility Muslim Americans faced following the terrorist strike on the World Trade Center. The teacher believes that students equipped with an understanding of these patterns will be better prepared to take action to confront racism when they see it.

It should be noted that assessments of various formats can be used for preassessments, formative assessments, and postassessments. For instance, a multiple-choice quiz might

be used to preassess, or a brief document analysis writing assignment could be used as a formative assessment or postassessment. The distinction between a preassessment, a formative assessment, and a postassessment is based upon when they are administered and how the results are used rather than the nature of the instrument.

Figure 9. *Postassessment Designed to Measure Students' Contextualization*

On February 13, 1942, Dr. Seuss produced a political cartoon supporting the internment of Japanese Americans.

Political Cartoon Information

Title: Waiting for a signal from home...

Artist: Dr. Seuss

Publisher: PM Magazine

Date: February 13, 1942

Source: Special Collections and Archives, UC San Diego Library linked to the Library of Congress through https://lccn.loc.gov/2003556745

Using the strategy of contextualization, write a paragraph of at least 50 words reflecting on why Dr. Seuss and many other Americans may have supported the internment of Japanese Americans, using this cartoon as evidence.

Note. Postassessment designed to assess students' mastery of the skill of contextualization in association with the internment of Japanese Americans during World War II. Dr. Seuss. (1942). *Waiting for a signal from home...* [Political cartoon]. Mandeville Special Collections Library, University of California, San Diego; Library of Congress. https://lccn.loc.gov/2003556745

Figure 10. *Scoring Guide for the Assessment Shown in Figure 9*

Score	Description	Example
0	No mention of the physical or social context	This cartoon is racist. It exaggerates the racial features of Japanese Americans.
1	Mentions inaccurate contextual information	This cartoon shows how happy most Japanese Americans were to live in California, Oregon, and Washington.
2	Accurately describes **either** the physical or the social context	[Answer showing the social context] After the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor many Americans, including Dr. Seuss, were angry and paranoid about another attack. Racism grew. Some people took out their anger on Japanese Americans, drawn in such a hateful way in this cartoon. Dr. Seuss's cartoon shows Japanese Americans being handed explosives, showing his paranoia.
3	Accurately describes **both** the physical and the social context	[Answer shown in 2 above, plus the following, showing the physical context] This overreaction was especially seen on the West Coast, where people felt most nervous about a surprise attack and were afraid that Japanese Americans might help Japan. The paranoia resulted in racist attitudes and hostile acts and Japanese Americans were forced to move to relocation camps.
4	Accurately describes **both** the physical and social context and **one other element** of contextualization	[Answer shown in 3 above, plus the following, showing an analogous context] The context after Pearl Harbor is easier to understand when we hear about hateful things being said and done to immigrants in the US today because of paranoia rather than facts.

Note. Scoring guide used to evaluate students' use of contextualization on the assessment shown in Figure 9.

Preassessment, Formative Assessment, and Postassessment Used Together

Measuring students' growth toward learning objectives can be enhanced when a teacher can make direct comparisons across preassessments, formative assessments, and postassessments. This is easiest to do when the assessments have similar formats. For instance, during a unit on the Cold War, a teacher wants students to develop a rich understanding of the causes, events, and effects of the Cold War. The teacher plans to

conduct a series of document-based inquiries on Cold War themes and needs to know what students already know about the Cold War in order to plan the lessons. So, prior to the start of the unit, the teacher preassesses students' knowledge about the Cold War through a concept mapping exercise. In such an assessment, students draw a schematic map showing how concepts and facts are associated in their memory (see Figure 11). The teacher tells students to start by drawing and labeling bubbles representing the causes, events, and effects of the Cold War (the content objectives of the unit). The teacher encourages students to record all their ideas, right or wrong, so that the teacher can identify what they know well, what they do not know, and what misconceptions they have.

The teacher scores each student's concept map using a simple scoring sheet (see Figure 12), noticing patterns across students' background knowledge. For example, the teacher finds that every student knows much more about the Vietnam War than they do about the Korean War. The teacher finds numerous misunderstandings about the causes of the Cold War, such as the erroneous idea that the United States and USSR fought as enemies during World War II. Findings from this preassessment will influence how the teacher prepares students for inquiry lessons. For example, the teacher notes that students will need to be given adequate background information and have their misconceptions confronted (Bransford et al., 2000) before they will be able to engage in a document-based inquiry on the causes of the Cold War.

Figure 11. *A Student's Mind Map Used to Preassess Prior Knowledge*
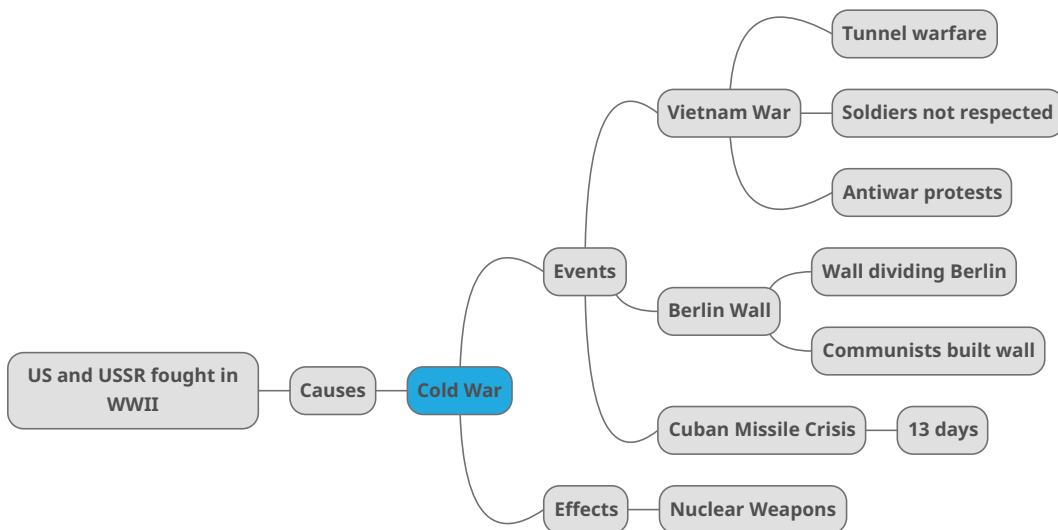
Note. A student's concept map produced prior to a unit on the Cold War using mindmup.com, showing limited background knowledge and some misconceptions.

Figure 12. *Scoring Sheet for the Cold War Mind Map in Figure 11*

Cold War Concept Map Scoring Sheet

	Preassessment Totals	Postassessment Totals
Correct **Causes**	0	
Incorrect **Causes**	1	
Correct **Events**	9	
Incorrect **Events**	0	
Correct **Effects**	1	
Incorrect **Effects**	0	

Note. Scoring sheet for the Cold War mind map, with preassessment totals from Figure 11 recorded and postassessment totals unrecorded.

At the end of an inquiry during which students debate the significance of various causes of the Cold War, the teacher again asks students to create a concept map, this time focused solely on the *causes* of the Cold War. This formative assessment allows the teacher to see that students have a richer understanding of the complex relationship between the USSR and the United States during and after World War II; however, the teacher also sees that many students confuse the symbolic *iron curtain* with the actual, physical *Berlin Wall*. The teacher makes a note to address this misunderstanding during the next class. Other concept mapping exercises are used at other points during the Cold War unit to help the teacher monitor students' learning of the causes, events, and effects of the Cold War.

Finally, at the end of the unit as a postassessment, the teacher returns to students the concept maps that they drew as a preassessment. They are assigned to make additions and corrections to the concept map using a different colored pen than they originally used. The teacher again counts the number of correct and incorrect causes, events, and effects that students have listed, looking specifically for the concepts that were taught during inquiries in class (one on the causes of the Cold War, one on the Korean War, and one on the summits held between Reagan and Gorbachev) to identify whether students reached the content objectives of those lessons. The postassessment concept map allows the teacher to make direct comparisons between what students knew at the start of the unit and what they know at the end of the unit, providing strong evidence of students' learning. Further, the assessment system helps the teacher identify strengths and weaknesses in the instruction during the unit. This example shows how preassessments, formative assessments, and postassessments can be used in tandem to enrich students' learning and to provide rich

data on the impact of instruction. The particular means of assessing, the concept map, is less important than a teacher's ability to make direct comparisons between the results of preassessments, formative assessments, and postassessments.

How Should Social Studies Teachers Assess?

The focus of this section will be on how social studies teachers can assess students' learning of objectives associated with the C3 Framework, including the intended outcomes of the inquiries described throughout this volume. Teachers can assess students' learning in a great number of ways, with no single correct way to assess in any given situation. For example, teachers can appropriately use multiple choice or free response tests, performance assessments, oral interviews, graphic organizers, class presentations, audio and video recordings, structured or informal observations, art- or music-based projects, problem-based projects, class discussions, and other activities to assess. Among the most useful of assessments are authentic assessments, through which students receive genuine feedback from community members, professionals, or others, often outside of the school setting (Newmann, 1996). Regardless of the type of instrument, strong assessments always have three qualities: reliability, validity, and practicality, with each of these qualities enhanced through the use of rubrics.

Reliability

First, strong assessments are *reliable*. Reliable assessments are those that yield consistent results (Popham, 2017). If a teacher were to have a student complete an assessment, then have the student complete it a second time, the results on both should be the same. If the teacher grades it once, then grades it a second time, the scores should be the same. If a teaching assistant evaluates an assessment and a different teaching assistant grades the same assessment, the scores should be the same. A student in a third period class who has a mediocre understanding of a concept should receive the same score on an assessment as a student with the same level of understanding in a sixth period class. Students who complete Form A of an exam should not have any advantage over students who complete Form B. Admittedly, because of human subjectivity, assessments are never completely reliable, though reliability remains the ideal. Rubrics and scoring guides that help a teacher score assessments consistently, such as those shown throughout this chapter, increase the reliability of an assessment (Jonsson & Svingby, 2007). In contrast, inconsistencies, such as scoring more harshly the assessments completed by a student who frequently disrupts class or by students with poor handwriting, yield unreliable assessment results.

Validity

Second, good assessments provide *valid* data. Researchers consider many aspects of validity, but for teachers, there is only one type that really matters: *construct validity*. An assessment has construct validity when it measures what it was intended to measure and the score that each student receives matches their level of learning of the objective being assessed (Popham, 2017). Factors outside of students' learning of the objectives should have no influence on their scores. For example, a student who has mastered the learning objectives for a history unit should receive a high score on a final assessment whether they speak English fluently, suffer from test anxiety, broke up with their girlfriend immediately before the assessment was administered, or regardless of any other factor. When the score on the assessment perfectly matches students' mastery of the learning objectives, the assessment is valid. Of course, as with reliability, perfect validity is impossible for humans to achieve, yet construct validity remains the standard.

There are many things a teacher can do to increase the validity of assessments. For example, in the assessment shown in Figure 3, a transcription of both documents was provided because the cursive handwriting in the documents might be illegible for some students. Without the transcriptions, the students' ability to read cursive might interfere with an accurate assessment of their ability to corroborate across primary sources. The assessment shown in Figure 6 is administered in Spanish so that a bilingual student's limited fluency in English would not invalidate the assessment results. The following accommodations, based on individual students' unique needs, might increase the validity of an assessment:

- allowing a student to eat snacks while testing in order to reduce their test anxiety and let them think more clearly while completing a test
- allowing a bilingual student who is more fluent in Spanish or another language than English to complete the assessment in their native language
- giving students adequate time to complete an assessment unrushed
- avoiding reducing the score on an assessment for penmanship or other factors unrelated to learning objectives
- reading the assessment instructions out loud to students
- allowing a student to digitally record their answers, spoken orally, rather than requiring them to write responses
- administering culturally responsive assessments that allow students to demonstrate learning in a manner that is familiar and valued within their culture

In contrast, the following situations would decrease the validity of an assessment of historical content knowledge and historical thinking skills because they introduce factors outside of students' learning of course objectives into their assessment outcomes:

- The teacher reduces a student's grade because of poor penmanship.
- The teacher gives extra credit on an assessment because the student contributed

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canned food to the school food drive.

- A student with test anxiety suffers an emotional breakdown during the test and leaves many questions unanswered.
- A student who is not fluent in English receives a poor score on an assessment because of language-related issues.
- A test administered to 8th graders is written at an 11th-grade level, so many students cannot comprehend the questions.

Further, providing frequent assessments using multiple means of assessing (i.e., both written and oral responses) at increasing levels of sophistication, a process sometimes known as looping (Parker, 2018), increases the validity of an assessment system.

Of importance, as with instruction, assessments should be adjusted to meet the needs of individual students. For example, the history teacher of a student with a moderate learning disability might work with a special education teacher to establish appropriate learning goals for that student. When the learning goals are personalized in this way, the assessments must also be adjusted for that student in order to produce valid results. For example, the questions used in the formative assessment associated with child labor and the Progressive Movement shown in Figure 2, might be adapted for a student with moderate learning disabilities as shown in Figure 13. If needed, a teaching aide or the teacher could read the questions to the student. Depending on their skills, the student could write their answers or record them using an audio recorder.

Figure 13. *Modified Assessment Question From Figure 2*

Question: What does this photograph show? Who took the photograph? How does it make you feel to see the children working like they are in this photograph?

Note.   Questions modified from the questions in Figure 2 for a student with a moderate learning disability to measure their learning of individualized learning objectives.

Modification of assessments according to individual students' needs can increase the validity of an assessment if it removes factors from a student's performance that are unrelated to learning objectives, such as access to technology at home, language proficiency, ability to write, reading comprehension proficiency, extreme fear of public speaking, and countless other factors.

Practicality

In addition to reliability and validity, effective assessments are *practical* to administer and evaluate. Teachers must consider, for example, the amount of time it will take to score an assessment, whether an assessment can be administered equitably within the constraints of the school schedule, and whether resources are available for administering an assessment.

For instance, having a set of interview questions that a teacher asks individual students one-on-one to assess their mastery of a series of objectives may be a reliable and valid way to assess. However, if the average discussion takes 15 minutes and the teacher has 150 students, the assessment would take over 37 hours to administer. Impossible! Even a 5-minute interview with each student would be unreasonable in many educational settings. As a result, an alternative assessment that is more practical must be used. Similarly, frequent formal assessments that take a great deal of time for the teacher to score may not be practical.

Rubrics

Because rubrics are a practical way to increase the reliability and validity of an assessment system, it is important to understand the basics of rubric design. A rubric is a matrix that supports teachers' evaluation of student products using clear criteria for judgement (Jonsson & Svingby, 2007). Most rubrics list the elements for which the project will be evaluated along the left side of the matrix in rows, with columns labeled along the top of the matrix establishing the criteria used in evaluation (see Figure 14). For example, a teacher might have students write a few paragraphs extending the assessment shown in Figures 5, 6, and 7 to include an evaluation of a series of paintings and statements about Westward Expansion from various perspectives. The rubric shown in Figure 14, based in part upon Monte-Sano and her colleagues' work (2014), might be used to evaluate students' learning of objectives associated with argumentative historical writing.

To design such a rubric, the teacher first determines the level of skill that would demonstrate that students have mastered the objective. In a standards-based or mastery-based scoring system, these criteria would be listed under the heading "meets standard," "proficient," or a similar term. The teacher then considers gradations of the standard including criteria for a product that exceeds the standards. Rubrics are often designed using a 4-point scale: students who are not making progress toward a standard score as a 1, students who have a basic understanding but need more practice score as a 2, students who have met the standard score as a 3, and students who have exceed the standard score as a 4. Rubrics that are shared in advance with students help them appreciate the attributes of high-quality products, and this can help them better understand the learning objectives of the class (Montenegro & Jankowski, 2017). It should be noted that assigning grades using a 4-point, standards-based rubric requires unconventional thinking. For example, a student who scores a 3 out of 4 should not be considered to have earned 75% on an assignment, or a C grade. Instead, a score of 3 on most rubrics that use a 4-point scale indicates that a student has met, but not exceeded, instructional objectives. A teacher should develop an equitable system to convert rubric scores to grades, such as that developed by Marzano (2011) where scores of 3 average to an A- grade.

Figure 14. *Sample Rubric*

Rubric Used to Evaluate Students' Argumentative Historical Writing

Elements of Argumentative Writing	Criteria for Evaluation			
	Exceeds Standards	Meets Standards	Approaching Standards	Does Not Meet Standards
Critical evaluation of evidence	Uses sourcing, corroboration, and contextualization to critically evaluate evidence	Uses sourcing and corroboration to critically evaluate evidence	Critically evaluates evidence based on factors unrelated to historical analysis	Accepts information at face value, ignoring contradictory evidence
Recognition of multiple perspectives in evidence	Provides evidence that diverse people viewed westward expansion differently	Acknowledges that diverse people viewed westward expansion differently	Acknowledges only one point of view in analysis of evidence or making claims	Does not recognize that diverse perspectives on westward expansion exist
Substantiates claims with evidence	Evidence supporting claims is drawn from the strongest documents based on critical reading	Evidence is drawn from the documents to support claims	Evidence supporting claims is not drawn from the documents or lacks explanation	Does not make a claim or support to a claim with evidence
Rebuttal of opposing viewpoints	Provides evidence drawn from the strongest documents to support critical view of opposing claims	Provides evidence to support critical view of or reconciliation with opposing claims	Criticizes opposing claims without evidence	Does not mention opposing claims or interpretations
Essay structure	Includes introduction, supporting paragraphs, rebuttal paragraph, and conclusion with transitions	Includes all of the following: introduction, supporting paragraphs, rebuttal paragraph, and conclusion	Lacks one/two of the following: introduction, supporting paragraphs, rebuttal paragraph, and conclusion	Lacks three/four of the following: introduction, supporting paragraphs, rebuttal paragraph, and conclusion

Note. Rubric used to evaluate students' argumentative historical writing.

Four Examples of Purposeful Assessment

The following four assessments, using Library of Congress resources, are designed to assess students' master of inquiry-related thinking skills in reliable, valid, and practical ways. Each example includes some contextual information, the instructional objectives, the assessment instrument, and a rubric or scoring guide to increase the likelihood that the assessment is administered with reliability and validity.

Example From a Middle School History Lesson
Instructional Objectives

Ms. Swanson, a seventh-grade teacher, would like students to have a deeper understanding of the tactics used by patriots during the Revolutionary War. In addition, she wants students to be able to develop interesting questions to guide historical inquiry. She provides some instruction, helping students understand the following characteristics of good historical questions (Barton & Levstik, 2004; Logtenberg et al., 2010; van Drie & van Boxtel, 2008):

- The question is something you really wonder about.
- The question cannot be answered simply with a "yes" or "no" but must be explained.
- Different people would probably answer the question in different ways.
- The answer is not just an opinion but can be answered with the help of historical evidence.

- The question might be about *causes* of things that happened.
- The question might be about *changes* or *continuities*.
- The question might be about the historical *context*.
- The question might *compare* or *contrast* two events or time periods.
- The question might be about how significant an event or condition was in the past.

Instrument

After talking with students about the nature of propaganda and the patriots' use of propaganda during the Revolutionary War, Ms. Swanson provides students with the engraving entitled *The bloody massacre perpetrated in King Street Boston on March 5th 1770 by a party of the 29th Regt.* by Paul Revere (see Figure 15). She assigns students to write a historical question that they have after looking at the image, using the standards for questions that she has taught them. She passes out a copy of the rubric shown in Figure 16 and reads with students the criteria for stronger and weaker historical questions. In doing so, she uses the rubric as a teaching tool as well as a resource to increase the reliability and validity of her evaluation of the students' questions. Determined to differentiate this assessment, she lets students know that they can write two or three questions rather than one if they feel that they have a good grasp of the idea of historical questions. "It's better to have one strong question than three weak questions, though," she informs them. When Ms. Swanson notices a few students struggling to write their own question, she gives them five possible questions that she prepared in advance and has them pick one or two that they are interested in that have the strongest qualities of historical questions. She keeps a record of the way she adjusted the assessment for different students, which will help her know how to interpret the data she receives from this assessment. Because she intends to continue to work with students on questioning, using data from this assessment to guide her teaching, this is a formative assessment.

Figure 15. *Image and Question Used as a Formative Assessment*

Instructions: Write a historical question that you have after looking at this engraving of the Boston Massacre by Paul Revere. Make sure that your question has the characteristics of strong historical questions. If you want to, you can write a second or third question that you have.

Note.   Engraving of the Boston Massacre by Paul Revere, used as a formative assessment of students' ability to engage in questioning. Revere, P. (1780). *The bloody massacre perpetrated in King Street Boston on March 5th 1770 by a party of the 29th Regt.* [Engraving]. Library of Congress. https://www.loc.gov/item/2008661777/

Figure 16. *Scoring Rubric for Historical Questioning*

Historical Questioning Scoring Rubric			
Standard	**Outstanding**	**Proficient**	**Emerging**
Question is real.	I can't wait to start looking for the answer.	I want to know the answer to this.	I might look for the answer if I was bored.
Question is open ended.	It would take a book to answer this question.	It would take a paragraph to answer this question.	It would take a word or sentence to answer this question.
Answers are debatable.	I can think of lots of ways people might answer this.	I can think of a few ways people would answer this.	Most people would probably agree on one answer.
Answers are defensible.	There is a lot of historical evidence to help me answer.	There is some historical evidence to help me answer.	There is very little historical evidence to help me answer.
Question is related to historical themes (causes, changes, continuities, contexts, comparisons, or judgments).	Answers are related to more than one theme.	Answers are related to one of the themes.	Answer is not really related to any historical theme.

Note.   Scoring rubric used to evaluate students' ability to formulate strong historical questions.

Example From High School History Class
Instructional Objectives

Mr. Garcia is a high school history teacher who has been teaching about the causes of the Civil War as well as strategies for searching online digital archives like the Library of Congress for historical evidence. He wants to dispel any persisting doubts that students might have about the enslavement of individuals as a root cause of the Civil War, and he is confident that immersing students in historical evidence will achieve this aim. He has spent a great deal of time in class modeling for students how to navigate the Library of Congress' digital collections. The formative assessment is shown in Figure 17. It could be given in class or assigned outside of class and could be used to assess students' understanding of the secessionist movement and to measure students' ability to locate and evaluate evidence relevant to a historical question. The scoring guide shown in Figure 18, like the other scoring guides and rubrics included in the chapter, is intended to increase the reliability and validity of teachers' scoring of the students' research and writing. In addition, see the Appendix for a sample of Library of Congress sources that a student might locate showing the role of enslavement in the secessionist movement, as listed in Figure 18.

Instrument

Figure 17. *Assignment to Assess Students' Ability to Find and Use Primary Sources*

Instructions: Today, there continues to be some debate over why Southern states seceded from the Union at the start of the Civil War. In particular, there is debate about the role of the enslavement of African Americans as a cause of secession. Find a primary source from the Library of Congress or another digital archive that could be used as evidence of the motivation of Southern states to secede. Write a few sentences about the document explaining whose perspective it shows, how much you trust it, and what evidence it provides of the motives of secession. The following document serves as an example of the types of evidence you seek.
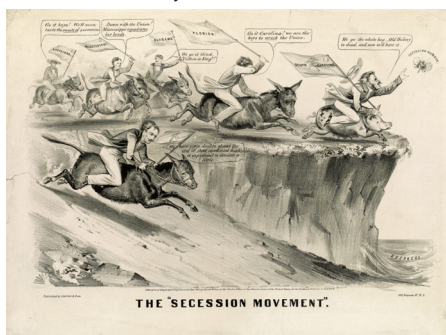
Document information: A political cartoon created by an unnamed artist and published in *Currier and Ives*, a New York-based magazine, in 1861. Found in the Library of Congress Prints and Photographs Division www.loc.gov/item/2003674576/
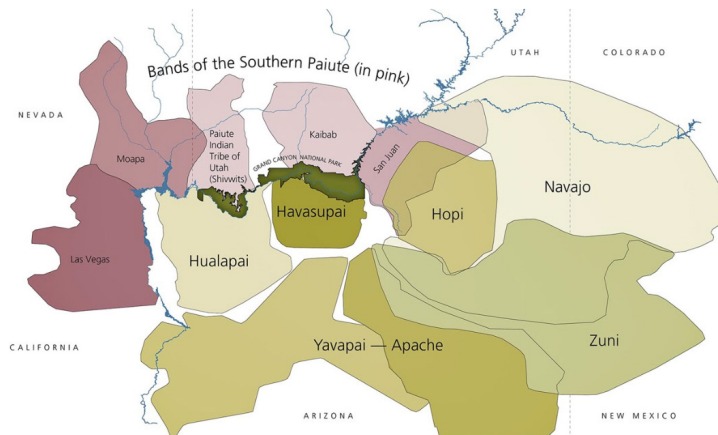
Note. An assignment given to assess students' ability to search for primary sources, identify their relevance, and analyze their perspective. *The "Secession Movement."* (ca. 1861). [Political cartoon]. Library of Congress. www.loc.gov/item/2003674576/

Figure 18. *Scoring Guide for the Assessment Shown in Figure 17*

Score	Description	Example
0	Fails to find primary source materials	
1	Finds a primary source that is irrelevant to the question of secession	Student cites the source *The Battle of Gettysburg* by Samuel Adams Drake (1863), which is a book about the Battle of Gettysburg rather than about secession.
2	Finds a primary source somewhat relevant to secession or engages in a faulty analysis or no analysis of a highly relevant primary source (such as failing to describe the perspective it represents or accepting its content at face value without critical analysis)	Student cites the source *Secession Unmasked* by A. J. Cline (1861), in which a Northerner takes on a Southerner's voice in describing the reasons for secession, but the student just lists the reasons for secession, failing to recognize that the Southern viewpoint is filtered through the perspective of a Northerner in this source.
3	Finds a primary source highly relevant to the motivations for secession and engages in an adequate analysis, noticing the source and explaining its content	Student cites the source *Confederate Echoes* by Albert Theodore Goodloe (1907), in which a veteran of the Confederate army remembers speeches prior to the war. The student acknowledges the problems with memory that result from this record being produced so long after the war, but also recognizes the strength of the source, coming from someone in the thick of the secessionist movement.
4	Finds a primary source highly relevant to the motivations for secession and engages in a critical analysis, identifying the perspective it represents, evaluating its trustworthiness, and providing a critical (rather than a literal) description of its content	Student cites the source *The Iron Furnace, or, Slavery and Secession* by John H. Aughey (1863). The student explains that the writer is a Unionist in Confederate Mississippi, so he provides a unique perspective on secession. His presence during the heat of the secessionist movement makes his perspective especially valuable in spite of its obvious biases against the secessionists. The reader can hear in the author's description of the Confederate's arguments his belief that they were being irrational.

Note Scoring guide used for the assessment shown in Figure 17. See the Appendix for more details on the examples of primary sources discussed here as well as other primary sources.

Example from Middle School Geography Class
Instructional Objectives

Mr. Francis, a geography teacher, has been teaching students to think critically about the content of maps, recognizing that the purpose of a map influences its content. He has modeled how to make inferences about each map's purpose by what is included and what is omitted. After teaching this critical thinking strategy to students, the teacher asks students to access on their computers at least two of the maps shown in Figure 19 and gives the students the following writing prompt, which they complete in the last few minutes of class as an "exit slip" and hand to the teacher as they leave the classroom. Using their computers, students zoom in as needed to see the details of the maps. Of course, this assessment is only practical if computers are available to each student. Using the scoring guide in Figure 20 to increase the reliability and validity of his grading, Mr. Francis intends to look over the exit slips before the next class to know whether he needs to reteach any part of the lesson, making this a formative assessment. In addition, he adapts this assessment to meet the needs of different learners, such as requiring some students to evaluate all three maps or to find an additional map on the Library of Congress website and identify its purpose. Alternatively, he requires Preston, a young man who struggles with writing, to sit by him and discuss one-by-one his analysis of the maps orally with him. Mr. Francis gives Preston the same prompt, the same maps, and uses the same scoring rubric, during the oral discussion about the maps, as is used with the other students.

Instrument

Figure 19. *Exit Slip to Assess Students' Ability to Infer the Purpose of a Map From its Content*

Instructions: Compare two of the three maps of the Grand Canyon National Park, paying special attention to the differences between them. Write a few sentences explaining the purpose of the two maps you choose. Talk about specific things you see on the map that help you to know about its purpose. Talk about the differences between the maps that help you know their purposes.

Map 1: Grand Canyon National Park, Arizona, published in 1984. Relief shown by shading and spot heights. Found at www.loc.gov/item/84695480

Map 2: Map produced by the National Park Service and published on their Grand Canyon webpage showing Traditionally Associated Tribes. Found at www.nps.gov/grca/learn/historyculture/associated-tribes.htm

Map 3: Topographic map of the Grand Canyon National Park, Arizona, published in 1948. Found in the Library of Congress Geography and Map Division at www.loc.gov/item/98687189

Note. Assessment instrument used as an exit slip to assess students' ability to infer the purpose of a map from its content. Map 1 is National Park Service. (1984). *Grand Canyon* [Map]. Library of Congress. www.loc.gov/item/84695480; Map 2 is National Park Service. (n.d.). [Map showing approximate locations of the traditional territories of the 11 tribes that have cultural connections to Grand Canyon] [Map]. www.nps.gov/grca/learn/historyculture/associated-tribes.htm; Map 3 is *Topographic map of the Grand Canyon National Park Arizona.* (1948). [Map]. Library of Congress. www.loc.gov/item/98687189

Figure 20. *Scoring Guide for the Instrument Shown in Figure 19.*

Score	Description	Example
	Scoring Guide	
0	Student does not complete the assessment.	
1	Student talks about two maps but does not address the purpose of either map.	The first map is a lot more colorful, and the third map is more detailed.
2	Student discusses the purposes of **one** of the maps but provides **no specific evidence.**	The first map looks like it was made for tourists coming to visit the National Park.
3	Student discusses the purposes of **both** maps but provides **no specific evidence.**	The first map looks like it was made for tourists. The third map was made by geologists for more scientific purposes.
4	Student discusses the purposes of **one** of the maps **with specific evidence.**	The first map looks like it was made for tourists. It shows the location of campgrounds and picnic areas.
5	Student discusses the purposes of **both** maps **with specific evidence.**	The first map looks like it was made for tourists. It shows the location of campgrounds and picnic areas. The third map was made by geologists for more scientific purposes. It provides detailed information about the elevation in each canyon.
6	Student discusses the purposes of **both** maps **with specific evidence** and makes **direct comparisons** between the maps.	In addition to the previous response: Geologists would have been less interested in tourist resources so information about campsites and gas stations is missing from the third map.

Note.   Scoring guide to evaluate students' written responses to the exit slip instrument shown in Figure 19.

Example from an Elementary School History Lesson
Instructional Objectives

Ms. Stirland has been teaching a unit on World War I to a fifth-grade class. They have studied a lot about the home front, including shortages and rationing, enlistment drives, and war bonds. She has also been working with fifth-grade students to help them understand propaganda. She has tried to help them recognize that propaganda is usually designed to

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move someone from a belief to an action by appealing to their emotions. People are more likely to do something when they feel sad, angry, patriotic, afraid, or another strong feeling. After discussing this concept with students, she wants to conduct a formative assessment to identify which students understand the purpose of propaganda and the role of emotion in achieving that purpose and which students might need more instruction on those concepts. She is aware of the Library of Congress' vast collection of propaganda posters from World War I and decides to use one of these posters to evaluate students' ability to identify the purpose of a propaganda poster and the tactics used by its creators to achieve that purpose. During the lesson on propaganda, after introducing the concept to the class, she displays the following information in front of the class and reads the instructions out loud to the students (see Figure 21). As students write, she creates a scoring guide that will allow her to quickly assess students' responses (see Figure 22).

Instrument

Figure 21. *Formative Assessment of Students' Understanding of Propaganda*

This propaganda poster was published in the United States in 1918 during World War I when the United States was fighting against Germany. The bird with a shield shown on the pant legs is a German eagle. Answer these questions about the poster:

1. What did the person who created the poster want people to do?
2. How did the person who created the poster try to get people to do what he wanted them to do?

Title: Keep these off the U.S.A.—Buy more Liberty Bonds
Creator: John Norton
Year: 1918
Publishing information: The Strobridge Litho. Company
Location: Cincinnati, Ohio
Found at: Library of Congress Prints and Photographs Division www.loc.gov/item/2002722447/

Note. Formative assessment used to evaluate students' ability to identify the purpose of propaganda and the role of emotion in achieving that purpose. Norton, J. W. (1918). *Keep these off the U.S.A.—Buy more Liberty Bonds* [Poster]. Library of Congress. www.loc.gov/item/2002722447/

Figure 22. *Scoring Guide for the Formative Assessment in Figure 21*

1	Correctly identifies the purpose as trying to get people to buy bonds	yes	no
2	Correctly identifies the use of fear to try to get people to buy bonds	yes	no
3	Elaborates on how the artist attempted to use fear—the bloody boots and/or the threat of an invasion of the United States	yes	no

Note. Scoring guide used to quickly assess students understanding of the purpose and methods used by the creators of propaganda.

Additional Assessment Resources and Ideas

The Stanford History Education Group has designed numerous assessments that use Library of Congress resources to measure students' development of the historical thinking skills of sourcing, corroboration, and contextualization mentioned in this chapter. These assessments, packaged under the label "Beyond the Bubble" to differentiate them from traditional fill-in-the-bubble multiple choice tests, meet the criteria of reliability, validity, and practicality for assessing their intended target skills. In addition, further examples of preassessments, formative assessments, and postassessments are shown in Figure 23. Creative teachers modify ideas by incorporating technology, making adaptations for individual students' unique needs, integrating oral and written responses, or requiring feedback from peers. As long as assessments are reliable, valid, and practical, they can provide useful data for teachers to use to guide students' learning and evaluate their teaching.

Figure 23. *Assessments and Ideas for Obtaining Reliable and Valid Scores and Applying Them Practically*

Assessment	Description	Scoring	Application or Example
KWL pre, post	Students make three lists. The first two, what they know (K) and what they want to learn (W), are completed before an activity. The third, what they learned (L), is completed after instruction.	Unscored. The teacher evaluates to find patterns in misconceptions and gaps in knowledge. Students add to and discuss as instruction continues.	A teacher has students complete the first two columns of the chart as a class before giving them a primary source document. The teacher uses the KWL chart to guide a discussion of the primary source, addressing students' misunderstandings, gaps in knowledge, and questions. The class collaboratively completes the third column after the analysis.

Poll pre, formative	Teachers conduct a survey to identify students' interests or to measure their comfort with target content or skills.	Unscored. Technology is especially useful to gather composite data on the entire class.	Teachers can use various apps or poll students by having them show a thumb up or down or move to a certain place in the classroom to get a quick, general sense of the class's ideas or comfort with content or skills.
Document analysis pre, formative, post	Students write a few sentences evaluating the reliability and usefulness of a document related to a historical question.	Teachers create a scoring guide or rubric based on the specific historical reading skill they assess.	Teachers use these to assess sourcing, corroboration, perspective-taking, or other strategies, using this data to make decisions about how to continue to nurture students' skill development. Library of Congress primary source sets could be used.
Multiple choice questions pre, formative, post	Teachers administer multiple-choice questions assessing students' mastery of content or skill objectives (rather than trivia).	Computer grading is possible, allowing quick, reliable scoring of a large number of assessments.	Multiple choice questions about historical evidence might be used in connection with writing prompts to make the scoring of assessments less time-consuming and more practical.
Free-response writing prompts pre, formative, post	Teachers administer one or more writing prompts assessing students' mastery of content or skill objectives	Teachers use scoring guides or rubrics to increase the reliability and validity of scoring.	Teachers can use free response writing prompts in exit slips; during the analysis of photographs, art, political cartoons, or other resources; in connection with multiple-choice questions on a final exam; or in other assessments.
Ungraded Pop Quiz (**UPQ**) formative	The teacher gives a surprise quiz that is collaboratively evaluated but not factored into students' grades.	Self-corrected during a class discussion on strong and weak responses	A teacher provides students with the source information of four pieces of evidence and asks them to rank them in order of usefulness to a historian. This assessment identifies areas of weakness that are retaught while correcting it. Students use it to self-assess.

Exit slip formative	The teacher gives students a writing prompt to be completed and turned in at the end of class as their "ticket" out.	Teacher evaluates using a scoring guide.	A teacher provides students with two historical photographs during the last few minutes of class and asks them to critically analyze them. The teacher collects their writing as they leave class and evaluates them, noticing patterns in the errors students make. The teacher addresses these errors during the next class.
Traffic light assessment formative	Teacher projects a traffic light with red, yellow, and green lights. Students use sticky notes to post what they understand well on green, what they don't understand on red, and questions they have on yellow.	Unscored. The teacher reviews students' responses to determine what needs to be retaught.	The teacher pulls questions from the yellow, reads them, and talks about them with the class at the end of class. The teacher looks at the red to plan future lessons.
Creative project formative, post	The teacher assigns students to create a diorama, poster, collage, or other project that requires the transfer of skills and content into a new situation.	Teacher evaluates using a scoring guide or rubric, shared with students at the time the assignment is made.	Creative projects are especially useful for assessing students' ability to apply concepts and skills within new settings, providing data on students' deep learning.
Oral interview Pre, formative, post	The teacher asks students a question or series of questions, listens, and takes notes on their responses.	Teacher evaluates using a rubric or scoring guide as students speak	A teacher assigns a writing task to most students associated with the analysis of a historic political cartoon but uses an oral interview with two students who struggle with writing.

Conclusion

To summarize, assessment plays a vital role in learning-centered and inquiry-focused social studies classrooms. However, traditional assessment instruments that test students' recall of trivial historical information are inappropriate within classrooms that follow the C3 Framework and promote inquiry (Ercikan & Seixas, 2015; Reich, 2015; VanSledright, 2015). Instead, assessments that measure students' progress toward learning objectives should

be used, focusing on students' development of conceptual understandings and skills, and their ability to engage in inquiry. Teachers can use data from preassessments and formative assessments to plan lessons and to differentiate instruction to meet students' individual needs. Postassessments may motivate students to study and provide data on the success of instruction but are less useful in interactions with students. A wide variety of assessments are available, each potentially appropriate if they meet the standards of reliability, validity, and practicality related to the instructional objectives and the context in which they are administered. Rubrics and scoring guides can be used in instruction and can increase the reliability, validity, and practicality of assessments.

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Appendix

Possible Primary Sources on the Reasons for Secession Found in the Library of Congress (see Figure 17), With Samples of Strong Analyses of the Sources and Perspectives

Aughey, J. H., (1863). *The iron furnace, or, slavery and secession.* William S. & Alfred Martien. www.loc.gov/item/02017765/

> This book was written by John Hill Aughey, a Southerner living in Mississippi who remained loyal to the Union and suffered for it. He includes a great deal of evidence for the reasons for the Southerners' secession, from his unique perspective as a Unionist. For example, he records a speech given by a Colonel Drane in Choctaw, Mississippi, in 1860 (pp. 14–19). Drane gives many reasons for the secession of the South, Lincoln's potential election and its threat to slavery being first mentioned by him. Of course, the words of the speech come through Aughey and are not Drane's original words. Several other similar pieces of evidence about the secession of Mississippi are provided throughout the book, always from the perspective of a Southerner who opposed secession.

Barksdale, E. (1861, January 2). Washington County. *The Weekly Mississippian*, Image 2. https://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/lccn/sn84024323/1861-01-02/ed-1/seq-2/

> This newspaper article summarizes the results of an informal vote on secession held in Washington County, Mississippi, along with a resolution written by Judge Yerger of that county. In the resolution, the judge explains that the election of Lincoln makes it necessary to secede in order to protect the rights of slaveholding states and to protect the institution of slavery. He encourages a convention of all slaveholding states. This article spins the story, including the summary of events in Washington County, in favor of the secessionist movement.

Cline, A. J. (1861). *Secession unmasked, or an appeal from the madness of disunion to the sobriety of the constitution and common sense.* Henry Polkinhorn. www.loc.gov/item/02001002/

> The title of the book gives away Cline's purpose for writing during the year that secession happened: he wants to show that secession was madness. He takes on the voice of a secessionist, explaining the reasons for their decision to secede (p. 7). This gives a Northerner's perspective of the Southerners' reasons for seceding. It is not a very good resource for the real reasons for Southerners' secession but a great primary source on a Northerner's perspective of the Southerners' reasons for secession.

Drake, S. A. (1892). *The battle of Gettysburg.* Lee and Shepard Publishers. www.loc.gov/item/02010457/

Goodloe, A. T. (1907). *Confederate echoes: A voice from the South in the days of secession and of the Southern Confederacy.* M. E. Church, South, Smith, & Lamar. www.loc.gov/item/07038912/

> This book was written by Albert Theodore Goodloe, a former Confederate soldier, many years after the Civil War had ended. His writing is influenced by his hindsight, though he remained true to the Southern cause many years after the war. He provides much evidence for the reasons for secession, including his memory of a speech given by former Confederate Captain Ed Baxter at a reunion of Confederate soldiers in 1892 (pp. 30–40). In this speech, Baxter talks a great deal about Northern tyranny and the Southerner's defense of the rights of the minority (talking about White Southerners as the minority). His speech includes references to Lincoln's

election, abolition, and Southerners' right to own property in slaves. Goodloe dedicates an entire chapter to the reasons for secession (pp. 60–73). He states that he is unsure how much of a role slavery played but then spends the entire chapter talking about slavery. Again, it is important to remember that this document represents the perspective of a veteran of the Confederacy produced many years after the war, highlighting the virtue of its lost cause.

Johnson, R. H., & Black, J. H. (1861, March 13). Backing down! *Daily True Democrat*, Image 2. https://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/lccn/sn89051466/1861-03-13/ed-1/seq-2/

This newspaper article was published by two editors of an Arkansas newspaper in March 1861 as Arkansans debated whether to join those states who had seceded shortly after Lincoln's election in November 1860. The article provides evidence that one of the main reasons the people of Arkansas seceded was because they were unwilling to support Lincoln's plan to force those states that had previously seceded to stay in the Union. The authors wrote from the perspective of individuals who favored secession and were frustrated with those who remained loyal to the Union despite Lincoln's election and the growing threat of war.

Stephens, A. H. (1866). Speech delivered on the 21st March, 1861, in Savannah, known as "The Corner Stone Speech," reported in the Savannah Republican. In H. Cleveland (Ed.), *Alexander H. Stephens in public and private with letters and speeches before, during and since the war* (pp. 717–729). National Publishing Company. https://lccn.loc.gov/13018469

Alexander H. Stephens, the vice president of the Confederate States of America, gave this speech on March 21, 1861. A historian can be fairly certain that Stephens' perspective, as a government official in a prominent position in the Confederacy, is representative of many Southerners who favored secession. In addition, Stephens gave this speech at a time when some states were trying to decide whether they would remain in the Union or join the Confederacy, suggesting that Stephens would use the strongest possible arguments for secession. He includes many causes for secession but discusses racist enslavement as a "cornerstone" of the new Confederacy.

Wikoff, H. (1861). *Secession and its causes, in a letter to Viscount Palmerston, K. G., Prime Minister of England*. Ross & Tousey. www.loc.gov/item/07008623/

This is a long letter written by Henry Wikoff, a Southerner, explaining the reasons for the secession of the Southern states. He writes to the prime minister of England, a nation that has banned slavery. He spends over two-thirds of this 94-page letter describing the history of slavery in the United States and the tensions it caused between the North and South, always blaming the Northerners for being unreasonable. Wikoff places slavery at the center of almost all of the sectional conflict and tries to justify its existence. In Wikoff's mind, slavery is the root cause of secession.