

Office of Teaching and Learning

Social Studies Walk-Through Tool

This Social Studies Observation Tool is adapted from the Instruction Domain of the Louisiana Educator Rubric (LER). It reflects the Louisiana Department of Education's (LDOE's) vision for effective social studies teaching and learning, informed by research on how students learn best. School and system leaders should utilize this tool to promote effective social studies instruction and support teachers in delivering impactful, standards-aligned lessons. Indicators included are:

- Standards and Objectives
- Presenting Instructional Content
- Lesson Structure and Pacing
- Activities and Materials
- Teacher Content Knowledge
- Questioning

Printing Consideration: The intentional design of this walk-through tool is for it to be used as a front-and-back, one-page document. On the pages below, **side 1** is a brief observation tool that includes indicators that should be evident in a brief walk-through, while **side 2** lists examples of what those indicators might look like in a social studies classroom.

Pacing Consideration: Leaders are encouraged to refer to the [Pacing Guidance Document](#) linked at the top of the walkthrough tool to build understanding of grade-specific pacing before conducting a walkthrough to assess the lesson structure and pacing indicators. This guidance document includes pacing guidance for grades K-8 and Civics and is designed to be flexible, allowing school systems to enter system-specific dates.

Teacher _____

Grade _____

School _____

System _____

Date/Time _____

Pacing Guide/Topic _____

Lesson Time Observed: B M E

Indicator	Descriptor	Evidence of Indicator	Notes
Standards and Objectives (SO)	Framing questions and/or learning objectives and their connection to student work expectations are <ul style="list-style-type: none"> explicitly communicated, and understood and can be expressed by students. 	<input type="checkbox"/> Evidence <input type="checkbox"/> Partial <input type="checkbox"/> No Evidence	
Presenting Instructional Content (PIC)	The presentation of historical content includes <ul style="list-style-type: none"> necessary scaffolds; visual aids; authentic historical sources; content-specific vocabulary; and connections across time, people, and place. 	<input type="checkbox"/> Evidence <input type="checkbox"/> Partial <input type="checkbox"/> No Evidence	
Lesson Structure and Pacing (LS)	The lesson's structure is <ul style="list-style-type: none"> coherent, based on the content, and organized to meet students' needs with time for reflection to ensure student understanding; and brisk, adjusted for rigor of content and individual student learning expectations, and aligned to year-long pacing. 	<input type="checkbox"/> Evidence <input type="checkbox"/> Partial <input type="checkbox"/> No Evidence	
Activities and Materials (ACT)	Activities and materials <ul style="list-style-type: none"> utilize the system-designated High-quality instructional materials (HQIM); support mastery of the lesson objectives and content standards; provide time for student-student interaction; and include opportunities for student ownership of learning. 	<input type="checkbox"/> Evidence <input type="checkbox"/> Partial <input type="checkbox"/> No Evidence	
Teacher Content Knowledge (TCK)	Teacher displays <ul style="list-style-type: none"> appropriate and accurate content knowledge; understanding of state standards; and understanding of their adopted or approved curriculum. 	<input type="checkbox"/> Evidence <input type="checkbox"/> Partial <input type="checkbox"/> No Evidence	
Questioning (QU)	Teacher questions <ul style="list-style-type: none"> are varied, from the HQIM, including inferential, literal, and evaluative question types, and target various students. lead to student-generated questions, further investigation, and/or self-directed learning. 	<input type="checkbox"/> Evidence <input type="checkbox"/> Partial <input type="checkbox"/> No Evidence	
Additional Focus Indicator for this teacher:		<input type="checkbox"/> Evidence <input type="checkbox"/> Partial <input type="checkbox"/> No Evidence	

Indicator	Indicator Explanations
Standards and Objectives (SO)	In a social studies classroom, the framing and supporting questions play a crucial role in guiding the learning process of the lesson. These questions progressively build upon one another throughout the unit and provide essential context and skills required to complete the unit's Performance Task . It is important that framing and supporting questions are displayed for students and frequently referenced to conduct formative checks for understanding throughout the lesson.
Presenting Instructional Content (PIC)	Instructional content in social studies should prioritize interactive, student-centered methods . While lectures may have a limited role, they are generally discouraged due to their passive, teacher-centered nature. Active learning , where students analyze, discuss, and apply information and sources, better fosters critical thinking, collaboration, and problem-solving skills essential for understanding complex issues. Effective instruction should include visual aids and scaffolds such as anchor charts, sentence starters, source analysis tools, and consistent use of content-specific vocabulary . Teachers should model analytical and writing processes and annotating, while making meaningful connections across time, place, people, and ideas .
Lesson Structure and Pacing (LS)	A well-paced and structured lesson promotes sustained student engagement, reinforces key learning objectives, and provides opportunities for critical thinking and application. To support this, teachers should begin instruction promptly , establish consistent classroom routines to maintain instructional flow, and minimize disruptions by ensuring all materials and technology are prepared in advance .
Activities and Materials (ACT)	Effective instructional activities incorporate key elements that support both content mastery and student engagement. They utilize the system-designated HQIM and align closely with lesson objectives and/or framing and supporting questions by anchoring student learning in primary, secondary, and tertiary sources that reflect multiple perspectives. These activities address significant historical and contemporary issues , making content relevant and meaningful to students' lives. Additionally, they emphasize student-centered practices by promoting accountable talk and providing regular opportunities for student-to-student interaction, fostering deeper understanding through collaboration and dialogue.
Teacher Content Knowledge (TCK)	The teacher should demonstrate strong and accurate content knowledge , clearly understanding state standards and high-quality instructional materials , including the adopted or approved curriculum across all subjects taught. They consistently apply social studies-specific instructional strategies to deepen student understanding and enhance content mastery. Additionally, the teacher effectively highlights key concepts and uses them as foundational elements to connect and build upon broader, more complex ideas , fostering a cohesive and meaningful learning experience.
Questioning (QU)	The teacher consistently employs a variety of high-quality questions , including literal, inferential, and evaluative types, to promote depth of understanding and engagement with rigorous content for all students. These questions are designed to stimulate critical thinking and encourage meaningful student participation. Furthermore, students are empowered to generate their own questions , fostering curiosity, deeper exploration, and self-directed learning.

Reinforcement	
Refinement	