

HISTORY

HISTORICAL THINKING REQUIRES understanding and evaluating change and continuity over time, and making appropriate use of historical evidence in answering questions and developing arguments about the past. It involves going beyond simply asking, “What happened when?” to evaluating why and how events occurred and developments unfolded. It involves locating and assessing historical sources of many different types to understand the contexts of given historical eras and the perspectives of different individuals and groups within geographic units that range from the local to the global. Historical thinking is a process of chronological reasoning, which means wrestling with issues of causality, connections, significance, and context with the goal of developing credible explanations of historical events and developments based on reasoned interpretation of evidence.

Historical inquiry involves acquiring knowledge about significant events, developments, individuals, groups, documents, places, and ideas to support investigations about the past. Acquiring relevant knowledge requires assembling information from a wide variety of sources in an integrative process. Students might begin with key events or individuals introduced by the teacher or identified by educational leaders at the state level, and then investigate them further. Or they might take a source from a seemingly insignificant individual and make connections between that person and larger events, or trace the person’s contributions to a major development. Scholars, teachers, and students form an understanding of what is and what is not significant from the emergence of new sources, from current events, from their locale, and from asking questions about changes that affected large numbers of people in the past or had enduring consequences. Developing historical knowledge in connection with historical investigations not only helps students remember the content better because it has meaning, but also allows students to become better thinkers.

Change, Continuity, and Context

At its heart, chronological reasoning requires understanding processes of change and continuity over time, which means assessing similarities and differences between historical periods and between the past and present. It also involves coming to understand how a change in one area of life relates to a change in other areas, thus bringing together political, economic, intellectual, social, cultural, and other factors. Understanding the interrelation of patterns of change

requires evaluating the context within which events unfolded in order not to view events in isolation, and to be able to assess the significance of specific individuals, groups, and developments.

Indicators of Dimension 2—Change, Continuity and Context—are detailed in the suggested K-12 Pathway for College, Career, and Civic Readiness in Table 20.

**Table 20: Suggested K-12 Pathway for College, Career, and Civic Readiness
Dimension 2, Change, Continuity, and Context**

BY THE END OF GRADE 2	BY THE END OF GRADE 5	BY THE END OF GRADE 8	BY THE END OF GRADE 12
INDIVIDUALLY AND WITH OTHERS, STUDENTS...			
D2.His.1.K-2. Create a chronological sequence of multiple events.	D2.His.1.3-5. Create and use a chronological sequence of related events to compare developments that happened at the same time.	D2.His.1.6-8. Analyze connections among events and developments in broader historical contexts.	D2.His.1.9-12. Evaluate how historical events and developments were shaped by unique circumstances of time and place as well as broader historical contexts.
D2.His.2.K-2. Compare life in the past to life today.	D2.His.2.3-5. Compare life in specific historical time periods to life today.	D2.His.2.6-8. Classify series of historical events and developments as examples of change and/or continuity.	D2.His.2.9-12. Analyze change and continuity in historical eras.
D2.His.3.K-2. Generate questions about individuals and groups who have shaped a significant historical change.	D2.His.3.3-5. Generate questions about individuals and groups who have shaped significant historical changes and continuities.	D2.His.3.6-8. Use questions generated about individuals and groups to analyze why they, and the developments they shaped, are seen as historically significant.	D2.His.3.9-12. Use questions generated about individuals and groups to assess how the significance of their actions changes over time and is shaped by the historical context.

Perspectives

History is interpretive. Even if they are eyewitnesses, people construct different accounts of the same event, which are shaped by their perspectives—their ideas, attitudes, and beliefs. Historical understanding requires recognizing this multiplicity of points of view in the past, which makes it important to seek out a range of sources on any historical question rather than simply use those that are easiest to find. It also requires recognizing that perspectives change

over time, so that historical understanding requires developing a sense of empathy with people in the past whose perspectives might be very different from those of today.

Indicators of Dimension 2—Perspectives—are detailed in the suggested K-12 Pathway for College, Career, and Civic Readiness in Table 21.

**TABLE 21: Suggested K-12 Pathway for College, Career, and Civic Readiness
Dimension 2, Perspectives**

BY THE END OF GRADE 2	BY THE END OF GRADE 5	BY THE END OF GRADE 8	BY THE END OF GRADE 12
INDIVIDUALLY AND WITH OTHERS, STUDENTS...			
D2.His.4.K-2. Compare perspectives of people in the past to those of people in the present.	D2.His.4.3-5. Explain why individuals and groups during the same historical period differed in their perspectives.	D2.His.4.6-8. Analyze multiple factors that influenced the perspectives of people during different historical eras.	D2.His.4.9-12. Analyze complex and interacting factors that influenced the perspectives of people during different historical eras.
<i>Begins in grades 3–5</i>	D2.His.5.3-5. Explain connections among historical contexts and people’s perspectives at the time.	D2.His.5.6-8. Explain how and why perspectives of people have changed over time.	D2.His.5.9-12. Analyze how historical contexts shaped and continue to shape people’s perspectives.
D2.His.6.K-2. Compare different accounts of the same historical event.	D2.His.6.3-5. Describe how people’s perspectives shaped the historical sources they created.	D2.His.6.6-8. Analyze how people’s perspectives influenced what information is available in the historical sources they created.	D2.His.6.9-12. Analyze the ways in which the perspectives of those writing history shaped the history that they produced.
<i>Begins in grades 9–12</i>	<i>Begins in grades 9–12</i>	<i>Begins in grades 9–12</i>	D2.His.7.9-12. Explain how the perspectives of people in the present shape interpretations of the past.
<i>Begins in grades 9–12</i>	<i>Begins in grades 9–12</i>	<i>Begins in grades 9–12</i>	D2.His.8.9-12. Analyze how current interpretations of the past are limited by the extent to which available historical sources represent perspectives of people at the time.

Historical Sources and Evidence

Historical inquiry is based on materials left from the past that can be studied and analyzed. Such materials, referred to as historical sources or primary sources, include written documents, but also objects, artistic works, oral accounts, landscapes that humans have modified, or even materials contained within the human body, such as DNA. These sources become evidence once they are selected to answer a historical question, a process that involves taking into account features of the source itself, such as its maker or date.

The selection process also requires paying attention to the wider historical context in order to choose sources that are relevant and credible. Examining sources often leads to further questions as well as answers in a spiraling process of inquiry.

Indicators of Dimension 2—Historical Sources and Evidence—are detailed in the suggested K-12 Pathway for College, Career, and Civic Readiness in Table 22.

**TABLE 22: Suggested K-12 Pathway for College, Career, and Civic Readiness
Dimension 2, Historical Sources and Evidence**

BY THE END OF GRADE 2	BY THE END OF GRADE 5	BY THE END OF GRADE 8	BY THE END OF GRADE 12
INDIVIDUALLY AND WITH OTHERS, STUDENTS...			
D2.His.9.K-2. Identify different kinds of historical sources.	D2.His.9.3-5. Summarize how different kinds of historical sources are used to explain events in the past.	D2.His.9.6-8. Classify the kinds of historical sources used in a secondary interpretation.	D2.His.9.9-12. Analyze the relationship between historical sources and the secondary interpretations made from them.
D2.His.10.K-2. Explain how historical sources can be used to study the past.	D2.His.10.3-5. Compare information provided by different historical sources about the past.	D2.His.10.6-8. Detect possible limitations in the historical record based on evidence collected from different kinds of historical sources.	D2.His.10.9-12. Detect possible limitations in various kinds of historical evidence and differing secondary interpretations.
D2.His.11.K-2. Identify the maker, date, and place of origin for a historical source from information within the source itself.	D2.His.11.3-5. Infer the intended audience and purpose of a historical source from information within the source itself.	D2.His.11.6-8. Use other historical sources to infer a plausible maker, date, place of origin, and intended audience for historical sources where this information is not easily identified.	D2.His.11.9-12. Critique the usefulness of historical sources for a specific historical inquiry based on their maker, date, place of origin, intended audience, and purpose.
D2.His.12.K-2. Generate questions about a particular historical source as it relates to a particular historical event or development.	D2.His.12.3-5. Generate questions about multiple historical sources and their relationships to particular historical events and developments.	D2.His.12.6-8. Use questions generated about multiple historical sources to identify further areas of inquiry and additional sources.	D2.His.12.9-12. Use questions generated about multiple historical sources to pursue further inquiry and investigate additional sources.
<i>Begins at grade 3–5</i>	D2.His.13.3-5. Use information about a historical source, including the maker, date, place of origin, intended audience, and purpose to judge the extent to which the source is useful for studying a particular topic.	D2.His.13.6-8. Evaluate the relevancy and utility of a historical source based on information such as maker, date, place of origin, intended audience, and purpose.	D2.His.13.9-12. Critique the appropriateness of the historical sources used in a secondary interpretation.

Causation and Argumentation

No historical event or development occurs in a vacuum; each one has prior conditions and causes, and each one has consequences. Historical thinking involves using evidence and reasoning to draw conclusions about probable causes and effects, recognizing that these are multiple and complex. It requires understanding that the outcome of any historical event may not be what those who engaged in it intended or predicted, so that chains of cause and effect in the past are unexpected and contingent, not pre-determined. Along with claims about causes and effects,

historical arguments can also address issues of change over time, the relevance of sources, the perspectives of those involved, and many other topics, but must be based on evidence that is used in a critical, coherent, and logical manner.

Indicators of Dimension 2—Causation and Argumentation—are detailed in the suggested K-12 Pathway for College, Career, and Civic Readiness in Table 23.

TABLE 23: Suggested K-12 Pathway for College, Career, and Civic Readiness Dimension 2, Causation and Argumentation

BY THE END OF GRADE 2	BY THE END OF GRADE 5	BY THE END OF GRADE 8	BY THE END OF GRADE 12
INDIVIDUALLY AND WITH OTHERS, STUDENTS...			
D2.His.14.K-2. Generate possible reasons for an event or development in the past.	D2.His.14.3-5. Explain probable causes and effects of events and developments.	D2.His.14.6-8. Explain multiple causes and effects of events and developments in the past.	D2.His.14.9-12. Analyze multiple and complex causes and effects of events in the past.
<i>Begins in grades 6–8</i>	<i>Begins in grades 6–8</i>	D2.His.15.6-8. Evaluate the relative influence of various causes of events and developments in the past.	D2.His.15.9-12. Distinguish between long-term causes and triggering events in developing a historical argument.
D2.His.16.K-2. Select which reasons might be more likely than others to explain a historical event or development.	D2.His.16.3-5. Use evidence to develop a claim about the past.	D2.His.16.6-8. Organize applicable evidence into a coherent argument about the past.	D2.His.16.9-12. Integrate evidence from multiple relevant historical sources and interpretations into a reasoned argument about the past.
<i>Begins in grades 3–5</i>	D2.His.17.3-5. Summarize the central claim in a secondary work of history.	D2.His.17.6-8. Compare the central arguments in secondary works of history on related topics in multiple media.	D2.His.17.9-12. Critique the central arguments in secondary works of history on related topics in multiple media in terms of their historical accuracy.