

## SOCIAL SCIENCE RUBRIC

NAME \_\_\_\_\_ DATE \_\_\_\_\_

- Exceeds standard (total points 11 - 12)
- Meets standard (total points 8 - 10)
- Approaches standard (total points 5 -7)
- Begins standard or absent (total points 1 -4)

	<b>Knowledge</b> of evidence from the social sciences: facts/supporting details; themes/issues; and concepts/ideas	<b>Reasoning:</b> Analysis, evaluation, and synthesis of evidence.	<b>Communication:</b> Demonstrates knowledge and reasoning through oral, written, visual, dramatic, or mixed media presentation
<b>4</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Key concepts/themes/issues/ideas are thoroughly identified, defined and described</li> <li>• Significant facts/supporting details are included and accurately described</li> <li>• Has little or no factual inaccuracies</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Identifies and logically organizes almost all relevant evidence</li> <li>• Uses appropriate and comprehensive critical thinking skills and habits of mind to analyze, evaluate, and synthesize evidence</li> <li>• Reaches informed conclusions based on the evidence</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Almost all ideas in the presentation are expressed in a way that provides evidence of the student's knowledge and reasoning processes</li> <li>• The presentation is well focused with a well-defined thesis</li> <li>• Presentation shows substantial evidence of organization</li> <li>• Presentation shows attention to the details of specific performance conventions</li> </ul>
<b>3</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Key concepts/themes/issues/ideas are identified, defined, and described</li> <li>• Facts/supporting details are included</li> <li>• May have a major factual inaccuracy, but most information is correct</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Identifies and organizes most of the relevant evidence</li> <li>• Uses partial critical thinking skills and habits of mind to analyze, evaluate, and synthesize evidence</li> <li>• Reaches informed conclusions based on the evidence</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Most ideas in the presentation are expressed in a way that provides evidence of the student's knowledge and reasoning processes</li> <li>• The presentation demonstrates a focus and thesis with several narrative gaps</li> <li>• Presentation demonstrates adequate evidence of organization</li> <li>• Presentation has mistakes in attention to the details of specific performance conventions</li> </ul>
<b>2</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Some key concepts/themes/issues/ideas are identified, defined, and described</li> <li>• Some facts/supporting details are included</li> <li>• Has some correct and some incorrect information</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Identifies some relevant evidence and omits most of the other evidence</li> <li>• Uses unclear, inappropriate, or incomplete critical thinking skills and habits of mind to analyze, evaluate, and synthesize evidence</li> <li>• Reaches incomplete or inaccurate conclusions based on the evidence</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Some ideas in the presentation are expressed in a way that provides evidence of the student's knowledge and reasoning processes</li> <li>• The presentation demonstrates an inadequate focus and thesis</li> <li>• Presentation demonstrates inadequate evidence of organization</li> <li>• Presentation has insufficient attention to the details of specific performance conventions</li> </ul>
<b>1</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Few or no key concepts/themes/issues/ideas are identified, defined, and described</li> <li>• Few or no facts/supporting details are included</li> <li>• Information is largely inaccurate, absent or irrelevant</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Important evidence relevant to the problem is not identified</li> <li>• Critical thinking skills and habits of mind are absent</li> <li>• Conclusions are lacking, absent or unclear</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Expression of almost all ideas in the presentation is unclear</li> <li>• The presentation demonstrate little focus and lacks a thesis</li> <li>• Presentation demonstrates little or no evidence of organization</li> <li>• Presentation has multiple mistakes in attention to the details of specific performance conventions.</li> </ul>
<b>Score</b>			

## A Social Science Rubric

This model is an analytic rubric. It separates the skills a student possesses into three dimensions: knowledge, reasoning, and communication. The three dimensions are interrelated. They overlap to show what students know and what they can do. Each dimension of the rubric is divided into four levels. Each level is defined by several criteria, which reflect a student's abilities and skills. Collectively, Levels 4 and 3 are designed to differentiate among students whose knowledge, reasoning, and communication skills are developed. Collectively, Levels 2 and 1 represent a student's knowledge, reasoning, and communication skills that are still developing. Level 4 represents work of a student who exhibits the most developed skills; Level 1 represents the work of a student with the lowest level of developing skills.

*The gap between Level 3 and Level 2 is wider than the gap between any of the other levels because it differentiates between a student whose skills are still developing and a student whose skills are developed.*

An analytic rubric is especially appropriate and useful for assessment in the social sciences. Teachers know that their students may perform at a more or less developed level in one dimension than in another. For example, a student may perform at Level 4 in knowledge, at Level 3 in reasoning, and at Level 2 in communication. An analytic rubric allows teachers to take these differences into account when assessing their students.

## RATIONALE FOR A SOCIAL SCIENCE RUBRIC

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### KNOWLEDGE - REASONING - COMMUNICATION

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#### **Dimension 1: Knowledge**

Knowledge of evidence from the social sciences: facts/supporting details; themes/issues; and concepts/ideas

Knowledge of evidence is basic to the social sciences. Students who have developed knowledge -- Levels 4 and 3-- are able to demonstrate their ability to identify, define, and describe key concepts, themes, issues, and ideas; they show their awareness of the connection between key facts and supporting details; and they are accurate in their use of facts and details. The levels are differentiated by the degree to which students can demonstrate their knowledge, that is, by being thorough, inclusive, and accurate.

Similarly, students who are developing knowledge -- Levels 2 and 1 --- are unable to demonstrate their ability to identify, define, and describe key concepts, themes, issues, and ideas; they show an inadequate awareness of the connection between key facts and supporting details; and they are largely inaccurate in their use of facts and details.

## Dimension 2: Reasoning

### Analysis, evaluation, and synthesis of evidence.

While facts are the essential starting point for demonstrating ability in the social sciences, a student must also be able to demonstrate the ability to reason. Reasoning makes facts, issues, and concepts meaningful. When reasoning occurs, a student is engaged in the content and develops a deeper understanding of the subject. Reasoning involves translation, interpretation, application, analysis, synthesis, and evaluation of information. These reasoning processes require students to discover relationships among facts and generalizations, values and opinions. Reasoning abilities and skills also include accessing, classifying, and applying information to provide a solution to a problem, to make a judgment, or reach a logical conclusion.

A student with developed reasoning ability must be able to organize evidence and select and apply an appropriate method for analysis, evaluation, and synthesis. To analyze and evaluate evidence effectively, whether that evidence is presented in a printed document, a song, poem, picture, or statistical table, a student must ask relevant questions.

These questions encompass the traditional five questions: who, what, where, when, and why.

A student with developed reasoning abilities also uses critical thinking skills and habits of mind to evaluate evidence. These thinking skills and habits of mind include comparing and contrasting, identifying causes and effects, developing and recognizing alternative solutions, showing relationships among concepts, recognizing bias, separating fact from opinion, identifying inconsistencies in logic, avoiding present-mindedness, and maintaining an empathetic attitude toward the people under study. These habits of mind and thinking skills demonstrate not only what students know; they also reveal aspects of the student's intellectual character. Students who possess habits of mind display self-discipline as a thinker. They help students acquire the habit of inquiring into social science content and engaging in discourse about their inquiry. Students with well developed thinking skills and habits of mind create projects with care and thoroughness.

While all developed students must be able to reach an informed conclusion, there are several ways to differentiate between students' reasoning skills at Levels 4 and 3. Differentiation among these higher levels is a matter of the degree to which a student can identify and logically organize evidence and then select and apply an appropriate method for analyzing, evaluating, and synthesizing evidence. Students can also be differentiated by their ability to incorporate critical thinking skills and habits of mind in their process of reasoning. For example, a student at Level 4 will analyze and evaluate the evidence from a variety of perspectives; a student at Level 3 will use only one perspective, but one that is still sufficient to evaluate the evidence.

Students who are developing their ability in reasoning show important deficiencies. They fail to organize information for proper analysis and may omit evidence. A developing student may also select an inappropriate method for analyzing, evaluating, and synthesizing evidence. Students who are in the process of developing reasoning skills have difficulty thinking critically. For example, they may accept evidence at face value without subjecting it to any critical analysis or evaluation. Finally, the inability to reach a reasonable, informed conclusion is indicative of a student who is still in the developing stage.

## Dimension 3: Communication

Demonstrate knowledge and reasoning through oral, written, visual, dramatic, or mixed media presentations

To be useful, a student's knowledge and reasoning must be communicated to a wider audience. Effective communication requires focus and organization. For example, in history, a student must have a clearly defined thesis and an organized narrative that tells what happened in an interesting and informed way. In the other social sciences, a student must be able to identify issues and concepts clearly, explain the various parts of a problem, and present possible resolutions.

The most important aspect of communication is the student's ability to express clearly his or her ideas. Clarity depends upon organization. A well-organized presentation includes a focus statement, supplies relevant examples to support main ideas, and offers conclusions based on evidence. Furthermore, an effective presentation, regardless of its type, provides evidence of a student's knowledge and reasoning processes.

The teacher, sometimes in conjunction with the student, establishes the context, or audience, for a student's presentation: an oral report presented to his or her classmates, a letter written to the newspaper, or an exhibit or model placed on display at a local business or historical society.

A student can select a variety of techniques to communicate his or her knowledge and reasoning skills. Each communication technique has its own conventions which teachers should take into account. For example, assessing an oral report may include such conventions as effective use of voice, gestures, eye contact, and use of visual aids. Assessing a student-made exhibit might include such conventions as the use of color, neatness, captions, and the selection of appropriate pictures, photographs, maps, and other materials.

A student who has developed ability in communication demonstrates knowledge and reasoning skills in a clear and organized fashion. The presentation will also take into account the appropriate conventions for the selected activity. A higher assessment, Levels 4 and 3 is determined by the degree of clarity and organization, the quality of illustrations and supporting examples, and the power of the conclusion. That is, the main ideas and reasoning processes are focused, well developed, and clearly articulated in the student's presentation. Finally, a presentation at the highest level of development meets all the convention standards for the type of activity the teacher assigns or the student selects.

A student who is developing his or her communication skills lacks the ability to present knowledge and reasoning clearly and effectively in an organized presentation. That is, a student who is still developing cannot successfully provide a thesis or a focus statement, or convey information through examples that support and elaborate a main idea, or present an informed conclusion. Lastly, a developing student neglects the details of the performance convention that he or she has selected as a means to communicate knowledge and reasoning. The difference between students performing at Levels 2, or 1 is a matter of degree in each of the criteria.

## Critical Thinking Skills

- Identifying central issues
- Making comparisons
- Determining relevant information
- Formulating appropriate questions
- Expressing problems
- Distinguishing fact from opinion
- Recognizing bias
- Distinguishing false from accurate images.
- Analyzing cause and effect
- Drawing conclusions
- Identifying alternatives
- Testing conclusions
- Predicting consequences
- Demonstrating reasoned judgment

## Habits Of Mind For Knowledge, Reasoning, And Communication

- Understand the significance of the past and the present to their own lives and to the lives of others
- Distinguish between the important and the inconsequential
- Perceive events and issues as they were experienced by people at the time
- Understand how human intentions matter
- Comprehend the interplay of change and continuity
- Realize that all problems may not have solutions
- Appreciate the often tentative nature of judgments
- Recognize the importance of individuals who have made a difference
- Appreciate the force of the non-rational, the irrational, and the accidental in human efforts
- Understand the relationship between people, time, and place as the context for events
- Recognize the difference between fact and conjecture
- Use evidence to frame useful questions

Adapted from Alternative Assessment in the Social Sciences:

### **AUTHORS**

**Lawrence W. McBride**

**Frederick D. Drake**

**Marcel Lewinski**

**Illinois State University**

**John C. Craig**

**Illinois State Board of Education**