



Inquiry Guide

Supporting teachers in the use of Inquiry

with lessons based on the (2013) Revised Social Studies, History and Geography Curriculum and Environmental Education

The Social Studies, History, Geography and Canadian and World Studies program will enable students to become responsible, active citizens within the diverse communities to which they belong. As critically thoughtful and informed citizens who value inclusion in society, they will have the tools they need to solve problems and to communicate ideas and decisions on significant developments, events and issues.

THE VISION AND GOALS OF THE SOCIAL STUDIES, HISTORY, AND GEOGRAPHY CURRICULUM Revised (2013) Social Studies, History and Geography Curriculum, page 6 Ministry of Education of Ontario

Introduction

This Inquiry Guide is designed to support teachers by facilitating the implementation of the revised 2013 Social Studies, History, Geography Curriculum. It describes the social studies inquiry model for effective teaching and learning, and demonstrates how teachers can apply this model in their planning and delivery.

The Guide elaborates the framework within the revised curriculum, using framing questions and applying concepts of thinking related to social studies, history and geography (significance; cause and consequence; continuity and change; patterns and trends; interrelationships; and perspectives) to address curriculum expectations and critically examine the big ideas by discipline.

Several junior and intermediate level social studies and geography lessons linked to environmental education illustrate how an inquiry-based approach engages critical thinking and encourages knowledge construction as students develop conceptual understanding. The Guide also suggests opportunities for field studies, use of digital and mobile technologies, cross-curricular extensions and relevant print and web resources. Appendices with detailed success criteria related to the Concepts of Thinking by discipline are included.

What is an Inquiry-based Model?

Inquiry-based learning is an approach or model that is motivated and directed by **initiating a lesson** or learning experience with collectively generated or proposed focus **question(s)**. Throughout their learning, students are given opportunities to address the question(s) by **gathering** and **organizing evidence, data and information** from a variety of sources; and, **analyzing** that **evidence, data and information** while considering multiple interpretations and perspectives. Students then form opinions, make judgements, and **draw** their own **conclusions** based on the evidence, data and information; and, finally **communicate** their insights, learning and potential action plans.

Throughout the inquiry process, students revisit and expand their questions, as appropriate, to successfully scaffold learning. In most cases, both the inquiry process as well as the communication of learning are assessed.

More specifically, students:

Formulate and ask relevant questions relating to Social Studies, History and Geography:

- either independently, in groups or with guidance from the teacher;
- exploring events, development or issues that are related to overall expectations;

Gather and Organize:

- relevant data, evidence and required information from primary (photographs, digital images, speeches, artefacts, one's own collected data) and varied and multiple secondary sources (websites, reference books/texts, commentaries, encyclopedias);

Interpret and Analyse:

- data, evidence and information by applying relevant concepts of thinking, analysing and constructing digital/print maps, considering reliability and bias within sources;

Evaluate and Draw Conclusions:

- synthesizing data, evidence and information, considering context, point of view and making informed critical judgements;

Communicate:

- Communicate learning through differentiated methods, student strengths, intelligences and products and present possible plans of action.

Effective Teaching Using Inquiry:

Why Introduce the Inquiry Process in Social Studies, History and Geography?

More traditionally, study in science has actively utilized an investigative, inquiry-based pedagogy. Students formulate questions, identify a problem, develop a hypothesis, select strategies and resources, form and justify conclusions based on evidence. (Science and Technology Curriculum, page 24, Ministry of Education of Ontario, 2007)

How would this approach be adapted to social studies, history and geography? The inquiry process is the process of suggesting and investigating questions. In the areas of social studies, history and geography, this refers to creating questions about and investigating people, heritage, regions, events and environments rather than just being told about them.

Instead of relying on the teacher as the source of knowledge and the one who chooses information for students to master, the spirit of inquiry is driven by open ended questions and investigations by students. Teachers act more as facilitators and coaches, guiding in knowledge construction, encouraging critical thinking and decision making, and taking ownership of one's learning process and products. Inquiry-based learning leads to increased student engagement, collaboration and actively validates all students' knowledge, insights and ideas.

Using an inquiry-based approach in teaching Social Studies, History and Geography, engaged learners work towards:

- Developing an understanding of responsible citizenship;
- Developing an understanding of the diversity within local, national and global communities, both personal and present;
- Developing an understanding of interrelationships within and between the natural environment and human communities;
- Developing the knowledge, understanding, and skills that lay the foundation for future studies in geography, history, economics, law, and politics;
- Developing the personal attributes and skills that foster curiosity about developments, events and issues;
- Developing concepts of disciplinary thinking and determine relevant criteria in order to make reasoned judgements;
- Developing skills and character attributes needed for discipline specific inquiry which can be transferred to other areas in life;
- Using appropriate technology as a tool to help them gather and analyse information, solve problems, and communicate.

The above content is adapted and contains excerpts from the Revised (2013) Social Studies, History and Geography Curriculum, Ministry of Ontario

Social Studies and Geography Lessons that promote Environmental Education

The following lessons for grade four Social Studies and grade 7 Geography provide an inquiry-based learning framework, demonstrate opportunities for ongoing assessment, integrate technology with Social Studies, History and Geography concepts, encourage exploration beyond the classroom with cross-curricular extensions and provide meaningful and authentic collaborative tasks and culminating activities.

(Insert Lessons here)

Concepts of Social Studies Thinking

Significance

This concept requires students to determine the importance of something (e.g., an issue, event, development, person, place, process, interaction). Students come to understand that significance often depends on the context or situation: for example, what is important to one person or group of people may not be important to another. The significance of something is generally determined by its short- and/or long-term impact on people and/or places.

Cause and Consequence

This concept requires students to determine the factors that affect or lead to something (e.g., an event, situation, action, interaction) as well as its impact or effects. Students study the causes and consequences of various types of events, situations, and interactions in both the natural environment and human society.

Continuity and Change

This concept requires students to determine what has stayed the same and what has changed over a period of time. Continuity and change can be studied with reference to ways of life, political policies, economic practices, relationships with the environment, social values, and so on. Students make judgements about continuity and change by making comparisons between some point in the past and the present, or between two points in the past.

Patterns and Trends

This concept requires students to study characteristics that are similar and that repeat themselves in a natural or human environment (patterns) and characteristics or traits that exhibit a consistent tendency in a particular setting and/or over a period of time (trends). The characteristics may be spatial, social, economic, physical, or environmental. Students discover patterns by making connections between characteristics; they discover trends by making connections between those characteristics over time.

Interrelationships

This concept requires students to explore connections within and between natural and/or human systems, including how they adapt to and have an impact on one another. Students explore various components within a system, interactions between components of a system, and relationships between systems.

Perspective

This concept refers to the ways in which different individuals and/or groups view something (e.g., an issue, event, development, person, place, process, interaction). Students learn that different groups have different perspectives, which depend on factors such as beliefs, social position, and geographic location, among others. Students also learn the importance of analysing sources to determine whose perspectives they convey and of gathering sources that reflect multiple perspectives.

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Concepts of Social Studies Thinking General Success Criteria

<p>Significance</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I can identify a short---term and long---term impact that a development/event/issue has/had locally/globally. • I can discuss (verbally, graphically, etc.) how a development/event/issue is influenced by society and circumstance. • I can show how and why this development/event/issue has different meaning and significance for different people and groups.
<p>Cause and Consequence</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> I can explain the impact various factors had locally and/or globally and the consequences they created. <input type="checkbox"/> I can demonstrate how the factors that led to a development/event/issue resulted in a consequence that affected the natural environment and/or human society. <input type="checkbox"/> I can use my understanding of an event to recognize consequences and determine possible solutions.
<p>Change and Continuity</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> I can make links between past and current practices to determine what has stayed the same and what has changed. <input type="checkbox"/> I can explain why something changed or stayed the same in the natural environment and/or human society in a period of time. <input type="checkbox"/> I can determine what I think is the most important change and/or the most important thing that stayed the same that has occurred in the natural environment or in the community in a period of time.
<p>Patterns and Trends</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> I can identify repeating characteristics. <input type="checkbox"/> I understand patterns that exist in the natural and/or human environment and how they influence our way of life. <input type="checkbox"/> I can recognize consistent patterns in the natural and human environment over time and determine trends.

Interrelationships	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><input type="checkbox"/> I can explain how relationships can be independent and/or interconnected and how they influence a variety of systems.<input type="checkbox"/> I am able to identify relationships that exist between humans, and humans and the environment and explain the impacts of those interactions.<input type="checkbox"/> I can determine how relationships can be helpful and/or harmful in relation to the natural and/or human environment.
Perspective	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><input type="checkbox"/> I can gather a variety of information and analyze a source to determine perspective.<input type="checkbox"/> I can use a variety of perspectives to successfully analyze a topic.<input type="checkbox"/> I am able to compare and contrast how different groups may view and interpret the same development/event/issue.