

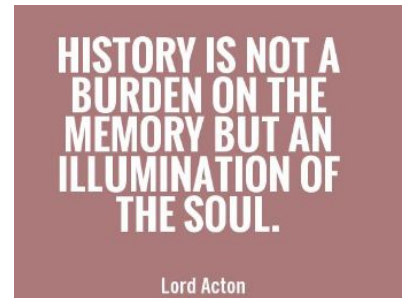
General Principles of Middle School Grading in Social Studies

General Principles of Middle School Grading:

- Grades should represent student mastery of essential standards in a subject.
- Non-academic factors such as participation, effort, and attitude should be reported separately from academic grades.
- Student work should be measured based on predetermined levels of quality (proficiency scales) rather than subjective or changing criteria.
- Grades should provide meaningful feedback to help drive improvement.
- Students learn material at different rates, so they should have the ability to relearn and re-assess in order to show improvement.

Is a Social Studies grade based on *content or skills*? The quick answer is **both**.

- Grades reported by Social Studies teachers represent student proficiency in the **essential skills and perspectives** of Social Studies. The simple reason for this is that pieces of knowledge are not easily repeated, practiced, or assessed through predetermined levels of quality. Compelling research and current thought in our field calls upon educators to prepare students to think, reason, and act as responsible citizens. For this reason, we choose to value **skills** that are transferable and that can be developed over time.
- Skills cannot be demonstrated without **rich and vibrant content**. In Social Studies class students are exposed to curriculum based on the Missouri Learning Standards and are asked to think critically, using that content to do more than just memorize information. Students will be asked to demonstrate their learning by applying their understanding of content in meaningful ways rather than circling a correct answer on a multiple choice test. Students cannot successfully apply skills without **rich examples, accurate conclusions, or relevant connections**.



How can I help my student?

- Student learning reported in the gradebook will be coded with one of the Learning Targets below. As students struggle, they should work on their ability to perform these skills as well as their understanding of the content learned in class. Using the examples provided you might be able to think of other exercises that might be more relevant to your student.

Geography Tools- I can construct and use maps, graphs, and other representations to answer geographic questions	
Supporting Learning Targets	Suggestions for practice/support
GT-1 I can construct maps, graphs and other geographic representations.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> → Construct maps of familiar places (home, neighborhood) → Draw a map from home to school. Create tools/symbols to add information to the map.
GT 2- I can make connections between physical geography and	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> → Find pictures to represent various types of vegetation, climate regions, and landforms. → Imagine what it would be like to live in places different from your own. Research stories about different places to confirm your predictions.

human characteristics.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> → Compare your lifestyle to someone in another country. Find reasons for why your daily lives are different. → Look at Independence, or other places you visit. Notice ways in which people have changed the landscape, or use it differently.
GT 3- I can use maps to analyze places.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> → Locate maps of familiar places (like Independence or Missouri). Make connections between map tools and familiar landmarks. → Use online tools like Google Maps/Earth or the National Geographic online map tool. Locate familiar places. Add information to the maps or use <i>layers</i> to add or subtract information. Discuss what you notice together. → Compare information on maps with photographs of places. Make connections between the information shown in each.

History Tools- I can construct, use, and evaluate timelines, charts, and other tools to answer historical questions.	
Supporting Learning Targets	Suggestions for practice/support
HT 1- I can construct and use timelines and similar tools.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> → Construct timelines, or use other tools to show familiar events or events from your life. → Research events that have occurred in your lifetime and add them to your timeline. → Think about a complicated event that you don't understand. Research key details from the event and put them in order correctly. → Use one of the many online timeline tools. Evaluate others' timelines or make your own.
HT 2- I can evaluate the causes and effects of events.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> → Consider events in your life. Evaluate them by considering the positive and negative effects that had. Identify turning points in your life that changed everything for you. → Compare your daily life with a relative's daily life. Ask a relative about important events in their life. → Consider familiar current events. Talk with other people to discover how there might be multiple causes for that event. Predict what <i>might</i> happen in the future.
HT 3- I can make connections between events.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> → Use graphic organizers to organize concepts that are similar and different. → Consider events you are familiar with. Practice using ranking systems to communicate how connected those events seem to be. → Pick a current event. Find out what past events are connected to it.

Using Sources- I can locate, organize, evaluate, and compare evidence.	
Supporting Learning Targets	Suggestions for practice/support
US 1- I can determine the reliability of evidence.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> → Pick an event you are familiar with. Explore how people have different opinions on that event, and why their opinions are different. → Practice finding the date and author of documents or pictures. Find out more about that author. → Make a list of things that make a source more reliable. → Look at sources to separate fact from opinion.
US 2- I can compare the point of view/perspective of more than one source.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> → Find conflicting editorials on an event you are interested in. Practice finding evidence the authors use to support their ideas. Find statements in the articles that agree and disagree. → Practice sorting ideas or perspectives of people into categories. → Brainstorm reasons why people might have different opinions on an event.

Communicating Conclusions-I can create and support a relevant claim based on available evidence.

Supporting Learning Targets	Suggestions for practice/support
CC 1- I can create and support a relevant claim based on available evidence.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">→ Notice how authors use evidence to support their opinions. Determine if the evidence used makes sense.→ Practice writing an opinion with reasons for that opinion.→ When you support a point of view, practice explaining why your reasons are relevant or useful.→ Practice adding evidence from other people to support your point of view. Do this in a way that gives credit to those people.→ Practice taking a stand on issues you care about. List the best reasons for your position.

If you have additional questions, feel free to visit with your student's teacher or visit the Independence School District website for more information.