

Standards and Scoring Criteria for Social Science Tasks

General Rules

The task is to estimate the extent to which successful completion of the task requires the kind of cognitive work indicated by each of the three standards: Construction of Knowledge, Elaborated Written Communication, and Connections to Students' Lives. Each standard will be scored according to different rules, but the following apply to all three standards.

- If a task has different parts that imply different expectations (e.g., worksheet/short answer questions and a question asking for explanations of some conclusions), the score should reflect the teacher's apparent dominant or overall expectations. Overall expectations are indicated by the proportion of time or effort spent on different parts of the task and criteria for evaluation, if stated by the teacher.
- Take into account what students can reasonably be expected to do at the grade level. However, scores should still be assigned according to criteria in the standard, not relative to other papers that have been scored.
- When it is difficult to decide between two scores, give the higher score only when a persuasive case can be made that the task meets minimal criteria for the higher score.
- If the specific wording of the criteria is not helpful in making judgments, base the score on the general intent or spirit of the standard described in the introductory paragraphs of the standard.

	Construction of Knowledge	Disciplinary Content	Elaborated Written Communication	Connection to Students' Lives
4	N/A	N/A	Analysis / Persuasion / Theory. Explicit call for generalization AND support. The task requires explanations of generalizations, classifications and relationships relevant to a situation, problem, or theme, AND requires the student to substantiate them with examples, summaries, illustrations, details, or reasons. Examples include attempts to argue, convince or persuade and to develop and test hypotheses.	N/A
3	The task's dominant expectation is for students to interpret, analyze, synthesize, or evaluate information, rather than merely to reproduce information.	Success in the task clearly requires understanding of concepts, ideas, or theories central to social science.	Report / Summary. Call for generalization OR support. The task asks students, using narrative or expository writing, either to draw conclusions or make generalizations or arguments, OR to offer examples, summaries, illustrations, details, or reasons, but not both.	The question, issue, or problem clearly resembles one that students have encountered or are likely to encounter in their lives. The task asks students to connect the topic to experiences, observations, feelings, or situations significant in their lives.
2	There is some expectation for students to interpret, analyze, synthesize, or evaluate information, rather than merely to reproduce information.	Success in the task seems to require understanding of concepts, ideas or theories central in the discipline, but the task does not make these very explicit.	Short-answer exercises. The task or its parts can be answered with only one or two sentences, clauses, or phrasal fragments that complete a thought.	The question, issue, or problem bears some resemblance to one that students have encountered or are likely to encounter in their lives, but the connections are not immediately apparent. The task offers the opportunity for students to connect the topic to experiences, observations, feelings, or situations significant in their lives, but does not explicitly call for them to do so.
1	There is very little or no expectation for students to interpret, analyze, synthesize, or evaluate information. The dominant expectation is that students will merely reproduce information gained by reading, listening, or observing.	Success in the task can be achieved with a very superficial (or even without) understanding of concepts, ideas, or theories central to social science.	Fill-in-the-blank or multiple choice exercises.	The problem has virtually no resemblance to questions, issues, or problems that students have encountered or are likely to encounter in their lives. The task offers very minimal or no opportunity for students to connect the topic to experiences, observations, feelings, or situations significant in their lives.

Criteria for Scoring Construction of Knowledge

The task asks students to organize and interpret information in addressing a concept, problem, or issue.

- ❑ Consider the extent to which the task asks the student to organize, interpret, evaluate, or synthesize complex information, rather than to retrieve or to reproduce isolated fragments of knowledge or to repeatedly apply previously learned procedures. To score high the task should call for interpretation of nuances of a topic that go deeper than surface exposure or familiarity. Possible indicators of interpretation are tasks that ask students to consider alternative solutions, strategies, perspectives and points of view.
- ❑ These indicators can be inferred either through explicit instructions from the teacher or through a task that cannot be successfully completed without students doing these things.

Criteria for Scoring Disciplinary Content

The task asks students to show an understanding and/or use of ideas, theories, or perspectives considered central to the social sciences.

- ❑ To what extent does the task promote students' understanding of and thinking about ideas, theories or perspectives considered seminal or critical within the social sciences, or in interdisciplinary fields recognized in authoritative scholarship? Examples could include democracy, social class, market economy, or theories of revolution.
- ❑ Reference to isolated factual claims, definitions, algorithms—though necessary to inquiry within the social sciences—will not be considered indicators of significant disciplinary content unless the task requires students to apply powerful social sciences ideas that organize and interpret the information.

Criteria for Scoring Elaborated Written Communication

The task asks students to elaborate on their understanding, explanations, or conclusions on important social sciences concepts through extended writing.

- ❑ Consider the extent to which the task requires students to elaborate on their ideas and conclusions through extended writing.

Criteria for Scoring Connection to Students' Lives

The task asks students to address a concept, problem or issue that is similar to one that they have encountered or are likely to encounter in daily life outside of school.

- ❑ Consider the extent to which the task presents students with a question, issue, or problem that they have actually encountered or are likely to encounter in their daily lives. Defending one's position on compulsory community service for students could qualify as a real world problem, but describing the origins of World War II generally would not.
- ❑ Certain kinds of school knowledge may be considered valuable in social, civic, or vocational situations beyond the classroom (e.g., knowing how a bill becomes a law). However, task demands for "basic" knowledge will not be counted here unless the task requires applying such knowledge to a specific problem likely to be encountered beyond the classroom.