
Model Proficiency Scales for Social Studies Priority Performance Indicators (Grades 9-12)

Purpose

The purpose of this document is to provide SU/SDs with model proficiency scales to accompany the [Social Studies Proficiency-Based Graduation Hierarchy](#). This document is part of the larger [Vermont Framework for Proficiency](#). The model proficiency scales were informed by extended feedback from and work with the field, including [Participatory Action Research](#) partnerships with Central Vermont Supervisory Union, White River Valley Supervisory Union, and Orleans Southwest Supervisory Union.

Document Overview

Each of the five Critical Proficiencies (CPs) is indicated by a separate header. Below the header for each CP (Inquiry Process, Civics, Economics, Geography, History) is the text of that CP. Each CP includes several Priority Performance Indicators (PPIs) that were developed for that CP, based on the indicators within the [College, Career, and Civic Life C3 Framework for Social Studies State Standards](#) (C3) and the work done previously by Vermont educators.

Below each CP are the proficiency scales associated with each PPI. The lefthand column of each proficiency scale includes the text for the PPI as well as the corresponding C3 Dimension, Disciplinary Concept, and Indicator (s) within the parentheses.

The first step in developing proficiency scales is determining what a student must know and do in order to demonstrate proficiency in a given PPI. This begins with unpacking the grade level standard(s) that correspond to the selected PPI. The combined learning targets identified through the unpacking process become the “proficient” level of the proficiency scale, which requires application of skills and knowledge (e.g., synthesis of information, transfer to a novel context, etc.). The “beginning” level is comprised of qualitative descriptors of the foundational skills or knowledge a student demonstrates first when working toward proficiency while the “developing” level identifies foundational skills or knowledge a student demonstrates as a steppingstone to “proficient.” Finally, the “expanding” level requires creative and flexible application of skills and knowledge at an advanced level. For more information about the unpacking process, see [Vermont Framework for Proficiency: Developing Proficiency Scales](#).



It is important to remember that the beginning and developing levels of the scales illustrate the learning trajectory of skills and/or knowledge expectations that build toward proficiency and do not indicate less rigor for a student. For clarity on how the language used in the scales represents depth of knowledge or differentiation of skill, refer to Hess' Cognitive Rigor Matrices for the different content areas: [Reading-Listening](#), [Writing-Speaking](#), [Math-Science](#), [Social Studies-Humanities](#), [Fine Arts](#), [Health and Physical Education](#), and [World Languages](#).

Note: For “Expanding” Social Studies educators who provided feedback preferred, “I can use creative and flexible application of skills and knowledge at an advanced level, which expands upon proficiency”.

Inquiry Process

Critical Proficiency: Students act as social scientists as they ask questions, think critically, solve problems, and share conclusions.

Priority Performance Indicator	Beginning	Developing	Proficient	Expanding
<p>Constructing Compelling and Supporting Questions: Generate, revise, and use a variety of questions about a topic of study to further inquiry and reflect on an enduring issue(s) in the field. (D1.1; D2., His.3)</p>	<p>I can:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify questions that assist in learning about a topic; and Use a social studies lens to identify issues. 	<p>I can:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Create questions that will assist in learning more about a topic; and Create questions about long-lasting issues. 	<p>I can:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Generate, revise, and use a variety of questions about a topic of study to further inquiry; and Generate, revise, and use a variety of questions to reflect on an long-lasting issue(s) in the field. 	<p>I can:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Individually develop an inquiry design model with a compelling question and supporting questions (examples: Inquiries, template). <p>- or -</p> <p>I can create alternative evidence that expands upon proficient.</p>

Priority Performance Indicator	Beginning	Developing	Proficient	Expanding
<p>Gathering and Evaluating Sources: Determine and gather the varied type of sources that will be helpful in answering compelling and supporting questions, taking into account the need for multiple points of view, secondary interpretations, and the types and limitations of sources available. (D2. His. 9, 10, 13, 17; D3. 1)</p>	<p>I can:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify sources that can provide reliable information. 	<p>I can:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify varied sources that can provide multiple viewpoints. 	<p>I can:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Determine and gather the varied type of sources that will be helpful in answering compelling and supporting questions; Take into account the need for multiple points of view and secondary interpretations; and Consider the types and limitations of sources available. 	<p>I can:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Support the development of an inquiry model with varied resources from multiple viewpoints that enable the user to respond to the compelling question and supporting questions. <p style="text-align: center;">- or -</p> <p>I can create alternative evidence that expands upon proficient.</p>

Priority Performance Indicator	Beginning	Developing	Proficient	Expanding
<p>Communicating and Critiquing Conclusions: Construct arguments using precise and knowledgeable claims, with evidence from multiple sources, while acknowledging counter claims and evidentiary weakness. (D2. His. 16; D4. 1)</p>	<p>I can:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Construct an argument using evidence. 	<p>I can:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Construct an argument using evidence from multiple sources. 	<p>I can:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Construct arguments using precise and knowledgeable claims; Construct arguments that use evidence from multiple sources; and Construct arguments that acknowledge counter claims and evidentiary weakness. 	<p>I can:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Share the individually developed inquiry design model with classmates for feedback and edits; and Construct counter response to feedback using precise and knowledgeable claims. <p style="text-align: center;">- or -</p> <p>I can create alternative evidence that expands upon proficient.</p>

Civic 9-12

Critical Proficiency: Students act as productive citizens by understanding the history, foundations, and principles of our American democracy through multiple lenses, and by acquiring the ability to become engaged in civic and democratic processes.

Priority Performance Indicator	Beginning	Developing	Proficient	Expanding
<p>Civic and Political Institutions: Analyze the powers and responsibilities of local, tribal, state, national, and international civic and political institutions, including the impact of established laws, constitutions, and/or agreements, and the role and responsibility of citizens in regard to these political institutions, systems, and structures. (D2. Civ 1-6)</p>	<p>I can:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> List the powers and responsibilities of civic and/or political institutions; List citizens roles within the U.S. political system, past and/or present; State why constitutions, laws, treaties, and/or international agreements maintain national and/or international order; and List social and political problems. 	<p>I can:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Describe the powers and responsibilities of civic and/or political institutions; Explain the role of citizens in the U.S. political system, over time with attention to changes in Americans' participation over time; Explain how the U.S. Constitution establishes a system of government that has powers, responsibilities, and limits; and 	<p>I can:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Analyze the powers responsibilities of local, state, tribal, national, and international civic and political institutions; Analyze the role of citizens in the U.S. political system, with attention to various theories of democracy, changes in Americans' participation over time, and alternative models from other countries, past and present; 	<p>I can:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop a plan for effective citizen engagement, including a proposal for addressing social and political problems at the local, state, tribal, national, and/or international level; and Develop strategies for the most effective maintenance of order at various levels of government. <p style="text-align: center;">- or -</p> <p>I can create alternative evidence that expands upon proficient.</p>

Priority Performance Indicator	Beginning	Developing	Proficient	Expanding
<p>Civic and Political Institutions: Analyze the powers and responsibilities of local, tribal, state, national, and international civic and political institutions, including the impact of established laws, constitutions, and/or agreements, and the role and responsibility of citizens in regard to these political institutions, systems, and structures. (D2. Civ 1-6) (continue)</p>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Describe how citizens and institutions address social and political problems at multiple levels (local, state, tribal, national, and/or international level). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Analyze the impact of constitutions, laws, treaties, and international agreements on the maintenance of national and international order; Analyze how the U.S. Constitution establishes a system of government that has powers, responsibilities, and limits that have changed over time and that are still contested; Evaluate citizens' and institutions' effectiveness in addressing social and political problems at the local, state, tribal, national, and/or international level; and Examine relationships among governments, civil societies, and economic markets. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Evaluate methods that the US Constitution utilizes to establish a system of government that has powers, responsibilities, and limits that have changed over time and that are still contested, and critique alternative. <p style="text-align: center;">- or -</p> <p>I can create alternative evidence that expands upon proficient.</p>

Priority Performance Indicator	Beginning	Developing	Proficient	Expanding
<p>Participation and Deliberation: Apply civic virtues and democratic principles in multiple settings and analyze the impact and appropriate roles of personal interests and perspectives on the application of civic virtues, democratic principles, constitutional rights and human rights. (D2. Civ. 7, 8, 9, 10)</p>	<p>I can:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify civic virtues, democratic principles; List social and political systems that promote civic virtues and enact democratic principles; and Identify appropriate deliberative processes in multiple settings. 	<p>I can:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Explain civic virtues, democratic principles, and appropriate deliberative processes in multiple settings; Explain how social and political systems promote civic virtues and enact democratic principles found in the U.S. Constitution; and Explain the importance of personal interests, perspectives, civic virtues, democratic principles, and constitutional rights when societal problems and issues are addressed. 	<p>I can:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Apply civic virtues, democratic principles, and appropriate deliberative processes in multiple settings; Analyze social and political systems in different contexts, times, and places, that promote civic virtues and enact democratic principles; and Analyze the impact and the appropriate roles of personal interests and perspectives on the application of civic virtues, democratic principles, constitutional rights, and human rights. 	<p>I can:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Engage in civic activities, participate in community projects, and advocate for positive change by applying theoretical knowledge to real-world situations, and promoting civic virtues and democratic principles in a practical manner. <p style="text-align: center;">- or -</p> <p>I can create alternative evidence that expands upon proficient.</p>

Priority Performance Indicator	Beginning	Developing	Proficient	Expanding
<p>Processes, Rules, and Laws: Evaluate the processes and rules by which people make decisions, govern themselves, address public concerns, change societies, promote the common good, and protect rights. (D2. Civ. 11-14)</p>	<p>I can:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> List multiple procedures for making governmental decisions at different levels of government; State how people use laws to address a variety of public issues; and List public policies intended to address problems and issues. 	<p>I can:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Describe multiple procedures for making governmental decisions at the local, state, national, and international levels; Explain how people use and challenge laws to address a variety of public issues; Identify public policies in terms of intended and unintended outcomes, and related consequences; and Outline historical and current means of changing societies, promoting the common good, and protecting rights. 	<p>I can:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Analyze multiple procedures for making governmental decisions at the local, state, national, and international levels in terms of the civic purposes achieved; Analyze how people use and challenge local, state, national, and international laws to address a variety of public issues; Evaluate public policies in terms of intended and unintended outcomes, and related consequences; and Analyze historical, contemporary, and emerging means of changing societies, promoting the common good, and protecting rights. 	<p>I can:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop a theory of effectiveness regarding how people use and challenge local, state, national, and international laws to address a variety of public issues, from a historical or contemporary lens, and propose new public policy; and Propose public policies while considering both intended and unintended outcomes, and related consequences. <p style="text-align: center;">- or -</p> <p>I can create alternative evidence that expands upon proficient.</p>

Economics

Critical Proficiency: Students make sound economic decisions through understanding the interactions between humans, governments, economic systems and both the national and global marketplaces.

Priority Performance Indicator	Beginning	Developing	Proficient	Expanding
<p>Economic Decision Making: Analyze how scarcity influences individual and societal decisions regarding established goals, and the advantages and disadvantages pertaining to the resources available to achieve those goals. (D2. Econ. 1, 2)</p>	<p>I can:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Describe how and why scarcity influences individual's economic decisions. 	<p>I can:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Explain how scarcity creates alternative choices, solutions, and incentives to both why and how decisions that are made. 	<p>I can:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Analyze how scarcity influences individual and societal decisions regarding established goals, and the advantages and disadvantages pertaining to the resources available to achieve those goals. (D2. Econ. 1, 2) 	<p>I can:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Evaluate and communicate how economic incentives can influence behavior (individual, societal, governmental) and develop a reasoned argument for/against their use. <p style="text-align: center;">- or -</p> <p>I can create alternative evidence that expands upon proficient.</p>

Priority Performance Indicator	Beginning	Developing	Proficient	Expanding
<p>Exchange and Markets: Evaluate the extent to which competition among buyers and sellers exists, and the consequences of competition, or lack thereof, within specific markets. (D2 Econ. 4, 5, 6)</p>	<p>I can:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Explain the role of buyers and sellers, in a market economy. 	<p>I can:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Describe how competition determines wages and prices in a market economy. 	<p>I can:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Evaluate the extent to which competition among buyers and sellers exists, and the consequences of competition, or lack thereof, within specific markets. (D2 Econ. 4, 5, 6) 	<p>I can:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Evaluate and communicate the role of government when inefficiencies exist in a market economy; and • Evaluate and communicate the effectiveness of government policies used to regulate/enhance market economies, including intended and unintended consequences. <p style="text-align: center;">- or -</p> <p>I can create alternative evidence that expands upon proficient.</p>

Priority Performance Indicator	Beginning	Developing	Proficient	Expanding
<p>The National Economy Use economic indicators and current data to evaluate, identify trends, and explain the influences on changes in spending, production, money supply, policies and the current and future state of the national economy. (D2. Econ. 10, 11, 12)</p>	<p>I can</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify the relationship between economic indicators and what is being measured. 	<p>I can</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Explain the importance of economic indicators to consumers, businesses, and governments. 	<p>I can</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use economic indicators and current data to evaluate, identify trends, and explain the influences on changes in spending, production, money supply, policies and the current and future state of the national economy. (D2. Econ. 10, 11, 12) 	<p>I can</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Evaluate and communicate the selection and use of monetary and fiscal policies in response to various economic conditions. - or - <p>I can create alternative evidence that expands upon proficient</p>

Priority Performance Indicator	Beginning	Developing	Proficient	Expanding
<p>The Global Economy: Explain how current globalization trends and policies affect economic growth, labor markets, rights of citizens, the environment, and resource and income distribution. (D2. Econ 15)</p>	<p>I can:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cite examples of how trade and technology have connected the world and created interdependence. 	<p>I can:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Explain the costs and benefits of trade and technology to individuals, businesses, governments, and societies. 	<p>I can:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Explain current globalization trends and policies; and • Explain how current trends and policies have affected the following in the US and differing nations: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ economic growth; ○ labor markets; ○ rights of citizens; ○ the environment; ○ resource distribution ○ income distribution. 	<p>I can:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Propose and communicate innovative solutions, and/or participate in discussions and initiatives addressing the challenges posed by globalization as it relates to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Economic fluctuations; ○ resource distribution; ○ income inequality; ○ environmental sustainability; ○ citizen and human rights; ○ income distribution. <p style="text-align: center;">- or -</p> <p>I can create alternative evidence that expands upon proficient.</p>

Geography

Critical Proficiency: Students use geographic inquiry and reasoning to propose solutions to local, national, and global issues.

Priority Performance Indicator	Beginning	Developing	Proficient	Expanding
<p>Human Population: Spatial Patterns and Movements: Analyze how historic events, long-term climate variability and the diffusion of ideas, technologies, and cultural practices have influenced human migration patterns and population distribution. (D2. Geo. 7, 9)</p>	<p>I can:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Describe reasons for human migration patterns and population distribution. 	<p>I can:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Explain how specific events, past or present, can influence population distribution and migration. 	<p>I can:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Analyze how historic events, long-term climate variability and the diffusion of ideas, technologies, and cultural practices have influenced human migration patterns and population distribution. (D2. Geo. 7, 9) 	<p>I can:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop and communicate a logical argument based on evidence and data from multiple perspectives to predict future migration patterns and population distributions. <p style="text-align: center;">- or -</p> <p>I can create alternative evidence that expands upon proficient.</p>

Priority Performance Indicator	Beginning	Developing	Proficient	Expanding
<p>Global Interconnections: Changing Spatial Patterns: Evaluate how changes in the physical systems of the earth contribute to conflict and cooperation. (D2. Geo. 10, 11, 12)</p>	<p>I can:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Explain changes in the earth's physical systems. 	<p>I can:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Explain how changes in the earth's physical systems have affected human-related behaviors, practices, and actions. 	<p>I can:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Evaluate how changes in the physical systems of the earth contribute to conflict; and • Evaluate how changes in the physical systems of the earth contribute to cooperation. (D2. Geo. 10, 11, 12) 	<p>I can:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Make predictions, from evidence, of future physical systems changes and develop solutions to avoid conflict, and communicate such predictions. - or - I can create alternative evidence that expands upon proficient.

Priority Performance Indicator	Beginning	Developing	Proficient	Expanding
<p>Human Environment Interaction: Place, Region, Culture: Analyze relations between physical systems and humans, including political and economic decisions, to determine how they influence each other. (D2. Geo. 4, 5, 6)</p>	<p>I can:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Describe how humans and physical systems interact. 	<p>I can:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Describe how physical environments influence decisions (economic, political, socio-cultural). 	<p>I can:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Analyze relations between physical systems and humans, including political and economic decisions; and Determine how the relationship between physical systems and humans influence each other. (D2. Geo. 4, 5, 6) 	<p>I can:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Synthesize information from multiple sources to develop and communicate a logical argument regarding how the environment will affect future geo-political, cultural, and economic decisions. - or - <p>I can create alternative evidence that expands upon proficient.</p>

Priority Performance Indicator	Beginning	Developing	Proficient	Expanding
<p>Geographic Representations: Spatial Views of the World: Create and/or use maps to analyze spatial patterns of cultural and environmental characteristics, and to help explain relationships between places/regions and their cultural, political and economic systems. (D2. Geo. 1, 2)</p>	<p>I can:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create and/or use maps to define cultural and/or environmental characteristics. 	<p>I can:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create and/or use maps to explain spatial patterns of cultural and environmental characteristics; and • Create and/or use maps to explain relationships between places and/or regions. (D2. Geo. 1, 2) 	<p>I can:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create and/or use maps to analyze spatial patterns of cultural and environmental characteristics; and • Create and/or use maps to help explain relationships between places/regions and their cultural, political and economic systems. (D2. Geo. 1, 2) 	<p>I can:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create and/or use maps and other evidence to illustrate and evaluate how common cultural, political, and economic themes develop over time and place. <p style="text-align: center;">- or -</p> <p>I can create alternative evidence that expands upon proficient.</p>

History

Critical Proficiency: Students understand and evaluate change and continuity over time, recognize the multiplicity of points of view and make use of historical evidence in answering questions and developing arguments about the past.

Priority Performance Indicator	Beginning	Developing	Proficient	Expanding
<p>Change, Continuity, Context: Evaluate how historical events and developments were shaped by unique circumstances, individuals and groups, and how their significance both changes over time and is shaped by historical context. (D2. His. 1, 3)</p>	<p>I can:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify historical events and developments that were shaped by unique circumstances (time and place), individuals and/or groups. 	<p>I can:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Explain how the significance of historical events changes over time. 	<p>I can:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Evaluate how historical events and developments were shaped by unique circumstances, individuals and groups; and Evaluate how the significance of historical events both changes over time and is shaped by historical context. 	<p>I can:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop an inquiry-based product that weaves together various historical themes; illustrating their interconnectedness and demonstrating a comprehensive understanding of the historical landscape. <p style="text-align: center;">- or -</p> <p>I can create alternative evidence that expands upon proficient.</p>

Priority Performance Indicator	Beginning	Developing	Proficient	Expanding
<p>Perspectives: Analyze and explain how historical context shapes peoples' perspectives, how perspective-influencing factors change over time, and how peoples' present perspectives shape interpretations of the past, including that which is written and acknowledged as history. (D2. His. 4-7)</p>	<p>I can:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Describe how information shapes people's perspectives. 	<p>I can:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Explain how peoples' present perspectives shape interpretations of the past. 	<p>I can:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Analyze and explain how: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> historical context shapes peoples' perspectives; how perspective-influencing factors change over time; and how peoples' present perspectives shape interpretations of the past, including that which is written and acknowledged as history. <p>(D2. His. 4-7)</p>	<p>I can:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Evaluate and communicate how interpretations of the past were limited by available resources and perspectives. <p style="text-align: center;">- or -</p> <p>I can create alternative evidence that expands upon proficient.</p>

Priority Performance Indicator	Beginning	Developing	Proficient	Expanding
<p>Causation and Argumentation: Analyze multiple and complex causes (long-term and triggering) and effects of events in the past to develop a reasoned historical argument. (D2. His.14, 15)</p>	<p>I can:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> State causes of historical events. 	<p>I can:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Align multiple causes to the effects of events in the past. 	<p>I can:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Analyze multiple and complex causes (long-term and triggering) and effects of events in the past to develop a reasoned historical argument. 	<p>I can:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Evaluate and communicate alternative perspectives to both causes and effects of historical events in a reasoned argument. <p style="text-align: center;">- or -</p> <p>I can create alternative evidence that expands upon proficient.</p>