

Instructional Planning Tool: Unpacking a U.S. History Standard

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Purpose: Use this planning tool to unpack a South Carolina U.S. History indicator and design coherent, evidence-centered instruction that aligns historical thinking, instructional anchors, content, DOK, Performance Level Descriptors (PLDs), and assessment.

Overview: Effective instructional planning begins by identifying the historical thinking required by the indicator. From there, teachers select an instructional anchor, identify the essential content, consider the intended DOK and Performance Level Descriptors (PLDs), and design instruction that intentionally aligns learning, assessment, and differentiation. This planning tool guides you through that process.

Planning Process

1. Identify the Historical Thinking Skill.
2. Select an Instructional Anchor.
3. Identify the Essential Content.
4. Determine the Required DOK.
5. Consider the PLDs.
6. Design Coherent Instruction.

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Part 1: Indicator Deep Dive

1. Choose one indicator from USHC Standard 1.
2. Complete the following unpacking prompts:

Prompt

Your Response

What is the Historical Thinking Skill?

What instructional anchor will best organize learning around this indicator?

What DOK level(s) are required by the indicator?

What essential content is identified in the South Carolina U.S. History Alignment Guide?

According to the PLDs, what does performance at the **Exceeds** level look like for this indicator?

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Part 2: Design Coherent Instruction

Design one or more coherent learning experiences that intentionally develop the historical thinking required by your indicator and align instruction with assessment.

Prompt

Your Response

Instructional Anchor

How will this instructional anchor help students develop the historical thinking required by the indicator?

Learning Experience(s)

What learning experience(s) will provide students with opportunities to practice the required historical thinking?

Assessment Evidence

What evidence will demonstrate that students have successfully applied the historical thinking identified in Part 1?

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Part 3: PLD-Aligned Learning Progression

Create a PLD-aligned learning progression that shows how students can move from Minimally Meets to Meets and Exceeds expectations.

PLD Level	Task
Minimally Meets	
Meets	
Exceeds	

When planning an Exceeds task, consider how students can build increasingly sophisticated historical reasoning by:

Identify → Analyze → Compare/Synthesize → Use Evidence → Justify a Conclusion

Planning Check: Before teaching, verify that your instructional anchor, learning experience(s), assessment, and PLD progression all develop the historical thinking identified in Part 1.

Reflection: What is one adjustment you would make to strengthen alignment between the historical thinking, instructional anchor, learning experiences, and assessment?

Planning Reminder: Effective instructional planning begins with the historical thinking required by the standard. As you refine your lesson, ensure that your instructional anchor, learning experiences, assessment, and PLD-aligned progression all intentionally develop that same historical thinking.