

From Standards to Success: PLD-Informed Task Scaffold

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Use this scaffold to anticipate student performance and plan PLD-informed supports for a common evidence-centered task. Begin with the same rigorous prompt for all students, then use the Performance Level Descriptors (PLDs) to anticipate differences in student reasoning, evidence use, and independence and to plan appropriate instructional supports.

PLD-Informed Task Scaffold

Frame a common prompt, then anticipate student performance and identify PLD-informed supports.

Prompt (same for all):

Use at least two sources to ... {your instructional anchor-specific task}

Standard/Indicator: USHC. _____

HTS target: CO ☐ CE ☐ P ☐ CX ☐ CC ☐ E ☐

DOK aim: 2 ☐ 3 ☐

Sources: _____

Use 1–2 supports per level and gradually fade supports as students demonstrate greater independence. Evaluate performance using observable evidence of historical thinking, evidence use, and reasoning.

Important: The PLD descriptions below are not separate assignments for different groups of students. They describe anticipated differences in student performance on the same rigorous task and can help teachers plan appropriate scaffolds, feedback, and extensions, while maintaining a common historical thinking goal.

PLD Level	What the Student Produces	Instructional Supports
Minimally Meets	States a basic claim/identification and uses 1 relevant detail from a source; partial/implicit use of the target HTS; explanation is limited or mostly descriptive.	Full graphic organizer (Cause→Event→Effect; Compare/Contrast; Claim-Evidence-Reasoning) • sentence stems • visual supports (charts/timelines/maps) • modeled example • think-aloud • paired discussion prompt • narrowed source set (1–2 short excerpts)
Meets	Presents a clear claim and applies the target HTS at the intended DOK; uses evidence from ≥2 sources and explains how the evidence supports the claim; reasoning is accurate and complete for the prompt.	Organizer (optional) • evidence checklist (“cite 2 sources, name HTS move”) • rubric snippet for Meets • peer check protocol • conferencing cue card • full source set (mixed media) • sentence-combining or transition bank (because/therefore/however)
Exceeds	Develops a coherent, well-supported explanation/argument that corroborates across multiple sources, adds nuance (e.g., short- vs long-term, continuity vs change, counterpoint/limitation), and sustains the target HTS at the upper end of DOK 3.	Extension prompts (counterclaim/limitations; alternative explanation) • additional/longer sources or datasets • choice of product (brief essay, annotated timeline, infographic) • minimal scaffolds (organizer removed) • rubric “Exceeds” criteria • self-assessment checklist

Meets— One-Sentence Success Criterion (fill):

Explains _____ using two sources (e.g., cartoon + excerpt), and identifies how each detail supports the claim.