

From Standards to Success: USHC 2 | Coherent Learning Experience Design Exemplar

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This exemplar models a 2–3-lesson U.S. History learning experience centered on historical thinking and evidence. Using the Missouri Compromise as an instructional anchor, it demonstrates how Hook → Explore → Apply → Synthesize can align learning targets, inquiry tasks, formative assessment, PLD-informed supports, sources, and a culminating evidence-centered task.

USHC Standard 2 Indicator: USHC.2.CE
Historical Thinking Skill: Causation

Instructional Anchor: Missouri Compromise
Intended Cognitive Demand (DOK): DOK 2–3

Phase	Learning Target (<i>Historical Thinking + Content</i>)	Key Activity (<i>Inquiry Task</i>)	Formative Assessment (<i>Evidence of Student Thinking</i>)	Differentiation (<i>PLD-Informed Supports</i>)	Materials/Sources (<i>Primary & Secondary Sources</i>)
Hook	Students will identify the legislative compromise's immediate intent.	Political Cartoon Analysis: In pairs, decode an 1820 cartoon on state balance.	SR Item: “What was the main goal of the Missouri Compromise?” A. Expand slavery B. Balance free/slave states ✓ C. End slavery nationwide D. Establish popular sovereignty Rationale: Assesses foundational understanding of the Compromise's immediate purpose in preparation for subsequent causal analysis.	Provide source annotations, guiding questions, or sentence frames as needed to support students in explaining the Compromise's immediate purpose. Extend reasoning by asking students who are ready to connect the evidence to a later sectional consequence.	1. 1820 political cartoon (primary) 2. Brief textbook or historical overview explaining the Missouri Compromise and the balance between free and slave states (secondary)

Explore	Students will analyze causes and short-term effects of the Compromise using text and map evidence.	Jigsaw Document Groups: Each group examines one source (law text or map of free/slave states) and reports findings.	EBSR Item: Part A: “Which factor prompted the Compromise?” – A: Westward migration ✓ – B: Industrial growth – C: War debt – D: Banking crisis Part B: “Which excerpt supports your answer?” – Excerpt on territorial admission ✓	Provide source highlighting, annotation prompts, or guiding questions as needed to help students identify causes and effects in the text and map evidence. Extend reasoning by asking students who are ready to corroborate findings with an additional source related to sectionalism.	1. Excerpt from the Missouri Compromise 1820 (primary) 2. Map showing the 36°30’ line (primary) 3. Historical map or textbook explanation that helps students interpret the legislation (secondary)
Apply	Students will sequence events and explain causal links leading from the Compromise to later crises.	Sequence the Missouri Compromise, Compromise of 1850, and Kansas-Nebraska Act, then explain the causal connections among the events.	Use a technology-enhanced drag-and-drop item to sequence the three events and match each event with an appropriate description of its role in sectional conflict.	Provide event dates, timeline cues, or a cause-and-effect organizer as needed to support students in identifying relationships among the events. Extend reasoning by asking students who are ready to explain how changes in federal policy contributed to increasing sectional conflict.	1. Event labels & dates list 2. Claim-evidence graphic organizer
Synthesize	Students will evaluate how the Missouri Compromise addressed immediate sectional tensions while contributing to later conflict.	Students synthesize evidence from the Compromise text, map, and prior learning to develop and support a causal claim.	Students draft a claim and select relevant evidence in preparation for the culminating performance task.	Provide a claim-evidence organizer or source-selection prompts as needed. Extend reasoning by prompting students who are ready to connect immediate and long-term consequences.	Missouri Compromise text, 1820 free/slave-state map, and evidence collected during Explore and Apply.

Culminating Performance Task

Design an evidence-centered performance task that assesses the historical thinking and evidence use developed throughout the learning experience.

Performance Task Prompt:

Using the Missouri Compromise text and the 1820 free/slave-state map, evaluate how the Missouri Compromise addressed sectional tensions and contributed to future conflicts. Support your response with relevant evidence and causal reasoning.

Scoring Criteria

Identify criteria for evaluating historical reasoning, evidence use, content accuracy, and the cognitive demand required by the indicator.

Criterion	What Successful Performance Demonstrates
Historical Reasoning	Explains how the Missouri Compromise addressed an immediate sectional problem and connects the compromise to later sectional conflict.
Evidence Use	Selects and uses relevant evidence from the Missouri Compromise text and 1820 map to support causal claims.
Content Accuracy	Accurately explains the purpose, provisions, and consequences of the Missouri Compromise.
Indicator-Specific Expectation	Evaluates immediate and long-term causes and effects by connecting multiple developments in a historically accurate causal explanation.

PLD-Informed Planning

How might PLD-informed supports or extensions help students engage with the same rigorous historical thinking task?

Provide source annotations, guiding questions, claim-evidence organizers, or sentence frames as needed while maintaining the same causal reasoning task. Students demonstrating greater independence can deepen their reasoning by corroborating evidence or connecting immediate and longer-term consequences.

Coherence Check

How do the components of this learning experience work together to develop and assess the historical thinking required by the indicator?

The Missouri Compromise serves as the instructional anchor connecting the learning sequence. Across Hook → Explore → Apply → Synthesize, students progressively develop causal reasoning through historical sources, formative assessment, and evidence-centered tasks. Supports vary based on student need while the historical thinking target remains consistent, and the culminating task assesses the same reasoning and evidence use developed throughout the learning experience.