Remodelling Social Studies

Introduction

The major problem to overcome in remodelling social studies units and lessons is that of transforming didactic instruction within one point of view into dialogical instruction within multiple points of view. As teachers, we should see ourselves not as dispensers of absolute truth nor as proponents of relativity, but as careful reflective seekers after truth, a search in which we are inviting our students to participate. We need continually to remind ourselves that each person responds to social issues from one of a variety of mutually inconsistent points of view. Each point of view rests on assumptions about human nature. Presenting one point of view as the truth limits our understanding of issues. Practice in entering into and coming to understand divergent points of view, on the other hand, heightens our grasp of the real problems of our lives. Children, in their everyday lives, already face the kinds of issues studied in social studies and are engaged in developing sets of assumptions on questions like the following:

What does it mean to belong to a group? What rights and responsibilities do I have? Does it matter if others do not approve of me? Is it worthwhile to be good? What is most important to me? How am I like and unlike others? Whom should I trust? Who are my friends and enemies? What are people like? What am I like? How do I fit in with others? What are my rights and responsibilities? What are others’ rights and responsibilities?

Humans live in a world of humanly constructed meanings. There is always more than one way to conceptualize human behavior. Humans create points of view, ideologies, and philosophies that often conflict with each other. Students need to understand the implications of this crucial fact: that all accounts of human behavior are expressed within a point of view, that it is not possible to cover all the facts in any account of what happened, that each account stresses some facts over others, that when an account is given (by a teacher, student, or textbook author), the point of view in which it is given should be identified and, where possible, alternative points of view considered, and finally, that points of view need to be critically analyzed and assessed.
Adults, as well as children, tend to assume the truth of their own unexamined points of view. People often unfairly discredit or misinterpret ideas based on assumptions which differ from their own. In order to address social issues critically, students must continually evaluate their beliefs by contrasting them with opposing beliefs. From the beginning, social studies instruction should encourage dialogical thinking, that is, the fairminded discussion of a variety of points of view and their underlying beliefs. Of course, this emphasis on the diversity of human perspectives should not be covered in such a way as to imply that all points of view are equally valid. Rather, students should learn to value critical thinking skills as tools to help them distinguish truth from falsity, insight from prejudice, accurate conception from misconception.

Dialogical experience in which students begin to use critical vocabulary to sharpen their thinking and their sense of logic, is crucial. Words and phrases like ‘claims,’ ‘assumes,’ ‘implies,’ ‘supports,’ ‘is evidence for,’ ‘is inconsistent with,’ ‘is relevant to’ should be integrated into such discussions. Formulating their own views of historical events and social issues should enable students to synthesize data from divergent sources and to grasp important ideas. Too often, students are asked to recall details with no synthesis, no organizing ideas, and no distinction between details and basic ideas or between facts and common U.S. interpretations of them.

Students certainly need opportunities to explicitly learn basic principles of social analysis, but more importantly, they need opportunities to apply them to real and imagined cases, and to develop insight into social analysis. They especially need to come to terms with the pitfalls of human social analyses, to recognize the ease with which we mask self-interest or egocentric desires with social scientific language. In any case, for any particular instance of social judgment or reasoning, students should learn the art of distinguishing perspectives on the world from facts (which provide the specific information or occasion for a particular social judgment). In learning to discriminate these dimensions of social reasoning, we learn how to focus our minds on a variety of questions at issue.

As people, students have an undeniable right to develop their own social perspective — whether conservative or liberal, whether optimistic or pessimistic — but they should be able to analyze the perspective they do use, compare it accurately with other perspectives, and scrutinize the facts they conceptualize and judge in the social domain with the same care required in any other domain of knowledge. They should, in other words, become as adept in using critical thinking principles in the social domain as we expect them to be in scientific domains of learning.

Traditional lessons cover several important subjects within social studies: politics, economics, history, anthropology, and geography. Critical education in social studies focuses on basic questions in each subject, and prepares students for their future economic, political, and social roles.

Some Common Problems with Social Studies Texts

- End-of-chapter questions often ask for recall of a random selection of details and key facts or ideas. Often the answers are found in the text in bold or otherwise emphasized type. Thus, students need not even understand the question, let alone the answer, to complete their assignments.
- Timelines, maps, charts and graphs are presented and read as mere drill rather than as aids to understanding deeper issues.
- There is rarely adequate emphasis on extending insights to analogous situations in other times and places.
• Although the texts treat diversity of opinion as necessary, beliefs are not presented as subject to examination or critique. Students are encouraged to accept that others have different beliefs but are not encouraged to understand why. Yet it is by understanding why others think as they do that students can profit from considering other points of view. The text writers’ emphasis on simple tolerance serves to end discussion, whereas students should learn to consider judgments as subject to rational assessment.

• Students are not encouraged to recognize and combat their own natural ethnocentricty. Texts encourage ethnocentricty in many ways. They often present American ideals as uniquely American when, in fact, every nation shares at least some of them. Although beliefs about the state of the world and about how to achieve ideals vary greatly, the American version of these is often treated as universal or self-evident. Students should learn not to confuse their limited perspective with universal belief. Ethnocentricty is reflected in word choices that assume an American or Western European perspective. Cultures are described as isolated rather than as isolated from Europe. Christian missionaries are described as spreading or teaching religion rather than Christianity. Cultures are evaluated as modern according to their similarity to our culture. In addition, texts often assume, imply, or clearly state that most of the world would prefer to be just like us. The American way of life and policies, according to the world view implied in standard texts, is the pinnacle of human achievement and presents the best human life has to offer. That others might believe the same of their own cultures is rarely mentioned or considered.

• Texts often wantonly omit crucial concepts, relationships, and details. For example, in discussing the opening of trade relations between Japan and the U.S., one text failed to mention why the Japanese had cut off relations with the West. Another text passed over fossil fuels and atomic energy in two sentences.

• Most texts treat important subjects superficially. There seems to be more concern for the outward appearance of things than for their underlying dynamics. Many texts also tend to approach the heart of the matter and then stop short. Topics are introduced, treated briefly, and dropped. History, for instance, is presented as merely a series of events. Texts often describe events briefly but seldom mention how people perceived them, why they accepted or resisted them, or what ideas and assumptions influenced them. Texts often cover different political systems by mentioning the titles of political offices. Most discussions of religion reflect the same superficiality. Texts emphasize names of deities, rituals, and practices. But beliefs are not explored in depth; the inner life is ignored, the personal dimension omitted.

• In many instances, texts encourage student passivity by providing all the answers. After lengthy map skills units, students are asked to apply those skills to answer simple questions. However, they are not held accountable for providing the answers on their own. Texts usually err by asking questions students should be able to answer on their own, and then immediately providing the answer. Once students understand the system, they know that they don’t have to stop and think for themselves, because the text will do it for them in the next sentence.

• Graphs and charts are treated in the same manner. Students practice reading maps in their texts for reasons provided by those texts. They are not required to determine for themselves what questions a map can answer, what sort of map is required, or how to find it. Map reading practice could be used to develop students’ confidence in their abilities to reason and learn for themselves, but typically isn’t.
• Chart assignments can be remodelled to provide more thought-provoking work on students’ parts by adding headings regarding implications, consequences, or justifications and by having students compare and argue for their particular ways of filling the charts out.

• Although the rich selections of appendices is convenient for the students, they are discouraged from discovering where to find information on their own. In real life, problems are not solved by referring to a handy chart neatly put into a book of information on the subject. In fact few, if any, complex issues are resolved by perusing one book. Instead we ought to be teaching students to decide what kind of information is necessary and how to figure out a way to get it. In addition, many of the appendices are neatly correlated, designed and labeled to answer precisely those questions asked in the text. Students therefore do not develop strategies they need to transfer their knowledge to the issues, problems, and questions they will have as adults.

• Texts often emphasize the ideal or theoretical models of government, economic systems, and institutions without exploring real (hidden) sources of power and change. The difficulty and complexity of problems are alluded to or even mentioned, but without exploring the complexity. Furthermore, texts typically do not separate ideals from the way a system might really operate in a given situation.

• Explanations are often abstract and lack detail or connection to that which they explain, leaving students with a vague understanding. Texts fail to answer such questions as: How did this bring about that? What was going on in people’s minds? Why? How did that relate to the rest of society? Why is this valued? Without context, the little bits have little meaning and therefore, if remembered at all, serve no function and cannot be recalled for use.

Subject-Specific Problems

There are somewhat different problems which emerge in each of the areas of social studies. It is important to identify them:

History

• Primary sources, when used or referred to at all, are not examined as sources of information or as explications of important attitudes and beliefs which shaped events. Their assessment is not discussed, nor are influences which shape that assessment. Texts fail to mention, for example, that most history was written by victors of wars and by the few educated people. Much information about other points of view has been lost. Most selections from primary sources are trivial narratives.

• History texts state problems and perceived problems of the past, give the solutions attempted, and mention results. Students don’t evaluate them as solutions. They don’t look at what others did about the same problem, nor do they analyze causes or evaluate solutions for themselves. We recommend that teachers ask, “To what extent and in what ways did the action solve the problem? Fail to solve it? Create new problems?” Students could argue for their own solutions.

• When discussing causes of historical events, texts present the U.S. interpretation as though it were fact. Thus, students gain little or no insight into historical reasoning.

• When texts present negative information on the U.S., they don’t encourage students to explore the consequences or implications of it.
Politics

- Traditional lessons seldom discuss the difficulty of being a good citizen (e.g., assessing candidates and propositions before voting), nor do they discuss the positive aspects of dissent, i.e., the need to have a wide-ranging open market of ideas.
- Texts tend to make unfair comparisons, such as comparing the ideal of governments of the U.S. and its allies to the real Soviet government.
- Important ideals, such as freedom of speech, are taught as mere slogans. Students read, recall, and repeat vague justifications for ideas rather than deepen their understanding of them and of the difficulty in achieving them. In effect, such ideas are taught as though they were facts on the order of the date a treaty was signed.
- Texts often confuse facts with ideals and genuine patriotism with show of patriotism or false patriotism. The first confusion discourages us from seeing ourselves, others, and the world accurately; we often don’t see the gap between how we want to be and how we are. The second encourages us to reject constructive criticism.

Economics

- Texts assume a capitalist perspective on economics, and texts generally contrast ideal capitalism with real socialism.
- Texts cover economic systems superficially, neglecting serious and in-depth coverage of how they are supposed to work (e.g., in our system, people must make rational choices as consumers, employers, and voters).

Anthropology

- Cultural differences are often reduced to holidays and foods rather than values, perspectives, and more significant customs, giving students little more than a superficial impression of this field.

Geography

- Texts more often use maps to show such trivialities as travelers’ and explorers’ routes than to illuminate the history and culture of the place shown and the lives of the people who actually live there.

What ties many of these criticisms together and points to their correction is the understanding that study of each subject should teach students how to reason in that subject, and this requires that students learn how to synthesize their insights into each subject to better understand their world. The standard didactic approach, with its emphasis on giving students as much information as possible, neglects this crucial task. Even those texts which attempt to teach geographical or historical reasoning do so occasionally, rather than systematically. By conceptualizing education primarily as passing data to students, texts present products of reasoning. A critical approach, emphasizing root questions and independent thought, on the other hand, helps students get a handle on the facts and ideas and offers students crucial tools for thinking through the problems they will face throughout their lives.

Students need assignments that challenge their ability to assess actual political behavior. Such assignments will, of course, produce divergent conclusions by students in accordance with the state of their present leanings. And don’t forget that student thinking, speaking, and writing should be graded not on some authoritative set of substantive answers, but rather on the clarity,
cogency, and intellectual rigor of what they produce. All students should be expected to learn the art of social and political analysis — the art of subjecting political behavior and public policies to critical assessment — based on an analysis of important relevant facts and on consideration of reasoning within alternative political viewpoints.

Some Recommendations for Action

Students in social studies, regardless of level, should be expected to begin to take responsibility for their own learning. This means that the student must develop the art of independent thinking and study and cultivate intellectual and study skills. This includes the ability to critique the text one is using, discovering how to learn from even a poor text. And since it is not reasonable to expect the classroom teacher to remodel the format of a textbook, the teacher must choose how to use the text as given.

Discussions and activities should be designed or remodelled by the teacher to develop the students’ use of critical reading, writing, speaking, and listening. Furthermore, students should begin to get a sense of the interconnecting fields of knowledge within social studies, and the wealth of connections between these fields and others, such as math, science, and language arts. The students should not be expected to memorize a large quantity of unrelated facts, but rather to think in terms of interconnected domains of human life and experience. This includes identifying and evaluating various viewpoints; gathering and organizing information for interpretation; distinguishing facts from ideals, interpretations, and judgments; recognizing relationships and patterns; and applying insights to current events and problems.

Students should repeatedly be encouraged to identify the perspective of their texts, imagine or research other perspectives, and compare and evaluate them. This means, among other things, that words like ‘conservatism’ and ‘liberalism,’ the ‘right’ and ‘left,’ must become more than vague jargon; they must be recognized as names of different ways of thinking about human behavior in the world. Students need experience actually thinking within diverse political perspectives. No perspective, not even one called ‘moderate,’ should be presented as the correct one. By the same token, we should be careful not to lead the students to believe that all perspectives are equally justified or that important insights are equally found in all points of view. Beware especially of the misleading idea that the truth always lies in the middle of two extremes. We should continually encourage and stimulate our students to think and never do their thinking for them. We should, above all, teach, not preach.

History

History lessons should show students how to reason historically and why historical reasoning is necessary to understanding the present and to making rational decisions regarding the future. To learn to reason historically, students must discuss issues dialogically, generating and assessing multiple interpretations of events they study. This requires students to distinguish facts from interpretations. It also requires that they develop a point of view of their own.

• Dates are useful not so much as things-in-themselves, but as markers placing events in relation to each other and within context (historical, political, anthropological, technological, etc.). To reason with respect to history, we need to orient ourselves to events in relation to each other. So when you come across particular dates, you might ask the students to discuss in pairs what events came before and after it and to consider the significance of this
sequence. They might consider the possible implications of different conceivable sequences. Suppose dynamite had been invented 50 years earlier. What are some possible consequences of that?

- Why is this date given in the text? What dates are the most significant according to the text? To us? To others? Notice that many dates significant to other groups, such as to Native Americans, are not mentioned. All dates that are mentioned result from a value judgment about the significance of that date.

**Economics**

When reasoning economically, Americans reason not only from a capitalist perspective, but also as liberals, conservatives, optimists, or pessimists. Lessons on economics should stress not only how our system is supposed to work but also how liberals, conservatives, etc. tend to interpret the same facts differently. Students should routinely consider questions like the following: “What can I learn from a conservative or liberal reading of these events? What facts support a conservative interpretation?” They should also have an opportunity to imagine alternative economic systems and alternative incentives, other than money, to motivate human work. Students should analyze and evaluate their own present and future participation in the economy by exploring reasoning and values underlying particular actions, and the consequences of those actions.

**Some Key Questions in Subject Areas**

Instruction for each subject should be designed to highlight the basic or root questions of that subject and help students learn how to reason within each field. To help you move away from the didactic, memorization-oriented approach found in most texts, we have listed below some basic questions, to suggest what sort of background issues could be used to unify and organize instruction. We have made no attempt to provide a comprehensive list. Consider the questions as suggestions only. In most cases, some translation or specific follow-up questions would be necessary before they could be posed to students.

**History**

Why are things the way they are now? What happened in the past? Why? What was it like to live then? How has it influenced us now? What kinds of historical events are most significant? How do I learn what happened in the past? How do I reconcile conflicting accounts? How can actions of the past best be understood? Evaluated? How does study of the past help me understand present situations and problems? To understand this present-day problem, what sort of historical background do I need, and how can I find and assess it? Is there progress? Is the world getting better? Worse? Always the same? Do people shape their times or do the times shape people?

**Anthropology**

Why do you think people have different cultures? What shapes culture? How do cultures change? How have you been influenced by our culture? By ideas in movies and T.V.? How does culture influence people? What assumptions underlie my culture? Others’ cultures? To what extent are values universal? Which of our values do you think are universal? To what extent do values vary between cultures? Within cultures? How can cultures be categorized? What are some key differences between cultures that have writing and those who don’t? What are the implications and consequences of those differences? How might a liberal critique our culture? A socialist? Is
each culture so unique and self-contained, and so thoroughly defining of reality, that cultures cannot be compared or evaluated? How is your peer group like a culture? How are cultures like and unlike other kinds of groups?

**Geography**

How do people adapt to where they live? What kinds of geographical features influence people the most? How? How do people change their environment? What effects do different changes have? How can uses of land be evaluated? How can we distinguish geographical from cultural influences? (Are Swedes hardy as a result of their geography or as a result of their cultural values?) Which geographical features in our area are the most significant? Does our climate influence our motivation? How so? Would you be different if you had been raised in the desert? Explain how. Why is it important to know what various countries export? What does that tell us about that country, its relationships to other countries, its problems, its strengths?

**Politics**

What kinds of governments are there? What is government for? What is my government like? What are other governments like? How did they come to be that way? Who has power? Who should have power? What ways can power be used? How is our system designed to prevent abuse of power? To what extent is that design successful? What assumptions underlie various forms of government? What assumptions underlie ours? On what values are they theoretically based? What values are actually held? How is the design of this government supposed to achieve ideals? To what extent should a country's political and economic interests determine its foreign relations? To what extent should such ideals as justice and self-determination influence foreign policy decisions? Take a particular policy and analyze the possible effects of vested interests. How can governments be evaluated? How much should governments do to solve political, social, economic, etc., problems?

**Economics**

What kinds of economic decisions do you make? What kinds will you make in the future? On what should you base those decisions? How should you decide where your money goes? When you spend money, what are you telling manufacturers? How is a family like an economic system? What kinds of economies are there? In this economy, who makes what kinds of decisions? What values underlie this economy? What does this economic system assume about people and their relationship to their work — assume about why people work? According to proponents of this economic system, who should receive the greatest rewards? Why? Who should receive fewer rewards? How can economic systems be evaluated? What problems are there in our economy according to liberals? Conservatives? Socialists? What features of our economy are capitalistic? Socialistic? Communist? How does ideal capitalism (socialism) work? In what ways do we depart from ideal capitalism? Are these departures justified? What kinds of things are most important to produce? Why? What kinds of things are less important? Why?

**Unifying Social Studies Instruction**

Although it makes sense to say that someone is reasoning historically, anthropologically, geographically, etc., it does not make the same sense to say that someone is reasoning socio-scientifically. There is no one way to put all of these fields together. Yet, understanding the
interrelationships between each field and being able to integrate insights gained from each field is crucial to social studies. We need to recognize the need for students to develop their own unique perspective on social events and arrangements. This requires that questions regarding the interrelationships between the fields covered in social studies be frequently raised and that lessons be designed to require students to apply ideas from various fields to one topic or problem. Keep in mind the following questions:

What are people like? How do people come to be the way they are? How does society shape the individual? How does the individual shape society? Why do people disagree? Where do people get their points of view? Where do I get my point of view? Are some people more important than others? How do people and groups of people solve problems? How can we evaluate solutions? What are our biggest problems? What has caused them? How should we approach them? What are the relationships between politics, economics, culture, history, and geography? How do each of these influence the rest? How does the economy of country X influence its political decisions? How does the geography of this area affect its economy? How is spending money like voting? How can governments, cultures, and economic systems be evaluated? Could you have totalitarian capitalism? Democratic communism? Are humans subject to laws and, hence, ultimately predictable?

In raising these questions beware the tendency to assume a "correct" answer from our social conditioning as Americans, especially on issues dealing with socialism or communism. Remember, we, like all peoples, have biases and prejudices. Our own view of the world must be critically analyzed and questioned.

Try to keep in mind that it takes a long time to develop a person's thinking. Our thinking is connected with every other dimension of us. All of our students enter our classes with many "mindless" beliefs, ideas which they have unconsciously picked up from T.V., movies, small talk, family background, and peer groups. Rarely have they been encouraged to think for themselves. Thinking their way through these beliefs takes time. We therefore need to proceed with a great deal of patience. We need to accept small payoffs in the beginning. We need to expect many confusions to arise. We must not despair in our role as cultivators of independent critical thought. In time, students will develop new modes of thinking. In time they will become more clear, more accurate, more logical, more open-minded — if only we stick to our commitment to nurture these abilities. The social studies provide us with an exciting opportunity, since they deal with issues central to our lives and well-being. It is not easy to shift the classroom from a didactic-memorization model, but, if we are willing to pay the price of definite commitment, it can be done.
International Trade

Objectives of the remodelled plan
The students will:
- discuss and evaluate international trade decisions and policies
- develop intellectual good faith and courage by comparing ideal capitalism with practice, and evaluating departures from ideals

Standard Approach

This lesson explains that the real world is far more complex than the example of two countries and two goods. The students investigate a nation's situation when it has a positive balance of trade and when it has negative balance of trade.

Critique

This lesson does not necessarily call for suspending judgement or distinguishing facts from ideals. The student does not look critically at international trade. The lesson does not challenge the student to look at the interdependence of trade among nations. The economy of developing countries is not a part of our students' experience and therefore they are unaware of the implications and the consequences of trading with us as a nation. Students need to explore implications and consequences on all levels of economic prosperity.

Strategies used to remodel
S-20 analyzing or evaluating actions or policies
S-3 exercising fairmindedness
S-27 comparing and contrasting ideals with actual practice
S-6 developing intellectual courage
S-35 exploring implications and consequences
S-7 developing intellectual good faith or integrity

Remodelled Lesson Plan S-20

When discussing trade, encourage students to research and reflect the meaning of "trade" from different countries' perspectives (i.e. 1st world, 2nd world, 3rd world and 4th world countries). Have the class discuss the effects of positive balance of trade in developing countries. S-3 What is the trade policy of the U. S.? Is it consistent with the principles of free enterprise? S-27 Do you agree with our policies? Why or why not? S-6 How might a short term positive
balance of trade in developed countries negatively affect longer term trade interests? What are some signs of interdependence which call us away from a short term or narrowly pragmatic perspective on trade? **S-35**

In small groups first, and then in a report given to the class, students can research news reports, and discuss key questions. "What values beyond immediate self interest call us to recognize our linkage with other nations? Why? What is our action in relation to our trade policy? Why was this done? Is our trade policy consistent? Explain." **S-27**

**Editor's note:** To guide research, have students find news articles in which disputes regarding international trade are covered or analyzed. Some students could trace back long-term consequences of trade policy decisions made a decade or more ago. "What is (was) the issue in this case? What sides are being taken? What reasons given? What principles or goals are behind each position? What results did each side give for the policies considered? Which consequences are most plausible? Why? **S-35** Which of these older cases bear most resemblance to which current cases? What was done? What were the results? Were they desirable? What should be done now? **S-20** How does capitalistic theory address international trade issues? In what ways do we depart from the theory? **S-7** Do we favor trade with some nations for political rather than economic reasons? Why? What countries do we refuse to trade with? Why? Is this wise? Why or why not? Can this sort of behavior be reconciled with belief in capitalism? Why or why not?" **S-6**
Free Enterprise

by Phyllis V. Walters, Redwood Academy, Santa Rosa, CA

Objectives of the remodelled plan
The students will:
- evaluate their participation in the economy
- develop and discuss criteria for evaluating an economic system
- discuss and evaluate the major economic systems of the world
- develop an appreciation for our natural resources as well as for human resources
- generate and assess economic systems

Standard Approach

This lesson covers the following points: discussion of how nations answer the three basic economic questions — 1) What goods and services are to be produced? 2) How should goods and services be produced? 3) For whom should goods and services be produced? — and then follow the answers to the economic system which is established. Capitalism, in its pure form, is described as having private enterprise, the right of property, profit motive, competition, and the freedom of choice. Students interview owners of private businesses regarding the benefits of private enterprise. The advantages and disadvantages of competition in business are discussed. Socialism and communism are briefly discussed as alternative systems chosen by certain countries. Students role play workers in a variety of jobs in the three main economic systems and their freedoms or lack of them.

Critique

This lesson misses the opportunity to have students focus on the importance of their contributions to their economic system and how they easily abuse their freedoms. The material isn't related directly to the students' lives, nor does it promote insight into each peoples' egocentricity when viewing the workings of their economy or when deciding how to use resources.

Strategies used to remodel
S-15 developing criteria for evaluation: clarifying values and standards
S-20 analyzing or evaluating actions or policies
S-35 exploring implications and consequences
S-17 questioning deeply: raising and pursuing root or significant questions
S-27 comparing and contrasting ideals with actual practice
S-19 generating or assessing solutions
Remodelled Lesson Plan S-15

Identify the basic meaning of ‘capital.’ When discussing what, how, and for whom goods and services should be provided, ask, “What goods and/or services do you personally produce? Would you prefer to go on errands on foot, on bicycle, or in a car? Which is most time efficient? Which is most efficient in saving capital resources? Which is most important to you — saving energy, gas, time, or money? Is it important to you to have freedom to choose to drive, walk, or ride your bike? Would you rather someone else decide that for you? If you work 8 hours do you receive more pay from your employer than one the same age who works two hours? Should you? Why? Should your grandparent receive the same pay for 8 hours of work as you do for 8 hours of work? In the past, when you have had the choice of how to spend money, how have you used it? Do you spend it wisely? Why or why not? S-20 What does it mean to spend your money wisely? Unwisely? Given the principle of supply and demand, what are the consequences for the economy of spending money unwisely?” S-35

Explore the resources that we have to produce the goods and services that our country needs. Ask, “What resources other than money do you have? If you have been allowed to choose how to spend your time, have you often wasted it? Do you still want the freedom to decide how to spend your money, time, energy even though you sometimes waste it? Why? If you over-spend your money, your time, and your energy, how do you get more? What resources does our country have? What other resources must we have to use natural resources? If we are given the freedom to produce goods and services, will we over-spend or waste our resources? Is freedom worth it?” S-17

When role playing leader/worker of the economic system, ask, “Who is important in this system? Why? Should they receive in proportion to what they put in? Why? How can we decide which people put more in to it? Why? What jobs or professions, do you think, get more money than they deserve? Why? Less than they deserve? How could this be changed?” S-27

Students can redesign and discuss their present systems. Ask, “How do we evaluate this system? What is our checklist? Do we need to redesign our system? How would you implement those changes? Are your changes in everyone’s best interest? Who might object? Why? How would you respond?” S-19

The teacher should emphasize that an economic system is only as good as those who are implementing it. The system depends on our usage of resources.
The Energy Crisis

by Susan Dembitz, Miranda, CA

Objectives of the remodelled plan
The students will:
• practice dialogical thinking while examining opposing viewpoints regarding energy
• examine the assumptions of opposing positions on energy and the environment
• make inferences about what current policy should address
• assess evidence for positions taken in the energy versus environment dispute
• practice dialectical thinking and listening critically by evaluating the views
• make interdisciplinary connections between economic, political, and ethical problems

Standard Approach

The text provides a good summary introduction to the events and issues of the energy crisis. The paragraph on page 692 explains that Nixon's support for Israel during the Yom Kippur War led to the gasoline shortage of 1973-74. On page 723 the text briefly outlines the history of oil pricing up to 1973, describes OPEC, and outlines Nixon's energy proposals. On pages 728-30 is a summary of the energy problem, the EPA, problems with coal and the nuclear industry, and the conflict between energy needs and environmental concerns. In the Section Review, students are asked to 1) identify or explain EPA, acid rain, strip-mining, Three Mile Island, Shah Mohammad Reza Palevi and 2) show how environmental and energy concerns collided.

Critique

The Energy Crisis will be more comprehensible to students when it is taught as a unit. In this text, the students need to consult three different sections to do this. Carter's political problems need to be treated separately. The energy material provides an ideal springboard for students to test their intuitive grasp of economics and its interrelation with politics in dealing with a group of topics which are still very much at issue now. It also provides an avenue for discussing important moral and ethical issues which the text begins to address.

Strategies used to remodel
S-25 reasoning dialogically: comparing perspectives, interpretations, or theories
S-11 comparing analogous situations: transferring insights to new contexts
S-32 making plausible inferences, predictions, or interpretations
S-35 exploring implications and consequences
S-23 making interdisciplinary connections
S-30 examining or evaluating assumptions
S-33 evaluating evidence and alleged facts

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Remodelled Lesson Plan S-25

Understand Economics

Use a series of questions to draw out students' understanding of basic laws of supply and demand, and the extension of this to the energy crisis. S-11 Help them see the connection between shortages and price hikes, and how the price of energy is a component of all other prices. S-32 Indicate how rising prices promotes conservation. S-35

Discuss Energy S-23

Divide the class into groups to collect information and prepare arguments about the various forms of energy used and researched, and economic, environmental, and political problems. Students should be preparing to discuss the trade-offs between producing energy economically and protecting the environment. Students should be alerted to examine the assumptions of the opposing viewpoints and the evidence, and then to examine current policy recommendations and explore the implications of policies. Students could consider questions like the following:


Then each team can prepare a panel discussion to present to the rest of the class. Students not discussing can evaluate the arguments. "Why did this person take that position? What evidence was used to support it? Where did this information come from? Which of these contradictory sources should we believe? Who is in a better position to know? Who might lie? Who should we accept? Why? S-16 What did this position leave out?" S-22

editor's note: Have students begin this unit by using the table of contents and index in their texts to find all references to energy. Students can read those references, share them with each other, and synthesize the points made throughout the text. Students can then brainstorm questions to guide their research. At the end of the unit, students could critique or rewrite relevant sections of their text.
Oil

Objectives of the remodelled plan
The students will:
- explore the significance of oil in various respects, discovering interdisciplinary connections
- consider the implications and consequences of oil possession and use on different countries and from a variety of perspectives

Standard Approach

Texts generally state that petroleum oil is the most important mineral deposit of our century, that we can find where the largest deposits of oil are located, or what percentage of the world's energy supply is derived from oil at any point in history. One text considers the effect of oil on Saudi Arabians: a farmer may now be in the oil business, a poor family may now be rich, and this family's son may now be able to go to college. Some texts mention OPEC and the energy crisis of the 1970's.

Critique

Oil makes a good topic, due to its economic, political, and environmental significance. Students should explore the implications and effects of widespread use of oil. Study of oil provides background information crucial for understanding domestic politics, international relations, economics, and environmental concerns, and is a good example of the overlap of these areas.

Students are told that oil is an important mineral, rather than being allowed to come to that conclusion on their own by exploring its significance. There is no discussion of perspective; students do not sort out different attitudes on oil use and how to meet energy needs.

Strategies used to remodel
S-23 making interdisciplinary connections
S-1 thinking independently
S-13 clarifying issues, conclusions, or beliefs
S-35 exploring implications and consequences
S-17 questioning deeply: raising and pursuing root or significant questions
S-25 reasoning dialogically: comparing perspectives, interpretations, or theories
S-5 developing intellectual humility and suspending judgment
Remodelled Lesson Plan

This topic provides an opportunity for students to research various aspects — oil location and available amounts, the effect of oil on oil-rich developing countries, oil as an international point of contention, environmental concerns. **S-23** Students can share their findings when relevant in the discussion. Ask them what fields of study they have to pursue to learn about oil and its effects on people. **S-1**

Why is oil important to people? Would everyone agree? Who might not? Would people have agreed with you in 1800? 1600? BC? 1900? Find times in history where the importance of oil changed. Why did it change? **S-13**

To explore the significance of owning oil, have the students consider Saudi Arabia. Would all Saudis agree about the importance of oil? How about the newly rich? The old rich? The poor? The rulers? The religious leaders? Why is oil so important to Saudi Arabia? How has it affected their culture? Find other countries which have been affected by oil to that extent. Look at countries with a great deal of oil as well as those with very little oil. **S-17**

Have students discuss differences in oil use among several countries and discuss the causes for and implications of these differences. Why does this country use so much (so little) oil? And why is that? How does that affect that country? Its citizens? Its relationships to other countries? **S-35**

What reasons are there to lessen or end our dependence on oil? What reasons are there against doing so? What problems does use of oil cause? Who is affected? How? Who is helped? Harmed? Who would be hurt if we changed to using other kinds of energy? How could everyone’s needs be met? How would you solve the problems caused by extensive use of oil? **S-25**

How has oil affected our foreign policy? Which oil rich countries are our friends? Enemies? Neither? Why? How should we treat countries that supply us with oil? What if they want to cut us off? **S-35**

Why did I focus on oil in this lesson? What do you think my purpose was? Why do you think so? What are some significant questions surrounding oil? How could we research them? **S-5**

*There is no one ‘right’ remodel. Many different improvements are possible.*
Maps

Objectives of the remodelled plan
The students will:
- analyze the concept of a map
- discuss the purposes for maps
- explain why symbols are used on maps, and why particular symbols may have been chosen
- think independently in order to make maps
- practice independent thought by using maps to understand the countries they study

Standard Approach
The following skills are generally covered in materials regarding maps: latitude/longitude calculations, identification of different kinds of maps, and calculations of scale and elevation. The other main topic covered is the problem of making a flat map to represent a globe; several different world map projections and their limitations are explained.

Critique
Texts provide little on the concept of maps and map theory. There is no adequate development of the concepts ‘map’ or ‘model.’ Students are told about a map’s legend, and the symbols locating specifics on the map, but are not asked to consider why symbols need to be used, or why the particular symbols were chosen. They do not evaluate choice of symbols. Map projections are presented without any opportunity for independent thinking; they are just listed with their good and bad qualities.

There is no discussion as to how to choose maps for particular purposes, nor are students offered any atlas skills. It is more important for students to be able to find and use the kinds of maps they need for particular purposes, and to be able to read new kinds of maps, than to or simply locate listed places on a given map.

Strategies used to remodel
S-9 developing confidence in reason
S-14 clarifying and analyzing the meanings of words or phrases
S-1 thinking independently
S-19 generating or assessing solutions
S-15 developing criteria for evaluation: clarifying values and standards
Remodelled Lesson Plan s-9

You might begin by first asking students what a model is. Ask them to make a list of all the different kinds of models they can think of. "What do these models have in common?" The students might say they represent something, they have to be a certain size, they look like something else, etc. Ask students what a model of the Earth is called. They may say map or globe. Look at a variety of maps with the class. (Street map, map for tourists, celestial map, floor plan.) Ask them what they notice. "What does each represent? What is each used for? What do the maps have in common? Why? How does this particular difference serve the function of the map, or arise from the nature of the place and from features it represents? Compare maps to verbal descriptions. Why do you think we use symbols on maps? Why has someone chosen these particular symbols?" S-14

Ask students how they would go about making a map of the world. "What are some of the problems we might run into? What would you want to consider when making a flat representation of a sphere? Look at different kinds of maps of Earth. Are they all the same? How are they different? Make your own map of the Earth. Compare it with those of other students. What can you learn from looking at all of the maps?" S-1

You may want to have students use art time to make maps of countries, states, towns, their school, their bedrooms. "Which maps will have which features? Why? How do you decide? Where should you put each feature? How far away from other features? How can you make clear what each represents? What do you want your map to show? What purposes could it serve?" S-19

Make a personal atlas yourself, and a classroom atlas as a group. Which maps belong in which atlas? How did you decide? What were you assuming that led you to make that decision? S-15

Have students write test questions and answer keys (on copies of various kinds of maps) and select some for a map-use test. S-1

Fostering independent thought throughout the year S-1

When discussing specific countries and periods of history, have students read and discuss population distribution, physical, political, linguistic, and land use maps before reading their texts. They could also discuss such things as trade routes and difficulty or ease of travel, noting what other groups are nearby, etc.

Whenever they are about to use a map to pursue a question or problem, first ask them what kind of map they need, and how and where to find it.
Natural Resources

Objectives of the remodelled plan
The students will:
- clarify the concept of natural resource and the values underlying the concept
- explore the implications and consequences of having natural resources, including using, misusing, and not using them
- consider what it means to be successful as a country

Standard Approach

Most of the information is presented in map form, with the main emphasis on the location of various resources.

One text offered a short discussion on conservation, and several offered alternative forms of energy and the concept of energy itself as a natural resource.

One text was interested in the role natural resources play in the formation of a world leader, emphasizing that, although nature gave us rich natural resources, we had to use them well to become productive and powerful.

Critique

It is less important for students to know who has what than it is for them to learn how to find such information when they need it, and to understand the implications of having and not having or using and not using various natural resources. Additionally, examples covered in the book should be used as opportunities for discussion of deeper issues, especially as they relate to ecology, geology, economics, politics, anthropology, technology, and history.

The implications of various mineral deposits and other natural resources on history and culture are inadequately drawn out. There is far too much emphasis on who has what, and too little on how and why people use their resources, and on the long term effects. Few implications are brought out concerning modern forms of energy. Using resources is assumed to be what all intelligent nations do to get ahead, and no other view is examined or evaluated.

Claims that “Nature gave us bountiful resources” could be explored and compared to another point of view — that nature didn’t give them to us. They were here, and we got them because we came here and took them.

Strategies used to remodel
S-14 clarifying and analyzing the meanings of words or phrases
S-15 developing criteria for evaluation: clarifying values and standards
S-1 thinking independently
S-21 reading critically: clarifying or critiquing texts
S-9 developing confidence in reason
Remodelled Lesson Plan

Students could begin by analyzing the key concept. “What kinds of things are called natural resources? What aren't? Why? What qualifies something as a natural resource? S-15 What are natural resources used for? Why is this important to know about? S-14

How could we find out who has what resources? What role have natural resources played in history? How could we find out? S-1

“What effects does our use of natural resources have? How can we find out? What does 'use wisely' mean? As opposed to what? How can use of resources be evaluated?” For each example, ask, “Why would this be called wise? Unwise? Why was this done? Not done? In what ways do we 'use them wisely'? How do we not? How has our use of resources hurt us? Why have we done this? Why does (name a country) export rather than use (name a resource)?” (Discuss at length.) S-15

“Why have we made more use of natural resources than developing countries have or did? Who should control how natural resources will be used? Why? Who does now?”

Ask, “What is progress? What issues involve this concept?” If the text uses the concept ‘success,’ students could develop a concept of success as it applies to a country and a means of evaluation. Then they can discuss what fits this ideal. “How did the book attribute success? Why? Do those things go with success?” S-14

Continue probing into the assumptions of the text. “What does it mean to say that ‘Nature gave us these resources?’ What does it assume? Imply? How else could we describe why we have the resources we do? What does that assume? Imply? Why did the text choose that way of speaking?” S-21

To develop students' confidence in their ability to think independently, the teacher could have them study resource maps and predict areas of conflict, whenever they are about to study an area or country S-9

It is better to use one clearly understood strategy than to attempt to use more than you clearly understand.
War

Objectives of the remodelled plan
The students will:
• discuss the consequences of technology on war
• discuss the moral implications of war, evaluating actions and policies

Standard Approach
When covering wars, texts often mention the technology available or which developed during each war. Texts provide explanations of the causes and results of wars covered.

Critique
Connections are rarely made between the technology of war and the outcomes. There are few discussions of war strategies, or the social changes that occur after them. Some texts point out that technology changes war. One does not get the sense from most texts that people are involved in war, and that war affects people. The students are not given any indication of what war is like for any of the parties. Students don’t discuss the moral implications of certain kinds of weapon technology, like nerve gas, germ warfare, nuclear missiles, and napalm. Students miss the opportunity to think independently about how to avoid World War III. They do not consider the ways in which we wage war and how that has changed over time, partly as a result of technology. Students do not consider the significant question of ethics of war or causes of war.

Strategies used to remodel
S-35 exploring implications and consequences
S-20 analyzing or evaluating actions or policies
S-10 refining generalizations and avoiding oversimplifications
S-17 questioning deeply: raising and pursuing root or significant questions

Remodelled Lesson Plan
Students could develop more insight into the effects of technology on war by discussions like the following: Consider a medieval war and discuss the technology that was available. How did the technology affect the way the war was fought and the effects it had? Now compare that with a 19th Century war. S-35

How do humans wage war? Why? What are some ways we could use technology to avoid war? Why do you think this would prevent war? How might technological advances cause war?
Is it morally acceptable to do whatever it takes to win a war? Why or why not? What weapons or techniques of war are unjustified? (Students could discuss biological warfare, defoliation, etc.) S-20 What might be some exceptions? Why are they exceptions? S-10 Write a code of honor for yourself that includes wartime behavior toward the enemy. Think about this in terms of types of weapons, targets, when to wage war, who to protect, etc.

Other discussion on war include pursuing questions like the following: Why are there wars? Is there one sort of cause, or many kinds of causes of wars? (Have students consider specific examples and possible counter-examples.) Does anyone think war is good? Why do many people believe war is necessary? What would people have to do to stop war? What kinds of effects do wars have on the people involved in them? S-17

What kinds of wars are there? What are the differences between fighting wars in your own country and fighting wars elsewhere?

When, if ever, is going to war justified? Are all parties responsible for being in a war? Can you think of a war that was clearly only one side’s fault? When, if ever, is violence justified? S-20

Teachers who don’t learn how to use basic critical thinking principles to critique and remodel their own lesson plans probably won’t be able to implement someone else’s effectively. Providing teachers with the scaffolding for carrying out the process for themselves, and examples of its application, opens the door for continuing development of critical thinking skills and insights.
Surveys

by Laura K, Racine Gifted Education
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Objectives of the remodelled plan
The students will:
- formulate and clarify the specific questions about which they want information
- analyze their word choices through dialectical reasoning and critical listening
- write clear answer choices to the survey questions
- specify clearly the significance of each answer choice
- format the survey coherently and efficiently
- develop greater precision of thought and expression

Standard Approach——
Gifted learners often question statistical results of polls and surveys, discounting or embracing results as they line up with their own particular positions. In order to gain some insight into the process of collecting data which will yield statistical results we might design a survey from start to statistical end. The students’ designs would include a question, a series of possible choices to answer the questions, a defined target population, a plan for recording results, a method and means of satisfactorily interpreting the results of the survey statistically.

Critique
Survey writing is highly specific and detailed work, dependent upon clarity of purpose and expression. Survey questions provide fertile ground for imprecise and biased language. Gifted adolescents who typically approach planning globally rather than with a step-wise system tend to be rather poor authors of sound surveys.

Analysis of the semantics, syntax, and connotative correlations of language which can yield insightful results are just that —“inciteful” — to the students. They detest being deterred from their purpose for petty analysis chores. The frustration level soars when they are prevented from asking their confusing and inadequate questions in an unsystematic way. The lesson design is not specific to the task of survey writing nor statistical analysis, nor its interpretation. It is perhaps too large a chunk even for gifted learners, however driving the urge to know the bubble-gum preference of their pals.

Focussing primarily on selecting the question which will most accurately elicit the desired data as content for this lesson may minimize the incidence of the survey results being affected by misunderstood meaning of terms and different frames of reference.
The guidelines of the original lesson are not specific to the type of learning that the students desire. The experience would not have been either appropriate or useful to learners. The lesson has little affect on the learners' experiential interchange with the data they wish to obtain.

**Strategies used to remodel**

S-13 clarifying issues, conclusions, or beliefs
S-14 clarifying and analyzing the meanings of words or phrases
S-12 developing one's perspective: creating or exploring beliefs, arguments, or theories
S-30 examining or evaluating assumptions
S-32 making plausible inferences, predictions, or interpretations
S-22 listening critically: the art of silent dialogue
S-28 thinking precisely about thinking: using critical vocabulary
S-18 analyzing or evaluating arguments, interpretations, beliefs, or theories
S-10 refining generalizations and avoiding oversimplifications
S-26 reasoning dialectically: evaluating perspectives, interpretations, or theories
S-8 developing intellectual perseverance

**Remodelled Lesson Plan S-13**

The focus of this lesson is to enable learners to discover the root question about which they want information. The facilitator could suggest that the students “play with” the issues and ideas of their subjects. Students can order components of their topics, evaluating their relevance to their interests and purposes. Becoming acquainted with the root question should enable the learners to order and specify the issues germane to formulating their formal questions. The learners can discuss their interests with the facilitator, “What data do you wish to obtain? From whom do you want this information? How else could you phrase the question? Which most precisely specifies what you mean? Why do you want to know this? What will it tell you?”

Clarifying their intent to classmates in discussion will cause them to clarify terms and to generate examples in order to answer the questions for clarification that will arise. The learners would be encouraged to manipulate words in order to gauge the appropriate language to form their questions. S-14 In the process of trying out ideas in give and take questioning of their peers, they would explore implications and consequences of their choices. The results of the practice time could move the learners to new questions in which they had a higher level of interest. S-12

In the practice sessions, the students share the ideas through questions and reply. Oversimplified answers would require clarification and more profound response. Assumptions would be exposed and examined as students discover them in each other's work. S-30

Discussion of the inferences that could be drawn from answer choices would be important as rough drafts are shared. S-32 “Does this mean that if ..., then? Could that lead to the assumption that ...? Are you meaning to infer ...?
John, please tell Jim how you perceive this question. Jane, how accurate is John? What can you change or rearrange with the language of your question, Jane, so that John catches your meaning more precisely? What does this answer imply? Is that what you want to imply? S-28

Because the students’ topics have some significance for them, there may be some personal attachment to their verbiage. When disagreements over meaning arise, they will have to evaluate the arguments presented against them. Other class members can also evaluate the quality of arguments based on their perspectives. S-18

The teacher’s goal is for the students to catch one another’s simplification errors, and for one learner to help another clarify ideas. “Could that term be interpreted in another way? Doesn’t that imply ...? What is the cause and effect relationship as you interpret it?” S-28

As students question each other, changing positions, they will experience the fallacies, assumptions, lack of clarity, incompleteness and bias in the writing of others, elucidating some of their own frailties.

The dialectical thinking that ensues may encourage questions like: Is this what you really intend to ask? Do you need question three? Does it add data that is relevant to your question? What does choice C on question 4 contribute to the information you want to obtain? S-26

Students ultimately must assume the responsible role of author, evaluating arguments, making decisions, and committing their ideas to paper.

The focus upon manipulating statistics in the original lesson caused the students to be frustrated. They did not have the skills with which to formulate an adequate survey question. Therefore, the goal of statistical analysis was never attained. To solve this problem, the survey lesson will succumb to a bit of megalomania and graduate to the status of survey unit, billed accordingly in the syllabus, to build to a full survey experience. Building the unit in this molecular style should provide more experiential opportunities, the goal is to ultimately bring the learners to a better understanding of themselves. S-8

editor’s note: To prepare for the unit, students could collect and analyze opinion poll questions from newspapers.

One does not learn about critical thinking by memorizing a definition or set of distinctions.
The Cold War

Objectives of the remodelled plan

The students will:
- practice intellectual courage by considering the Cold War from multiple perspectives
- develop intellectual good faith by applying the same standards to the U.S. and U.S.S.R.
- raise and clarify questions regarding particular Cold War incidents

Standard Approach

Texts trace the rise of hostilities between our government and that of the Soviet Union. They generally mention Soviet expansion in Europe, the Berlin Wall, the Cuban Missile Crisis, The Warsaw Pact and NATO, Soviet support of revolutionaries throughout the world, and U.S. aid to non-communist countries.

The U.S.S.R. forces countries to become communist and puts communist leaders in power, while the U.S. fights to keep countries from becoming communist by supplying food, money, and help to fight communism. Since the communists use poverty to incite communist revolutions, the U.S. gives assistance to improve those conditions and thus strengthen the country against communism.

Critique

Predictably, treatment of the Cold War is generally biased. In each case covered, they want to oppress, we want to free; they take over or interfere with, we offer aid and assistance; their friends are dictatorships and tyrannies, ours are democracies. Students are given little or no idea of how other perspectives conceptualize the Cold War or the superpowers. Students should come to understand how others see us and the world, and come to their own conclusions on specific events. Every country's foreign policy can stand some improvement. Ours is no exception.

This entire remodel helps students develop intellectual courage and integrity.

Strategies used to remodel

S-6 developing intellectual courage
S-7 developing intellectual good faith or integrity
S-21 critical reading: clarifying or critiquing text
S-25 reasoning dialogically: comparing perspectives, interpretations, or theories
S-13 clarifying issues, conclusions, or beliefs
S-12 developing one's perspective: creating or exploring beliefs, arguments, or theories
S-20 evaluating actions or policies
S-11 comparing analogous situations: transferring insights to new contexts
S-26 reasoning dialectically: evaluating perspectives, interpretations, or theories
Remodelled Lesson Plan

Ask students to read whatever their text has on the subject of the Cold War. Have them clarify and critique their texts with questions like the following: 
“What does the text say about the Cold War? Whose fault is it? What assumptions are made in the text? As this text is written, is there a clear ‘good guy’ and a clear ‘bad guy?’ From what perspective is this text written? How can you tell? What is the point of view presented in the text? What must the authors believe to present this point of view? What else might a person think? How could the text be written to reflect another point of view? How would a text written from a Soviet perspective present similar material? What would such a perspective assume? S-25 What other points of view are possible?” Students could pick two paragraphs to rewrite from another point of view. S-21

Ask, “How does the U.S. government distinguish countries — what categories are used? Why? What categories does the U.S.S.R. use? Why? How are the U.S. and the U.S.S.R. different in their foreign policies? What do U.S. and U.S.S.R. foreign policies and perspectives have in common? How should foreign policy be evaluated? Do countries have the right to involve themselves in how other countries are run? Why or why not? If they do, when? In what ways?” S-20

Have students (or groups of students) focus on one incident or conflict at a time, list the parties involved, and discuss each. “What happened? What reasons were given? How could we figure out if those were the real reasons? What should have been done?” The class could compare two or more similar incidents and responses to them. S-29 Students should be encouraged to apply the same standards to each country. (“Do any differences between these two situations warrant different evaluations of these actions?”) S-7

Have students raise questions the text doesn’t answer. Ask questions to help the students to refine their questions: “Why do you raise that question? Why does that seem significant to you? What would this answer imply? How could this question be settled? What points of view need to be considered?” S-13

Students could locate Vietnam and Afghanistan on maps and compare the two wars. S-29 Students could interview adults regarding their views about the war in Vietnam. Students could begin with such questions as, “What did you think of the war then? Why? What did you think of those who disagreed with you? Have your views changed? Why?” Have them probe the interviewees’ responses. Students could then discuss the views they collected. S-25

Students could also research news accounts of the war and anti-war protest. What, if anything, was settled? What issues remain?

Organize a conference on whether we should increase aggressions in Vietnam (1968) or pull out (or something else altogether). Each student can take a particular perspective from which to argue. Have the student conduct a similar meeting about a current issue. S-11

Have groups of three students take turns arguing from three different perspectives in a dialectical discussion regarding a dispute between the U.S. and the U.S.S.R. mentioned in the text. They could trade positions and thus argue each side. Have the students evaluate the arguments they have generated. S-26
China

Objectives of the remodeled plan
The students will:
- evaluate evidence for the approximate age of a culture
- recognize ethnocentrism in others, in themselves, and in the text
- transfer insight into aspects of Chinese history to analogous situations
- analyze the teachings of Confucius and Lao-Tzu

Standard Approach

China is described as the oldest culture, with a civilization reaching back for at least 3,500 years. China is described as an ethnocentric society, basically due to its isolation throughout history. Some texts mentioned the various dynasties, sometimes briefly discussing one or two. One text focused on Shih Huang Ti, an early ruler. China of the Chou dynasty is compared to ancient Egypt. The climates and populations of China and the United States are compared. Recent Chinese history is mentioned: the Opium War with Great Britain, the revolt of the Emperor’s army in 1911 and the underlying causes, the conflict between Chiang Kai-Shek of the Nationalist Party and Mao Tse-tung of the Communist party, including Japan’s invasion of China and Mao’s system of social control in which community is more important than the family. Most texts mention the Wall and its purpose.

Nearly every text includes a section on Confucius. Some texts also mention Lao-tzu (the founder of Taoism) and contrast his views with those of Confucius.

Suggested activities include: fact recall (reading a timeline of the dynasties), defining vocabulary words, and map reading (listing bordering countries and areas of high population density).

Critique

Study of ancient China provides an example of an old and powerful culture very different from ours. It is also a case of an area that mainly had only one big power, unlike much of Mediterranean history. Furthermore, since China was strong, understanding its influence on East Asia is necessary to understanding East Asia. But the main value of study of any country and time is to develop students’ ability to think historically and anthropologically and to begin to have them consider whatever basic historical forces, events, and aspects of culture are mentioned in their texts.

Texts generally emphasize details. Chapters are largely filled with fact after fact, with little or no analysis. Analyses that are given are generally too brief and often too superficial to mean
much to students. For example, they may explain the break in economic linkage between China and Russia in one sentence, giving as the reason the Soviets' sudden departure from China.

Often, end-of-chapter questions demand little more than simple recall. "What are China's natural barriers? What is loess? How is it formed?" Timelines and map activities merely require students to read them. Students do not discuss the implications of what they see. Often, questions imply the desired answer such as in the following example: "Do we even try to cultivate slopes as the Chinese do? Why or why not?"

One text dealt effectively with the Mongol invasion, giving a detailed and reasonable explanation, but ended the section with the implication that it was insignificant that the Mongols had invaded and were ruling China, since they had acquired many Chinese customs. Students could compare this case with invasion by those of alien culture and/or discuss whether it made a difference, and of what sort.

By emphasizing Chinese ethnocentrism, and ignoring American ethnocentrism, many texts inadvertently support student ethnocentrism. One activity had students reflect on ways in which our pro-American bias shows in the media. Another asked students to look at a China-centered map and a U.S.-centered map, and infer attitudes from these. Such activities can be extended with in-depth discussion of why people have these attitudes and various ways ethnocentrism is manifested.

Brief study of the philosophers can provide insight into the culture, as well as opportunity for dialectical thought. Such discussion requires going beyond paraphrase, and into discussion of the ideas: whether compatible with each other, evaluating them, or probing contradictions between or among others.

Strategies used to remodel
S-9 developing confidence in reason
S-33 evaluating evidence and alleged facts
S-13 clarifying issues, conclusions, or beliefs
S-11 comparing analogous situations: transferring insights to new contexts
S-20 analyzing or evaluating actions or policies
S-2 developing insight into egocentricity or sociocentricity
S-18 analyzing or evaluating arguments, interpretations, beliefs, or theories
S-26 reasoning dialectically: evaluating perspectives, interpretations, or theories

Remodelled Lesson Plan

You could begin by asking students (or having them write as a homework assignment) what they know about China. Throughout the lesson, students could make a timeline, with periods and events in China above, the mid-east and Europe below. Students can look at various kinds of maps, list their observations, and make inferences regarding the significance of what they find. S-9

Then have them read their texts, and ask for the main points covered. "What does the text say? Why did it mention these points? What is the most important thing to learn from this chapter? Is there anything you want to know about? How could you find out?"
To develop students' insight into anthropological reasoning and clarify the claims regarding China's age, you could ask, "How do we know how old a culture is? What kinds of things would we find in China to illustrate that China has the oldest culture? Why would these show us how old China is? How would they show us how old Chinese culture is compared to other cultures? S-33 Is it significant that Chinese culture is so old? Why? Would it be more significant to the Chinese or to us? Why do you think so?" S-13

What would you need to do in order to understand Chinese history and culture? Compare Chinese history, culture and ideas with other countries In what ways was China ahead of Europe? Behind?

Students can compare any wars mentioned in their texts to other wars they have discussed. "Who started this war? What motivated them? What would you say caused this war? Why did that occur? What wars that you know about are like this one? In what ways? In what ways are they different? Is there anything you know about that other war that you can apply to understanding this war? What? What does that tell you about this war? What that you know about this war can you apply to better understand other wars you know something about?" S-11

- What was it like to live near the place the Wall is, before the Wall was built? What motivated the building of the Wall? What effects did the Wall have on the society? What was it like to build it? S-20
- Why does this text discuss China's ethnocentrism? What evidence do they have of it? What explanation do they give? What reasons have they for feeling superior? How do you think the Chinese thought of other people? How do you think they thought of themselves? S-2

- What have we learned about Asia? How could we characterize China's relationship to the rest of Asia?

If the text mentions Confucius and Lao-tzu, students could analyze their ideas with questions like the following: What did each say? What do you think they meant? Have you thought or heard similar ideas? What would they agree about? Disagree about? If you lived your life according to Confucius, how would you live? How would your study of Confucius affect how you live your life? Lao-tzu? What is Confucius' basic idea? Lao-tzu's? What specific differences are there between these two thinkers? Can their insights be reconciled? Why are they important? S-18 Students could write a dialectical discussion between followers of Confucius and Lao-tzu, and evaluate it. S-26

*Every trivial lesson you abandon leaves more time to stimulate critical thinking.*

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The Railroad Business

by Susan Dembitz, Miranda, Ca

Objectives of the remodelled plan
The students will:
- exercise fairmindedness when discussing 19th Century viewpoints of fear of standard time
- practice critical reading while evaluating the arguments presented in an interview with Vanderbilt
- practice dialogical thinking by conducting their own interviews
- explore the implications and consequences of new forms of business organization

Standard Approach
This topic is discussed in parts of two separate chapters. In the first, the text explains the need for improved transportation, the enormous expansion of track mileage, the reasons for and process of adopting standard time and standard gauge, and the development of trusts as a way to limit competition. There are also brief vignettes of John D. Rockefeller, J. Pierpont Morgan, and Andrew Carnegie. In the second chapter, the Interstate Commerce act of 1887 and the Sherman Antitrust Act are each given half a page.

Critique
In the Section Review, students are asked to:

1) identify or explain certain people and concepts (which they need only look up in the text).

2) find out how the railroads and the public benefitted from land grants, standard time, and standard gauge. (This is good, because it introduces the concept of differing viewpoints, but doesn’t go far enough.)

3) explain how a dozen big sugar companies might have formed a trust and why. (This is good critical thinking because it asks students to transfer an idea to a new context, to develop insight, and to exercise fairmindedness by putting themselves in the place of sugar company executives and understanding their motives.)

4) describe how companies had become more impersonal and inhuman. (This question could lead to a good discussion of feelings and differences between life in the 19th Century and now, but needs more development.)
5) explain how wealth accumulated by Morgan and Carnegie benefited the public. (This question sidesteps the whole issue of the ethics of trusts. This area is dealt with very superficially in the succeeding chapter.)

The text calls the great 19th Century entrepreneurs the "Go-Getters," and characterizes them flatteringly: J. P. Morgan is a "man of culture," and "an amazing organizer." Andrew Carnegie is "intelligent" and "responsible for the spread of the free public library." The political and social effects of their actions on the working class and on the rest of American society is barely touched on. Vanderbilt and his famous "Public be damned" remark is not mentioned at all.

In the later chapter on politics, the ICC Act is summarized as the first attempt by Congress to regulate big business. In the description of the Sherman Antitrust Act mentions how big companies and monopolies affected small businesses and farmers, and of how ineffective the Act was until Teddy Roosevelt become president. These laws could be used as spring boards to discuss social problems caused by the "Go-Getters."

**Strategies used to remodel**

- S-24 practicing Socratic discussion: clarifying and questioning beliefs, theories, or perspectives
- S-3 exercising fairmindedness
- S-21 reading critically: clarifying or critiquing texts
- S-18 analyzing or evaluating arguments, interpretations, beliefs, or theories
- S-25 reasoning dialogically: comparing perspectives, interpretations, or theories
- S-35 exploring implications and consequences
- S-19 generating or assessing solutions

**Remodelled Lesson Plan S-24**

Use Socratic questioning to compare the 19th Century viewpoint (perhaps some students will agree with it!) to the modern one on time zones. Use the sentence from the text, "This was a sensible plan, but it took a long time to convince everybody that they ought to tamper with God's time." Relate this to differing contemporary effects of religion on society. Get students to put themselves in the place of rural Americans afraid to change "God's time." S-3

Give students Vanderbilt’s interview and read it aloud, explaining any difficult language.

"The Public Be --!"

**AN OPINION BY THE RAILROAD CRÉSUS ON MATTERS THAT GREATLY INTEREST THE PUBLIC.**

Mr. Vanderbilt, in an interview with a Chicago reporter yesterday, expressed himself with unusual freedom, and made some statements that will naturally be read with interest. He said:

The roads are not run for the benefit of the "dear public." That cry is all nonsense. They are built by men who invest their money and expect to get a fair percentage on the same. Freight rates have been altogether too low and the roads have seen that it was the best policy to get together, arrive at an amicable understanding and transact their business on business principles; that is, they will not do business for nothing. I
consider that it is an excellent thing to have the rates controlled by the Commissioners who are selected by the roads, but I don’t believe in those State Railroad Commissioners. They are usually ignorant persons who have to be bought up by the railroads if any legislation favorable to the road is desired. The idea of having the roads under the control of any set or sets of State Commissioners is nonsense. No cast iron rules which any State may adopt will do for all roads which run through it. The Government should appoint a National Board of Railroad Commissioners, men capable to fill the office, who understand the business, and who will adopt rules of a flexible nature, and who will do all that is possible to encourage the building of roads and not repress it.

In reply to the question as to whether the “limited express” was run to accommodate the public he said:

“The public be --. What does the public care for the railroads except to get as much out of them for as small a consideration as possible? I don’t take any stock in this silly nonsense about working for anybody’s good but our own, because we are not. When we make a move we do it because it is our interest to do so, not because we expect to do somebody else some good. Of course, we like to do everything possible for the benefit of humanity in general, but when we do we first see that we are benefitting ourselves. Railroads are not run on sentiment, but on business principles and to pay, and I don’t mean to be egotistical when I say that the roads which I have had anything to do with have generally paid pretty well.”

“What do you think of this anti-monopoly movement?”

“It is a movement inspired by a set of fools and blackmailers. To be sure, there are some men interested in it whose motives are good, if their sense is not. When I want to buy up any politician, I always find the anti-monopolists the most purchasable. They don’t come so high.”

Use this and the text to lead a Socratic discussion examining the assumptions of the “Go-Getters” in general and evaluating Vanderbilt’s arguments. During this discussion, encourage students to reread the interview, and have them quote it to back up their points. “Where does he say that? How do you interpret that statement?” **S-21**

“Explain Vanderbilt’s view. What conclusions did he come to? What reasons does he give for each? Are any words or phrases unclear? (What attitudes and behaviors would he accept as capable and flexible?) Evaluate his reasoning. (For each point, ask.) Should you doubt or accept this claim? Why? What would opponents say? Why? What do you think of the attitudes expressed? Why?” **S-18**

Then evaluate the actions and policies that resulted from railroad expansion. Divide students into pairs or small groups to practice dialogical thinking. In each group Mr. Vanderbilt (and his advisor) would face questioners or opponents. **S-25**

Finally, the teacher could lead the class as a whole in a discussion of the consequences of rapid business expansion in the late 19th Century. “What were the results of this? And what did that lead to? Why? How did these people respond? Those? Why? What positive and negative affects did this have on our
world today? **S-35** What should have been done differently? Why? What should we do now? Why?” **S-19**

**editor’s note:** Have students compare the image of Vanderbilt in their text with that which they get from reading the interview. **S-21**

What rights and responsibilities do big business owners have? Why? **S-24**

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**To think critically about issues we must be able to consider the strengths and weaknesses of opposing points of view. Since critical thinkers value fairmindedness, they feel that it is especially important that they entertain positions with which they disagree.**
Nigeria

Objectives of the remodelled plan
The students will:
- explore reasons for British colonization of Nigeria and evaluate it
- explore its consequences
- construct the perspectives of different people involved
- discuss causes for Nigeria’s present problems, thus practicing historical reasoning

Standard Approach

Some texts introduce the history of Nigeria tracing British colonialism. After the Boer wars, the British moved north into Central Africa, including Nigeria. After WWII, most of Africa was independent. Nigeria, in particular, gained its freedom in 1960, deciding to keep the name given them by the British. Along with other former British colonies, Nigeria joined the Commonwealth of Nations. When the British took over, Nigeria was a land of various different groups with quite different ways of life and languages. They were very hard to hold together in one nation. Their civil war between 1967 and 1970 brought the West and East together. Even today there are communication problems in Nigeria, due to their many languages and customs. In addition, the discovery of oil in Nigeria in 1958 brought changes such as big cities, traffic jams, clogged harbors, limited telephones and gas stations, and housing shortages. Nigeria’s problems are hard to solve.

Critique

Study of Nigeria can illustrate how understanding the history of a place is necessary to intelligently discussing its present problems. Here, the original cultures and groups and their differences, colonialism, developing countries and their relationships to developed countries are key elements.

Typically, texts stick to the bare facts, (though once able to feed itself, Nigeria must now import much of its food; Nigerians decided to keep the name ‘Nigeria;’ Nigeria had a civil war) with little or no explanation of reasons, causes, implications, or evaluations. Many of the details approach deeper issues, but they are not adequately explored or explained.

The concept of colonialism is seriously underdeveloped. The world views and attitudes that allowed and justified colonialism, the reasons underlying it, its effects on culture and development are ignored. Some texts do not really discuss colonization much at all, especially not the
opinions of the colonized, except to say that everyone would rather be free like we are. Students are not asked to consider why. Little attempt is made to understand the differences between the many points of view represented in this slice of history. For example, what of the British who were appalled at colonialism, or the tribes and individuals in Africa who welcomed British and western ways? One can't understand colonialism without understanding events and social structures in colonizing powers that supported it.

The fact is offered in one of the texts that Nigeria used to produce nearly all of its food, but now is forced to import much of it. Although the book acknowledges that this is a serious concern, it did not refer to any causes of this situation. The text did not draw out any of the implications if this trend continues, how to reverse this trend, or how it could have been avoided. The students are not invited to wonder how egocentrism, sociocentrism, or differing points of view and culture might have helped to cause this problem and interfere with its solution. Nor do students consider the ways other countries interfere with developing countries’ attempts to improve. Nigeria is treated in isolation from the rest of the world.

Texts generally confuse development and modernization with becoming like the U.S., thus failing to recognize the potential variety of forms of development and progress. Other countries must learn from us; we have little to learn from them.

Strategies used to remodel
S-32 making plausible inferences, predictions, or interpretations
S-1 thinking independently
S-35 exploring implications and consequences
S-12 developing one’s perspective: creating or exploring beliefs, arguments, or theories
S-15 developing criteria for evaluation: clarifying values and standards
S-20 analyzing or evaluating actions or policies
S-8 developing intellectual perseverance

Remodelled Lesson Plan

Students could begin by looking at physical, political, and linguistic maps of Africa and West Africa, describing observations, and making inferences. S-32
When students have read the material, they could do a timeline of events in Africa and Europe.

Interested students could research Nigeria, other colonies, and the colonizing countries, before this section is covered. They could report to the rest of the class during discussion. At the very least, English history of the time should be studied or reviewed, in order to provide background for understanding colonialism. “What do we know of England at the time? How powerful was England? Why? What does this tell us about why England had colonies? What did England get from its colonies? How did it treat its colonies? Why?” S-17

Students could compare West African cultures with Great Britain and other European countries.
Who drew Nigeria's boundaries? Would Africans have drawn the same boundaries? What have been long term effects of the way Europeans drew boundaries in West Africa?

How did the British characterize West Africans and colonization? What different kinds of English people were in Africa? Why? What kinds of relationships did they have with native Africans? What reasons did the British government give justifying colonization? How about the Nigerians? Why did the British colonize this area? What different groups might have had opinions on this subject in the U.K.? In Nigeria? Elsewhere? Did England have the right to rule? Should the English have done anything differently? S-20

Why did Nigeria gain independence? Compare this to other examples of colonies gaining independence.

What problems does Nigeria face? What are the causes? What features of Nigeria have most influenced its history? What historical facts influence Nigeria presently? Why is Nigeria not producing enough food? S-1 What has changed? Why? Should other people be worried about this problem? What will happen if this trend continues? How can this be avoided? What would you advise the Nigerians to do? What would happen then? S-35 Is this what you really want to happen? What would a solution require? With what kinds of knowledge are experts from here and Europe most needed? African experts most needed? Whose knowledge has been most relied on? What kinds of knowledge has been lost?

Why are some countries at a subsistence level? Why is farming poor, medical care scarce, health education poor, and income so low? Should a country want to change this? Why? Why might they? Why wouldn't they? Who might want things to change? Who might not? Does anyone benefit from this situation? What could keep a country from changing when they want to? What could make them change against their will?

Ask students to describe the standard of living in Nigeria. Is it the same for everybody? How many different kinds of living situations can you think of? What was life like before the British arrived, during the British rule, and in the independent Nigeria (at the beginning and now)? When was the quality of life best? In what ways? In what ways worse? For whom? Were other times better for other people? Who? Why do you think so? What are you assuming when you say that life is better? In what ways? In what ways worse? When is it better? When is it better for poor people? When is it better for rich people? Is this true everywhere, in any country, in any culture? S-12 Have students develop criteria for classifying living arrangements in terms of subsistence, developing economies, and industrial economies. S-15
What were the long-range affects of colonialism on Nigeria? Do you think colonialism was justified? What, if anything, should the British have done differently? **S-20** Discussion of colonialism could be extended by having students discuss whether any group of people has the right to rule over others. The issue can be raised, and students reminded of this chapter, whenever relevant during the course of the year. **S-17**

To more fully explore the idea of historical thinking with respect to Nigeria, the teacher could ask, "What perspectives would we need to study in order to develop a complete and fairminded view of Nigerian history? (Different Nigerian groups/cultures, pro- and anti-Western Nigerians, pro- and anti-colonial British.) How would one gain expertise on Nigeria? **S-8**

"Be aware of the hidden curriculum in all schools. If teachers ask only factual questions that test memory and recall, students assume that this is the most important aspect of learning. If principals spend more time focusing on administrative concerns, discipline, or standardized test scores, teachers also assume these aspects of school are the most important." Greensboro Handbook
Economic Systems

Objectives of the remodelled plan
The students will:
- compare and evaluate economic ideals and practices of the U.S. and U.S.S.R.
- examine assumptions underlying economic systems
- compare our attitudes about the U.S.S.R. with our attitudes about similar systems, systems like ours, and completely different systems

Standard Approach

The students are told that, although the U.S. and the U.S.S.R. have similarly good resources, their economies are quite different. The U.S. is characterized by individuals deciding how to spend their money, while in the U.S.S.R. the government decides or commands what shall be produced, and controls land, farms, factories, and industry. Prices in the U.S. are governed by supply and demand, while the Soviet government may set prices to discourage the purchase of certain items. The market economy shows producers that Americans want many consumer goods for their own use. In our free enterprise system, people choose jobs and careers, what to buy, sell, and produce, what to pay and charge. Businesses are run for profit. In the U.S.S.R. many of these decisions are made by the government, not by each individual.

One text offers a chart to show the number of hours a worker in the U.S. and the U.S.S.R. would have to work in order to earn enough to purchase various luxury items. Salaries in the U.S.S.R. are lower than those in the U.S., yet education and skills are rewarded with money, housing, good meats, and cosmetics. The U.S. government does play a role in the U.S. economy, but only to protect consumers and oversee trade with other countries. The government in the U.S. also functions as a buyer/consumer, as a market itself. If our government does anything more directive, it is usually because enough people request help. We take for granted a lifestyle that is only available to the rich in other countries.

Critique

Students studying lessons like this need to grasp how capitalism is supposed to work, the mechanics of it, the view of man and economics on which it is based, and how to evaluate departures from those ideals. They should come to understand communism and how it is supposed to work, what conception and ideals underlie it, and how to evaluate departures therefrom. Texts give abstract principles but little sense of how capitalism is supposed to work and what is required to keep it going: for example, rational consumers and employers, and a government which is neutral toward particular businesses and which prevents businessmen from abusing each other or the public.
The comparison of the two systems is rife with ethnocentricity. It is also full of misleading information. Sometimes texts almost make it sound as though each American individually designs the economy. There is no mention of the factors that inhibit millions of people from participating freely and equally, or other factors in our society which conflict or interfere with ideal capitalism. There is little opportunity for independent thought, as students are told what values and aspirations to have. Students do not have an opportunity to begin to consider different American viewpoints regarding economic problems we face. The texts present only two positions, two choices, us and the good life, or them and oppression. There is little attempt to treat the concept of communism as a communist, or even a neutral party, would. Although one text acknowledged that the U.S.S.R. offers its citizens free education, medical care, and vacations, nothing else was said supporting the ideals or practices of the U.S.S.R.

Strategies used to remodel
S-6 developing intellectual courage
S-1 thinking independently
S-29 noting significant similarities and differences
S-30 examining or evaluating assumptions
S-27 comparing and contrasting ideals with actual practice
S-10 refining generalizations and avoiding oversimplifications
S-25 reasoning dialogically: comparing perspectives, interpretations, or theories
S-3 exercising fairmindedness
S-2 developing insight into egocentricity or sociocentricity
S-35 exploring implications and consequences

Remodelled Lesson Plan S-6

Capitalism

When students have read their texts, they can discuss the negative opinion of the U.S. toward the U.S.S.R. and the negative opinion of the U.S.S.R. toward the U.S. and compare the countries. How is their government different from ours? Their economy? Their industry? S-1 Students can then begin in-depth analysis of capitalism.

What are the goals of capitalism? For owners? For workers? For consumers? Do these goals conflict? How does the system address the conflict? On what assumptions about people is this system based? What does this system assume about why people work, produce, and create? What evidence is relevant to settling that question? What is your position? Why? S-30 How is a capitalist economy supposed to provide the best goods and services for the best prices? Why would this system have that result? What does this system assume about how people decide which goods and services to use? What employees to hire? How should these decisions be made?

Now that the ideal system has been set out, students can begin to distinguish actual practice from those ideals. How is our government supposed to protect consumers? From whom? What would producers do? Why? What are some possible economic choices individuals make? What kinds of decisions can
your parents make? Not make? **S-10** How do people make economic decisions? How do they decide which brand of a particular product to buy? What role does advertising play in our system? What role should it play? What kinds of forces, factors, attitudes, and habits interfere with the free working of market forces? Do Americans decide what job to take, how much they will be paid? How do individuals help to decide? What are the limitations of our freedom to decide issues for ourselves? Are these deviations from ideal capitalism good, or should they be prevented? If so, how? What interferes with Americans’ freedom to determine their careers? **S-27**

Emphasize that no country has a pure version of any economic system. You could talk about some of the aspects of socialism in our economy. You might mention (or have students mention) Social Security, Medicare, or note that government-controlled postal and passenger rail services in the U.S. are further examples of aspects of socialism in our economy. Ask, “In what ways are these ‘socialist’ in nature?” **S-10**

A written assignment here might be: Explain the goals of capitalism. Consider such things as: fairness, and whether the goals are easy or hard to achieve.

Have students “play capitalist” in a genuinely free market economy, to discover such ideas as supply and demand, etc. They could then discuss and compare their experiences with real situations (e.g., students are given capital and resources to start with).

**Socialism**

You might list the essential features of socialism for clarity, including some of the benefits that socialism ideally provides, such as comprehensive health care, free education through university level, guaranteed employment, etc. **S-3** For example, ask, “What might be some implications of the features of socialism? How are the services, such as free medical care, paid for? **S-35** What would life be like for a person living under socialism? How would it be different from capitalism? The same? Where is socialism practiced? What are some of the goals and ideals of socialism? What do you think of them?”

When examining our own system, we saw how the form of capitalism we have departs from ideal capitalism. What do you think is true for the Soviets? What evidence do you have for your answer? Where could we get information like this? What do we have to watch for in our information? How could our negative feelings for the U.S.S.R. influence the information we find? **S-16** Why are there unions in some socialist countries? What problems do socialist countries face? Is the U.S.S.R., for example, a classless society? What would be some examples of how class distinctions persist in the Soviet Union? Why? **S-27**

**Comparison of the Economic Systems**

What problems does each system face? What sort of people does each system claim to reward the most? Actually reward? What sort of people do you think
should be rewarded most? Why? What sort of a society would that produce? How could such a system be implemented? **S-1**

What can make each system go wrong? Do you approve of the goals? Have they been achieved? To what extent? Why or why not? **S-27**

How can we find American opinions on other systems of economies and governments? Devise a method to measure American opinion. (Through media or by surveying adults.) Show this information on a chart or graph. Why do most Americans disapprove of communism and socialism so strongly? Notice how we feel about the U.S.S.R. itself. How does this compare to how we feel about countries with systems similar to the U.S.S.R., more similar to us, completely different from both? Who do we like best? Least? How would the U.S.S.R. probably make a scale? Who might they like most and least? Why? How can you explain these differences? **S-2**

Several concluding activities could now tie the lesson together. One would be to assign students to role play defenders and critics of both systems. They could compare the assumptions, basic concepts, and values of each. **S-25**

A written assignment might be given as follows: "People who emigrate from the U.S.S.R. to the U.S. sometimes have difficulty adjusting to our economic system. Could you predict what some of those difficulties might be and why it could be hard for them to adapt?" (The assignment could be reversed for an American taking up residence in the Soviet Union.) **S-3**

Students could write analyses and assessments of their texts. **S-2**

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*The highest development of intelligence and conscience creates a natural marriage between the two. Each is distinctly limited without the other. Each requires special attention in the light of the other.*

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The Constitution

Objectives of the remodelled plan
The students will:
- learn some functions of the three branches of U. S. government
- clarify claims in their texts by exploring root issues regarding government and the distribution of power in our government
- compare ideals of the Constitution with actual practice
- develop criteria for evaluating political candidates
- through Socratic questioning, understand the reasons for and assumptions underlying rights guaranteed under the Bill of Rights
- develop their perspectives on human rights, and functions and limits of government
- transfer insight into the Constitution to current events

Standard Approach

The history of the Constitution, as well as some of its present day applications, is presented. Main themes and concepts are explained such as federalism, separation of powers, judicial review, the Bill of Rights, how a bill becomes law, and democracy. Students are asked to consider the role of these concepts in current American politics. Typical end-of-chapter questions are, "Why did our leaders call the constitutional convention? What were the four main compromises? What were the main arguments for the opponents and the supporters?" Other questions ask for explanation and evaluation, such as, "What is meant by the statement 'The government is you'? Do you agree with the statement? State your reasons." Vocabulary enrichment involves having the students look up words and put them into sentences.

Critique

We chose this lesson because understanding the Constitution is crucial to citizenship in a democracy. Students should explore the ideas underlying important aspects of our government: how it is supposed to work, why it was structured the way it was, how the structure is supposed to preserve citizens' rights, how it could fail to do so, and why rights are important to preserve. Critical education demands clear and well-developed understanding of these points. When understanding is superficial or vague, hidden agendas and mere associations guide thought and behavior. Slogans substitute for reasons, prejudices for thought. Citizens become willing to accept the appearance of freedom, equality under the law, and democracy, rather than insisting on their realization.

The greatest flaw with the standard approach is its lack of depth; not nearly enough time is given to fostering understanding of this important document. The relative importance of different material should be reflected in the text space given and time spent on it. Spending insufficient
time on such important ideas leads texts to treat them superficially or vaguely. Students have little opportunity to understand key ideas fully, see the whole picture, appreciate reasons for important parts of the Constitution, or develop their perspectives on government, human relations, and how to preserve their rights.

Texts generally ask too few questions, have little extended discussion, and ask too many questions which are trivial, or simple recall. Some of the suggested explanations and answers are generally solely incomplete, vague, confusing, or fail to answer the questions. To simply tell students that our government’s system of checks and balances helps protect people’s freedom does little to help students understand that system or how it is supposed to work.

Important explanations are undeveloped, fail to probe the reasons. Texts offer abstract and unclear explanations, and then merely require students to reiterate them. Often the answers to the end-of-chapter questions are tagged by bold face in the text. Students are encouraged to substitute reiteration for understanding; to accept apparently unconnected answers as adequate explanations, for example, that the right to trial was thought important because it was denied by the British.

Similarly, regarding the Bill of Rights, texts fail to answer the important questions: Why did people think these rights should be written down? What is the advantage? Why write them into the Constitution? Does writing them into the Constitution guarantee they won’t be violated? Crucial questions and connections are left unanswered. Neither texts nor students clarify the various Constitutional rights, leaving them in the realm of empty slogans.

**Strategies used to remodel**
- S-21 reading critically: clarifying or critiquing texts
- S-17 questioning deeply: raising and pursuing root or significant questions
- S-7 developing intellectual good faith or integrity
- S-27 comparing and contrasting ideals with actual practice
- S-15 developing criteria for evaluation: clarifying values and standards
- S-19 generating or assessing solutions
- S-24 practicing Socratic discussion: clarifying and questioning beliefs, theories, or perspectives
- S-13 clarifying issues, conclusions, or beliefs
- S-30 examining or evaluating assumptions
- S-12 developing one’s perspective: creating or exploring beliefs, arguments, or theories
- S-26 reasoning dialectically: evaluating perspectives, interpretations, or theories
- S-14 clarifying and analyzing the meanings of words or phrases
- S-35 exploring implications or consequences
- S-11 comparing analogous situations: transferring insights to new contexts

**Remodelled Lesson Plan**

**Introduction to the Constitution**

When the passages about the Constitution and whatever portions of the document students can read have been read, allow students a chance to get the “big picture,” by asking, “What is this document for? What is its purpose? What basic points does it cover?” (It defines the three branches of Federal Government, describes how offices are filled, lists duties of and limits on each branch.) You might read the Preamble to the students and discuss it with them. The class
could analyze portions of the Constitution in depth. You could then tell the students about some of the details left out of their texts. Students could reiterate the veto and override process, and discuss what protection it gives. \textbf{S-21}

\textbf{Separation of Powers, and Checks and Balances S-17}

Discussion of the previous point can lead into a discussion of the separation of powers and checks and balances. To probe these ideas in depth, thereby making the reasons for our system of government clearer, you could ask, “Have you ever been in a situation where someone had too much power or abused power? Why was that a problem? How could the problem be solved? How did the authors of the Constitution try to solve it? Why not give all of the power to one branch, say, the Executive? Why can’t the President declare war? Why have each branch have some power over the others, rather than giving each branch complete control over its duties? What does the text say in answer to this question? What does its answer mean? How could concentrating power lead to loss of people’s rights? \textbf{S-21} Make up an example which shows how a system like this could prevent abuse of power. This separation of powers and system of checks and balances is the ideal. What could make it go wrong? How could the President start a war without Congressional approval? Has this ever happened? Should it ever happen? \textbf{S-7} Why or why not? Make up an example of how it could go wrong. (Using the checks and balances unfairly, or not using them at all.) Why would that be bad? \textbf{S-27} What has to happen to make it work right? What should we look for in our leaders? What sort of people should be chosen? (e.g., when voting for President, voters should consider who the candidate would appoint to important offices or whether the candidate is a good judge of character. Perhaps members of Congress who abuse or fail to use checks on the President should be reconsidered.) \textbf{S-15}

The class could also relate some of the above ideas to a specific historical or current issue regarding abuse of power or charges of abuse of power. The students could also try to come up with alternative solutions to the problem of abuse of power and compare their solutions with those in the Constitution. \textbf{S-19}

\textbf{The Bill of Rights S-24}

Students could generate a list of the rights covered. To foster in-depth understanding of the meaning and importance of the Bill of Rights, the teacher could conduct a Socratic discussion clarifying and analyzing each right with questions like the following: What does this right mean? What does it say people should be allowed to do? How could it be violated or denied? \textbf{S-13} Why might people try to take it away? How important is it? Why? Why would not having this right be bad? How would it hurt the individual? Society? Are there exceptions to this right? Should there be these exceptions? Why or why not? \textbf{S-17}
The class could also discuss the underlying ideas and assumptions behind the Bill of Rights, especially the First Amendment rights. (The importance of following conscience, especially regarding political and religious beliefs; the belief that when everyone can discuss their ideas and consider all alternatives, the best ideas will prevail or compromise can be reached; people who do no wrong shouldn’t have to be afraid of their government; even people who do wrong have rights; trials in which both sides argue before a jury of impartial citizens will best render justice; government has an obligation to be fair to citizens and not make arbitrary or unjust laws; etc.) S-30 You might ask, “Why did some people want these rights written down? What are the advantages? Are there disadvantages? Are there important rights omitted? Should they be added to the Constitution? Why or why not?”

For this activity, the teacher could split the class into groups, each of which could discuss one or two rights. One member of each group could then report to the rest of the class.

**Human Rights Throughout the World S-12**

The class could also discuss these rights with respect to people all over the world, and so begin to forge their own perspectives on international politics, human nature, and the role of the U. S. as a world power. Ask, “Do you think everyone all over the world should have these rights? Why or why not?” (You may need to point out that not every country has these rights: In some countries you can be put in jail for disagreeing with your government leaders, even if you don’t advocate violence; you can be taken by the police or soldiers, kept, tortured and even killed without ever having a trial; you can be arrested for practicing your religion or for not following the rules of the official religion; etc.) Students could then talk about what, if anything, our government should do about these countries. How should we treat such countries? Should we give them aid or withhold it? What kind of aid? Should we tell them we want them to change, or is it none of our business? What if most of the people of the country voted for the leaders that do these things? If people want to escape these countries, should we let them move here and become citizens? Why do some Americans object to this idea? S-7 Teachers familiar with the U.N. Declaration of Human Rights could mention it here. If students express different points of view, the teacher could conduct a dialectical exchange by having students defend their views, clarify key concepts, explore assumptions, and note where the perspectives conflict. S-26

As always in such a discussion, encourage students to listen carefully to, and note strengths in, perspectives with which they disagree.

**Purposes and Limits of Government S-17**

The lesson could also be used for a discussion probing the purposes and limits of government and deepening students’ understanding of government and our Constitution. The Preamble could be re-read to initiate discussion.
The following questions could be used to develop an analogy with, say, student government, if the school or class has one: Why do we have student government? What does it do? Are you glad there is student government? Why or why not? Why did the writers of the Constitution believe they had to start a government? Do you agree with them? Why or why not? What does government provide for us? (The class could use a list of Federal Departments to generate some ideas.) How could we have these things without government, or why couldn’t we have them without government? What is our government not supposed to do? Why?

Students could discuss the concepts ‘fair’ and ‘unfair laws,’ or ‘just’ and ‘unjust laws,’ with questions like the following: Give me examples of unjust laws. (Discuss each at length — Does everyone agree it is unjust? Why is it unjust?) Why was each made? What justification was given for each law? Then students might summarize the differences between just and unjust laws. S-14

Students could compare possible reactions to unjust laws, and the consequences of those reactions. Encourage them to include examples in their discussion. You may use questions like the following: What can people do when their laws are unjust here? Elsewhere? What have different people done? What happened next? Why? S-35 Students could compare alternatives and their results, for both the individuals and countries. S-19 Do people have the right to break unjust laws? Why or why not? When? Under what circumstances? If a government has many unjust laws, should other governments do anything about it, or is it none of their business? Why? What, if anything, should be done? What might the people in the unjust government say? Would they think of themselves as unjust? Should we help governments that seem to us to be unjust? S-12

Current Events S-11

The lesson could also be linked to a unit on the news. The class, or groups of students who could report to the class, could find newspaper articles about major bills being debated or passed, Supreme Court decisions, a Cabinet or Supreme Court nomination, or debates on foreign affairs. The class could outline both sides of the issue, pinpoint the relevant part of the Constitution, and discuss the implications of different possible outcomes. If the issue revolves around interpreting the Constitution, the class could discuss why there is no agreed-upon interpretation. Students could also distinguish aspects of the issue involving the Constitution from aspects which have become part of our government but are not set out in the Constitution.