

## Teaching Social Studies

At Kuumba, Social Studies Standards in K-3 are addressed during Module and Lit Labs (See Social Studies alignments in ELA Educational Program section). Teachers view social studies as a way to develop students' capacity to interpret their world critically and to engage productively in it. Teachers foster inquiry and enable authentic student research. When possible, student research contributes to the school community or broader community. Teachers help students understand the big picture and timeline of history through survey-type lessons but emphasize historical frameworks, trends, and concepts rather than memorization of myriad facts and details.

Kuumba students also participate in Better World Day, an annual event hosted by EL Education, that showcases student learning projects or acts of community service that help to illustrate the powerful vision we hold for public schools: that our schools can be a place where children become great scholars and active citizens with capacity and power to make positive impact.

In the EL Education model, teachers of social studies prioritize students' understanding of enduring concepts so that they can apply that understanding to the modern world. Teachers view social studies as a way to develop students' capacity to interpret their world critically and to engage productively in it. Teachers support students to read, write, think, and work as social scientists do. They use learning expeditions, case studies, projects, problem-based content, collaborating with social science professionals, and interactive instructional practices to foster inquiry and enable authentic student research. When possible, student research contributes to the school community or broader community.

Teachers help students understand the big picture and timeline of history through survey-type lessons but emphasize historical frameworks, trends, and concepts rather than memorization of myriad facts and details. By focusing on big ideas, teachers support students to appreciate and understand diverse cultures and understand connections among ancient and modern cultures. Whenever possible, teachers choose strategic points to step out of survey mode and dive deep into case studies (often on local topics), during which students can engage in research and work as social scientists. Teachers also cultivate historical thinking and disciplinary skills such as close reading, questioning, using data, and communicating as social scientists do.

### A. Planning for Social Studies Instruction

1. Teachers unpack and bundle social studies standards to emphasize the enduring themes—or big ideas—of social studies (e.g., the common elements of civilizations; the roles that governments play; the relationship among geography, industry, and culture).
2. In collaboration with colleagues, teachers plan the year's scope and sequence to "cover" the breadth of required standards and put particular events in a broader historical context (a survey approach) and also to "uncover" key concepts through a case study

approach (diving deep). Planning entails the following: a. Crafting standards-aligned learning targets for knowledge, skills, and historical thinking (e.g., interpreting data) b. Creating engaging lessons that provide a broad overview of topics (e.g., surveys of time periods or geographical regions) using timelines and graphic representations to help students comprehend the big picture of historical relationships c. Selecting case studies or narrow topics that intertwine history, government, economics, geography, and culture, and illuminate enduring themes (e.g., a case study of Shays' Rebellion that allows students to develop an understanding of challenges in the founding of the United States, as well as the themes of power, authority, and governance)

3. Teachers choose social studies topics as the basis of learning expeditions, case studies, and projects at all grade levels. They identify engaging local issues that animate topics and have strong potential for original research (e.g., a case study of a local civil rights leader embedded in a study of the American civil rights movement).
4. Teachers design research opportunities and products that engage students in authentic research that contributes to their communities (e.g., third-graders writing and advocating for a school constitution; middle school students writing and publishing a book about local peace activists).
5. Teachers structure opportunities for students to do original research or problem solving using professionally recognized social science methods, including framing questions, designing methods to answer questions, determining appropriate timelines and costs, conducting surveys or interviews, writing reports or narratives, and presenting and defending ideas.
6. Teachers select a variety of primary and secondary source materials to supplement or replace textbooks (e.g., trade books, journal articles, government documents). These texts serve as both anchor texts to bolster students' conceptual understanding and mentor texts to model the structure and style of social science writing (e.g., an oral history or white paper).
7. Teachers supplement texts with rich experiences to support conceptual understanding, including visits to cultural sites, fieldwork, and interaction with experts.
8. Teachers design assessments that address content knowledge, historical thinking, and integrity in applying social science methods.

## **B. Teaching Social Studies Concepts and Skills**

1. Teachers use complex text to build students' understanding of social studies content and teach literacy skills through the following actions:
  - A. Conducting close reading lessons of informational text (and sometimes fiction) related to a social studies topic
  - B. Teaching students to comprehend multiple forms of social science documents, including texts, maps, diagrams, charts, graphs, tables, and timelines
  - C. Explicitly teaching domain-specific vocabulary related to the topic of study

2. Teachers use a survey approach to teach geography and the broad timelines of history that provide the big picture of social studies.
3. Teachers use a case study approach to dive deep and explore local and/or specific historical questions with depth and complexity.
4. Teachers engage students in complex, problem-based activities, such as investigations based on authentic questions, through the following actions:
  - A. Teaching students to use methods approximating those used by professional social scientists (e.g., oral history, surveys, demographic data collection) with accuracy, care, and expertise at all levels
  - B. Requiring students to collect, represent, analyze, and report real data as a part of inquiry
5. Teachers ask students to explore multiple perspectives when learning about a topic and to analyze and evaluate evidence for opposing views. This may include exploring the history and evolution of historical thinking, considering such questions as who records history and how is it interpreted.
6. Teachers require students to construct arguments and make verbal and written claims supported by evidence so that students practice:
  - A. Making logical assumptions
  - B. Drawing insightful conclusions
  - C. Supporting claims with unbiased and reliable evidence
7. Teachers ask students to represent and reflect on their thinking (e.g., develop history notebooks, create analogies, make graphs, create technical drawings, build models).
8. Teachers use both student work samples and professional models (e.g., community ethnography, annotated maps, infographics) to explicitly teach what quality writing in social studies looks and sounds like.
9. Teachers sometimes incorporate service-learning projects connected to content.

### **C. Creating a Culture of Social Studies Inquiry**

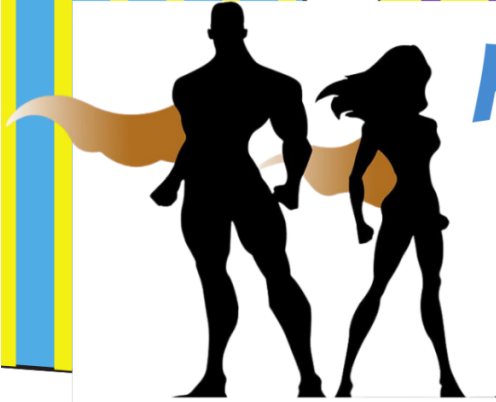
1. Teachers empower all students to see themselves as historians by refuting stereotypes about who records history and highlighting the past and current historical contributions of diverse individuals and groups.
2. Teachers, students, and school leaders celebrate, display, and discuss culture and society throughout the school. They address issues of diversity and equity that impact students and their communities.
3. Teachers support student appreciation and stewardship of their communities through experiences, projects, and authentic service learning.
4. Teachers and students connect local issues with the broad concepts of social studies. Teachers encourage students to explore specific social issues that impact their lives, to

ask questions, and to pursue their own answers within the context of broader social studies questions and topics.

5. Teachers, students, and staff participate in community events that encourage students to make informed and reasoned decisions for the public good as citizens of a culturally diverse, democratic society.
6. Teachers display student work that provides evidence of social science research and learning in public areas of the school.

#### **D. Assessing Social Studies**

1. Teachers create opportunities for students to demonstrate understanding of concepts by explaining them accurately to others using graphic representations, models, or demonstrations.
2. Teachers regularly check for understanding and misconceptions. They support students in tracking their own progress toward learning targets and provide feedback that gets students back “on track” toward targets.
3. Teachers debrief learning by inviting students to generalize and apply concepts and procedures to other contexts and problems. They encourage students to reflect on what they learned, how they learned it, and how they can transfer it to new contexts.
4. Teachers use multiple methods of assessment, including one-on-one discussions, interactive notebooks, performances, or products that result from projects, as well as quizzes and tests.



# KUUMBA ACADEMY WORK PLAN NORMS



## REFLECTION

WE WILL INCORPORATE THE **NGUZO SABA PRINCIPLES** IN OUR COMMUNICATION AND HAVE STUDENTS PRACTICE AND REFLECT ON THEM DAILY.

## DISCUSSION PROTOCOLS

- WE WILL EMPOWER STUDENTS TO USE **NIA** TO CONTRIBUTE THEIR IDEAS TO DAILY INSTRUCTION AND CULMINATING EVENTS.
- WE WILL EMBODY **UJIMA** USING A VARIETY OF CONFERENCES, PEER CRITIQUE, AND SELF-REFLECTION TO EMPOWER STUDENTS TO ACHIEVE THEIR HIGHEST QUALITY OF WORK.



## CHECKS FOR UNDERSTANDING

- WE WILL USE **KUUMBA** TO ASSESS STUDENT LEARNING BY PRIORITIZING ARTS INTEGRATION ACROSS ALL CONTENT AREAS.
- WE WILL USE **IMANI** TO FOLLOW THROUGH WITH OUR DAILY MISSION AND VISION.
- WE WILL USE OUR **KUJICHAGULIA** AND KNOWLEDGE OF STUDENT UNDERSTANDING AND MISUNDERSTANDING TO DRIVE INSTRUCTION IN REAL TIME AND TEACH OUR STUDENTS TO BE DATA-LITERATE.
- WE WILL USE **UMOJA** TO UNPACK LEARNING TARGETS MULTIPLE TIMES THROUGHOUT THE LESSON.



## CRITERIA FOR SUCCESS

- WE WILL USE **KUJICHAGULIA** TO CREATE EXEMPLARS, MODELS, AND RUBRICS TO PROMOTE STUDENT SUCCESS.
- WE WILL USE **KUUMBA** AND AUTHENTICITY IN STUDENT LEARNING THROUGH THE USE OF EXPERTS, FIELDWORK, EXPERIENCES, AND RESEARCH TO PROMOTE **UJAMAA** THROUGH REAL-WORLD CONNECTIONS.
- WE WILL TRACK OUR PROGRESS TOWARD HIGH QUALITY WORK THROUGH THE USE OF PORTFOLIO, STUDENT-LED CONFERENCES, DOC PANELS, AND DATA WALLS TO ENCOURAGE THE **NIA** FOR SCHOLARS TO BE LEADERS OF THEIR OWN LEARNING.