

*Challenging Social Studies Activities:  
A Resource and Curriculum Guide  
Grades K-12*

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# Introduction

*Challenging Social Studies Activities: A Resource and Curriculum Guide Grades K-12* is a companion document to the Grades K-12 2010 Alabama Course of Study: Social Studies adopted draft. This draft Course of Study was developed by members of the Social Studies State Course of Study Committee and Task Force and was adopted by the Alabama State Board of Education in October 2012. Content standards contained within the course of study document may be accessed on the Alabama State Department of Education (ALSDE) Web site at [www.alsde.edu](http://www.alsde.edu). On the Home page, select Special Links, and then Courses of Study. Click on Drafts and Periods for Public Review/Input. Then scroll down and click on 2010 Social Studies Course of Study-Adopted Draft.pdf.

Educators are reminded that content standards indicate minimum content—what all students should know and be able to do by the end of each grade level or course. Local school systems may have additional instructional or achievement expectations and may provide instructional guidelines that address content sequence, review, remediation, and challenge.

*Challenging Social Studies Activities: A Resource and Curriculum Guide Grades K-12* provides alternate lessons for students, including those with Individual Education Plans (IEPs), who have demonstrated mastery of grade-level content, providing assignments and activities that address the mastered objective with added depth, complexity, and creativity. Student choice is often incorporated into these assignments, allowing those who learn differently to approach required content according to diverse learning styles. This allows students who are capable of working above grade level to engage in rigorous course work while addressing the required course of study standards. By pre-assessing to identify strengths, teachers may plan appropriate response to instruction (RtI) for high-functioning students, while still working with all students toward achievement of the same standards. Educators are encouraged to use this document to:

- Assist in tiered lesson planning as part of RtI.
- Plan for RtI Problem Solving Team meetings.
- Deliver consultative and collaborative services.
- Design professional development programs.
- Provide parent information and plan for parent conferences.
- Develop curriculum-based assessments.
- Prepare for state assessments.

Teachers can access this document electronically by going to the Alabama State Personnel Development Grant Web site at [www.alspdg.org](http://www.alspdg.org). On the left side, click on Professional Development and Instructional Resources, and click on Challenging Curriculum Guides for High-Functioning Students with Disabilities. Then click on *Challenging Social Studies Activities: A Resource and Curriculum Guide Grades K-12*. Student pages can be downloaded and saved for interactive use on the computer or printed for paper-and-pencil application.

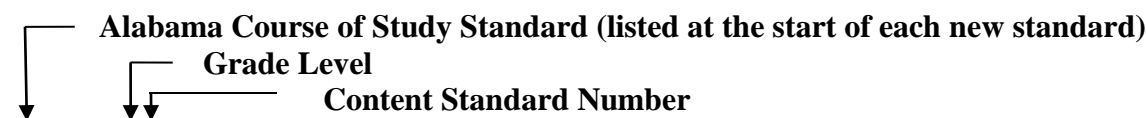
## Organization of the Curriculum Guide

The organizational components of this guide include social studies content standards, advanced standards for those who have mastered the grade-level standards, and “going forward” standards. Also included are suggested lesson plans for each advanced standard, including vocabulary, literature and Web site links, student pages, and resources.

Grade level or course is displayed at the top right side of each page. Below is an example of the information displayed within the body of the document for Grades K-8 and directions for interpretation.

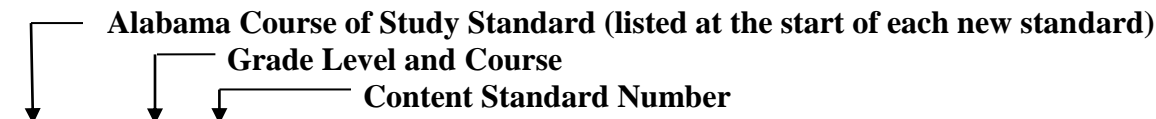
**Instructional Objectives:** Each new Alabama Course of Study Standard (ALCOSS) is denoted by a double-bordered table. Grade level (Grades K-8) or Course (Grades 9-12) is listed next to the term ALCOSS, followed by the standard number. In parenthesis, the 2004 Social Studies COS is provided for alignment. Column 1 in the second row of the table, entitled Mastered, lists the standard that students are expected to have mastered before attempting the alternate activities. Column 2, entitled Present, repeats the same standard with added depth/complexity. This is the standard that students who have demonstrated mastery are to address. Column 3, entitled Going Forward, adds further challenge and is an optional extension for students who have mastered the standard in Column 2 (Present).

**Example:** Standards in Grades K-8 are identified by grade level.



<b>ALCOSS: 3.9 (2004 COS, p. 26) ← 2004 Course of Study (Bulletin 2004, No. 18)</b> Identify ways to prepare for natural disasters. Example: constructing houses on stilts in flood-prone areas, buying earthquake and flood insurance, providing hurricane or tornado shelters, establishing emergency evacuation routes		
<b>Mastered:</b> Students can identify ways to prepare for natural disasters	<b>Present:</b> Students will explain different ways to prepare for different types of natural disasters	<b>Going Forward:</b> Students will design a disaster supply kits and create disaster preparedness plans for his/her families.
What students already know and can do ↑	Standard with added depth/complexity ↑	Optional extension ↑

**Example:** Standards in Grades 9-12 are identified by grade level and course name.



<b>ALCOSS: 9WH.2 (9.2 in 2004 COS, p. 64) ← 2004 Course of Study (Bulletin 2004, No. 18)</b> Describe the role of mercantilism and imperialism in European exploration and colonization in the sixteenth century, including the Columbian Exchange. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Describing the impact of the Commercial Revolution on European society</li> <li>• Identifying major ocean currents, wind patterns, landforms, and climates affecting European exploration</li> </ul> Example: marking ocean currents and wind patterns on a map		
<b>Mastered:</b> Student can describe the role of mercantilism and imperialism in European exploration and	<b>Present:</b> Student will analyze the impact of mercantilism on colonization by major	<b>Going Forward:</b> Student will evaluate the success of each major European power in the establishment of a colonial empire.

colonization in the sixteenth century and the impact of the Commercial Revolution on European society, and identify major ocean currents, wind patterns, landforms, and climates affecting European exploration.	European powers as they develop their plans for the establishment of empire.	
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**What students already know and can do** ↑

**Standard with added depth/complexity** ↑

**Optional extension** ↑

Each standard component contains the following elements: Career Connections, Present and Going Forward Vocabulary, one or more Alternate Activities aligned to the standard, and Literature/Resources Connections.

**Career Connections:** Careers listed in the boxes are aligned to each standard. We encourage teachers to emphasize these or other connected careers both to spark student interest in further investigation and to assist students in making real-world connections.

**Career Connections:**  
Cartographer, Geographer, Meteorologist, Agronomist, Political Scientist, Economist

**Vocabulary:** Present and Going Forward Vocabulary words are specialized terms used by practicing professionals or those studying the discipline(s) in which this standard would be integral.

**Present and Going Forward Vocabulary:**  
Circumnavigate, mercantilism, Prince Henry, Columbian exchange, British East India Company, Middle Passage

**Advanced Understanding & Activity (Alternate activity): Student page found in Appendix A.**

**Trade Routes of European Colonial Powers**

Using the basic information on major ocean currents, wind patterns, and land forms, students will design a map overlay that identifies the major trade routes of each of the European colonial powers. Then they create a Venn diagram to illustrate the similarities and differences among the major powers. They will use that information to write a summary report to the monarch of their choice detailing the reasons for the success or failure of that country’s efforts, as well as the impact that colonization had on both the colonized area and the mother country.

**Advanced Understanding & Activity (Alternate Activity):** Alternate activities are specifically defined with accompanying full-size, printable student sheets found in Appendix A. In addition, student activity sheets are available on the CD Rom version of this document. They can be saved to a computer and completed electronically or printed.

**Literature Connections/Resources:** Web sites listed in this document are also found on the CD Rom version and are in clickable format. Simply click on the Web address or copy and paste into the address bar to go to the selected site. All sites were active at the time this document was printed. Please notify the ALSDE if any links are broken. A separate page found in Appendix B also lists these resources.

**Literature Connections/Resources:**

- Christopher Columbus Biography:  
<http://www.biography.com/people/christopher-columbus-9254209>

**Types of Alternate Activities:** Many formats are used to differentiate the lessons in this document, most of which will be familiar to the user. Explanations and examples of some that may not be familiar, such as RAFT, Tic-Tac-Toe Choice Boards, ThinkFast, Kaplan’s Depth & Complexity, I Can..., and Thinker Keys, follow.

**Roll, Audience, Format, Topic (RAFT)**

Students are required to research a given topic and answer study questions to assist them in gaining the necessary understanding to complete the RAFT assignment. They then assume the **role** (Column 1) of an animate or inanimate object or character from the unit of study. They develop the product for the **audience** (Column 2), which can be anyone/anything that would be interested in the topic. The **format** (Column 3) can be any suitable method of communication, including verbal, musical, kinesthetic, artistic, etc. The **topic** is often adapted from a clever saying, a book, a movie, a song, or a cliché (Column 4), and serves as the title for the RAFT. For example, in the set of RAFTs below, a student might choose to be a French supplier, talking to a minuteman through a secret spy letter, explaining the topic “Why I’m important to you.”

<u>ROLE</u>	<u>AUDIENCE</u>	<u>FORMAT</u>	<u>TOPIC</u>
French supplier	Minuteman	Secret Spy Letter	Why I’m important to you

**Tic-Tac-Toe Choice Board**

The Tic-Tac-Toe menu provides students with choices of activities that address different learning styles or different levels of complexity. Students contract with the teacher to complete three, moving across, down, or diagonally. For example, in the Tic-Tac-Toe menu below, a student might choose to complete Activities 2, 5, and 8 to complete the Tic-Tac-Toe contract.

ACTIVITY 1	ACTIVITY 2	ACTIVITY 3
ACTIVITY 4	ACTIVITY 5 STUDENT CHOICE (with teacher approval)	ACTIVITY 6
ACTIVITY 7	ACTIVITY 8	ACTIVITY 9


**Think Fast**

Students are asked to answer a series of questions concerning a major topical concept (spelled out vertically in Column 1). Answers should begin with the corresponding letter of each row. For example, in row one, students are asked to list three things affected by the oil spill and all answers must begin with the letter “O.”

O	Name three things affected by the oil spill.
I	List five problems that could result from the Gulf Oil Spill.
L	List three professions that helped to clean up the spill.
S	Name five ways to clean up the oil from the spill.
P	Name two ways students can help.
I	Identify two professions affected by the oil spill.
L	Name three living things from the ocean not affected by the oil spill.
L	Name two systems in the Gulf Region.



## Kaplan's Depth & Complexity

In this activity, students think about a given topic in 1 of a possible 11 different contexts, each of which adds depth or complexity to their topical study. First, they choose 1 of 11 possible elements (Column 1). After answering questions and/or participating in an activity to facilitate understanding (Column 2), students culminate with an authentic product (Column 3). The 11 possible elements are Details, Language of the Discipline, Patterns, Trends, Unanswered Questions, Big Ideas, Rules, Ethics, Change Over Time, Multiple Points of View, and Interdisciplinary Relationships.

ELEMENT	QUESTION/ACTIVITY	PRODUCT(S)
 <b>DIFFERENT PERSPECTIVES</b>	The United States has often been called “a melting pot,” “a salad bowl,” or “a kaleidoscope.” What is meant by each of these phrases? Research to find out!	Write an argument that could be given for using each of these labels.

## Thinker Keys

Thinker Keys offer students choices in ways to think about a given topic in 20 different ways based on questions, activities, and research opportunities that encourage creativity and abstract thought, while strengthening higher-order thinking skills. The keys consist of What If?; Reverse Listing; Disadvantages; Combination; BAR-Bigger, Add, Replace; Alphabet; Variations; Picture Transformations; Prediction; Different Uses; Ridiculous; Commonality; Brainstorming; Inventions; Brick Wall; Construction; Forced Relationships; Alternatives; and Interpretation. Students choose one or more of the keys from Column 1 and complete the activities from Column 2. See the example below.

 <b>What If?</b>	What if the earth were to tilt in the opposite direction overnight?
 <b>Reverse Listing</b>	List ten things that would not happen if the earth did not rotate nor revolve around the sun for 365 days. Write a science fiction story about life on earth during this time.



## How Can Teachers Most Effectively Use This Document?

- Become familiar with the *Alabama Course of Study: Social Studies*.
- Pre-assess students to determine mastery of each objective.
- Pre-assess all students first. Later in the year, pre-assess those whom you strongly believe may have already mastered the material as well as any student who requests it.
- Use advanced activities **in place of** and not in addition to the “regular” or grade-level lessons and assignments. The length of time to complete alternate assignments should be comparable to the length of time allotted to complete the regular assignment.
- Emphasize the importance of students taking ownership of their learning.
- Establish clear rules for behavior so that students know what is expected of them in all work situations. Be consistent in enforcing rules and follow through with consequences for rule infractions. (Behavior contracts may be a useful tool.)
- Best practices suggest awarding students a letter grade of “A” for each of the “regular” or grade-level activities. Evaluation of the alternate activities should be in the form of extra points, teacher narrative reports, rubrics, or shared student and teacher evaluations.
- Prior to beginning a new objective, browse through Resource and Curriculum Guides in order to obtain necessary literature, classroom materials, etc.
- Prepare sufficient student pages and materials for lessons in Resource and Curriculum Guide ahead of time to be ready for students who show mastery of grade-level material. (The number of students who need these materials may be reduced as the year progresses, especially during the second semester.)
- Organize student pages and materials needed to complete advanced lessons for easy access by students.
- Prepare all students for the probability that all may not be working on the same content at the same time nor in the same way. Help them to understand that each is unique and, therefore, may need to learn differently.
- Use graphic organizers and student planners when suggested in the Resource and Curriculum Guide or when otherwise necessary.
- Ask for collaborative or consultative assistance from the gifted specialist when necessary.

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## Inside Front Cover of the Guide

For information regarding the *Challenging Social Studies Activities: A Resource and Curriculum Guide, Grades K-12*, contact the Alabama State Department of Education, Special Education Services, 3344 Gordon Persons Building, 50 North Ripley Street, Montgomery, Alabama 36104, or by mail to P.O. Box 302101, Montgomery, Alabama 36130-2101.

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