

# Social Studies Update

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## Check Out:

- [The C3 Framework for Social Studies State Standards](#)
- [Social Studies "Agora" Site](#)  
-Click on social studies
- [Social Studies Google Calendar](#)
- [Iowa Social Studies on Twitter](#)
- [Iowa Social Studies on Diigo](#)
- [Iowa Department of Education Social Studies Page](#)

## Questions?

Contact Stefanie Wager, social studies consultant at the Iowa Department of Education, at [stefanie.wager@iowa.gov](mailto:stefanie.wager@iowa.gov) or 515-725-7842

## What are Best Practices in Social Studies?

What are best practices in social studies instruction? The Statewide Social Studies Leadership Team is currently working on a "white paper" around this very question and we hope to present our findings at the Best Practices Institute.

A lot of research has been done recently around best practices in history instruction and getting students to think historically.



Some of that research can be found [here](#).

In the meantime, don't forget to save the date for the Best Practices Institute that will take place June 24-25 in at the State Historical Museum in Des Moines.

The Iowa Department of Education, in collaboration with the State Historical Society of Iowa and various other partners, is offering a FREE summer institute centered around best practices in social studies.

Presenters include the State Historical Museum of Iowa, the Anti-Defamation League's Echoes and Reflec-

tions, and the Council for Economic Education, the St. Louis Federal Reserve, and CultureAll, to name a few.

Registration will be opening soon. Questions? Contact Stefanie Wager at [stefanie.wager@iowa.gov](mailto:stefanie.wager@iowa.gov).

## SAVE THE DATE!



## Literacy Corner: The Use of Complex Text

What is complex text? What does the use of it mean for your social studies classroom?

Appendix A of the Core contains three main arguments for emphasizing the need for complex text.

1. Text complexity of required K-12 readings has gotten easier over the last 50 years.
2. The complexity of college readings has remained stable over the last 50 years.
3. There is a gap between the average reading ability of a high school graduate and the

text demands for postsecondary life.

There are three factors to consider when determining text complexity

- **Qualitative:** Levels of meaning, structure, language, knowledge demands, etc.
- **Reader & Task:** Student motivation, knowledge, purposes, etc.
- **Quantitative:** Word length, frequency, sentence length, etc. An example of a resource for this is Newsela

([www.newsela.com](http://www.newsela.com)). This resource includes various current events articles, sortable by topic. Each article's Lexile level can be adjusted.

Here's a webinar that is an overview of text complexity within a social studies classroom. <https://student.gototraining.com/3sk65/recording/7252840847040485120> This is a webinar offered by my counterpart at the Arizona Department of Education. You do have to enter your name and email address to "view" the webinar.

## Social Studies News

### Panel Discusses Civic Education and the Common Core

The Manhattan Institute and the Gilder Lehrman Institute of American History convened a panel to address declines in American students' knowledge of history and civics. They specifically examine the causes of this decline in civic knowledge, how the decline can be rectified, and what role the Common Core standards play in the Civic education. The video of the panel discussion can be seen [here](#).

### Report Urges Steps to Revitalize Civic Education

A new report calls for a revitalization of civic education to better prepare young people to become active and engaged citizens and ensure a vibrant democratic society. It outlines steps to improve civics learning in schools, including getting teachers to move beyond textbooks to get students more engaged with primary sources. View the report [here](#).

### Attend Social Studies Related Performances at the Civic Center

Want to connect your social studies curriculum with the arts? Check out the upcoming performances at the Civic Center. Tickets are only \$1 per student. Questions? Contact Michelle McDonald at [mmcdonald@desmoinesperformingarts.org](mailto:mmcdonald@desmoinesperformingarts.org).

[Alonzo King Lines Ballet](#)  
[Spirit of Uganda](#)  
[Trey McIntyre Project](#)  
[Black Violin](#)  
[Love: A Tale of Community](#)



## Social Studies Resources

### Lincoln as the Great Communicator

Many people think of Lincoln as the great emancipator, but he was also a master at communication. Check out this fabulous website from Canada Snyder, a US history teacher at Central Campus in Des Moines. She focuses on the way Lincoln communicates and includes links to many of his key writings. <http://lincolnasgreatcommunicator.wordpress.com>

### Smithsonian X 3D

The use of artifacts in a social studies classroom can be powerful. The Smithsonian Institute has launched Smithsonian X 3D. This allows you to view objects in a 3D format and study the objects in a real life way. Check it out at <http://3d.si.edu/>.

### Animated Atlas of the Historical Geography of the United States

This resource is basically an animated history of the United States. Students can see visually the history of the US and they can "animate" each map to make that history come alive. Check it out at <http://dsl.richmond.edu/historicalatlas/>

*"History doesn't repeat itself, but it does rhyme."*

-Mark Twain

### What So Proudly We Hail

This resource is dedicated to the exploration of American History through great literature. Their curriculum focuses on the power of big ideas in history and looks to explore the questions like "what does it mean to be an American?" Check it out at [www.whatsoproudlywehail.org](http://www.whatsoproudlywehail.org).

### Teach UNICEF

TeachUNICEF provides educators with tools to create an exciting, interesting classroom experience through the use of teaching tools focused on the millennium development goals and global topics such as poverty, clean water, and armed conflict. To access these resources to go [www.teachunicef.org](http://www.teachunicef.org).

### 15 Minute History Podcasts

15 minute history is a series of weekly podcasts developed by The University of Texas at Austin. The podcasts are designed for educators, students, or history buffs, but are concise in nature and would be ideal for a flipped history classroom. Check them out at <http://blogs.utexas.edu/15minutehistory>



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## Professional Development

### Teaching about China's Political System

NCTA is offering a 25 hour FREE seminar entitled "Teaching about China's Political System." This seminar will be offered through asynchronous online modules. This is open to any secondary teacher who teaches about China. For more information go to [http://www.colorado.edu/cas/tea/ncta/downloads/China\\_Govt\\_Flyer\\_Winter\\_2014.pdf](http://www.colorado.edu/cas/tea/ncta/downloads/China_Govt_Flyer_Winter_2014.pdf)

### Teaching Japan Through Children's Literature

This course is being offered through NCTA and is open to K-5 elementary teachers nationwide. It examines children's literature about Japan and considers teaching ideas that integrate literacy and social studies. For more information go to <http://www.colorado.edu/cas/tea/programs/downloads/2013%20TCcourse%20FLYER.pdf>

### Memory and Art: A Look Back on Childhoods in Asia

NCTA is offering this course based on the work of two prize-winning children's authors. The online book group offers a guided discussion of the 2011 memoirs of Allen Say and Ed Young about growing up in Asia during the 1940s. For more information contact Mary Bernson at [earc@uw.edu](mailto:earc@uw.edu).



### #SSCHAT on Twitter

Each Monday night at 6 pm Central on Twitter, using the hashtag #sschat, there is a social studies chat with educators from around the world. A different question is discussed each week. On January 13th, for example, the Newseum will be facilitating the discussion around how museums can support classroom social studies teachers. Hope to "see" you there.

### Study Trip to Germany through the Transatlantic Outreach Program

Interested in a two week FREE study tour to Germany? The Goethe Institut offers study tours each summer. The trip focuses on modern Germany. For more information, and to apply, visit <http://www.goethe.de/ins/us/lp/prj/top/txl/enindex.htm>

### C-SPAN Conference

C-SPAN offers a teacher fellowship program each summer for teachers who are highly familiar with C-SPAN resources. In addition, they offer a two-day conference for teachers who are less experienced with C-SPAN. Find out more info by going to [www.c-spannclassroom.org/Teacher-Opportunities.aspx](http://www.c-spannclassroom.org/Teacher-Opportunities.aspx)

### American Air Museum Summer Residency

The American Air Museum summer residency program is a unique PD opportunity for teachers. Participants spend two weeks studying the impact of WWII in England. For more information visit <http://projects.americanairmuseum.com>

### Bill of Rights Institute

The Bill of Rights Institute is offering two summer institutes. One is entitled Civil Liberty, Commerce, and the Constitution (July 14-18). The other is Liberty and Security (July 21-24). To apply go to <http://billofrightsinstitute.org/ff-2014/>

### Foundation for Teaching Economics

The Foundation for Teaching Economics (FTE) offers various summer professional development opportunities for teachers and most of them are FREE. Visit [www.fte.org/teacher-programs](http://www.fte.org/teacher-programs).

# Social Studies Awards, Grants, and Competitions

## James Madison Fellowship

The James Madison fellowship was established as a living memorial to James Madison. The purpose of the program is to strengthen the teaching of history and principles of the Constitution by supporting graduate level study for secondary school teachers. The award provides up to \$24,000 towards a Master's degree. For more information go to [www.jamesmadison.gov](http://www.jamesmadison.gov). Applications are due by March 1, 2014.

## History Teacher of the Year Award

Know a great history teacher? If so, nominate them for the Iowa History Teacher of the Year Award. This award is part of the National History Teacher of the Year Award that is sponsored by the History Channel, The Gilder Lehrman Institute and Pre-

serve America. The winner from each state will receive \$1,000 and other materials from the Gilder Lehrman Institute. The National History Teacher of the Year will receive a \$10,000 award. To nominate someone go to [www.gilderlehrman.org/nhtoy](http://www.gilderlehrman.org/nhtoy). Questions? Email Stefanie Wager at [stefanie.wager@iowa.gov](mailto:stefanie.wager@iowa.gov).

## The American Foreign Service Association National High School Essay Contest

How did America's diplomats make history and shape today's world? That is one of the framing question for this year's American Foreign Service Essay Contest. The winner receives \$2,500, a trip to DC to meet the Secretary of State, and a full scholarship for a Semester at Sea voyage. Go to [www.afsa.org/essaycontest](http://www.afsa.org/essaycontest) for more information. The deadline to apply is March 15, 2014.

## National Economics Challenge

The National Economics Challenge is a fun and free way for students to test their economic knowledge. Competitions are held at the state and national level. For more information on how to participate, please visit [www.councilforeconed.org/econchallenge](http://www.councilforeconed.org/econchallenge).

## World of 7 Billion Student Video Contest

Create a short video (60 seconds or less) that illustrates the connection between population growth and either climate change, global poverty, or water sustainability. Four winners will be chosen in each topic area with the grand prize winner getting \$1,000. This contest is open to all students in grades 9-12. For more information go to [www.worldof7billion.org](http://www.worldof7billion.org). The deadline is February 21, 2014.

*"The ultimate measure of a man is not where he stands in moments of comfort and convenience, but where he stands at times of challenge and controversy."*

-Martin Luther King, Jr.

# January Observance Day Resources

## Martin Luther King Jr. Day

Legislation for a King holiday was introduced four days after his assassination, but wasn't signed into law until 1983. The day is observed on the third Monday of January each year. This year it's commemorated on Monday, January 20th.

Below you will find some resources for commemorating the day in your

classroom.

### MLK Day

[www.mlkday.gov](http://www.mlkday.gov)

### The King Center

[www.thekingcenter.org](http://www.thekingcenter.org)

### National Park Service

<http://www.nps.gov/malu/index.htm>

## King Papers Project

<http://mlk-kpp01.stanford.edu/index.php/kingpapers/>

## PBS

<http://www.pbs.org/newshour/extra/2013/08/8-resources-for-teaching-the-50th-anniversary-of-the-march-on-washington/>

