

**The NEW TCAP Social Studies & US History Test:  
A Process Guide for Instructional Planning**

This document is designed to assist your teacher team with preparing for the upcoming Spring 2015 TCAP social studies/US History field test and beyond. It includes the following components:

1. Summary of the design of the field test
2. Process guide to facilitate discussion amongst teacher teams about the new assessment. Includes tips for breaking down and interpreting the new standards, assessment frameworks, Performance Level Descriptors (PLDs), and the extended response scoring rubric

**Summary of the design of the field test:**

More information about design, administration dates, and supporting resources for the Spring 2015 field test can be found [here](#).

- The new assessments consists of **two** parts:
  1. Multiple choice questions at various levels of difficulty
    - Many of these items have one or more stimuli such as a map, political cartoon, reading excerpt, etc. that should be used in addition to prior knowledge to help the student successfully answer the question.
    - The higher level questions require students to make a deeper analysis of the content.
    - There is a shift away from questions that only ask students to recall information.
  2. One extended response question
    - This question provides several stimuli and also expects prior content knowledge to be referenced.
    - The response will be typed online in the TestNav8 platform and should thoroughly address the question/questions asked by the prompt.
    - The extended response question will be evaluated with a rubric.

**Process Guide**

The following is a sample protocol that teacher teams might use to help plan next instructional steps for the 2014-15 school year.

<b>Step 1:</b>	<p>Review the current standards individually as a learner. Discuss with team members the similarities and differences in skills and content knowledge necessary between the old and current standards. Focus on understanding the instructional shifts necessary for student success.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Current standards: <a href="http://tn.gov/education/standards/social_studies.shtml">http://tn.gov/education/standards/social_studies.shtml</a></li> <li>• “Old” standards: <a href="http://tn.gov/education/standards/archives.shtml">http://tn.gov/education/standards/archives.shtml</a></li> <li>• Process standards and content coding should also be discussed</li> </ul> <p>The new standards have a much greater focus on Tennessee’s contribution to history. Look through the standards and collaboratively build and expand your content knowledge of any names, locations and events that teachers are not familiar with.</p>
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<b>Step 2:</b>	<p>Explore the assessment frameworks – under Design section <a href="#">here</a> – for relevant grade levels and identify what percentage of questions will come from each area of the standards. Discuss options for how to approach instructional planning over the school year. If your district has created a pacing guide, be sure to reference it as a resource. Areas for discussion might be:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Where are the main areas of focus?</li> <li>• How can this provide helpful guidelines for planning?</li> <li>• How will this impact instruction?</li> </ul>
<b>Step 3:</b>	<p>Have team members individually explore the Performance Level Descriptors (PLDs) – under Scoring section <a href="#">here</a> – for relevant grade levels and identify what skills and capacities are necessary to successfully demonstrate mastery. Pinpoint the skills that students will need to be proficient or advanced and note differences between the two levels.</p> <p>Based on the details, as a team, add to the list generated in Step 1 with any further points of emphasis for your students: what will they need to do to succeed on the Spring 2015 field test? Consider using this information to create essential questions or “I can” statements for students.</p>
<b>Step 4:</b>	<p>Print the “2015 TCAP Social Studies/U.S. History: Design and Administration Information” <a href="#">memo</a> and share with teacher team members to review together. Based on the details, add to the list generated in steps 1 and 4 with any further points of emphasis for your students.</p>
<b>Step 5:</b>	<p>Work with team members to plan a common writing activity with students to build student success on extended response item types. As a grade level, choose a primary source listed in social studies standards (Note: 3<sup>rd</sup> grade will need to choose a text, as there are no primary sources listed).</p> <p>Consider using the released sample practice items for Grade 3, Grade 7, and US History as a model. These practice items are available in ePATs for online practice and can be accessed <a href="#">here</a>. Full practice tests for all grades will be available in February 2015.</p> <p>Create a writing stimulus/prompt to accompany the chosen primary text listed in the standards. Sample literacy units and instructional resources can be found on the TNCore website, <a href="#">here</a>.</p>
<b>Step 6:</b>	<p>Review the social studies extended response rubrics – under Scoring section <a href="#">here</a> – focusing on both the content and the literacy components. Identify skills on the rubric that you can use to help move a student towards a higher score point (e.g. from a 2 to a 3).</p> <p>Review the appropriate grade-level <a href="#">TCAP Writing Assessment scoring rubrics</a>. Compare the TCAP Writing rubric with the social studies rubric and discuss how this will affect instruction and collaborative planning with ELA teachers.</p>
<b>Step 7:</b>	<p>Rewrite social studies extended response rubric in student friendly language and share with students. Model social studies literacy tasks for students. Have students use text in a</p>

	<p>picture, analyze map, and/or passage by using prior knowledge to come to a conclusion and answer as many parts of the question as they can. Practice using blank paper for pre-writing skills and organization/outline of thoughts when answering a prompt.</p>
<b>Step 8:</b>	<p>Have students complete the common writing activity (see Step 6). Collect student work samples and bring to discuss with team. Score the student work using the released extended response rubrics – under Scoring section <a href="#">here</a>. Share results and observations with colleagues. Create strengths/needs chart to frame further instruction. You might want to consider the following questions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What evidence can you draw from these student samples about your students’ capabilities?</li> <li>• Where do students still need to grow more?</li> <li>• What are strategies you can use to help bridge those deficits and improve student writing?</li> </ul>
<b>Step 9:</b>	<p>Once practice materials are made available in February 2015, assign the full practice test (ePATs) or relevant sections as a pre-assessment. If possible, have students complete the practice test on TestNav8 to practice in an online testing format.</p> <p>Score the practice tests and share results and observations with colleagues. Discuss how the data/findings from the February practice tests can help drive instruction throughout February and March?</p>
<b>Step 10:</b>	<p>As a teacher team, work together to create additional sample questions. Use appropriate grade-level vocabulary and focus on writing higher-order questions. Revisit PLDs to ensure questions measure full range of ability.</p> <p>Consider using the released sample practice items for Grade 3, Grade 7, and US History as a model. These practice items are available in ePATs for online practice and can be accessed <a href="#">here</a>. Full practice tests for all grades will be available in February 2015.</p>