

HUMANITIES

TEACHING AND LEARNING SYLLABUS

Social Studies Normal (Technical)

Implementation starting with
2020 Secondary One Cohort



Ministry of Education
SINGAPORE

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SECTION 1: INTRODUCTION

Purpose of Social Studies

Social Studies and the Desired Outcomes of Education

Social Studies and 21st Century Competencies

Social Studies and National Education

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Purpose of Social Studies

The Singapore Social Studies (SS) curriculum spans the primary and secondary levels. This subject helps students to grow in knowledge, develop skills and learn values through examining issues that are of concern to our society and the world we live in.

1.1.1 Philosophy of Social Studies

At the heart of the Social Studies curriculum is the preparation of our students to be effective citizens by helping them to better understand the interconnectedness of Singapore and the world they live in, as well as to appreciate the complexities of the human experience.

Drawing on aspects of society that are of meaning and interest to students, Social Studies seeks to ignite students' curiosity to inquire into real-world issues that affect their lives. Through inquiry and authentic learning experiences, Social Studies helps students to attain relevant knowledge and understanding about these issues, develop critical and reflective thinking skills, and appreciate multiple perspectives.

Social Studies seeks to inculcate in students a deeper understanding of the values that define the Singapore society, as well as nurture dispositions in them that will inspire them to show concern for the society and the world in which they live and demonstrate empathy in their relationships with others. The curriculum therefore envisions students as informed, concerned and participative citizens who are competent in decision-making with an impassioned spirit to contribute responsibly to the society and the world they live in.



Figure 1.1: The Singapore Social Studies Curriculum

1.1.2 Social Studies Curriculum Aims

As ***informed*** citizens, students will:

- understand the rights and responsibilities of citizens and the role of the government in society;
- understand their identity as Singaporeans, with a regional and global outlook;
- understand the Singapore perspective on key national, regional and global issues;
- analyse and negotiate complex issues through evaluating multiple sources with different perspectives; and
- arrive at well-reasoned, responsible decisions through reflective thought and discernment.

As ***concerned*** citizens, students will:

- have a sense of belonging to the nation, appreciate and be committed to building social cohesion in a diverse society;
- be motivated to engage in issues of societal concern; and
- reflect on the ethical considerations and consequences of decision making.

As ***participative*** citizens, students will:

- take responsible personal and collective actions to effect change for the good of society; and
- be resilient in addressing concerns of society in spite of challenges faced.

1.2 Social Studies and the Desired Outcomes of Education

The learning of Social Studies provides many opportunities to achieve the Desired Outcomes of Education, which are attributes that educators aspire for every Singaporean to possess by the completion of their formal education.

The student who embodies the Desired Outcomes of Education is:

- **a confident person** who has a zest for life, have a strong sense of right and wrong, are adaptable and resilient, know themselves, are discerning in judgment, think independently and critically, and communicate effectively;
- **a self-directed learner** who takes responsibility for their own learning, are curious, reflective, and persevering in the lifelong pursuit of learning, driven by their passion and purpose;
- **an active contributor** who is empathetic and open-minded to collaborate effectively in teams, exercise initiative, have courage to take risks responsibly, are innovative and strive for excellence; and
- **a concerned citizen** who is rooted to Singapore, has a strong civic consciousness, are responsible to their family, community and nation and take active roles in improving the lives of others.

For details of the Desired Outcomes of Education, please refer to

<https://www.moe.gov.sg/education-in-sg/desired-outcomes>.

1.3 Social Studies and 21st Century Competencies

To help our students thrive in a fast-changing world that is becoming highly digitalised, MOE has identified competencies that have become increasingly important in the 21st century. These core values and competencies, as outlined in the refreshed Framework for 21st Century Competencies (21CC) and Student Outcomes in **Figure 1.2**, guide our holistic education efforts to prepare our students well for the future.

The outer ring of the framework represents the 21CC necessary for the globalised and fast-changing world we live in. These competencies are Civic, Global and Cross-cultural Literacy; Critical, Adaptive and Inventive Thinking; and Communication, Collaboration and Information Skills. The middle ring signifies the Social-Emotional Competencies necessary for students to develop healthy identities, recognise and manage their emotions, develop a sense of responsibility, care and concern for others, relate to others and develop positive relationships, handle challenges, make responsible decisions, and act for the good of self, others and the society. Knowledge and skills must be underpinned by values which shape the beliefs, attitudes and actions of a person. These values form the core of the framework. Relevant 21CC are developed through the knowledge, values and skills outcomes articulated in the Social Studies curriculum. In this way, learning in Social Studies is aligned with MOE’s emphasis on developing 21CC which are necessary for students to thrive in the 21st century.

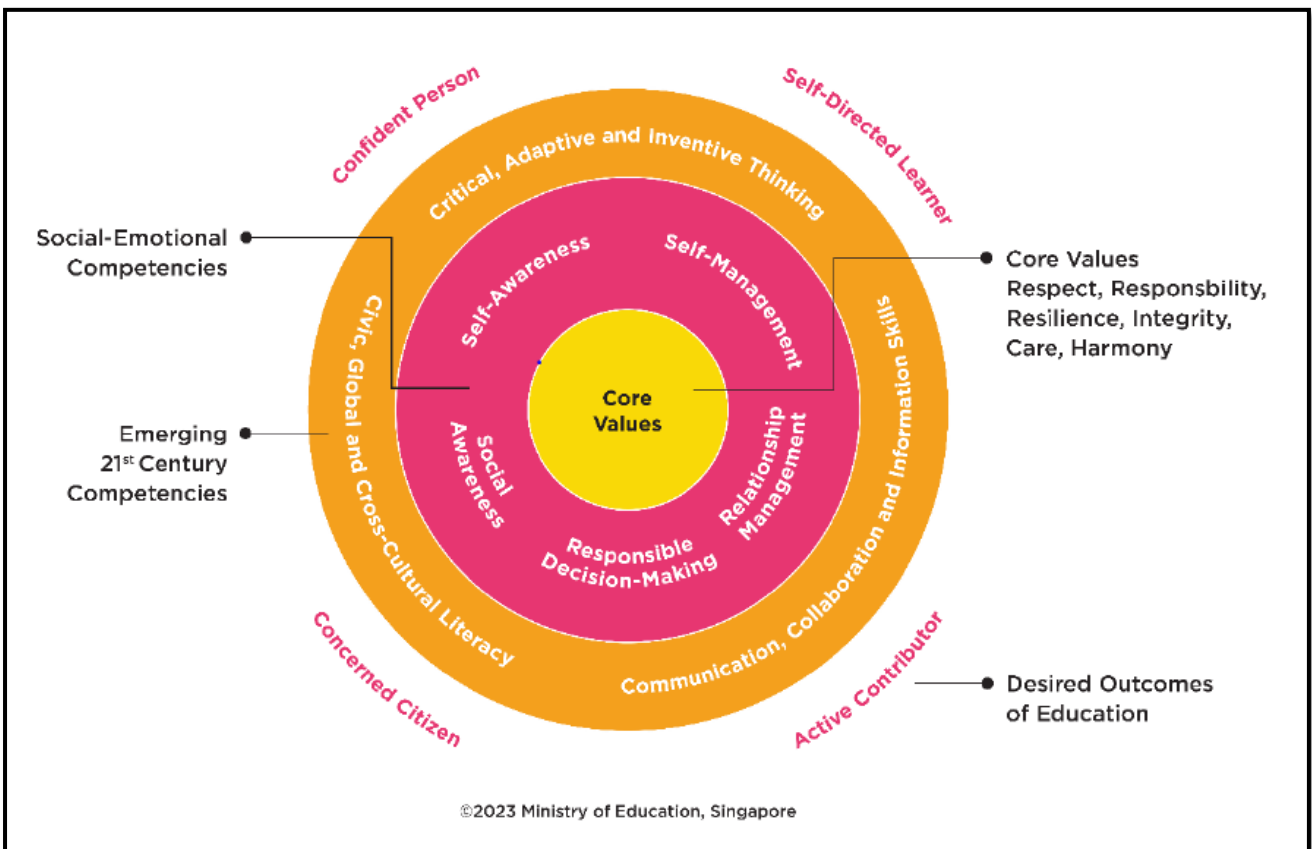


Figure 1.2 Framework for 21st Century Competencies (21CC) and Student Outcomes

The foci on holistic education and 21CC development will also help enhance students' digital literacy¹, to enable them to find, think about, apply and create information in increasingly digitalised environments that they will be living and working in. Drawing on readily available opportunities and platforms in the total curriculum that are currently used for holistic education and 21CC development and supported by the effective use of technology, our students will be able to leverage their core values and social-emotional competencies development to act safely and responsibly when using technology for learning and social interactions. They can also tap their Communication, Collaboration and Information skills to manage digital information, while communicating, collaborating and participating with others through digital platforms and tools.

Social Studies is especially well positioned to help nurture students' civic, global and cross-cultural literacy, developing them to be both locally anchored and globally confident as they learn to navigate an increasingly complex future. Social Studies also hones students' communication, collaboration and information skills as they learn to better manage ambiguities and understand complex ideas through group discussions and seek to convince others of their interpretation of data and texts. Furthermore, Social Studies sharpens students' critical, adaptive and inventive thinking as they are provided with opportunities to make sense of a range of information and exercise sound reasoning when considering varied viewpoints.

1.4 Social Studies and National Education

The design of the Social Studies curriculum takes into consideration the recommendations of the National Education (NE) 2017 review. Based on the review, NE has been reframed to anchor the dispositions for citizenship, which are:

- **a sense of reality;**
- **a sense of belonging;**
- **a sense of hope; and**
- **the will to act.**

The aims of Social Studies are aligned to these dispositions in the following ways:

- **A sense of reality.** Through the study and inquiry of real-world issues and understanding people's relationships with self, society and the environment, the curriculum imbues in students the awareness and understanding of the constraints, vulnerabilities and contemporary realities that confront Singapore as a country that exists in a volatile, uncertain, complex and ambiguous world.
- **A sense of belonging and a sense of hope.** As students inquire into real-world issues and people's relationships with self, society and the environment, they will be more cognisant that Singapore's and the world's social fabric is continually evolving and thus develop a deeper awareness of who they are as locally confident and globally competent Singaporeans. This can help students appreciate the importance of engaging in real-world issues and build the trust and belief that there is a place for everyone in Singapore. This will help build their confidence and optimism in the future of our nation and be resilient in facing the challenges ahead.

¹ Digital literacy refers to a set of knowledge, skills and dispositions that will help our learners to be able to find, think about, apply and create information so that they are able to live with and be confident, critical and responsible users of digital technologies for information, communication and problem-solving.

- **The will to act.** The Social Studies curriculum strengthens students' knowledge of, and concern for, Singapore and the world as they inquire, reflect and respond to real-world issues and people's relationships with self, society and the environment. In doing so, students will develop a collective resolve and a sense of shared mission to build a caring and inclusive society for everyone.

For details on the NE review 2016–2017, please refer to moe.gov.sg/-/media/files/programmes/ne-review-2016-2017-booklet.pdf?la=en&hash=479F1C73D67BCC77D0CD83C8FC08D88D85857CB5.

SECTION 2: CONTENT

Issues Covered in Social Studies

Understanding the Syllabus Document

The Syllabus Document

Mapping the Syllabus to Ministry of Education Initiatives

2. CONTENT

2.1 Issues Covered in Social Studies

Social Studies adopts an issues-based approach which focuses on the inquiry into current societal issues to develop students into informed, concerned and participative citizens. The syllabus considers significant societal issues that are of perennial concern to Singapore and the world, which will affect the lives of students today and tomorrow.

In exploring the real-world societal issues in the syllabus, students will draw on the disciplines of the humanities and social sciences, including History, Geography, Political Science, Sociology and Economics. Inquiry-based learning complements the issues-based Social Studies curriculum so that students can be involved in their learning as they formulate questions, gather relevant information to answer questions, and build new understandings, meaning and knowledge. Students will also have opportunities to reflect on their learning.

The Lower Secondary Social Studies syllabus content is organised around four Issues and is anchored in a set of knowledge, skills and values outcomes. The knowledge, skills and values acquired through exploring these Issues will develop students into informed, concerned and participative citizens.

Figure 2.1 gives an overview of the Issues in Social Studies Normal (Technical) syllabus.

The Issues in the Social Studies Normal (Technical) Syllabus
<p>Issue 3: Resolving Conflict and Building Peace (Sec 2) <i>Inquiry Focus</i> – How far can we contribute to peace and security? <i>Guiding Questions:</i></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. What is conflict?2. What are some causes and consequences of conflict?3. How can conflict be resolved amicably?4. What is terrorism and its impact?5. What can we do to maintain Singapore’s peace and security?
<p>Issue 4: Protecting Our Environment (Sec 2) <i>Inquiry Focus</i> – How far can we protect the environment? <i>Guiding Questions:</i></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. How are people dependent on the environment?2. What is the impact of human activities on the environment?3. How can we protect the environment?
<p>Issue 5a: Being Part of a Globalised World (Sec 3) <i>Inquiry Focus</i> – How can we participate in a globalized world? <i>Guiding Questions:</i></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. What is globalisation?2. What are the opportunities and challenges of globalisation?
<p>Issue 5b: Managing Our Resources (Sec 3) <i>Inquiry Focus</i> – How can we manage our resources wisely?</p>

The Issues in the Social Studies Normal (Technical) Syllabus

Guiding Questions:

1. How can I better manage my resources?
2. How does the government manage Singapore's financial resources?

Issue 6: Building a Caring Nation and an Inclusive Society? (Sec 4)

Inquiry Focus – How can we make Singapore a better place for everyone?

Guiding Questions:

1. What does it mean to care?
2. What are some needs of society?
3. What are some ways to build a caring nation and an inclusive society?
4. How can youths care for society?

Figure 2.1: Overview of the Issues in the Social Studies Normal (Technical) Syllabus in 2024

2.2 Understanding the Syllabus Document

Descriptor

This section highlights the relevance of the Issue. It makes explicit connections for students by outlining what they will be able to do after studying the Issue.

Knowledge Outcomes

The Knowledge Outcomes help students achieve the Key Understandings and respond to the Inquiry Focus.

Issue 1: Living in a Multicultural Society

Descriptor

This Issue enables students to appreciate cultural diversity, understand the importance of harmony and see that multiculturalism is a valuable part of the Singaporean identity. Through examining this Issue, students will develop an understanding of how culture is shaped and learn about the need to respect, appreciate and celebrate diversity in a multicultural society. The study of this Issue will help them develop personal responsibility towards promoting and maintaining harmony in a multicultural society.

Knowledge Outcomes

Students will be able to:

- describe how one's identity could be shaped by one's culture;
- describe the experiences and effects of living in a multicultural society;
- explain ways of promoting cultural understanding and harmony among different cultural groups in Singapore.

Skills Outcomes

Students will be able to:

- identify gaps in their understanding and ask questions;
- gather and organise information;
- make observations using sources and interpret data;
- consider different perspectives when encountering different views;
- evaluate sources of information;
- communicate ideas and findings with clarity and in creative ways through multi-modal presentations; and
- demonstrate reflective thinking regarding knowledge gained and their role in the inquiry process.

Skills Outcomes

The Skills Outcomes promote inquiry and critical thinking skills necessary for students to be informed, concerned and participative citizens. These skills are taught throughout the coursebook and are assessed through a combination of formative and summative assessment.

Inquiry Focus

How far can we achieve harmony in a multicultural society?

Key Understandings

- Our culture and experiences help shape our identity.
- Living harmoniously means understanding and respecting our differences, as well as appreciating what we share in common.
- Harmony can be forged by sharing common space.

Values Outcomes

Students will be able to:

- respect and appreciate diverse cultures and harmony in a multicultural society; and
- appreciate culture through practical actions in living and working harmoniously.

Values Outcomes

The Values Outcomes emphasise nurturing the dispositions of a concerned and participative citizen, and are aligned to the core values of Resilience, Responsibility, Respect, Integrity, Care and Harmony.

Key Concepts

- Identity
- Culture
- Multiculturalism
- Diversity
- Common space
- Harmony

Key Understandings

The Key Understandings reflect the main insights that students will gain through the study of each Issue.

Key Concepts

The Key Concepts are the concepts that are fundamental in attaining the Key Understandings and responding to the Inquiry Focus.

Guiding Questions

1. How is my identity shaped by my culture?

2. What are the experiences and effects of living in a multicultural society?

3. How can we learn to live together harmoniously in Singapore?

Guiding Questions

The Guiding Questions guide students' progressive understanding of the Issue. Placing these questions alongside the content show teachers how to facilitate students' learning using the inquiry approach. The Guiding Questions also help to provide focus to facilitate the achievement of Key Understandings.

Content

- Identity
 - Personal qualities, family, culture and nationality
- Culture
 - Race and ethnicity
 - Religion
 - Customs
- Experiences and effects of living in a multicultural society
 - Appreciation of different cultures
 - Types of cuisines
 - Festivals
 - Inter-ethnic marriages
 - Prejudice due to lack of understanding
 - Discrimination among different races
 - Discrimination against foreigners
 - Online discrimination
- Interaction through common space
 - Physical spaces
 - Public housing
 - Community spaces
 - Shared experiences
 - Shared experiences during National Service (NS)
 - Shared experiences in school
 - Co-Curricular Activities (CCAs)
 - Bilingualism
 - Outdoor education

Core Content

The core content refers to the content essential for students to achieve the Knowledge Outcomes and Key Understandings.

Examples

Examples that are in the grey boxes help students deepen their understanding of the core content. Teachers can use the examples provided or their own examples that are relevant in helping students understanding the core content.

2.3 The Syllabus Document

Issue 3: Resolving Conflict and Building Peace

Descriptor		Inquiry Focus	
<p>This Issue enables students to understand the causes and consequences of conflict among individuals, communities and countries. Students will develop an understanding that a collective response is vital in managing and resolving conflict among individuals, communities and countries. The study of this Issue will also allow students to develop an understanding of the roles played by different groups to build and maintain peace.</p>		<p>How far can we contribute to peace and security?</p>	
Knowledge Outcomes		Key Understandings	
<p>Students will be able to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> describe the nature of conflict; state some causes and consequences of conflict; explain how conflict can be managed and resolved; describe the impact of terrorism; and describe how Singapore maintains peace and security. 	Skills Outcomes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Conflict can disrupt peace. Everyone can help to build peace in Singapore. 	Key Concepts
<p>Students will be able to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> manage and resolve conflicts; identify gaps in understanding and ask questions; gather and organise information; make observations using sources and interpret data; consider different perspectives when encountering different views; evaluate sources of information; communicate ideas and findings with clarity and in creative ways through multi-modal presentations; and demonstrate reflective thinking regarding knowledge gained and their role in the inquiry process. 	Values Outcomes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Conflict Peace Terrorism 	
<p>Students will be able to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> respect the perspectives of others; believe in individual and collective responsibility in resolving conflict; believe in individual and collective responsibility in building and maintaining peace in the community; and demonstrate sensitivity and resilience in resolving conflict. 			

Guiding Questions
1. What is conflict?
2. What are some causes and consequences of conflict?
3. How can conflict be resolved amicably?
4. What is terrorism and its impact?

Content
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conflict <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Conflict escalation and de-escalation • Causes and consequences of conflict <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Causes and consequences of conflict among individuals ○ Causes and consequences of conflict among communities <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Maria Hertogh Riots, 1950 ○ Causes and consequences of conflict among countries <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Dispute between Cambodia and Thailand ➤ Dispute between Qatar and the Quartet • Ways to resolve conflict amicably <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Involvement of a neutral third party <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Resolving conflict between individuals through the involvement of a neutral third party ➤ Resolving disputes between countries through the involvement of a neutral third party • Terrorism • Impact of terrorism <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Loss of lives and destruction of property ○ Disruption to daily activities ○ Distrust and disunity ○ Inconvenience due to security measures <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Lone-Wolf attack in Norway, 2011 ➤ Terror attacks in Paris, 2015

Guiding Questions
5. What can we do to maintain peace and security in Singapore?

Content
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Deterrence<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ Total Defence○ SGSecure• Diplomacy<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ Bilateral relationships○ Multilateral relationships<ul style="list-style-type: none">➤ Role of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN)➤ Role of the United Nations (UN)

Issue 4: Protecting Our Environment

Description

This Issue enables students to appreciate the interdependent relationship between people and the environment. The study of this Issue will allow students to explore the impact of their actions on the environment and learn how they can exercise stewardship over the environment.

Inquiry Focus

How far can we contribute to protecting the environment?

Key Understandings

- People and the environment are interdependent.
- Everyone plays an important role in protecting the environment.

Knowledge Outcomes

Students will be able to:

- describe the importance of the environment;
- explain the impact of human activities on the environment; and
- describe ways to protect the environment.

Skills Outcomes

Students will be able to:

- identify gaps in their understanding and ask questions;
- gather and organise information;
- make observations using sources and interpret data;
- consider different perspectives when encountering different views;
- evaluate sources of information;
- Communicate ideas and findings with clarity and in creative ways through multi-modal presentations; and
- demonstrate reflective thinking regarding knowledge gained and their role in the inquiry process.

Values Outcomes

Students will be able to:

- appreciate the beauty and benefits that the environment brings to their lives;
- care for the environment through individual and collective responsibility; and
- commit to protecting the environment.

Key Concepts

- Environment
- Interdependence
- Climate change
- Conservation
- Sustainability

Guiding Questions
<p>1. How are people dependent on the environment?</p> <p>2. What impact do human activities have on the environment?</p> <p>3. How can we protect the environment?</p>

Content
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Importance of the environment to people <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Resources from the environment • Impact of human activities on the environment <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Resource depletion ○ Pollution <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Land pollution ➤ Air pollution ➤ Water pollution ○ Climate change • Ways to protect the environment <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Sustainable use of resources: Reduce, Reuse and Recycle <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Sustainable use of water – Sustainable use of fossil fuels <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Efforts to conserve energy ➤ Efforts to use alternative sources of energy ○ Concerted efforts by countries to protect the environment <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Efforts by ASEAN to manage the haze situation ➤ Efforts by the UN to tackle climate change

Issue 5: Maximising Opportunities in a Changing World

Issue 5a: Being Part of a Globalised World

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Key Concepts											
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Globalisation • Interconnections • Interdependence 											

Guiding Questions
1. What is globalisation?
2. What are the opportunities and challenges of globalisation?

Content
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Globalisation• Key factors that contribute to globalisation<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ Improvements in technology<ul style="list-style-type: none">– Improvements in transportation– Improvements in digital technology○ Growth of Multinational Companies (MNCs) • Impact of globalisation and possible responses to it<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ Impact on the economy○ Impact on culture○ Impact on security

Issue 5b: Managing Our Resources

Description		Inquiry Focus	
<p>This Issue enables students to develop their financial literacy and understanding of economic concepts. Students will examine how resources are managed, allocated and consumed at the personal and national levels. They will also develop self-awareness and personal responsibility in how to manage their resources wisely. The study of this Issue will provide students with the skills and habits necessary to enable them to participate sensibly in a globalised world.</p>		<p>How can we manage our resources wisely?</p>	
		Key Understandings	
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Using resources wisely means managing how much we spend and save. • Wise use of our resources helps us to be self-reliant. • Careful use of our country’s resources helps Singapore to progress. 	
Knowledge Outcomes	Skills Outcomes	Values Outcomes	Key Concepts
<p>Students will be able to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • define needs and wants; • explain the importance of managing resources wisely; • describe how resources can be managed and allocated wisely; • explain how they can contribute to the management of resources in Singapore. 	<p>Students will be able to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • plan and manage their financial resources prudently; • identify gaps in their understanding and ask questions; • gather and organise information; • make observations using sources and interpret data; • consider different perspectives when encountering different views; • evaluate sources of information; • communicate ideas and findings with clarity and in creative ways through multi-modal presentations; and • demonstrate reflective thinking regarding knowledge gained and their role in the inquiry process. 	<p>Students will be able to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • exercise thrift and prudence in the management of financial resources; and • appreciate the role played by citizens in the government’s decision-making processes. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Needs • Wants • Trade-offs

Guiding Questions	Content
<p>1. How can I better manage my resources?</p> <p>2. How does the government manage Singapore's financial resources?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Managing resources wisely <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Needs and wants ○ Income and savings ○ Trade-offs ○ Budgeting • The national budget and its importance <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Revenue and expenditure ○ National budget allocation <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Developing Singapore through the national budget - How Singapore leaders managed and safeguarded financial resources • The role of citizens in contributing to the management of Singapore's financial resources

Issue 6: Building a Caring Nation and an Inclusive Society

Description		Inquiry Focus	
<p>This Issue enables students to develop an understanding of how caring for others can bring about an inclusive society. They will examine some needs of society and how these needs can be met through the efforts of individuals and their families, the community, and the government. The study of this Issue will help students develop an awareness of the importance of being active citizens in caring for others and building an inclusive society in Singapore.</p>		<p>How can we make Singapore a better place for everyone?</p>	
		Key Understandings	
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Everyone has a responsibility to care for other members of society. Different groups of people have different needs. Everyone has a part to play in building an inclusive society. 	
Knowledge Outcomes	Skills Outcomes	Values Outcomes	Key Concepts
<p>Students will be able to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> describe what it means to care; identify some needs of society in Singapore; describe an inclusive society; explain how individuals and their families, the community, and the government play a role in meeting the needs of society; and explain how youths can be active citizens in building an inclusive society. 	<p>Students will be able to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> identify gaps in their understanding and ask questions; gather and organise information; make observations using sources and interpret data; consider different perspectives when encountering different views; evaluate sources of information; communicate ideas and findings with clarity and in creative ways through multi-modal presentations; and demonstrate reflective thinking regarding knowledge gained and their role in the inquiry process. 	<p>Students will be able to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> believe in individual and collective responsibility in caring for others and building an inclusive society; and care for and empathise with people who have different needs. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Active citizenship Inclusive society Shared responsibility Youth volunteerism Social entrepreneurship

Guiding Questions	Content
<p>1. What does it mean to care?</p> <p>2. What are some needs of society?</p> <p>3. What are some ways to build a caring nation and an inclusive society?</p> <p>4. How can youths care for society?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The meaning of care • How to care for others: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Being attentive, responsive and competent • Understanding some human needs • Understanding some needs of society • Building a caring nation and an inclusive society in Singapore <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ The “Many Helping Hands” approach <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Efforts by individuals and families - Efforts by the community - Efforts by the government • Youths caring for society through volunteerism <div data-bbox="909 724 2013 852" style="border: 1px solid black; background-color: #e0e0e0; padding: 5px;"> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Youths initiating a volunteering project ➤ Youths tapping on existing volunteering opportunities </div> • Youths caring for society through social entrepreneurship <div data-bbox="909 919 2013 1102" style="border: 1px solid black; background-color: #e0e0e0; padding: 5px;"> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Providing employment opportunities through a youth-initiated social enterprise ➤ Providing skill development opportunities through a youth-initiated social enterprise </div>

SECTION 3: PEDAGOGY

The Singapore Teaching Practice

Pedagogy for Social Studies

3. PEDAGOGY

3.1 The Singapore Teaching Practice

An engaged student is one whose energy and attention are channelled towards learning. To engage students, teachers need to touch the hearts and intrigue the minds of the students. They also need to consider how students learn and to design learning opportunities that will allow students to find meaning in what they learn. To help facilitate students’ learning, teachers can take reference from the Singapore Teaching Practice (STP). At the heart of the STP are pedagogical practices pertaining to lesson preparation, lesson enactment, assessment and feedback. **Figure 3.1** shows these four teaching processes and the corresponding teaching areas

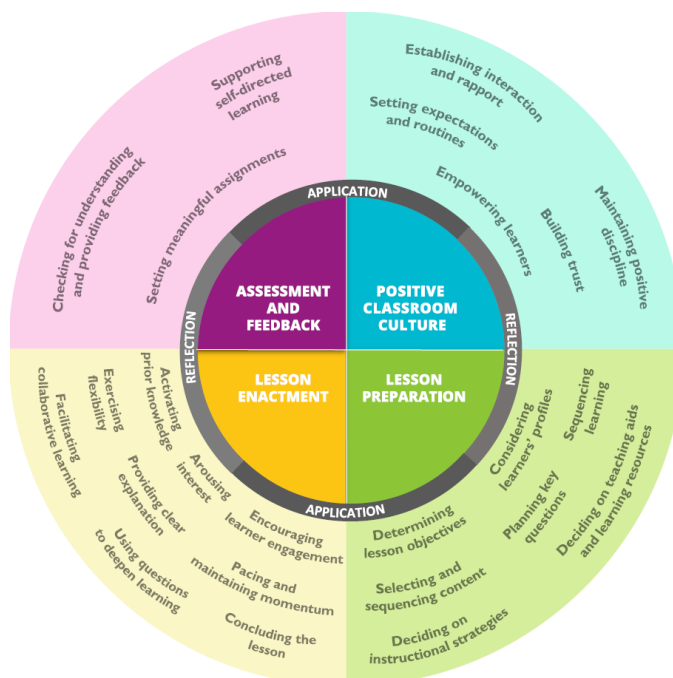


Figure 3.1: The STP Pedagogical Practices

3.2 Pedagogy for Social Studies

Inquiry is the recommended pedagogy that guides students’ exploration of societal issues in Social Studies. Through inquiry-based learning, students learn to deliberate on issues and study them in depth, so that they can offer well-considered responses based on evidence. These are important life skills as they progress to higher education and as they play their role as citizens of Singapore¹.

Students would benefit from an active and authentic classroom experience that helps them to make sense of the Social Studies syllabus content and investigate societal issues through the process of inquiry. An active-learning approach also sustains students’ interest as there would be ample opportunities to investigate societal issues beyond the classroom. These issues are multidisciplinary in nature and are usually drawn from students’ experiences and society’s concerns. They challenge

¹ National Council for Social Studies, *College, Career, and Civic Life (C3) Framework for Social Studies State and Standards* (Silver Spring MD: NCSS, 2017).

students' perceptions and often cannot be adequately understood or addressed effectively without a range of sources to provide multiple perspectives that illustrate the complexity of each issue. Therefore, inquiry in Social Studies entails well-facilitated discussions that can bring out multiple perspectives illustrating the complexity of various societal issues. The Social Studies inquiry process is shown in **Figure 3.2**.

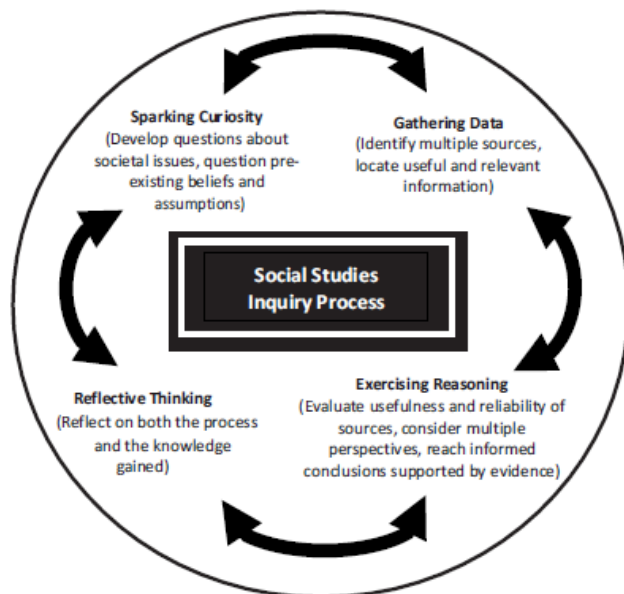


Figure 3.2: An illustration of the Inquiry Process

- a. Sparkling Curiosity – Teachers must first activate students' prior knowledge about these real-world issues in Social Studies to spark curiosity. For example, if the teacher wants to introduce the issue of ethnic insensitivity and its potential harm, it would be helpful to get students to surface their existing beliefs and knowledge about the issue. Students need to engage with their pre-existing cognitive frames and be aware of the ways in which they understand the issue and why they have adopted such a view. It would also be useful to identify questions that they have about the issue, i.e., gaps in their understanding that they would like to address. In the course of the lesson, teachers can seek to address these gaps in understanding. Teachers can also introduce new stimulus materials that would trigger further interest and curiosity about the issue and provoke students to question the assumptions and beliefs that they hold. For instance, a variety of sources based on accounts of challenges faced by different ethnic groups can be shown to students to expose them to alternative perspectives that they are unlikely to have encountered before.
- b. Gathering Data – Students should learn that the classroom extends beyond its four walls. They should be encouraged to gather data from a variety of authentic sources that will provide them with information to address the questions they have. Teachers can help provide basic foundational knowledge on the issue by guiding students to explore possible sources of information, for instance, certain books, journal articles, websites, films, etc. Students can also gather data by making observations about authentic scenarios and conducting interviews and surveys with members of the community.
- c. Exercising Reasoning – Students need to make sense of the data they have gathered and extract relevant information from the various sources they have encountered. They need to describe,

explain and analyse the information and infer potential implications. Through the process of comparing and contrasting sources, they will make connections in their knowledge and deepen their insights into an issue. They will also apply suitable criteria for evaluating the reliability and usefulness of the information gathered and develop informed conclusions about the issue. Through the exploration of different views within a collaborative learning environment, students learn to provide justification for their opinions and hone their critical thinking skills. As they engage in this reasoning and deliberation process, they develop new ways of understanding the issue and thereby construct new knowledge for themselves. For instance, students can conduct interviews with their schoolmates to understand the forms of interactions that take place in school among people of different races. Through the study of the data gathered, students will deliberate on and come to understand the underlying characteristics of good interactions between people of different races. Hence, an important component in the Social Studies experience is for the student to consolidate the data gathered and make sense of this information through reasoning. This will help them to arrive at sound conclusions. Such skills are important in honing students' ability to make quality decisions and responses in relation to each issue being discussed.

- d. Reflective Thinking – Reflective thinking is an integral aspect of inquiry and students ought to engage in reflection in every aspect of the inquiry process. This reflection can take place at two levels: Firstly, by reflecting on the process, and secondly, by reflecting on the knowledge gained. First, when students engage in inquiry, they are challenged to reflect on their current understanding of an issue. Teachers should guide them to surface their assumptions, biases, values and beliefs about the issue. For example, in Issue 1, students may be asked to reflect on their personal beliefs regarding how achievable harmony is in a multicultural society. After examining the issue at length during Social Studies lessons, students should then be able to reflect again, analysing their beliefs and attitudes towards people of other races in a more informed way. Through questions that provoke deeper thought, students can reflect on their thinking, actions and feelings, and thereby develop metacognitive self-awareness. Second, as students engage in data gathering and sound reasoning, they will need to critically evaluate their sources, methods, and opinions and go on to reflect on the new insights they have gained.

It is important to note that these four stages are iterative rather than linear in nature.

Discussions is another model of inquiry that is emphasised in the Social Studies syllabus. Discussions can take many forms and be used for many purposes. It can be described as a dialogue between or among people. It involves, at a minimum, the exchange of information about a topic (e.g., a controversy, a problem, an event, a person, etc.) as well as a particular approach to constructing knowledge that is predicated on the belief that the most powerful ideas can be produced when people are expressing their ideas on a topic and listening to others express theirs. Through discussions, students can explore multiple perspectives about an issue from different sources and from one another as well as critically examine the reliability and usefulness of the sources. They will also be able to develop some common understanding of the issue; and construct well-reasoned and substantiated conclusions that could include recommendations, decisions or a plan of action to address the issue.

SECTION 4: ASSESSMENT

Purpose of Assessment

Formative Assessment

Summative Assessment

4. ASSESSMENT

4.1 Purpose of Assessment

To ensure that Social Studies is taught effectively, assessment is necessary to evaluate and report the level of student learning. Assessment should also be an iterative and continuous process that motivates learning and helps students achieve the learning outcomes of the syllabus.

Assessment is aligned to the key beliefs of the Singapore Curriculum Philosophy which is encapsulated in the STP. The Singapore Curriculum Philosophy of the STP expounds the belief that every student wants to, and can, learn. Assessment, the process of gathering and analysing evidence of student learning, is an integral part of teaching and learning. Thus, assessment that is designed with clarity of purpose, provides students and teachers with feedback to move learning forward and improve teaching practices.

4.2 Formative Assessment

Formative assessment takes place during teaching and learning and aims to help student improve their learning. Students will be given a variety of assessment types by which to express their understanding of their learning, such as in-class questioning, writing reflections, group discussions, group work, quizzes, role-playing, journal entries, podcasts, posters and use of technology. This variety will allow students to express their understanding in a mode that suits their interest and strengths. Teachers can use formative assessment to help students move learning forward.

Examples of formative assessment include oral questioning, quizzes, feedback on Performance Tasks, and coursebook activities such as those developing critical thinking skills and reflective thinking. Activities in the Social Studies coursebooks are designed to allow students to attain the Social Studies assessment objectives progressively over the course of four years, while having varied and enriching learning experiences in the process. Through the activities, teachers are informed of the areas of intervention necessary to improve or support learning so that students can attain the learning outcomes.

Effective formative assessment hinges on the provision of timely, relevant and specific qualitative feedback from teachers or peers so that students are able to self-monitor, self-regulate and improve their own learning. Feedback given could help students improve, facilitate thinking and build confidence in repeating the right thing again or developing best practices. It provides teachers with information on students' progress and valuable feedback on the effectiveness of their lessons. Teachers can use the information to scaffold students' learning to ensure progression in their learning. Formative assessment can also help students develop positive habits and skills related to reflection and self-directed learning through peer and self-assessment.

4.3 Summative Assessment

In Social Studies summative assessment is carried out through the Performance Task, which evaluates students' attainment of the assessment objectives found in **Figure 4.1**.

<p>Assessment Objective 1 – Knowledge with Understanding <i>Students should be able to:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• demonstrate an understanding of societal issues.
<p>Assessment Objective 2 – Interpreting and Evaluating Sources / Given Information <i>Students should be able to:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• comprehend and extract relevant information;• draw inferences from given information;• analyse and evaluate evidence;• compare and contrast different views;• distinguish between fact, opinion and judgement;• recognise values and detect bias; and• draw conclusions based on reasoned consideration of evidence and arguments.
<p>Assessment Objective 3 – Constructing Explanations <i>Students should be able to:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• analyse societal issues through the consideration of different perspectives; and• construct reasoned arguments and make informed judgements and recommendations.

Figure 4.1: Social Studies Assessment Objectives

Through the Performance Task, students are assessed on their ability to translate and transfer the key knowledge and skills learnt within an Issue to an authentic context through addressing an inquiry question. The Performance Task is aligned to the inquiry process and allows students to demonstrate their inquiry skills. As students gather data and exercise reasoning, they have to interpret and evaluate sources and construct explanations. For example, when conducting surveys or research, they have to extract relevant information as well as infer, analyse and evaluate the information before drawing reasoned conclusions about the issue they are investigating. In analysing the information, they often must navigate contrasting perspectives and be mindful of biases in the information gathered. Students are also required to make recommendations after considering different perspectives and explain how their recommendations can address the societal issues they are investigating. They are expected to communicate their recommendations with clarity and creativity. As students go through the reflective thinking stage of the inquiry process, they reconsider their understanding of the societal issues.

While the Performance Task is the summative assessment tool, teachers can scaffold students' comprehension of the assessment demands. In this way, there is an element of formative assessment involved.

The conduct of the Performance Task will allow students to be exposed to some of the knowledge and skills which their counterparts taking Express and Normal (Academic) humanities subjects will experience through Geographical and Historical Investigations.

It is recommended that at least six periods are allocated to complete each Performance Task. These six periods can be spaced out over the semester to give students sufficient time to complete each stage of the Performance Task before moving on to the next. Information on the Performance Task can be found in the subsequent segments.