VIRGINIA DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

# History and Social Sciences: Instruction & Performance Assessment for English Learners

## *Make* learning visible

* Establish content and connected language targets to support students in comparing, sequencing, justifying, explaining their thinking, etc.
* Use graphic organizers such as mind maps and Venn Diagrams to help students connect their ideas
* Draw attention to patterns and relationships in graphs, tables, timelines, and other visualizations
* Refer to written language models and examples to support language development and understanding of primary sources
* Use (and encourage students to use) motion to support understanding and retention of new concepts and key terms
* Post visual displays to cue memory and support written language

## Use cooperative learning structures and strategies

* Structure opportunities for students to collaborate and communicate ideas and make meaning
* Have students work together to share what they notice and wonder about primary sources and to analyze political cartoons and historical images during authentic, hands-on activities
* Use strategies to support student engagement and disciplinary discourse
* Use flexible and fluid grouping of students

## Support the language of history and social sciences

* Provide real-world contexts for students to build vocabulary and conceptual understanding
* Explicitly teach the language of history/social science beyond a focus on vocabulary to support conceptual understanding
* Provide sentence starters to support student communication of their perspectives, questions, thinking, analysis, evaluations, claims, and arguments

## Reduce cognitive load and allow processing time

* Read tasks and texts out loud
* Model strategies for understanding complex, primary source texts
* Break tasks and prompts into smaller sections and organize the text using bullet points versus complex paragraphs
* Provide artifacts and visuals (images, maps, videos) to support the content of text; use political cartoons and historical images when possible to remove any reading barriers
* Use simple sentences and include only details needed to complete the task (when possible)
* Provide adequate and flexible thinking and processing time

## Connect learning to students’ backgrounds and skills

* Make connections between class concepts and everyday life
* Craft tasks and prompts that connect with students’ lives and responsibilities
* Allow time and space for students to share their perspectives, hear others’ perspectives, and make connections to a variety of perspectives in respectful ways
* Highlight developments and contributions from a variety of cultures (focusing on those of the ELs in the class, as possible)
* Facilitate opportunities for perspectives to be explained in student’s home language

## Prepare for Performance Tasks and Assessments

* Show and discuss models of past or related performance assessment products
*  Explain the components of the rubric in easy-to-understand language
* Refer to previously reviewed anchor charts or sentence frames related to the rubric tasks (connect claim to evidence, describe trends and patterns)
* Allow beginning level ELs to respond in words and phrases or simple sentences to show their content understanding

*High expectations, asset-based thinking, and a growth mindset are key to student success!*

*Virginia Department of Education 2020*