COLLEGE, CAREER & CIVIC LIFE
C3 FRAMEWORK
FOR SOCIAL STUDIES STATE STANDARDS

Guidance for Enhancing the Rigor of K-12 Civics, Economics, Geography, and History
The College, Career, and Civic Life (C3) Framework for Social Studies State Standards: Guidance for Enhancing the Rigor of K-12 Civics, Economics, Geography, and History is the product of a collaboration among the following fifteen professional organizations committed to the advancement of social studies education:

American Bar Association
American Historical Association
Association of American Geographers
Campaign for the Civic Mission of Schools
Center for Civic Education
Constitutional Rights Foundation Chicago
Constitutional Rights Foundation USA
Council for Economic Education
National Council for Geographic Education
National Council for History Education
National Council for the Social Studies
National Geographic Society
National History Day
Street Law, Inc.
World History Association

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HOW TO READ
THE C3 FRAMEWORK
OVERALL DOCUMENT ORGANIZATION The C3 Framework begins with two narrative explanations: the Inquiry Arc, which provides the organizing structure for the document; and the Overview of English Language Arts/Literacy Common Core Connections, which highlights the important relationship between the C3 Framework and the Common Core State Standards for ELA/Literacy. Next, the C3 Framework presents the following four Dimensions: 1 Developing questions and planning inquiries; 2 Applying disciplinary concepts and tools; 3 Evaluating sources and using evidence; and 4 Communicating conclusions and taking informed action. The C3 Framework closes with five appendices.

Inquiry Arc. The Inquiry Arc highlights the structure of and rationale for the organization of the Framework's four Dimensions. The Arc focuses on the nature of inquiry in general and the pursuit of knowledge through questions in particular.

Overview of the Connections with the ELA/Literacy Common Core Standards. The C3 Framework recognizes the important role that the Common Core State Standards for ELA/Literacy play in defining K-12 literacy expectations in most states. This overview outlines how the C3 Framework connects to and elaborates on the ELA/Literacy Common Core Standards for social studies inquiry.

In addition to the overview of Common Core connections, each of the four Dimensions includes graphical and narrative descriptions of how the C3 Framework connects with the standards to guide states and local jurisdictions in incorporating these expectations as they upgrade their state social studies standards.

Dimensions and Subsections. The C3 Framework is organized into the four Dimensions, which support a robust social studies program rooted in inquiry.

Dimensions 2, 3 and 4 are further broken down into subsections. For example, Dimension 2, Applying Disciplinary Concepts and Tools, includes four subsections—civics, economics, geography, and history—which include descriptions of the structure and tools of the disciplines as well as the habits of mind common in those disciplines. See Table 1 for a graphical representation of the organization of the C3 Framework.

Unique Structure of Dimension 2. Dimension 2 has an additional layer of three to four categories

### TABLE 1: C3 Framework Organization

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<thead>
<tr>
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<tr>
<td>Developing Questions and Planning Inquiries</td>
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<td>Communicating and Critiquing Conclusions</td>
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<td>Taking Informed Action</td>
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</table>
within each disciplinary subsection. These categories provide an organizing mechanism for the foundational content and skills within each discipline. For example, within the subsection of economics, there are four categories: (1) Economic Decision Making; (2) Exchange and Markets; (3) The National Economy; and (4) The Global Economy. See Table 2 for a graphical representation of the categories within the four disciplinary subsections in Dimension 2.

C3 Framework Indicators and K-12 Pathways. Within each subsection or category is a set of College, Career, and Civic Readiness Indicators for the end of grade 12. For each C3 Indicator, there is a suggested K-12 Pathway for how students might develop proficiency for a particular skill or concept. These Pathways acknowledge students' developing capacity for understanding more sophisticated ideas and completing more demanding inquiries across the grade bands of K-2, 3-5, 6-8, and 9-12. Each Pathway includes three developmental Indicators and the culminating C3 Indicator. The Indicators suggest student proficiency by the end of grades 2, 5, 8, and 12 with an understanding that these skills and concepts will be taught within and throughout the grade band. States will decide how these suggested Pathways inform their processes for developing and upgrading state social studies standards.

Appendices. The C3 Framework concludes with five appendices:

- **Appendix A: C3 Framework Disciplinary Inquiry Matrix.** The Disciplinary Inquiry Matrix articulates how the four Dimensions of the C3 Framework connect to and build upon one another through the use of a content-specific example.

- **Appendix B: Psychology Companion Document for the C3 Framework.** The Psychology Companion Document was created by the American Psychological Association and articulates the key disciplinary tools and concepts central to the discipline of psychology. C3 Indicators are listed for the 9-12 grade band, a corollary for Dimension 2. Psychology adds its unique and important perspective to the content-specific example presented in Appendix A: C3 Framework Disciplinary Inquiry Matrix.

- **Appendix C: Sociology Companion Document for the C3 Framework.** The Sociology Companion Document was created by the American Sociological Association and articulates the key disciplinary tools and concepts central to the discipline of sociology. C3 Indicators are listed for the 9-12 grade band, a corollary for Dimension 2. Sociology adds its unique and important perspective to the content-specific example in Appendix A: C3 Framework Disciplinary Inquiry Matrix.

- **Appendix D: Anthropology Companion Document for the C3 Framework.** The Anthropology Companion Document was created

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**TABLE 2: Dimension 2—Applying Disciplinary Tools and Concepts**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CIVICS</th>
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<th>GEOGRAPHY</th>
<th>HISTORY</th>
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<td>Economic Decision Making</td>
<td>Geographic Representations</td>
<td>Change, Continuity, and Context</td>
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<tr>
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<td></td>
<td>Spatial Views of the World</td>
<td>Perspectives</td>
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<tr>
<td>Participation and Deliberation: Applying Civic Virtues and Democratic Principles</td>
<td>Exchange and Markets</td>
<td>Human-Environment Interaction: Place, Regions, and Culture</td>
<td>Perspectives</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Processes, Rules, and Laws</td>
<td>The National Economy</td>
<td>Human Population: Spatial Patterns and Movements</td>
<td>Historical Sources and Evidence</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Global Economy</td>
<td>Global Interconnections, Changing Spatial Patterns</td>
<td>Causation and Argumentation</td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

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by the American Anthropological Association and articulates the key disciplinary tools and concepts central to the discipline of anthropology. Anthropology adds its unique and important perspective to the content-specific example in Appendix A: C3 Framework Disciplinary Inquiry Matrix.

**Appendix E: Scholarly Rationale for the C3 Framework.** This appendix articulates the reasoning behind the creation of the C3 Framework and addresses the research base that supports the ideas represented. Now more than ever, students need the intellectual power to recognize societal problems, ask good questions, and develop robust investigations into them; consider possible solutions and consequences; separate evidence-based claims from parochial opinions; and communicate and act upon what they learn. And most importantly, they must possess the capability and commitment to repeat that process as long as is necessary. Young people need strong tools for, and methods of, clear and disciplined thinking in order to traverse successfully the worlds of college, career, and civic life. The C3 Framework and its Inquiry Arc mark a significant departure from past attempts to develop a robust social studies program. The scholarly argument supports and underpins the fundamental shift in direction and practice that the C3 Framework embodies.

The appendices are followed by references and two concluding sections.

- **Glossary of Key Terms in the C3 Framework.** The glossary defines and provides examples of key concepts and terms. The examples are illustrative but are not exhaustive. The definitions and examples are intended to encourage a broad exchange of ideas about social studies content and should contribute to a coherent vision of how social studies might be enlivened and enriched by the use of the C3 Framework.

- **C3 Framework Writing Team Biographical Sketches.** The writing team includes members who have expertise in K-12 social studies education and the academic disciplines of civics, economics, geography, and history. The selection of individuals was based on recommendations from the professional associations and state education agencies engaged in the process of developing the C3 Framework.

**What Is Not Covered in the C3 Framework**

The C3 Framework is intended to serve as a resource for states to consider as they upgrade their existing state social studies standards. The Framework provides guidance on the key concepts and skills students should develop through a robust social studies program of study, but intentionally does not address all of the elements states will need to consider in developing and upgrading standards. There are three main areas not addressed by the framework:

- **Content Necessary for a Rigorous Social Studies Program.** The C3 Framework focuses on the concepts that underlie a rich program of social studies education. The foundational concepts in Dimension 2 outline the scope of the disciplinary knowledge and tools associated with civics, economics, geography, and history. References are made to a range of ideas, such as the U.S. Constitution, economic scarcity, geographical modeling, and chronological sequences. However, the particulars of curriculum and instructional content—such as how a bill becomes a law or the difference between a map and a globe—are important decisions each state needs to make in the development of local social studies standards.

- **Other Disciplines Beyond Civics, Economics, Geography, and History.** The disciplines represented in the C3 Framework are not the only ones relevant to a rich social studies curriculum. Other disciplines, such as anthropology, psychology, and sociology, while not covered in the main body of the C3 Framework, are important lenses for understanding the human experience (see Appendices B, C, and D). Anthropology is the scientific study of humans, past and present; psychology is the scientific study of the mind and behavior; and sociology is the scientific study of the social lives of people, groups, and societies. All have countless applications to everyday life. Indeed, the study of the behavioral and social sciences enhances student preparation for college, careers, and civic life by promoting critical thinking, inquiry, problem-solving, evidence-based reasoning and communication.
skills, as well as multi-cultural and global understandings, the ability to work with diverse groups, and a deep sense of personal and social responsibility (American Anthropological Association, 2013; American Psychological Association, 2011; American Sociological Association 2009). 3

The behavioral and social sciences align well to the C3 Framework, which focuses on the four core social studies disciplines, but some are not included in the body of the framework. These behavioral and social sciences are most frequently taught at the high school level, though efforts are underway to better integrate behavioral and social science concepts in the K-8 age bands. The C3 Framework has been constructed as a K-12 Framework offering specific guidance across the grade bands of K-2, 3-5, 6-8, and 9-12. The tough decision was made early in the development of this framework to focus only on the four federally defined core social studies areas (i.e., civics, economics, geography, and history) to streamline the development process and produce a concise document.

The exclusion of some behavioral and social sciences from the main body of this document should not be seen as minimizing the importance of these other disciplines in a robust social studies curriculum. To that extent, professional organizations affiliated with these areas have been consulted and have created discipline-specific resources to align to this framework document. For example,

Appendices B and C were created by the American Psychological Association and American Sociological Association to align with Dimension 2 as well as other aspects of the C3 Framework. Appendix D is a parallel companion document created by the American Anthropological Association. These supporting documents should be seen as an extension of this framework, as complementary materials that will further the intention of preparing students for civic life. We encourage all readers to refer to and use these additional resources.

- The Different Abilities Children Bring to their Schooling. The C3 Framework is largely silent on the different abilities children bring to their schooling. The C3 Indicators and K-12 Pathways individually and together describe the concepts and skills students develop in a rich, ambitious program of studies. Some students will need far more assistance and support than others in reaching the aims of each Dimension. All children deserve the opportunity to learn. To be successful, students will need varying degrees of scaffolding to support their learning. Smart, thoughtful, and imaginative teachers are widely recognized as key to powerful learning experiences; for English language learners, students with special needs, and struggling readers and writers, such teachers are invaluable.

3 The detailed reference information for works cited can be found in the References section on page 92 below.

YOUNG PEOPLE need strong tools for, and methods of, clear and disciplined thinking in order to traverse successfully the worlds of college, career, and civic life.
THE PRIMARY PURPOSE of the College, Career, and Civic Life (C3) Framework for Social Studies State Standards is to provide guidance to states on the concepts, skills, and disciplinary tools necessary to prepare students for college, career, and civic life. In doing so, the C3 Framework offers guidance and support for rigorous student learning. That guidance and support takes form in an Inquiry Arc—a set of interlocking and mutually reinforcing ideas that feature the four Dimensions of informed inquiry in social studies: 1. Developing questions and planning inquiries; 2. Applying disciplinary concepts and tools; 3. Evaluating sources and using evidence; and 4. Communicating conclusions and taking informed action.

Dimension 1 features the development of questions and the planning of inquiries. With the entire scope of human experience as its backdrop, the content of social studies consists of a rich array of facts, concepts, and generalizations. The way to tie all of this content together is through the use of compelling and supporting questions.

Questioning is key to student learning. The C3 Framework encourages the use of compelling and supporting questions, both teacher- and student-generated, as a central element of the teaching and learning process. For example, a compelling question like "Was the American Revolution revolutionary?" is both intriguing to students and intellectually honest. Such a question can be vigorously explored through the disciplines of civics, economics, geography, and history. It is also sensitive to the idea that students are interested in how and why events are characterized as they are. Supporting questions assist students in addressing their compelling questions. For example, questions like "What were the regulations imposed on the colonists under the Townshend Acts?" will help students understand the many dimensions of the war as they form their conclusions about the magnitude of change associated with those Acts.

Developing compelling and supporting questions is challenging, and teachers will need to provide guidance and support in crafting them, especially for young learners. The indicators for Dimension 1 present a developmentally appropriate, scalable, and assessable set of ideas through which students can demonstrate their increasingly independent facility with recognizing, developing, and articulating powerful questions.

Dimension 2, Applying Disciplinary Concepts and Tools, provides the backbone for the Inquiry Arc. Working with a robust compelling question and a set of discrete supporting questions, teachers and students determine the kind of content they need in order to develop their inquiries. This process is an artful balancing act because the interplay between Dimensions 1 and 2 is dynamic: students access disciplinary knowledge both to develop questions and to pursue those questions using disciplinary concepts and tools.

Children typically begin proposing solutions to compelling questions based on their experiences. Because social studies content is based in human experience, students will have hunches about the questions under study. Rich social studies teaching, however, offers students opportunities to investigate those questions more thoroughly through disciplinary (civic, economic, geographical, or historical) and multi-disciplinary means. Dimension 2 sets forth the conceptual content that defines the disciplines, such as the historian's habit of describing how the perspectives of people in the present shape their interpretations of the past. This practice, along with the curricular content and the distinctive habits of mind from the other social science disciplines, informs students' investigations and contributes to an inquiry process for social studies.

In some cases, the compelling questions posed will draw on content largely from a single discipline. Teachers and students may pull primarily from
economics, for example, to answer the compelling question, “How will an increase in the minimum wage affect local job opportunities for teens?” “Why are there rules?” invites inquiry into key civics concepts. Many compelling questions, however, can best be explored through the use of multiple disciplines. Recall the question, “Was the American Revolution revolutionary?” Students will need to examine a range of economic, geographic, historical, and civic concepts in order to craft a full-bodied, evidence-based response to this question. In similar fashion, a contemporary environmental question such as “What path should a new transcontinental pipeline take?” or “Should the pipeline be built at all?” demands the use of economic, historical, and civic as well as spatial concepts and tools.

With compelling and supporting questions in hand and a sense of the relevant concepts and ideas, the Inquiry Arc of the C3 Framework turns toward the matter of sources and evidence. Social studies is an evidence-based field. The disciplinary concepts represented in Dimension 2 provide a solid base from which students can begin constructing answers to their questions. Equally important, however, is knowing how to fill in the gaps in their knowledge by learning how to work from sources and evidence in order to develop claims and counter-claims.

Sources come in many forms, including historical and contemporary documents, data from direct observation, graphics, economic statistics, maps, legislative actions, objects, and court rulings. Access to these and other digital sources is now more readily available than ever. The availability of source materials, however, does not translate automatically into their wise use. Students must be mindful that not all sources are equal in value and use and that sources do not, by themselves, constitute evidence. Rather, evidence consists of the material students select to support claims and counter-claims in order to construct accounts, explanations, and arguments. Helping students develop a capacity for gathering and evaluating sources and then using evidence in disciplinary ways is a central feature of the Inquiry Arc represented by Dimension 3, Evaluating Sources and Using Evidence.

A compelling question such as “Was the Civil Rights Movement of the 1960s a success?” demands that students draw evidence from more than one or two sources. A wide range of perspectives is available in both primary and secondary form. Having students gather, evaluate, and use a rich subset of those sources offers them opportunities to identify claims and counter-claims and to support those claims with evidence. Making and supporting evidence-based claims and counter-claims is key to student capacity to construct explanations and arguments.

HELPING STUDENTS DEVELOP a capacity for gathering and evaluating sources and then using evidence in disciplinary ways is a central feature of the Inquiry Arc represented by Dimension 3, Evaluating Sources and Using Evidence.
Developing explanations and making and supporting arguments can take form in individual essays, group projects, and other classroom-based written assessments, both formal and informal. But students need not be limited to those avenues. Although there is no substitute for thoughtful and persuasive writing, the Framework advocates expanding the means by which students communicate their preliminary and final conclusions. As the Indicators for Dimension 4 (Communicating Conclusions and Taking Informed Action) demonstrate, those means include a range of venues and a variety of forms (e.g., discussions, debates, policy analyses, video productions, and portfolios). Moreover, the manner in which students work to create their solutions can differ. Students need opportunities to work individually, with partners, in small groups, and within whole-class settings. Readiness for college, career, and civic life is as much about the experiences students have as it is about learning any particular set of concepts or tools. Thus, the learning environments that teachers create are critical to student success. Students will flourish to the extent that their independent and collaborative efforts are guided, supported, and honored.

Active and responsible citizens identify and analyze public problems; deliberate with other people about how to define and address issues; take constructive, collaborative action; reflect on their actions; create and sustain groups; and influence institutions both large and small. They vote, serve on juries, follow the news and current events, and participate in voluntary groups and efforts. Teaching students to act in these ways—as citizens—significantly enhances preparation for college and career. Many of the same skills that are needed for active and responsible citizenship—working effectively with other people, deliberating and reasoning quantitatively about issues, following the news, and forming and sustaining groups—are also crucial to success in the 21st century workplace and in college. Individual mastery of content often no longer suffices; students should also develop the capacity to work together to apply knowledge to real problems. Thus, a rich social studies education is an education for college, career, and civic life.

In one sense, Dimension 4 closes the Inquiry Arc. But learning is reflexive and recursive—new disciplinary knowledge can be the source of new questions, communicating ideas in one setting can lead to new ideas about evidence, and new historical sources can lead to new disciplinary and interdisciplinary concepts. The Inquiry Arc of the C3 Framework offers states guidance for developing standards with multiple opportunities for students to develop as thoughtful, engaged citizens.

**ACTIVE AND RESPONSIBLE CITIZENS**

identify and analyze public problems; deliberate with other people about how to define and address issues; take constructive, collaborative action; reflect on their actions; create and sustain groups; and influence institutions both large and small.
The Common Core State Standards for English Language Arts and Literacy in History/Social Studies, Science, and the Technical Subjects call on social studies teachers to share in the responsibilities for literacy instruction in K-12 education (NGA and CCSSO, 2010a). The expectations for literacy learning in grades K–5 are established through the four strands of Reading, Writing, Speaking and Listening, and Language. For grades 6–12, the ELA/Literacy Common Core Standards provide specific literacy standards for Reading and Writing in History/Social Studies. The C3 Framework fully incorporates and extends the expectations for literacy learning put forward in the Common Core Standards for ELA/Literacy on three levels (Table 3).

Connections between the C3 Framework and the College and Career Readiness (CCR) Anchor Standards. Each strand of the Common Core State Standards for English Language Arts/Literacy is headed by a set of College and Career Readiness (CCR) Anchor Standards that are identical across all grades and content areas, including social studies. The authors of the C3 Framework view the literacy skills detailed in the ELA/Literacy Common Core College and Career Readiness (CCR) Anchor Standards as establishing a foundation for inquiry in social studies, and as such all CCR Anchor Standards should be an indispensable part of any state’s social studies standards. Many specific CCR Anchor Standards are directly supportive of the C3 Framework.

### TABLE 3: Connections between the C3 Framework and the CCR Anchor Standards in the ELA/Literacy Common Core Standards

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<tr>
<th>FUNDAMENTAL</th>
<th>All ELA/Literacy Common Core Standards</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>SUPPORTIVE</td>
<td>Reading 1-10, Writing 1, 7-9; Speaking and Listening 1-6; Language 6</td>
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### TABLE 4: Connections between the C3 Framework and the CCR Anchor Standards in the ELA/Literacy Common Core Standards

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<th>DIMENSION 1</th>
<th>ANCHOR STANDARDS</th>
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<th>DIMENSION 3</th>
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while three of these CCR Anchor Standards are vital to social studies inquiry.

The connections between the C3 Framework and the ELA/Literacy Common Core Standards are comprehensive and consistent. The CCR Anchor Standards for the ELA/Literacy Common Core Standards, particularly those in the Reading, Writing, and Speaking and Listening strands, provide a useful context for illustrating the broader connections across and within each Dimension. These supportive connections are detailed for each of the Dimensions in Table 4.4

The CCR Anchor Standards in Table 4 focus on a wide range of inquiry practices that contribute to the literacy foundations in social studies. Social studies students should use and attend to the skills described in these standards to assist them in focusing their inquiries and research practices. The C3 Framework emphasizes and elaborates on those skills in the Common Core Standards that explicitly connect to inquiry, and recognizes the shared responsibility social studies plays in honing key literacy skills.

Three CCR Anchor Standards (and their corresponding grade-specific standards) are particularly vital to social studies inquiry. Common Core Anchor Standard for Reading 1 asks students to read texts closely to both determine “explicit” information lodged within the body of the text as well as draw “logical inferences” based on the text (NGA and CCSSO, 2010a, p. 10). Students are also expected to “cite specific textual evidence when writing or speaking to support conclusions drawn from the text” (NGA and CCSSO, 2010a, p. 10). The C3 Framework stresses the role evidence plays in the four Dimensions: explicitly in Dimension 3, which focuses on developing claims and using evidence, and inferentially in developing questions answered with evidence in Dimension 1 or communicating conclusions supported by evidence in Dimension 4. The emphasis on evidence also connects the disciplines in Dimension 2.

Additionally, Common Core Anchor Standard for Writing 7 is broadly relevant for inquiry in social studies. Writing Standard 7 calls on students to “conduct short as well as more sustained research projects based on focused questions, demonstrating understanding of the subject under investigation” (NGA and CCSSO, 2010a, p. 18). The C3 Framework elevates research as a process of inquiry that informs the Indicators in all four Dimensions. Dimension 2 establishes the tools and concepts from the social studies disciplines that are relevant for inquiry. Dimensions 1, 3, and 4 describe the general social studies inquiry skills and processes that support argumentation, explanation, and taking informed action.

Finally, Common Core Anchor Standard for Speaking and Listening 1 has broad application across the four Dimensions. Speaking and Listening Standard 1 calls on students to “prepare for and participate effectively in a range of conversations and collaborations with diverse partners, building on others’ ideas and expressing their own clearly and persuasively” (NGA and CCSSO, 2010a, p. 22). Indicators in the C3 Framework describe the types of collaboration needed for: specific skills and understandings. For example, a Dimension 1 Indicator states, “By the end of grade 2, individually and with others, students construct compelling questions....” The C3 Framework acknowledges civil and democratic discourse within a diverse, collaborative context as both a purpose and outcome of a strong, meaningful, and substantive social studies education.

Shared Language. Language and concepts from the ELA/Literacy Common Core Standards were deliberately used in specific Indicators across the C3 Framework Dimensions. For example, the terms argument and explanation; claim and counterclaim; information and evidence; and point of view and opinion appear regularly in the ELA/Literacy Common Core Standards and throughout the Dimensions of the C3 Framework.5

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4 As Common Core states upgrade their social studies standards, they will want to incorporate the grade-specific standards for K-5 and the grade-band specific standards for literacy in social studies for grades 6-12 that correspond to the CCR anchor standard with the same number.

5 Although the ELA/Literacy Common Core Standards and the C3 Framework both emphasize the unique skill of constructing evidence-based arguments, different terms are used: opinion in the ELA/Literacy Common Core Standards for grades K-5 and argument throughout the C3 Framework.