Published in 2013, the College, Career, and Civic Life (C3) Framework for Social Studies is the result of a three-year effort by a national network of social studies educators to “re-envision the purpose and instructional practices of social studies education in the states.” In response to the C3, many States and school districts around the nation have begun work to modify curricular requirements and instructional programming in social studies. As a result, districts considering the adoption of new instructional materials for social studies may inquire about their compatibility with the C3. The purpose of this document is to demonstrate a clear and comprehensive alignment between Discovery Education Social Studies Techbook and the C3 Framework.

The C3 Standards

The C3 Framework was designed to provide guidance to states seeking to “update, revise, or reinvent their state social studies standards.” It is also intended to provide support for local school districts, schools, and individual teachers “who seek to strengthen their social studies programs” by enhancing their rigor, “building the critical thinking, problem solving, and participatory skills necessary for students to become engaged citizens,” and “aligning academic programs to the Common Core State Standards for English Language Arts and Literacy in History/Social Studies.”

The foundation of the C3 Framework are its developers’ “shared principles about high quality social studies instruction,” including social studies’ core purpose to prepare students for “college, careers, and civic life;” the role of inquiry as “the heart of social studies” instruction; the involvement of “interdisciplinary applications” and the integration of “arts and humanities;” the emphasis on “skills and practices for democratic decision-making;” and the need for social studies education to make “connections to the Common Core Standards.”

The C3 Framework is organized around an Inquiry Arc that “focuses on the nature of inquiry in general and the pursuit of knowledge through questions in particular.” The Inquiry Arc consists of four Dimensions and each Dimension provides Indicators, which, when considered together, provide a series of K–12 “Pathways for College, Career, and Civic Readiness.” The Dimensions are:

1. Developing Questions and Planning Inquiries
2. Applying Disciplinary Tools and Concepts
3. Evaluating Sources and Using Evidence
4. Communicating Conclusions and Taking Informed Action
Social Studies Techbook

Discovery Education’s Social Studies Techbook is a breakthrough digital textbook that fundamentally changes the way students and teachers experience social studies. Techbook features Core Interactive Text, a comprehensive, all-in-one design that integrates exclusive video, multimedia activities, and digital text. This design saves teachers time, places students at the center of their own learning, and eases school districts’ transition to digital learning. Techbook also includes many features to help teachers meet the needs of all of their students. These include different reading levels, speech-to-text, and an interactive glossary. Techbook is custom-built to help students meet rigorous requirements, including the Common Core and individual state social studies standards.

Techbook’s design and instructional resources reflect the shared principles that are the foundation of the C3. First, Techbook provides a multitude of resources for teachers to prepare students for college, career, and civic life. For example, every Techbook concept provides opportunities for teachers to emphasize key literacy and writing skills. Teachers can use resources and activities in each E-tab of Social Studies Techbook to provide students practice in skills such as reading and understanding informational texts, analyzing sources, and composing arguments. Second, Techbook includes a variety of features, described in detail later in this document, to make an inquiry approach to social studies teaching and learning more accessible to teachers and students. Third, Techbook supports interdisciplinary applications as well as the integration of arts and humanities. Throughout Techbook, resources such as text and video segments explain connections between scientific processes and social studies topics. For example, resources in World Geography and Cultures Techbook examine the economic implications of the slow formation of fossil fuels. You as Artist activities, found in the Elaborate tab, provide students with opportunities to analyze samples of visual art, music, and literature from various time periods in American and world history. Fourth, Techbook emphasizes students’ development of skills for democratic decision-making. It frequently engages students in detailed analysis of historical and contemporary issues and provides them with opportunities to offer and defend policy alternatives. Fifth, Techbook is well aligned with the Common Core State Standards for English Language Arts and Literacy in History/Social Studies. In states that have adopted the Common Core State Standards, each concept features a Common Core Connections page that provides examples of Techbook resources aligned with specific Common Core requirements.

Dimension 1: Developing Questions and Planning Inquiries

The first Dimension of the C3 Framework features Indicators designed to support instruction that nurtures students’ capacity to generate “questions that can frame and advance an inquiry” in social studies. The Framework argues that such questions “come in two forms: compelling and supporting questions.” Compelling questions “focus on enduring issues and concerns,” while supporting questions “focus on descriptions, definitions, and processes on which there is general agreement within the social studies disciplines.” Dimension 1 also includes Indicators that are intended to ensure that students can determine helpful sources for addressing compelling and supporting questions.
Social Studies Techbook is organized to facilitate inquiry-based social studies instruction and models for students the process of developing questions, planning inquiries, and determining helpful sources for addressing questions. The focal point of each Techbook concept is a compelling Essential Question that teachers may use to bring purpose to students’ exploration of content. Thus, teachers and students may frame their examination of events leading to the American Revolution around the Essential Question “Why did the colonists risk their lives to fight for independence from Great Britain?” The Explain tab in each concept also includes a Social Studies Explanation activity, in which students evaluate the importance of the concept’s Essential Question, document evidence they have gathered that relates to this Essential Question, form and defend preliminary responses to the Essential Question, and identify questions they still must address to complete their inquiries. As students complete their Social Studies Explanation, they identify additional questions—both compelling and supporting—that they have developed in their exploration of the topic and brainstorm how they would pursue additional inquiry into these questions.

Techbook’s organization also models for students the process of raising and addressing supporting questions. Each Explore page begins with a supporting Focus Question. For example, the Focus Question “What challenges did victory in the French and Indian War bring for the British?” gives meaning to students’ examination of text and other resources found on the page “The Cost of Victory” in Britain vs. the Colonists. Explore pages also feature graphic organizers that may be used as during-reading activities. These organizers include additional supporting questions, such as “What problems did victory in the French and Indian War bring to the British?” and “What solutions did the British devise to solve these problems?”

Social Studies Techbook also provides students with many opportunities to generate and address their own supporting and compelling questions. The Elaborate tab for each concept features a Self-Guided Inquiry planning template that students may use to generate their own compelling questions, identify possible sources for addressing them, and then conduct inquiries around these questions. Each Techbook also includes guides for analyzing different types of information and source materials, including statistical data and primary sources. These guides are accompanied by activities that require students to generate questions raised by the information provided in the targeted sources. For example, the Database of United States History and the World Geography and Cultures Database are accompanied by Diving into the Data activities that provide students with opportunities to conduct research around self-generated Essential Questions. The Database of United States History also features a Writing Prompt in which students respond to the questions “What questions do these statistics raise about the United States? What sources could you consult to find the answers to your own questions?”
Dimension 2: Applying Disciplinary Concepts and Tools

The C3 Framework states, “four core disciplines within social studies provide the intellectual context for studying how humans have interacted with each other and with the environment over time.” As a result, Dimension 2 of the Framework includes conceptual understandings students should develop from grades K-12 in the areas of civics, economics, geography, and history.

**Civics.** The C3 Framework emphasizes the importance of students developing understandings of “the important institutions of their society and the principles that these institutions are intended to reflect,” including “mastery of a body of knowledge about law, politics and government.” Thus, the first Indicator category for Civics covers disciplinary ideas in the area of “Civic and Political Institutions.” The second Civics Indicator category, “Participation and Deliberation,” involves student understanding of “democratic principles” and “civic virtues” that guide governmental institutions and the interactions between citizens in our democratic society.

Social Studies Techbook includes resources for instructing and assessing students in both of these categories. The early World History Techbook covers the emergence and evolution of political systems in the ancient world, including the development of democratic principles and institutions in ancient Greece and Rome. World Geography and Cultures Techbook devotes full concepts to describing governmental systems in each of its ten global regions and also provides students opportunities to evaluate the impact of democratic and authoritarian practices on human lives in each of these areas. Each United States History Techbook examines the evolution of American political institutions since colonial times, with special emphasis on providing students with opportunities to evaluate the extent to which governmental processes in the United States have lived up to the principles and virtues of the founding documents. Each United States History Techbook also features detailed overviews of the American political system as established by the U.S. Constitution.

Social Studies Techbook also provides opportunities for students to exercise the disciplinary skills of Civics, such as predicting civic consequences and analyzing alternatives. Many Techbook activities ask students to analyze and evaluate real or simulated policies and their alternatives. Activities from the Elaborate tab such as Debates and Express Your Opinion often ask students to evaluate the purpose or impact of policy decisions. The interactive Global Challenge and Key Decision Investigations ask students to take on the role of policy advisers to world leaders, analyze the advantages and disadvantages of various proposals, and advocate for a position.
Economics. In Economics, the C3 argues that “effective economic decision making requires that students have a keen understanding of the ways in which individuals, businesses, governments, and societies make decisions to allocate human capital, physical capital, and natural resources among alternative uses.” This includes understanding of the “interaction of buyers and sellers in markets, workings of the national economy, and interactions within the global marketplace.” Hence, the Framework includes Indicators from four areas: Economic Decision Making, Exchange and Markets, The National Economy, and The Global Economy.

World History Techbook examines economic influences on the early development and evolution of human civilizations, including the role geography played in early specialization, the first global trade networks, and the emergence of early technologies. World Geography and Cultures Techbook features concepts devoted to describing economic systems and economic decision-making in ten different regions of the world. It places frequent emphasis on factors that influence economic decisions that are made by individuals and institutions around the world while also examining economic, social, and political consequences of these decisions. Each United States History Techbook traces the development of the American mixed-market economic system and the emergence of the United States as a global economic power.

Activities in Techbook’s Elaborate tab provide students with opportunities to apply economic reasoning to evaluate pivotal decisions and policies implemented by institutions at key moments in history. For example, activities such as Express Your Opinion often engage students in cost-benefit analysis to formulate policy positions on historic issues such as how to respond to the Great Depression. In addition, many Document-Based Investigations establish inquiries in which students consider whether the benefits of influential technologies and innovations were worth the costs. Finally, Global Challenges and interactive Key Decisions Investigations require students to select and prioritize policy alternatives for dealing with historical and contemporary economic issues.

Geography. The C3 Framework’s Geography Indicators are organized around the idea that the student’s ability to employ “geographic reasoning” depends upon “deep knowledge of Earth’s physical and human features” as well as the ability to “use spatial and environmental perspectives, skills in asking and answering questions, and being able to apply geographic representations including maps, imagery and geospatial technologies.” Indicator categories include Geographic Representations: Spatial Views of the World; Human-Environment Interaction: Place, Regions, and Culture; Human Population: Spatial Patterns and Movements; and Global Interconnectedness: Changing Spatial Patterns.
An array of digital tools common to all of the Techbooks may be used to develop students’ geographic reasoning in each of these areas. For example, the interactive Techbook Atlas permits users to create customized maps of global regions by combining a selection of overlays with base maps. In doing so, students not only acquire knowledge of physical and human features of Earth but also have the opportunity to identify and explain spatial patterns. Included with the Atlas is a series of Teacher Guides that provide activity suggestions customized to the area of the world being covered in class. For example, when World Geography and Cultures students study North Africa and Southwest Asia, they can use the Techbook Atlas to propose a location for a new desalinization plant in this region. In addition, the Investigation type Timeline Maps permits students to interact with digital maps to see how various places changed at key moments in history. In the Timeline Map Westward Expansion, students study an information-rich map of the territorial expansion of the United States during the mid-1800s to draw conclusions about the motives and impacts of the country's growth.

A common theme in each Techbook is the impact that geographic characteristics have on human-environment interactions, settlement patterns, economic activities, movement, and the development of cultural characteristics. World History Techbook, for example, examines how interactions between human and physical systems in the ancient world affected the development, spread, and movement of cultures, civilizations, and empires. In United States History, students examine how spatial patterns in physical characteristics of the United States contributed to the development of distinctly different economic and social systems in the country's northern and southern regions.

**History.** The C3 Framework states that historical thinking “involves going beyond simply asking, ‘What happened when?’ to evaluating why and how events occurred and developments unfolded.” It also involves “the appropriate use of historical evidence in answering questions and developing arguments about the past.” Central to students’ appropriate use of historical evidence is the ability to assemble “information from a wide variety of sources in an integrative process.” The C3’s History Indicators fall into four categories: Change, Continuity, and Context; Perspectives; Historical Sources and Evidence; and Causation and Arguments.

Social Studies Techbook is organized to facilitate inquiry-based social studies instruction and therefore models for students the process of using evidence from varied primary and secondary sources to address questions and develop and defend claims about the past. Techbook also provides students with a multitude of activities to develop and refine historical-thinking skills. Graphic organizers embedded in the Core Interactive Text and Explain activities often feature timelines and other tools that require students to document and account for meaningful examples of historical continuity and change.
The interactive Investigation type Historical Perspectives enables students to use
digital tools to acquire detailed information and then make educated predictions
about perspectives from a variety of time periods and places. Document-
Based Investigations provide students primary source materials for developing
and defending responses to compelling historical questions. Other Elaborate
activity types, including Say What?, Student Sleuth, Express Your Opinion, You
as Artist, and Socratic Seminar, involve students in evaluating historical evidence
to develop and defend claims.

Dimension 3: Evaluating Sources
and Using Evidence

Dimension 3 includes skills associated with “gathering and evaluating sources, and
then developing claims and using evidence to support those claims.” According
to the C3 framework, students should be able to use “various technologies and
skills to find information to express their responses to compelling and supporting
questions . . .” Included in this skill set is the ability to consider characteristics
of sources, such as their origin, authority, structure, context, and corroborative
value, to guide selection and analysis of information. It also includes the ability
to note “evidentiary limitations” of sources used to address inquiries.

Social Studies Techbook features a variety of tools to develop students’ ability
to evaluate sources and use evidence. Each Techbook includes the reading
passage “Evaluating and Using Sources,” which serves as a guide to help
students understand the different kinds of resources available for research in the
social sciences, the advantages and disadvantages of different types of sources,
and the ways sources can be used to learn about social studies topics. A Teacher
Guide for this reading passage includes suggestions to help teachers provide
effective instruction around source analysis skills. The reading passage is also
accompanied in the Core Interactive Text by assignments designed to provide
students with practice evaluating sources to learn about specific topics. For
example, in the early United States History Techbook, students may complete
an assignment in which they select a historical figure, find primary and secondary
sources about that individual, and use Board Builder, Discovery Education’s tool
for creating digital presentations, to display information they learned about
the figure from analyzing these sources.

Additional activities in Techbook’s Elaborate tab provide students with extensive
opportunities to analyze primary and secondary sources and then develop and
defend claims using information from the sources as evidence. Nearly every
Techbook concept features a Document- Based Investigation, in which students
are presented with a compelling question, provided with a variety of source
materials for addressing the question, and then assigned a final product for
reporting their findings. Many other Elaborate activity types, including Say
What?, Student Sleuth, Express Your Opinion, You as Artist, and Socratic Seminar,
involve primary source analysis for the purpose of developing and defending
claims.
All of these Elaborate activities include scaffolding tools that model for students effective source analysis and argument development processes. Finally, Source Analysis interactive Investigations enable students to use digital tools to analyze primary source documents such as the famous “King Andrew the First” cartoon, which was created in the 1830s as a criticism of President Andrew Jackson. Each Source Analysis Investigation includes a Teacher Guide that provides suggestions for products students may create in response to their source investigation. For example, the Teacher Guide for the “King Andrew the First” Investigation recommends that teachers engage students in writing letters to the cartoonist expressing agreement or opposition to his opinions about President Jackson.

**Dimension 4: Communicating Conclusions and Taking Informed Action**

Dimension 4 of the C3 Framework maintains that inquiries in social studies should go beyond merely requiring students to generate questions, apply disciplinary knowledge, evaluate sources, and develop and defend claims. Inquiries must also support “readiness for civic life” by providing students with opportunities to “collaborate with others as they communicate their conclusions and critiques in public venues” that “may range from the school classroom to the larger public community.” As a result, this Dimension includes Indicators addressing the areas of “Communicating and Critiquing Conclusions” and “Taking Informed Action.” Indicators in the first area emphasize students’ capacity to “draw on multiple disciplinary lenses” to “critique arguments and the structure of explanations.” They also include the use of “print and oral technologies.” The latter category’s focus is on training students to apply “deliberative and democratic procedures to make decisions and take action.”

Social Studies Techbook provides students with many varied opportunities to communicate and critique conclusions in public venues. The Elaborate tab features several activity types in which students conduct inquiries and communicate their findings by creating a variety of different products, including letters to past and present public officials, position papers, speeches, news and magazine articles, digital slide presentations, debate statements, and even original artwork. Two Elaborate activity types in particular emphasize both collaboration and critique. In Socratic Seminars, students read one or a series of primary sources together and then conduct a large group discussion around a compelling question. In one activity from United States History (Civil War – Present), for example, students examine sources from the McCarthy Era and then discuss the questions “What is McCarthyism? What impact does it have on democracy? Based on what happened in the 1950s, what sort of circumstances led to its emergence?” Classroom Debate activities assign groups of students competing claims to defend and then provide a detailed and manageable framework for teachers to facilitate structured student debates around these claims. In World Geography and Cultures, for example, students may debate competing claims on the potential costs and benefits of China’s recent rapid economic growth.
Techbook also provides students with opportunities to analyze issues, propose and defend policy solutions, and take informed action. World Geography and Cultures Techbook, for example, features an interactive Investigation type called Global Challenges. In these Investigations, students use digital tools to understand global issues, analyze alternatives for dealing with these issues, and propose solutions. Not only do these activities model for students the processes that effective citizens use to analyze issues and evaluate policy alternatives, but they also include Teacher Guides that provide suggestions for students to present and defend policy proposals. The Teacher Guide for the Global Challenge entitled “The Future of Energy in India,” for example, suggests that students create documentary films or a class conference to present their ideas. In addition, Techbook includes Elaborate activities in which students identify problems in their schools or communities, conduct research on possible options for addressing these problems, and formulate action plans to facilitate change. The early United States History Techbook, for example, features a Civic Virtue Project, in which students design community improvement projects around self-selected characteristics of civic virtue. This Pitch Your Idea Elaborate activity is accompanied by a Writing Prompt that enables students to reflect on the effectiveness of their action plans after implementation. Similar activities, called Act Locally, appear in World Geography and Cultures and modern United States History Techbooks.

**Conclusion**

In response to the publication of the C3 Framework, many States and school districts have begun to modify curricular requirements and instructional programming in social studies. As a result, districts considering the adoption of new social studies instructional materials may inquire about their compatibility with the C3. Discovery Education Social Studies Techbook is clearly and comprehensively aligned with both the broader purpose and specific requirements of the C3. It is well suited to serve as the basis for school districts’ efforts to provide social studies instruction that will prepare students for academics, careers, and citizenship.