

Differentiation Strategies

*for Gifted/Advanced Students
in Social Studies, Grades 4-8*



Differentiation Strategies for Gifted/Advanced Students in Social Studies is designed to assist educators in addressing differentiation in the social studies classrooms, Grades 4-8. Specific content and grade level examples illustrate the theories of gifted/advanced education in real social studies settings.

- The introduction addresses the importance of differentiated curriculum for the gifted/advanced student.
- The first section focuses on depth and complexity. Instructional strategies, with specific implementation examples and different levels of complexity, are included in Part I.
- The second section discusses ways teachers can add more breadth to the state-mandated social studies curriculum. Grade level specific examples, which use assorted teaching methodologies and illustrate how teachers can add more variety to classroom instruction, are described in Part II.

Differentiation Strategies for Gifted/Advanced Students in Social Studies includes practical content examples and provides a framework from which teachers can create their own differentiated activities and lessons. The book includes:

- A definition of gifted students/advanced students
- Characteristics of a social studies gifted student
- An examination of differentiated concepts
- Strategies for planning lessons that can meet the needs of gifted and advanced social studies students, including:
 - Compacting the Curriculum
 - Student Research and Products
 - Tiered Instruction
 - Critical Thinking
 - Flexible Grouping

Detailed teacher notes are provided to assist the teacher in the implementation of these strategies.

Professional development is available with this product, which includes 6 hours G/T Update Credit, approved by TAGT (Texas Association for the Gifted and Talented).

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The following document is a “snapshot” or preview of the book *Differentiated Strategies for Gifted/Advanced Students in Social Studies*.

This book has been created to illustrate differentiation principles for the gifted or advanced student and help address those needs. All students need a challenging curriculum, including the gifted student. This book will include concrete examples of differentiation using Social Studies content. Several resources that are well known in the field of giftedness were used as the foundation for the differentiation strategies used in this book. Those resources will be listed in the back of the book.

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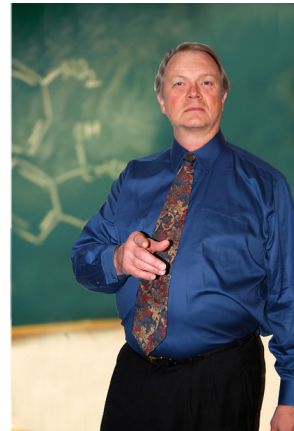
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A Visit to Mr. Pagnea's Social Studies Class

When the sixth graders at Tall Middle School come home on the first day of school, one of the classes that they all anxiously discuss is social studies. The teacher for this class is Mr. Pagnea*, and he has taught sixth grade social studies at Tall Middle School for many years.

Any student who has been instructed by Mr. Pagnea would be able to explain the focus of the course. First, Mr. Pagnea is serious about the content in his class. He has prescribed lists of dates, names, and events that he believes are essential knowledge. Every day, students can expect a new list of people, places, and events to be displayed on the chalkboard. Once Mr. Pagnea gives the overview and reads the objective from the board, students know that it is time for them to begin their "trivia pursuits" as they read through their textbooks and copy information about each item on the list.



Mr. Pagnea's classes consist of students of various ethnicities, socio-economic levels, and ability levels, including a large group of advanced learners and those identified as gifted and talented (G/T) students. Among these students are some "diamonds in the rough"; or high level thinkers who have not been identified as advanced learners or G/T. This diverse group of students possesses many different learning styles and multiple intelligences.

Mr. Pagnea never fails to remind the advanced learners and the G/T students that he expects them to do more than the other students. He is quick to point out the fact that this course has been customized for the gifted and talented and that he expects them to go beyond what the "regular" students are doing. For example, he states that while the other students are required to do only 10 vocabulary words each week, the G/T students are required to learn the same 10 words plus 20 additional words. A paper/pencil objective test is given over these words every Friday.

Mr. Pagnea further explains that the gifted and talented students are required to do oral reports for each unit. He gives them the guidelines for these reports and cautions them that they should not attempt any other oral presentation format. In his opinion, the other formats are just nonsense and do not help students learn the content.

Mr. Pagnea informs the advanced and G/T students that they are expected to answer more questions from the textbook than the other students.

**Mr. Pagnea is not a real person, but is based on a compilation of observations and reports of classroom experiences.*

How is this book organized?

In the introduction section of the book the authors will review what differentiation is and why we differentiate for the gifted or advanced student. The remaining two sections of the book are focused on depth and breadth.

- **Part I** of the book is focused on how teachers can add more **depth and complexity** to classroom instruction. This section will demonstrate several instructional strategies that incorporate different levels of complexity. This section is divided into three parts:
 - **Content**
 - **Process**
 - **Products**
- **Part II** of the book is focused on ways teachers can add more **breadth** to the curriculum. This section will give examples on how teachers can add more variety to classroom instruction using various teaching methodologies.

Throughout the book, specific examples of implementing these strategies will be discussed. Some examples will be applicable to all Social Studies curriculum in grades 4-8, while others will use precise curriculum content.

The intent of this book is to give Social Studies teachers many content examples that illustrate how to increase the depth and breadth of the content they teach. These classroom-tested differentiation strategies have already helped teachers improve the quality of instruction for the gifted student.

Imperative (You must do all of these.)	Negotiable (You must do at least one of these.)	Options (You may do one or more of these.)
1. Create a map of Africa, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Physical features • Political boundaries • Capital cities • Major bodies of water 	1. Create a graph comparing the standard of living in different parts of Africa. Include at least 10 different areas. Your graph should show both low and high standards of living. The graph can be drawn on paper or created using a computer program. Draw conclusions about the relationship between the physical features in Africa and standard of living.	1. Compare and contrast the standard of living in Africa to the standard of living in the continents of North America, South America, and Asia. Draw conclusions about the relationship of the physical features of the areas and the standard of living in each area. Present a commercial, encouraging people to move to the location with the best standard of living. Use persuasive techniques along with factual information.
2. Create another map of Africa and locate the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Population density • Industrial areas (specify the industries) • Agricultural areas (specify the crops grown) 	2. Create maps showing the spread of AIDS in Africa. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • One map should show areas in Africa infected by AIDS when the disease was first recognized. • A second map should show the areas in Africa infected by AIDS several years later. • A third map should show AIDS in Africa today. Draw conclusions about the relationship between the physical features of Africa and the spread of AIDS.	2. Create a diary of a person who lives in an AIDS-infected area in Africa. Include at least 10 entries, using factual information about the spread of AIDS in Africa and its effects on the people there. Identify the location of the person who is writing the diary.
3. Create a flyer for one area of Africa. The purpose of the flyer is to convince people to live in that area of Africa instead of some other area. Include pictures and facts about the area that would appeal to potential immigrants.	3. Create maps comparing the spread of three infectious diseases. These events can be during the same or different time periods. Draw conclusions about spatial diffusion based on your maps and propose solutions to the possible spread of infectious diseases in the future.	3. Write an editorial for a newspaper in Africa about the AIDS epidemic. Use statistical information to back up your opinion about what the government and other agencies should do in response to the AIDS outbreak. Make predictions about what will happen if measures are not implemented.

Example: Texas History

Using synetics to help a student make a connection with something they know to new content is another way to present material. Synetics is the forced association of two irrelevant ideas. This is done with analogies, similes, or metaphors.

One example of synetics is the 5-7-9 strategy. This idea is based on one of Dr. Nancy Radcliffe's strategies. The steps for this activity and an example follow.

5-7-9 Strategy

- Create a three-column chart on paper.
- In the far left column, list **five** significant individuals from the current topic or era being studied.
- In the middle column, list **seven** significant locations or events related to the topic or era.
- In the far right column, list **nine** situations that might occur. The situations should be applicable to the period you chose. Examples:
 - Someone is shot.
 - Two people get married.
 - A colony is settled.
- In the list of significant individuals, rank them from 1-5 in order of importance. This ranking is personal opinion, but the student must be able to back up the opinion with facts and persuasive arguments.
- Choose a number at random from one to five from the ranked list of significant individuals; the student will write a paragraph about that person.
- The student will include at least one of the locations or events and at least one of the situations listed in the other two columns of your chart.
- Sample paragraph topic: Why would this person be (or not be) a successful leader in America today?

Student sample: Topic – Texas Revolution

5	7	9
Sam Houston	Alamo	Shoot a gun
Santa Anna	Gonzales	Cook a meal
William Travis	San Jacinto	Ride a horse
Charles Childress	Goliad	Write a letter
Juan Seguin	Washington-on-the-Brazos	Serve in the military
	Velasco	Get married
	Galveston	Have children
		Capture the enemy
		Get elected to an office

Example: Texas History

Student writing: (The number three was assigned for column one.)

William Travis would be a great leader today. He showed tremendous courage under fire as he held the Texans steady during the siege on the Alamo in 1836. He pled for help in his letter "To the People of Texas & all Americans in the world", yet he knew that help would probably not be coming. Although he knew he was on a suicide mission, he believed in the cause of independence and fought to the death. That kind of dedication to freedom is a leadership quality we need today in our democratic society.

To further challenge students, require them to make associations with all the words in the same location in each column. In the previous example, Students have to write about William Travis, San Jacinto, and ride a horse.

Example: American History

Using “Opinion-support notes” can be an effective tool in teaching students how to justify their beliefs with facts. Initially a student might justify an opinion with another opinion. This framework requires students to collect specific data in defending their suppositions. An example for the American Revolution, which is part of both the Grade 5 and 8 curricula, follows: (adapted from *Project CRISS*, Santa, et. al., 2004)

Opinion	Support
<p>American colonists were justified in revolting against Great Britain and declaring independence in 1776.</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. British citizens were guaranteed certain rights in the Magna Carta and the English Bill of Rights. <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Freedom of speech b. Direct representation c. Protection against search and seizure 2. Taxes were to be levied by local representative assemblies, not by Parliament. 3. Americans were British citizens and felt that their rights were being abridged. They did not have direct representation in Parliament and were expected to pay taxes passed by this legislative body. <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Sugar Act b. Stamp Act c. Townshend Acts d. writs of assistance e. Tea Act f. Intolerable/Coercive Acts 4. American colonists repeatedly attempted to work with the English government to avoid armed conflict. <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. non-violent boycotts and protests b. Olive Branch Petition 5. King George III and Parliament had broken the social contract established between them and the colonists; therefore, the colonists had the right to overthrow this government and replace it with one that would protect their “inalienable rights” of “life, liberty, and pursuit of happiness”.

Example: American History

The opposite viewpoint might look like this:

Opinion	Support
<p>American colonists were not justified in revolting against Great Britain and declaring independence in 1776.</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. British citizens, including American colonists, were represented by Parliament<ol style="list-style-type: none">a. Glorious Revolution: sovereignty of King-in-Parliamentb. Declaratory Act of 17662. Even if the colonists had proportionate representation in Parliament, their interests would always be outvoted by the majority of both the House of Commons and House of Lords, due to the smaller proportion of American colonial population compared to the rest of the British Empire.3. Other British colonists were represented in exactly the same way as the American colonists yet had no grievances. (approximately one-fourth of the world)<ol style="list-style-type: none">a. Canadab. West Indiesc. Far East (India, Bangladesh)d. Australia4. American colonists benefited greatly from British governmental aid and should help pay for this service through taxation.<ol style="list-style-type: none">a. Colonial charters (e.g., Jamestown, Plymouth)b. French and Indian War5. American colonists paid less in taxes than British citizens living in the British Isles.6. Americans had been smuggling goods in and out of the colonies for over a century. Their disregard for laws negated their defense of their rights as loyal British subjects.

Advanced students need opportunities to examine multiple viewpoints of an issue, and this framework requires them to find hard evidence to support both sides of the debate.