

Differentiated Instruction in Social Studies

- Multiple Intelligences
- Learning Centers
- Flexible Grouping
- Learning Contracts
- Tiering
- Compacting
- Independent Investigations

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Introduction to Differentiated Instruction

As teachers, we recognize that students are not all alike and that instruction must be designed to meet the needs of the diverse learners in our classrooms. Differentiating instruction is a way to utilize the strengths and interests of all our students as we plan lessons for them. By providing varied educational opportunities, we can increase the chances for their academic success and make learning a rewarding and challenging experience.

According to Carol Ann Tomlinson, an associate professor at the University of Virginia and an authority on differentiating instruction, teachers can differentiate the following classroom elements based on student readiness, interest, or learning profile:

Classroom Elements

- **Content**
Content is what the student needs to learn. It is usually based on school-district curriculum or national standards.
- **Process**
Process is the method the teacher uses to plan and teach the lessons.
- **Product**
Products require students to demonstrate and apply what they have learned.
- **Learning Environment**
Learning environment is the way the classroom looks—the arrangement of furniture and types of displays—and the types of instructional materials available to students.

Differentiation Strategies

- **Multiple Intelligences**
- **Learning Centers**
- **Flexible Grouping**
- **Learning Contracts**
- **Tiering**
- **Compacting**
- **Independent Investigations**

Applying Differentiated Instruction

By modifying the key elements—content, process, product, and learning environment—to suit the needs of our students, we can support individual learning requirements. Teachers should assume the roles of facilitators rather than direct instructors, by effectively organizing students for particular learning experiences. Students may work in a group, cooperate with a partner, or work independently. It is crucial to remember that these organizational patterns must remain flexible. When designing differentiated instruction, keep in mind that the instruction should always be fair and equitable. Higher ability students are sometimes merely assigned more of the same type of classwork to complete instead of being offered enrichment or higher level lessons. Students at all levels should be challenged with engaging and appropriate types of active learning experiences.

Before using differentiated instructional materials for their students, teachers must first gather information about the students. Academic assessments, such as tests, portfolios, and cumulative files, offer information about students' strengths and weaknesses. Interest inventories or student interviews provide clues to the things the students prefer and enjoy. Multiple Intelligence Surveys help teachers understand how students learn best. Classroom observations also reveal differences in learning needs. Talks with family members and other teachers may provide additional insight into determining what method of instruction is the proper match for each child.

In Section II, you will find a variety of strategies for differentiating your social studies instruction. The content that is used in the lessons is based on national standards requirements. Choose the strategy or strategies that fit best with the content that you are teaching and the students in your class.

In Section III, you will find a series of template pages to help organize students into categories based on their learning abilities and styles. The section also contains forms: a student contract to fulfil assignment requirements; and a teacher self-evaluation sheet. There are also organizational charts for teachers to use with the assignments in Section II, Lesson 6.

Multiple Intelligences

What Are Multiple Intelligences?

Educators have long believed that verbal/linguistic and mathematical/logical types of intelligence were the essential intelligences to possess. However, in 1983, Dr. Howard Gardner of Harvard University developed the theory of Multiple Intelligences. This theory greatly broadens the vision of intelligence. Dr. Gardner's identified intelligences are listed below.

- **Verbal/Linguistic Intelligence**
This intelligence describes people who excel in reading, writing, speaking, and other forms of communicating.
- **Logical/Mathematical Intelligence**
This intelligence describes people who excel at diverse mathematical skills, computer programming, scientific studies, abstract thinking, and solving problems logically.
- **Visual/Spatial Intelligence**
This intelligence describes people who excel in visual perception; these people are often artistically talented.
- **Bodily/Kinesthetic Intelligence**
This intelligence describes people who excel at using physical activity, such as in sports or in dance. They may be builders or performers. They express themselves through bodily movement.
- **Musical Intelligence**
This intelligence describes people who excel at playing musical instruments, singing, composing music, and dancing; they possess a special sensitivity to sounds.
- **Interpersonal Intelligence**
This intelligence describes people who excel at working with and cooperating with others. They communicate well and are sympathetic to the problems of other people.
- **Intrapersonal Intelligence**
This intelligence describes people who excel at working alone. They have a good sense of themselves, their emotions, and their abilities.
- **Naturalist Intelligence**
This intelligence describes people who excel in living with nature. They are sensitive to the needs and problems of the natural world, interact well with animals, and like to grow things.

Unit 2: The American Revolution

Topic: Events of the War

The Boston Massacre

One of the early events that led to the American Revolutionary War took place in Boston, Massachusetts, in 1770. It was known as the Boston Massacre. A group of boys taunted the British troops and one boy threw a snowball at a British soldier. Soon other colonists got involved in the situation, and the British began to fire on the crowd. Five people died and many others were wounded on this tragic day.

Below is a copy of an engraving of the event created by Paul Revere. Why, do you think, did Paul Revere make the engraving? How did it help the colonists' cause?



Boston Massacre

Learn more about The Boston Massacre and other events that sparked the need for independence. Draw your own picture of one of those events. Think about your point of view regarding the event and use your picture in a political cartoon.