

Social Studies – Ancient Civilizations Games Project Outline

Welcome, historians!

Your task is to become an expert on an ancient civilization of your choice, and then to create a game based on your research, with the idea that someone playing your game would come away with a greater understanding of your topic (while – hopefully! – having fun).

There are two parts to this challenge: research and game creation. You will work with the Social Studies curriculum to put together a combination of Curricular Competencies and Content that will help guide your work and help me know how to assess it.

You can look at a broad overview of your topic, touching on many aspects of your chosen civilization, or you can choose to focus in on one area in great depth – or you can aim somewhere in the middle, looking at two or three aspects; the choice is yours!

Your game can take any form you desire: card game, board game, role playing game, computer game, PE game, or anything else that strikes your fancy. You will need to provide clear and thorough written instructions as to how to play your game, as well as the physical components, all contained in an eye-pleasing and attention grabbing container (box or other). Strive to create content that allows for depth and complexity in your audience’s engagement and understanding, and strive to avoid an emphasis on obscure trivia (for example, it is interesting to learn that Wu Zetian was a concubine to the Emperor before she rose to power in Ancient China, as that tells us something about the traditional avenues to power for women in that time period; it is less interesting to learn the exact date of her death) (December 16).

Step One – Choosing a Focus and a Question

Decide which aspects of the curriculum will be the focus of your work and your assessment.

1. Go to <https://curriculum.gov.bc.ca/curriculum/social-studies/7>
2. Look at the two columns, Curricular Competencies and Content. Notice that if you click on the underlined text, it will expand to give you specific examples that help define the terms.
3. Now, mix and match from the two areas. You must choose at least one aspect from each – Curricular Competencies and Content – but you can choose more, if you so desire.
4. Once you have made your decisions, use those aspects to help you form a key question(s) that your game will help its players explore and that will help guide your research.
5. Now, complete the “Choosing a Focus and a Key Question” graphic organizer and submit it to me.

Example:

I am researching ancient Egypt, and I am really interested in ancient religions and mythology, so I am going to combine that content area – **“origins, core beliefs, narratives, practices, and influences of religions”** – with the curricular competency, **“Characterize different time periods in history, including periods of progress and decline, and identify key turning points that marked periods of change.”** My key question is, *“How did spiritual beliefs in ancient Egypt change over time, and what were those changes made in response to?”*

Step Two – Research

Think back over your experience researching your aspect of Medieval Wales and researching your science topic. What have you learned, in terms of research skills? What did you do really well that you can keep doing and rely upon? What was the feedback you received in terms of next steps?

Before you begin work on your game, you and I will meet to conference over your notes. As always, I will be looking at the following criteria:

- Written in your own words
- Uses the fewest number of words to capture the information
- Identifies Big Ideas and related Important details
- Applies depth and complexity, **as related to your Curricular Competency/ies**
- Is Organized

And, as always, the ✓+ or “A” level is, “demonstrates thoroughness and attention to detail throughout.”

This term, I will be putting particular weight on systems of organization. What systems can you use to help classify and sort your information in such a way that it is easy to navigate and easy to find the things you need to find at any given moment?

I am also interested to see if you are paying attention to the feedback you received in Term 1 and that you are making progress in that area or those areas. If you have forgotten this feedback, come and see me.

Remember to keep your key question at the center of your research.

Notes can be digital or done by hand in your comp book. I encourage you to challenge yourself to go beyond only using point-form for your notes. We have looked at other models: webs, mind maps, diagrams; and grade 7s, you are familiar with sketchnoting from last year (grade 6s, there are lots of cool videos on-line exploring this technique, if you are interested). Experiment with these forms and see if you can come up with your own personalized way of taking notes.

However you do it, we are now well beyond cutting and pasting other people’s writing and changing a few words to try to disguise it as your own. I would like to see that you are processing and synthesizing information, and reworking it to fit into your system of organization. This means you have to think. ☺

You will also need to submit a **bibliography** of your sources, done in proper **APA format**.

As you do your research, keep track of the sources you have used: books and online sources. **WRITE YOUR SOURCES DOWN AS YOU USE THEM.** You might want to devote a page in your comp book to this, or create and maintain a digital document for this purpose. We will explore how to create a bibliography in class.

Your bibliography should contain at least three book, magazine, or reference book sources and four on-line sources (not including Wikipedia, although you can use and cite Wikipedia as a source if you so wish). You may also include other forms of media as your sources – podcasts, documentaries – and people resources, like grad students or professors who are experts in your topic (if this is of interest to you, talk to me).

This is a good resource for following APA referencing format:

<https://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/560/06/>

Step Three – Make Your Game

What do you want your audience to take away from their experience of the game? Think about this like a bulls-eye target or a helicopter landing pad: in the center is the essential information that you'd like everyone to know, after they finish playing the game; and the outer rings represent levels of information that people *might* or *can* learn, if they go deeper or play longer.

What form will your game take? Once you have made this decision, do some research into popular models of this type of game. How are the instructions written? What do the material components look like? How do you hook people in and make them want to play the game and then play it again and again?

Games can be very complex, or they can be very simple. Regardless of your form and structure, please keep this criteria in mind:

- Clearly written instructions
- An attention grabbing container that clearly expresses the purpose of your game
- Enjoyable game play
- Educational content
- Attention to detail
- Pride in your work

The last is perhaps the most important: you should be proud to submit your final product and excited for others to view it and play it.

Ready, set, go!