

Inquiry is the key to independent and engaged learning. Students ask questions, investigate the answers, draw conclusions from the information they find, and create expressions of their new understandings.

School librarians are responsible for teaching the literacy, information, technology, and critical thinking skills of inquiry. They collaborate with classroom teachers to integrate the teaching of these skills into content learning. When students are expected to think critically and form their own understandings, they engage and develop confidence in their own ability to learn.

This website is designed to bring the integration of social studies content and inquiry skills to life. Two instructional guides have been combined to enable social studies teachers and librarians to teach inquiry-based lessons together.

The first guide is called the Empire State Information Fluency Continuum (ESIFC), a K-12 framework of information fluency/inquiry skills that are most important to be taught at each grade level. The complete ESIFC can be found [here](#). The ESIFC is based on the Stripling Model of Inquiry. You will find the inquiry model and benchmark information fluency skills for K-12 below. The second tab provides easy grade-level access to the lists of benchmark skills (*ESIFC Priority Benchmark Skills*).

The second guide is the set of inquiries in the K-12 New York State Social Studies Toolkit. The full toolkit can be found [here](#). These inquiries are framed around compelling and supporting questions. Although the inquiries hint at the skills that students must use to answer those questions, they do not explicitly enumerate the most appropriate skills that will enable students to find and interpret information and draw their own conclusions. Under the third tab (*Social Studies Alignment Charts*), you will find charts for each social studies inquiry with suggested inquiry skills to be taught as students and teachers work through the inquiry process to answer the supporting and compelling questions.

The fourth section of this website (*ESIFC Assessments*) provides graphic-organizer assessments for many of the embedded skills. These assessments can be downloaded in Word and adapted or adopted for use as formative assessments by both classroom teachers and librarians.