



# inkwell

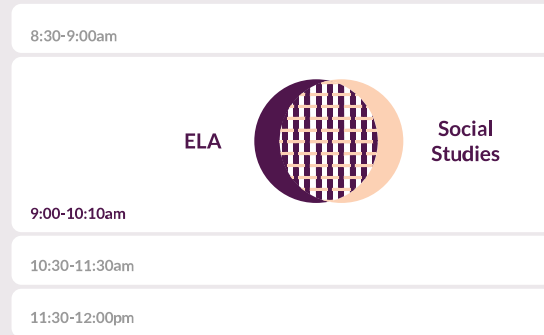
K-5 integrated core ELA and  
core social studies curriculum

**Assessment Overview**

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## INTEGRATED ELA AND SOCIAL STUDIES

Meet Inkwell, a K–5 core curriculum that integrates ELA and social studies into one cohesive instructional block.



- Supports **mastery of ELA and social studies standards in one block**
- Grounded in the **Science of Reading**
- Embeds **explicit writing instruction** in daily lessons
- **Builds knowledge** through content-rich social studies investigations
- Connects and deepens learning through **inquiry**

## Assessment that moves learning forward

### A complete, research-aligned approach

Inkwell’s comprehensive assessment system provides frequent, consistent evidence of learning across reading, writing, speaking, and knowledge. Each assessment aligns to ELA and social studies standards and monitors mastery over time, giving teachers a clear view of progress and the tools to adjust instruction in real time.

- **Authentic for students:** Assessments are built into learning, not interruptions from it. Tasks reflect how students naturally demonstrate understanding through reading, writing, speaking, and thinking across content areas.<sup>1</sup>
- **Actionable for teachers:** Practical tools and assessment guides help teachers gather, interpret, and act on meaningful evidence of learning.<sup>2</sup>
- **Aligned to research:** Inkwell reflects decades of learning science, including the “assessment triangle” of cognition, observation, and interpretation,<sup>3</sup> and the proven impact of formative assessment and feedback loops on student growth.<sup>4</sup>

### What leaders, teachers, and students can count on

- ✓ **Grounded in research:** Supports meaningful learning, not just measurement.<sup>5</sup>
- ✓ **Built for real classrooms:** Balances authenticity and accountability with embedded opportunities that save time.<sup>6</sup>
- ✓ **Integrated and efficient:** Connects ELA and social studies for authentic application of knowledge.<sup>7</sup>
- ✓ **Focused on growth:** Builds confidence and fluency through low-stakes practice and student selfassessment.<sup>8</sup>

1. Darling-Hammond & Adamson, 2014  
2. Popham, 2008  
3. Dwyer, 2013

4. Black & William, 2018  
5. Hattie, 2003  
6. McMillan, 2018

7. Wiggins & McTighe, 2008  
8. Tomlinson & Moon, 2013

## Twice the information in a single assessment

Inkwell uses an integrated assessment approach designed to measure progress across both ELA and social studies within a single task. Rather than isolating skills, teachers monitor growth on a focus strand and a connected cluster of related strands, creating a clear throughline from daily instruction to long-term goals.

For students, Inkwell's assessments feel like natural extensions of reading, writing, and discussion. For teachers, they offer a coherent, standardsaligned sequence that makes student thinking visible and supports informed instructional decisions.

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Informational Paragraph Planning and Drafting 5.9a

**Part 1**  
Draw details to answer the question and plan your informational paragraph.

How did people cooperate to build the Statue of Liberty?



**Part 2**  
Draft your informational paragraph.

Topic sentence:

People helped build the Statue of Liberty.

### Secondary Look-For

Civics D2.Civ.6.K-2

Demonstrates accurate understanding of topic and of how people worked together

### Primary Look-For

Informational Writing (W.1.2, RI.1.1)

Write a topic sentence, two important details (with "who" + "what"), and an ending sentence.

Important detail:

Some people made the statue.

Important detail:

Other people gave money for it.

Ending sentence:

They all helped make it together.

### Secondary Look-For

Language (Grammar L.1.1, L.1.2)

Uses common/proper nouns, correct subject-verb agreement, simple conjunctions, and proper capitalization and punctuation

### LOOK-FORS

- ☐ Informational Writing W.1.2, RI.1.1: Write a topic sentence, two important details (with "who" + "what"), and an ending sentence.
- ☐ Civics D2.Civ.6.K-2: Demonstrates understanding of topic and of how people worked together
- ☐ Language Grammar L.1.1, L.1.2: Uses common/proper nouns, correct subject-verb agreement, simple conjunctions, and proper capitalization and punctuation

**Module 2 Written Checkpoint Assessment Guide**  
Version 5.0a

Students draw and write to show and explain two parts of culture after reading the *What is Culture?* Storyline, demonstrating social studies knowledge (understanding aspects of culture), reading comprehension (using evidence from the text), writing (explaining ideas through sentences and drawings), and grammar (using a naming part and using correct capitalization).

**LOOK-FORS**

- ☐ Logical selection of the subject (naming part) to form a complete sentence.
- ☐ Use of capitalization at the beginning of sentences.
- ☐ Drawing and writing that reflect evidence about culture from the text.

**SAMPLE STUDENT RESPONSES**

- Read is a part of culture.
- All is a part of culture.

Note: At this point in the school year, phonetic spelling is developmentally appropriate.

**NEXT STEPS FOR INSTRUCTION**

| Student Need                                                                                   | Possible Instructional Response                                                                                                                                                                  | Available Flexible Supports                                           |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Needs support with logical selection of the subject (naming part) to form a complete sentence. | Use the upcoming <i>What is Culture?</i> Storyline to reinforce practice writing complete sentences that start with "I" about how writing "I" makes the sentence complete (e.g., "I like milk"). | Targeted Instruction Block 2.3 (Complete Sentences)                   |
| Does not consistently use capitalization at the beginning of sentences.                        | Revisit students' work sentence on the upcoming <i>What is Culture?</i> Storyline and begin with a capital "I" have them to use together.                                                        | Targeted Instruction Block 2.4 (CAPS)                                 |
| Drawing and writing does not reflect evidence about culture from the text.                     | Revisit <i>What is Culture?</i> Storyline and co-create a class chart of cultural examples before students write their own drawings and sentences.                                               | Targeted Instruction Block 2.5 (Examples and Non-Examples of Culture) |
| Drawing and writing does not reflect evidence about culture from the text.                     | Encourage students to add a third example of culture from the text or their own work and explain how it connects to community or traditions.                                                     |                                                                       |

## Assessment types

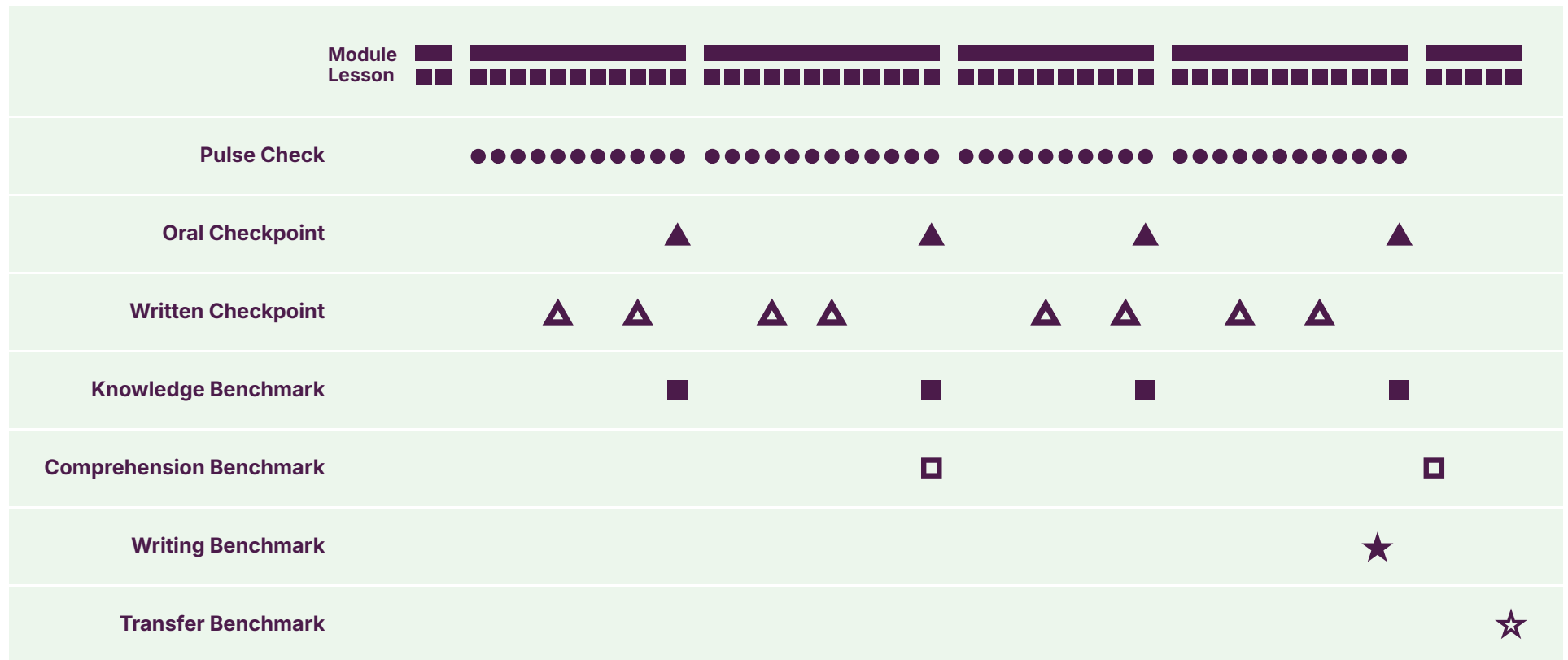
Inkwell assessments are woven throughout each unit, giving teachers frequent, varied opportunities to gather meaningful evidence of student learning. Each type focuses on specific skills and standards, together forming a comprehensive picture of growth across ELA and social studies strands.

- **Pulse Checks:** Brief, informal assessments in daily lessons that take the pulse of student progress and allow teachers to make quick adjustments
- **Oral Checkpoints:** Structured discussions and oral responses primarily assessing Speaking and Listening skills
- **Written Checkpoints:** Short written tasks primarily assessing Writing and Language (Conventions) skills
- **Knowledge Benchmark:** Two-part assessment primarily assessing Social Studies knowledge and conceptual understanding
- **Comprehension Benchmark:** Assessment where students read or listen to an unfamiliar passage and answer questions, primarily assessing Reading or Listening Comprehension skills
- **Writing Benchmark:** Multi-day assessment primarily assessing Writing and Language (Conventions) understanding through process writing
- **Transfer Benchmark:** Culminating presentation primarily assessing Speaking and Listening skills and application of learning





# Assessments across a unit



## Pulse checks

Informal, ongoing

Brief, informal moments embedded in daily lessons that take the pulse of student understanding and give teachers real-time insight to guide next steps.

### Pulse Checks

Brief, informal assessments in daily lessons that take the pulse of student progress and allow teachers to make quick adjustments. Used for reading, writing, language, discussion, and social studies across lessons.

Use information and facts.

- Use the morphology of the word to further explain how nonfiction texts are different from fiction texts.
  - The prefix "non" means "not." A prefix is a group of letters added to the beginning of a word that change what the word means.
  - Nonfiction is different from fiction because it is not made up. Nonfiction tells us facts and shares information about real people and places.
- Show the cover of the text, and share the title and authors.
  - This nonfiction text is written like a story, but it is still teaching us facts.
- Model making a prediction, and prompt at that prediction with details from the cover.
  - I predict that this text will share information about children who live all around the world like or cover support my prediction?
    - I see a place that looks hot and cold and snowy.
    - There are kids with different skin.

Lead a first read-aloud of *Children of the World* to foster a basic understanding.

Slide 61



- Read pp. 1-45 (up to the book's appendix) expression as students listen, pausing to ask students to answer a few select questions.
- After reading, invite students to share any key details in the text.
  - What is this text mostly about?
    - What did you learn about children in?
      - They play games and eat food.
      - They can be similar and different.

MULTILINGUAL SUPPORT

To help 1st grade students describe an provide one and visual scaffolds across proficiency levels.

Beginning

- Introduce the question: "What did children around the world?" Give and answer for key words first, at one- or two-word responses and sentences. For example, if the is "hot," reply "Yes, children eat hot food."

Intermediate

- Prompt with simple frames to use

Learning, such as "Children ... Children around the world ... and ..." (I learned that children around the world play games and eat food.)

Advances

- Encourage students to connect ideas using complete sentences and conjunctions. Provide frames such as "I learned that children around the world ... and ..." (I learned that children around the world play games and eat food.)

- Reinforce that each child is unique and special, but they also share similarities.
- Invite students to share any additional questions or observations about the text.

**HUDDLE**  
10 min

Transition students to partner Huddle spots.

Slide 71



Transition slide

Support students in constructing complete sentences about *Children of the World*.

Slide 81



- Display pp. 20-21 of the book, and explain that students will create sentences based on the illustrations.
- Model how to use what you see to orally construct a sentence about the illustration of children flying kites (top row, left).
  - First, I'll start with the naming part, or who my sentence is about. The children...
  - Then, I'll add a telling part that explains what the children do... fly kites.
- Write the sentence on the board. (Ex. "The children fly kites.") As you write, think aloud about each letter in CAPS.
- Students turn-and-talk to orally construct their own sentences based on the illustration of jumping rope (middle row, right).
- Invite a student to share their sentence with the class and write

it on the board. As you write, think aloud about CAPS.

- Repeat this process with the illustration of children playing hide-and-seek (middle row, center).

**PULSE CHECK**

As students turn-and-talk to orally construct their sentences, look for:

- Recognition of the elements of a complete sentence (capital first letter, subject and predicate, end punctuation)
- Creation of complete sentences (subject and predicate) that accurately describe an illustration in the text

**Support:** If pairs are using incomplete sentences, join them with another pair to form a group of four. Invite one student to model a complete sentence, then prompt others to share, reflect, and revise. Prompt: "I heard your classmate say a naming part and a telling part. Can you try it too?"

**Extend:** If you hear multiple pairs of students using complete sentences, invite them to form a group of four and add detail to their sentences. (Ex. "The children play hide-and-seek outside")

~ End of Part 1 ~

**PULSE CHECK**

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- Recognition of the elements of a complete sentence (capital first letter, subject and predicate, end punctuation)
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## Checkpoints

Structured, periodic

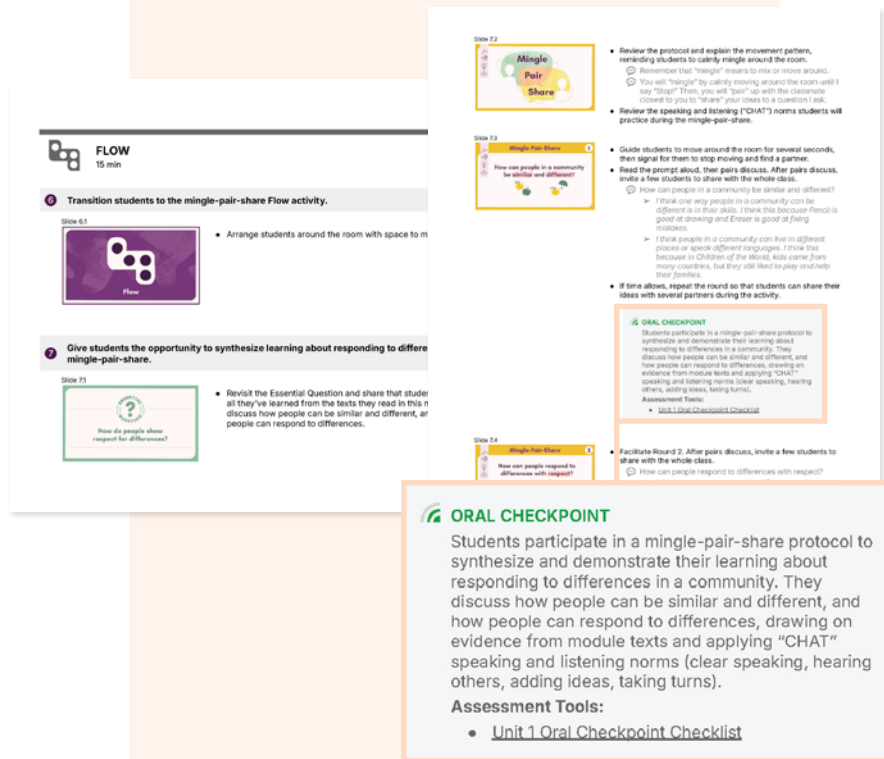
Structured opportunities at key moments where teachers check progress and students naturally apply their learning through short writing or discussion-based tasks.

### Oral Checkpoint

A discussion at the end of each module where students demonstrate conceptual understanding and speaking and listening skills through academic talk grounded in text and content.

### Written Checkpoint

A short, structured writing task completed once or twice per module that surfaces developing writing fluency, language use, and understanding of key concepts.



**FLOW**  
15 min

Transition students to the mingle-pair-share Flow activity.

Slide 63

Arrange students around the room with space to move.

Slide 71

Give students the opportunity to synthesize learning about responding to differences in a mingle-pair-share.

Slide 72

Mingle-Pair-Share

Review the protocol and explain the movement pattern, reminding students to calmly mingle around the room.

Remember that "mingle" means to mix or move around.

You will "mingle" by calmly moving around the room until I say "Stop". Then, you will "pair" up with the classmate closest to you to "share" your ideas to a question I ask.

Review the speaking and listening ("CHAT") norms students will practice during the mingle-pair-share.

Slide 73

Mingle-Pair-Share

How can people in a community be similar and different?

Guide students to move around the room for several seconds, then signal for them to stop moving and find a partner.

Read the prompt aloud, then pairs discuss. After pairs discuss, invite a few students to share with the whole class.

How can people in a community be similar and different?

I think one way people in a community can be different is in their skills. I think this because Pencil is good at drawing and Eraser is good at fixing mistakes.

I think people in a community can live in different places or speak different languages. I think this because in Children of the World, kids came from many countries, but they still liked to play and help their families.

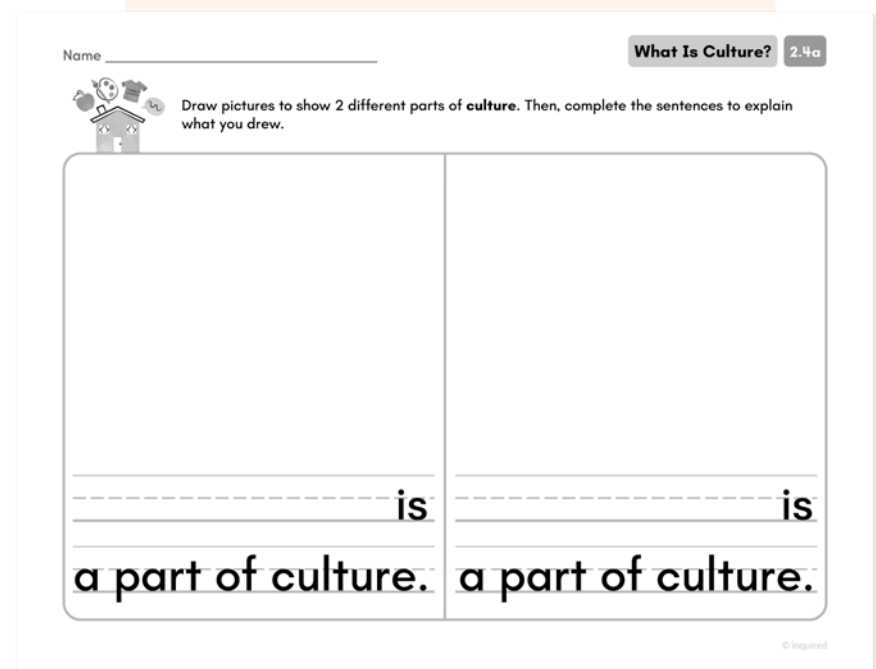
If time allows, repeat the round so that students can share their ideas with several partners during the activity.

**ORAL CHECKPOINT**

Students participate in a mingle-pair-share protocol to synthesize and demonstrate their learning about responding to differences in a community. They discuss how people can be similar and different, and how people can respond to differences, drawing on evidence from module texts and applying "CHAT" speaking and listening norms (clear speaking, hearing others, adding ideas, taking turns).

Assessment Tools:

- Unit 1 Oral Checkpoint Checklist



Name \_\_\_\_\_

**What Is Culture? 2.4a**

Draw pictures to show 2 different parts of culture. Then, complete the sentences to explain what you drew.

\_\_\_\_\_ is \_\_\_\_\_ a part of culture.

\_\_\_\_\_ is \_\_\_\_\_ a part of culture.

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## Benchmarks

*Formal, culminating*

Formal summative assessments that set a benchmark for learning, where students showcase progress across strands through authentic, purposeful tasks.

## Comprehension Benchmark

A formal assessment given twice per unit in which students read or listen to a new passage and demonstrate comprehension through text-dependent questions.

## READING & LISTENING COMPREHENSION

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Comprehension Benchmark 3.12

**Part 1**

**The Community Potluck Problem**

**1. What is the setting of this story?**

- ☐ a school
- ☐ a community park
- ☐ a grocery store

**2. What problem did Maya and her community have?**

- ☐ Some food got burned before the potluck.
- ☐ Some people thought the potluck was on different days.
- ☐ Some people thought it was going to rain.

**3. What did Maya do to fix the problem?**

- ☐ She moved the potluck to a building nearby.
- ☐ She made new flyers for another day.
- ☐ She called, texted, and knocked on doors right away.

**4. Why were the foods at the potluck all different?**

- ☐ Everyone brought food from their cultures.
- ☐ Everyone brought brand-new recipes to try.
- ☐ Everyone brought the same kind of food.

pg 1 of 2

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## Writing Benchmark

A multi-day process writing task completed once per unit that measures mastery of a specific genre through planning, drafting, revising, and editing.

## WRITING

**LANGUAGE**

Name \_\_\_\_\_

**Informational Paragraph Planning and Drafting**    **5.9a**

**Part 1**  
Draw details to answer the question and plan your informational paragraph.

**How did people cooperate to build the Statue of Liberty?**

**Part 2**  
Draft your informational paragraph.

**Topic sentence:**

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

**Important detail:**

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

**Ending sentence:**

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_



## Benchmarks

### Knowledge Benchmark

A two-part assessment given four times per unit that measures social studies knowledge and vocabulary and includes a prompt connected to the Essential Question.

**SOCIAL STUDIES**

Knowledge Benchmark Handout 2.10

Similar and Different

Part 1

Practice: Circle 2 words that go with the word "classroom."

crayon car student cat

1. Circle 2 words that go with the word "culture."

food cloud star language

2. Circle 2 words that go with the word "disrespect."

insult true rude paper

4. People in a community may have different opinions and cultures.

True ☐ False ☐

5. Respect means you must always agree with others.

True ☐ False ☐

6. When people are similar, it means they are exactly the same.

True ☐ False ☐

Part 2

Draw a picture showing how you can show respect to someone who is different from you. This could be at school, on the playground, or in your neighborhood. Then, complete 2 sentences to explain your picture and thinking.



I can show respect by \_\_\_\_\_

This will help strengthen our community because \_\_\_\_\_

pg. 1 of 2

pg. 2 of 2

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### Transfer Benchmark

A culminating presentation at the end of the unit where students apply and present what they've learned to an authentic audience, demonstrating synthesis across ELA and Social Studies.

**SOCIAL STUDIES**

**SPEAKING & LISTENING**

Working Together | Transfer Benchmark

Student

Inquiry product

Audience and impact

Who are students sharing their inquiry products with, and for what purpose?

Content knowledge assessment

Craft assessment

Presentation skills assessment

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## Comprehensive assessment support

Inkwell pairs every assessment with clear, practical guidance, so evidence of learning is easy to gather, interpret, and act on. This clarity helps teachers respond to learners with confidence and helps students understand what growth looks like. Inkwell provides:

**Pulse checks:** Include look-fors and guidance on how to respond to student understanding with support or extension.

**Assessment guides:** Guides for Checkpoints and Benchmarks that show what's being measured, streamline scoring, and map instructional next steps.

- **Look-fors:** Give teachers specific guidance on what to look for in student work.
- **Sample student responses:** Exemplars that anchor expectations and strengthen feedback quality.
- **Rubrics and scoring guidance:** Standards-aligned criteria that ensure consistency and calibration across classrooms.
- **Responsive teaching guidance:** Assessment Guides point to companion lessons that help teachers act on assessment data.

**Progress trackers:** Simple tools for documenting observable skills and behaviors (e.g., speaking and listening) to spot patterns, regroup, and monitor growth.

**Self-assessment tools:** Student-facing rubrics and checklists (discussion norms, grammar, writing criteria) that support student reflection.

### Module 2 Written Checkpoint Assessment Guide Handout 2.4a (What is Culture?)

Students draw and write to show and explain two parts of culture after reading the *What Is Culture?* Sourceable, demonstrating social studies knowledge (understanding aspects of culture), reading comprehension (using evidence from the text), writing (explaining ideas through sentences and drawings), and grammar (adding a naming part and using correct capitalization).



#### LOOK-FORS

- ☐ Logical addition of the subject (naming part) to form a complete sentence.
- ☐ Use of capitalization at the beginning of sentences
- ☐ Drawing and writing that reflect evidence about culture from the text

#### SAMPLE STUDENT RESPONSES

- Food is a part of culture
- Art is a part of culture

Note: At this point in the school year, phonetic spelling is developmentally appropriate.

#### NEXT STEPS FOR INSTRUCTION

| Student Need                                                                                 | Possible Instructional Response                                                                                                                                                          | Available Flexible Supports                                           |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Needs support with logical addition of the subject (naming part) to form a complete sentence | Use the upcoming Handout 2.5a (About Me) to reinforce practice writing complete sentences that start with "I." Model how adding "I" makes the sentence complete (e.g., "I like music."). | Targeted Instruction Block 2.3 (Complete Sentences)                   |
| Does not consistently use capitalization at the beginning of sentences                       | Remind students every sentence on the upcoming Handout 2.5a (About Me) begins with a capital "I"; have them fix one together.                                                            | Targeted Instruction Block 2.4 (CAPS)                                 |
| Drawing and writing does not reflect evidence about culture from the text                    | Revisit <i>What Is Culture?</i> Sourceable and co-create a class chart of cultural examples before students revise their own drawings and sentences.                                     | Targeted Instruction Block 2.5 (Examples and Non-Examples of Culture) |
| Drawing and writing accurately reflects two pieces of evidence about culture from the text   | Encourage students to add a third example of culture from the text or their own lives and explain how it connects to community or traditions                                             |                                                                       |



## For students

### Assessment feels like learning, not pressure

Purposeful tasks integrate reading, writing, and social studies, showing what students know and how they're growing. Built-in supports help every learner succeed without lowering expectations, while frequent, lowstakes check-ins build confidence and mastery.



## For teachers

### Real insight that drives instruction

Inkwell provides clear, actionable information about student learning without adding to teachers' workload. Built-in assessments provide authentic, standards-aligned evidence. Shared rubrics and guides ensure consistency, while ongoing check-ins help teachers refine instruction and move learning.



## For leaders

### Clarity and confidence across classrooms

Inkwell gives leaders the visibility and confidence they need without extra work for teachers. Built-in assessments provide authentic, reliable evidence of learning. Shared rubrics and benchmarks ensure consistency, while progress data makes growth and impact clear across classrooms.





## **inquirED**

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inquirED supports teachers with high-quality instructional materials that make joyful, rigorous, and transferable learning possible for every student. Our social studies curricula – Inquiry Journeys (K-5) and Middle School World History – are used across the country to help students build deep content knowledge and develop inquiry skills essential for a thriving democracy.