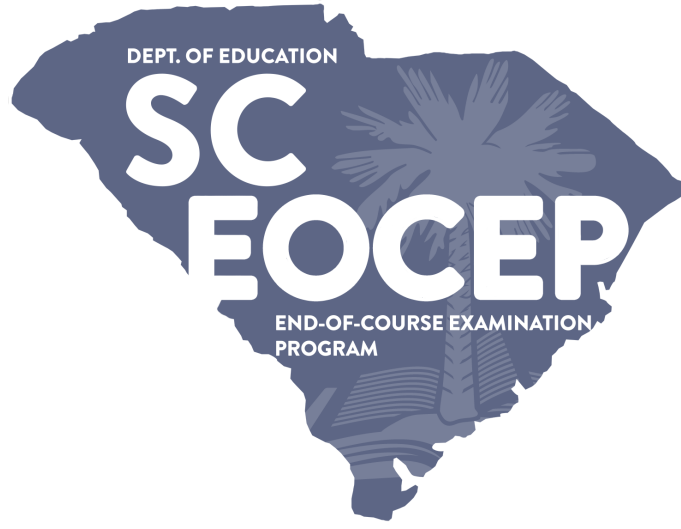




2026 Data Review Report

Statewide Instructional Recommendations

U.S. History and the Constitution

Office of Assessment and Standards

October 2026

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Introduction to the Data Review Reports

The [South Carolina Department of Education](#) (SCDE) Office of Assessment and Standards (OAS) extends our deepest gratitude to the hard-working teachers across our state. We are especially thankful for the educators who dedicate their time to participate in our annual assessment meetings. Your collaboration is what makes these reports possible.

What is the Data Review Committee?

As part of our [Test Development Cycle](#) every year, the SCDE gathers educators from across South Carolina for virtual Data Review Meetings. This group of dedicated educators forms our *Data Review Committee*, a specialized team tasked with examining state-level, item-by-item test data to better understand student ability and identify where students are struggling with specific standards.

From Numbers to Strategies

For this report, the Committee focused on the End-of-Course Examination Program (EOCEP) United States History and the Constitution (USHC) assessment, which measures the *2019 South Carolina Social Studies College- and Career-Ready Standards (2019 SC CCR Social Studies Standards)*. While every standard is assessed on the EOCEP USHC assessment, this report selectively highlights key standards where statewide trends point to clear, actionable recommendations for the classroom.

The Committee looks closely at the *quantitative* data, how students across the entire state responded to test items. They use these numbers to produce a *qualitative* analysis. In other words, they look at the data to figure out *why* students are struggling, and then they offer actionable, instructional recommendations on how to improve student achievement on those topics.

A Redesigned Format

Based directly on feedback from teachers across the state, we have redesigned the Data Review Reports to be more useful for your daily practice. The reports are now organized by standards and indicators. Within each section, you will find:

- **Observations:** What the data tell us about student understanding and misconceptions.
- **Historical Trends:** Years in which similar trends or observations were noted.
- **Instructional Recommendation(s):** Practical strategies to address learning gaps.

How to Use This Report

The goal of this report is to provide clear suggestions to improve instructional practice and inspire collaborative discussions at your school. Offered in a spirit of helpfulness and collaboration, these recommendations reflect broad, statewide trends. Because every classroom is unique, we recognize that certain identified gaps or suggestions may not align with every individual school or district.

Get Involved and Learn More

The OAS provides numerous resources for districts, schools, and teachers to help clarify the standards, understand how our assessments align with them, and make the most of test data.

The [Assessment Quick Links for Teachers Page](#) includes the following resources for USHC educators:

- [Applications for Assessment Committees](#): Apply to Content Review Committees, Data Review Committees, and more.
- [Test Blueprints](#): Broadly outline the test construct in terms of content and rigor.
- [Assessment Specifications for Teachers](#): Guidance on how standards are assessed on the ECOEP.
- [Data Review Reports](#): Access older reports from various content areas.
- [Item Type Descriptions](#): Breakdown of the item formats students encounter on the ECOEP assessments.
- [Sample Items](#): Grade- and content-aligned items demonstrating the ECOEP formats.
- [Online Tools Training \(OTT\)](#): Allows students to practice interacting with sample items in the official testing environment.

The [Social Studies Standards Page](#) includes:

- [Standards](#): The *2019 South Carolina Social Studies College- and Career-Ready Standards*.
- [Instructional Resources](#): Support materials designed to help teachers instruct the *2019 SC CCR Social Studies Standards*.
- [Professional Learning Opportunities](#): District-level professional learning menus and recordings of past webinars.

Interested in Statewide Assessment Data?

[State-level assessment data](#) is published each year on our website. You can explore the [2026 ECOEP Test Scores](#) directly through our online interactive tools or download full data files from the right side of the page.

Want to make an impact?

If you are interested in joining an annual assessment committee, we invite you to [apply through our website!](#)

Statewide Trends for U.S. History and the Constitution

After reviewing operational and field test items from the 2025-2026 USHC End-of-Course assessment, the committee identified these areas of strength and areas for growth in student performance statewide.

Strengths

The committee reported that students generally performed well on assessment items that included stimuli providing historical context or supporting information. Students effectively engaged with a variety of source types, including texts, maps, graphs, tables, and visual sources. Areas of strength include the ability to:

- categorize information into partially completed charts or diagrams (e.g., some different characteristics of the Northern and Southern Colonies or how Enlightenment ideals like natural rights influenced the writing of the Declaration of Independence).
- interpret maps to explain geographic influences on frontier settlement and identify relationships between cotton production and the enslaved population in the South.
- summarize secondary source texts about the expansion of U.S. territory or the experiences of Irish and German immigrants in the early-mid 1800s to draw conclusions and determine which historical question the source could help answer.
- use a table of the 16th, 17th, 18th, and 19th Amendments, a graph of U.S. life expectancy from 1950-2010, and titles from the USA PATRIOT Act to draw conclusions about the impact of constitutional changes, factors contributing to changes in life expectancy, and American identity and society in the post-9/11 period.

Areas for Growth

The committee reported that students experienced the greatest difficulty on items requiring deeper content knowledge and historical reasoning without extensive supporting stimuli. Opportunities for growth include the ability to:

- analyze the foundations of American government by identifying events connected to the development of republicanism (e.g., Mayflower Compact and House of Burgesses) and distinguishing between Enlightenment thinkers' influences on U.S. government.
- evaluate Early Republic policies and debates by describing how the Embargo Act of 1807 was a change in U.S. approach to foreign policy and explaining why the South was more opposed to protective tariffs of the American System than the North.
- analyze changes in government policy and the economy in the late 19th and early 20th centuries by explaining the Dawes Severalty Act and cultural assimilation, identifying characteristics of laissez-faire economics, and evaluating the significance of the creation of the War Industries Board in 1917.
- examine political participation and party priorities in modern America by making inferences about the increase in African American voter registration between 1965 and 1988 and distinguishing between the policy priorities of Democratic and Republican presidents in the late 20th and early 21st centuries.

Committee Observations and Recommendations

This section is organized into two categories: General Trends and Standard-Specific Insights. General Trends highlight broad observations from statewide student performance data and offer instructional recommendations that apply across multiple standards and historical topics. Standard-Specific Insights focus on particular indicators and topics where statewide data identified common misconceptions or areas of instructional emphasis. **These insights are not intended to be a comprehensive review of all indicators, nor does their inclusion in this report imply greater importance than other indicators or content.** All indicators should continue to be taught with the depth and rigor outlined in the *2019 SC CCR Social Studies Standards*.

General Observations and Recommendations

Connections and Themes

Observation: Students need regular opportunities to trace major themes and make connections across historical eras. (Previously reported in [2025](#).)

Instructional Recommendations:

- Create cumulative anchor charts or annotated timelines that are revised throughout the year to track themes such as:
 - American Identity
 - Time Period/Era | Event/Issue | Impact on American Identity
 - Federal vs. State Power
 - Time Period/Era | Supreme Court Case | Impact on Federal Power
 - Innovation and Technological Change
 - Time Period/Era | Innovation/Technology | Change Introduced | Impact
 - U.S. Policies Toward Native Americans
 - Time Period/Era | Policy/Event | Goal | Impact on Native Americans
 - The Federal Government and the Economy
 - Time Period/Era | Economic Practice | Federal Government's Role
 - The United States' Role in the World
 - Time Period/Era | Foreign Policy | Summary of Approach
 - The Evolution of Political Parties
 - Time Period/Era | Topic/Issue | Group For | Group Against
- Group constitutional amendments by broad themes and analyze the historical circumstances behind their adoption. Possible groups could include:
 - Reconstruction Amendments: Group the 13th, 14th, and 15th Amendments and have students explain how they addressed the consequences of the Civil War and expanded rights for formerly enslaved people.
 - Expansion of Voting Rights: Group the 15th, 19th, 24th, and 26th Amendments and examine how different movements worked to broaden political participation.
 - Progressive Era Reforms: Group the 16th, 17th, 18th, and 19th Amendments and analyze the social and political concerns that motivated these reforms.
 - Rights and Liberties: Group amendments that protect individual rights and explain the historical context that led to their ratification.

- Group presidents by enduring themes and have students compare how leaders from different eras addressed similar challenges. Some possible themes and presidents could include, but are not limited to:
 - Expansion of Federal Power: George Washington, Abraham Lincoln, Theodore Roosevelt, Franklin D. Roosevelt, and Lyndon B. Johnson
 - Limiting Government Intervention: Thomas Jefferson, Grover Cleveland, Calvin Coolidge, and Ronald Reagan
 - Economic Crisis and Recovery: Andrew Jackson, Herbert Hoover, Franklin D. Roosevelt, Ronald Reagan, and Barack Obama
 - Expanding Rights and Opportunities: Abraham Lincoln, Ulysses S. Grant, Lyndon B. Johnson, and Barack Obama
 - Balancing Security and Liberty: John Adams, Abraham Lincoln, Woodrow Wilson, Franklin D. Roosevelt, and George W. Bush
 - Foreign Policy and America's Role in the World: James K. Polk, Theodore Roosevelt, Woodrow Wilson, Franklin D. Roosevelt, Harry Truman, and George W. Bush
- Use Hexagonal Thinking, a collaborative and visual activity where students connect ideas, themes, or vocabulary words written on hexagon-shaped cards, to build an interconnected web. (Previously reported in [2025](#).)
 - Best uses in the classroom include activating prior knowledge, assessing student understanding through formative assessment, and reinforcing key concepts during unit reviews.

Skills and Sources

Observation #1: Students need practice evaluating source purpose and determining which sources best support a historical inquiry. (Previously reported in [2025](#).)

Instructional Recommendations:

- Provide frequent opportunities for students to evaluate source usefulness within specific historical investigations. For example, students could be asked to determine which sources would be most useful to a historian studying the strategies marginalized groups used to raise awareness and build support for their causes between 1865 and 1924.
 - Sources that would likely support the inquiry could include, but are not limited to:
 - Suffrage posters, pamphlets, and parade photographs used by women's rights organizations to promote voting rights or Ida B. Wells' anti-lynching pamphlets and newspaper articles that exposed racial violence and encouraged public action.
 - Sources that would be less useful to the inquiry might include, but are not limited to:
 - Photographs of settlements, homesteads, factories, or urban growth that do not document efforts to promote a cause or influence public opinion or secondary source articles, textbook passages, or graphic organizers that describe an event or development that do not specifically examine the strategies marginalized groups used to raise awareness for their cause.

Observation #2: Students need practice analyzing multiple sources, connecting evidence across documents, and applying historical reasoning to reach conclusions. (Previously reported in [2025](#).)

Instructional Recommendations:

- The committee identified several instructional strategies that teachers may implement independently or as part of a comprehensive approach when supporting students' development of source analysis and historical reasoning.
 - Use collections of 4-6 sources centered on key course themes. Possible themes or topics could include, but are not limited to:
 - Development of the American Government
 - Geographic Expansion and Expansion of Slavery
 - Reform Movements of the Late 19th and Early 20th Century
 - American Culture and Identity in the 1920s and 1930s
 - The Cold War and the Widening Global Conflict
 - Require students to sequence sources chronologically.
 - Have students practice analyzing sources using a quick annotation protocol:
 - ADAPT (author, date, audience, purpose, topic),
 - HAPPY (historical context, audience, purpose, point of view, why), or
 - HIPPO (historical context, intended audience, purpose, point of view, outside information). (Previously reported in [2021 and 2022](#).)
 - Use a summarizing strategy that requires students to distinguish central ideas from supporting details, prioritize information, and demonstrate their understanding of each source in a concise and intentional way. Suggestions include a “Six-Word Story”, “Shrinking Summary”, or “Hashtag Summary”.
 - Ask students questions like, “Which sources provide similar/contrasting perspectives?”, “Which pair of sources demonstrate a cause-and-effect relationship?”, or “What trend is demonstrated in the collection of sources?”
 - Have students make connections between multiple documents by creating a product, such as a chart, graphic organizer, timeline, or comparison matrix to synthesize information.

Test Prep and Assessment Readiness

Observation: Students need continued practice interpreting assessment questions, evaluating answer choices, and supporting responses with evidence. (Previously reported in [2025](#).)

Instructional Recommendations:

- Have students practice unpacking questions and answer choices and explain why incorrect options are wrong or only partially correct.
- Practice examining all source features (e.g., captions, dates, authors, attribution lines, etc.).
- Incorporate drag and drop/chart completion, dropdown/fill-in-the-blank style questions and tasks that require students to apply content knowledge and recognize relationships among concepts *that move beyond simple recall*.
- Practice matching quotes, viewpoints, or statements to historical groups or movements.
- Have students respond to evidence-based, two-part questions that require both an answer and supporting evidence.

Standard 1: Foundations of American Republicanism 1607–1815

USHC.1.P – Development of Federalism

Observation: Students demonstrated challenges understanding federalism and its place in the chronology of early U.S. history. Many incorrectly identified federalism as an Enlightenment principle and struggled to explain how the weaknesses of the Articles of Confederation influenced the creation of a stronger federal government and a system that balanced powers between the national and state governments.

Historical Trends: Similar observations noted in [2024](#).

Instructional Recommendations:

- Have students analyze excerpts from the Articles of Confederation and the Constitution to compare differences in structure and distribution of governmental power. Then, ask students to identify how the Constitution addressed the shortcomings of the Articles of Confederation and explain how those revisions contributed to the development of federalism. Recommended sections for document analysis could include:
 - Articles of Confederation: Article VIII, Article IX, Article XIII
 - Constitution: Article I, Section 8; Article II; Article III; Article V; Tenth Amendment

USHC.1.CC – Role of the Federal Government

Observation #1: Students generally understand that differing interpretations of the Constitution contributed to political tensions that persisted over time. However, they have difficulty applying this concept to specific historical examples, such as the debate over the creation of the national bank.

Historical Trends: Similar observations noted in [2025](#).

Instructional Recommendations:

- Use a Claim-Evidence-Reason strategy to help students apply the abstract concept of constitutional interpretation to a specific historical example.
 - Step 1: Present students with the question: "Did the Constitution give Congress the power to create a national bank?" Ask students to take a position and briefly justify their answer using Article I of the Constitution.
 - Step 2: Introduce Alexander Hamilton's loose construction argument and Thomas Jefferson's strict construction argument. Have students discuss which interpretation they find more convincing.
 - Step 3: Explain that this debate did not end with the national bank but continued through cases such as *McCulloch v. Maryland* and remains relevant today. Teachers can reinforce this concept by incorporating modern examples that allow students to see how differing interpretations of the Constitution continue to shape issues that affect their everyday lives.

Observation #2: Students have difficulty determining the significance of the Marshall Court and understanding how it expanded the power of the federal government.

Historical Trends: Similar observations noted in [2025](#).

Instructional Recommendations:

- Use a jigsaw strategy to help students quickly synthesize information from multiple Marshall Court decisions and draw broad conclusions about their significance.
 - Step 1: Divide students into small groups and assign each group a different Marshall Court case, such as *Marbury v. Madison*, *McCulloch v. Maryland*, or *Gibbons v. Ogden*. Provide each group with a brief overview of the case.
 - Step 2: Students complete a graphic organizer summarizing the main question of the case, the Court's ruling, and case's impact on the political system.
 - Step 3: Reorganize students into mixed groups with representatives from each case. Students share their findings, compare the rulings, and conclude how federal power changed because of the three cases.

Case	Main Question of the Case	The Court's Ruling	Impacts on the Political System	How Federal Power Changed
<i>Marbury v. Madison</i>				
<i>McCulloch v. Maryland</i>				
<i>Gibbons v. Ogden</i>				

The goal of this activity is to encourage students to look beyond individual case details and identify the larger patterns and impacts of the Marshall Court's decisions.

Standard 2: Expansion and Union 1803–1877

USHC.2.P – Emancipation Proclamation

Observation: While most students recognized the Emancipation Proclamation as a significant turning point in the abolition movement, many struggled to explain its impact on the Civil War, particularly its role in increasing African American participation in the Union army through the formation of regiments like the 54th Massachusetts. About one-third of students held the misconception that it caused the border states to secede from the Union.

Historical Trends: Similar observations noted in [2025](#).

Instructional Recommendations:

- Use an annotated timeline activity that requires students to place key events leading up to and following the Emancipation Proclamation in chronological order. Have students annotate each event with historical context and analyze how the proclamation served as a military strategy to weaken the Confederacy and strengthen the Union through increased African American enlistment, including the formation of regiments such as the 54th Massachusetts.
- Address misconceptions about secession by using a map analysis activity that identifies the Confederate states and distinguishes them from the border states that remained in the Union.

Standard 3: Capitalism and Reform 1862–1924

USHC.3.CO – Comparing Labor and Industrial Leaders

Observation: Most students were able to identify general strategies used by labor leaders and industrial leaders. However, many struggled when comparing viewpoints and determining whether a quotation reflected the interests of labor or industry.

Historical Trends: Similar observations noted in [2024](#).

Instructional Recommendations:

- Incorporate headlines and point-of-view sorting tasks that ask students to match newspaper headlines, political cartoons, or brief quotes to the labor or industrial perspective. Require students to cite specific words or ideas from the evidence for their classification. Include examples where multiple sources could connect to the same group to provide practice applying concepts in different contexts.
- Use a "speed dating" role-play activity in which students assume the identities of labor and industrial leaders and engage in brief, structured interviews about issues such as wages, working conditions, unions, and government regulation. After each interaction, have students evaluate whether the two individuals would have agreed on key issues and explain why or why not using historical evidence. This authentic learning experience encourages students to compare perspectives, draw content-based conclusions, and learn from peer discussions.

Standard 4: Modernism and Interventionism 1893–1945

USHC.4.CO – Motivations and Outcomes of American Intervention

Observation: While most students successfully interpreted a pros-and-cons chart on the outcomes of the Spanish-American War, many struggled to transfer that understanding when asked to explain, without the support of a chart, how the war expanded U.S. involvement in Latin America and the Pacific. Students often had difficulty linking American expansion to the pursuit of economic opportunities, including access to new markets, resources, and trade routes. Additionally, about one-third of students demonstrated a misconception that U.S. involvement in these regions was primarily intended to limit the spread of communism.

Historical Trends: Similar observations noted in [2023](#) and [2024](#).

Instructional Recommendations:

- Use map analysis activities that require students to identify territories acquired after the Spanish-American War and explain how their locations supported American trade, access to resources, and naval influence.
- Model historical thinking through "bigger picture" discussions during instruction. When discussing events such as the Spanish-American War, explicitly ask students:
 - What was happening in the United States at this time?
 - What foreign policy goals were driving U.S. actions?
 - What similarities and differences exist between the motives for and outcomes of this intervention and those of other U.S. foreign interventions?

USHC.4.CE – Causes and Effects of the Great Depression

Observation #1: Students demonstrated challenges applying key economic terms and concepts, such as inflation, deflation, speculation, deficit spending, surplus, profit, debt, credit, overproduction, and laissez-faire economics. Students often struggled to use these concepts to explain economic conditions and developments associated with the Great Depression.

Historical Trends: Similar observations noted in [2024 and 2025](#).

Instructional Recommendations:

- Analyze primary and secondary sources to emphasize targeted economic vocabulary:
 - Stock market cartoons and newspaper headlines to illustrate speculation;
 - Installment-buying advertisements to demonstrate credit and debt;
 - Farm production statistics and crop price reports to explain overproduction; or
 - New Deal posters and government spending data to show deficit spending and efforts to promote economic recovery.

Observation #2: Students demonstrated difficulty explaining the interconnected causes, effects, and responses associated with the Great Depression. While many students could identify an individual cause or effect, they struggled to explain how risky lending practices and stock market speculation contributed to the Stock Market Crash, how the crash contributed to bank failures, and how New Deal programs such as the FDIC were designed to restore confidence in the banking system. Additionally, students demonstrated the misconception that deficit spending caused the Great Depression rather than serving as a federal response to the crisis.

Historical Trends: Similar observations noted in [2023 and 2025](#).

Instructional Recommendations:

- To help students understand the economic chain of events:
 - Use a Problem-Solution Matching Activity in which students analyze major effects of the Great Depression and match each problem to the New Deal program designed to address it;
 - Have students create color-coded timelines/flowcharts that connect Great Depression events to New Deal responses. For example, students could trace: Stock Market Crash → Bank Failures → Loss of Public Confidence → FDIC; or
 - Have students explain the connection between a problem and its remedy using sentence frames such as: "Because _____ occurred during the Great Depression, the federal government created _____ to address _____."

USHC.4.CX – The Great Migration

Observation: Most students were able to interpret a map of the Great Migration and identify economic opportunities as a key pull factor drawing African Americans to northern cities. However, when presented with a primary source newspaper excerpt reporting census data on increased African American migration from the South to the North, many students struggled to apply historical context by identifying the Great Migration and explaining the combination of push and pull factors that drove the movement, particularly the impact of violence, racial discrimination, and Jim Crow laws in the South.

Historical Trends: Similar observations noted [2024](#) and [2025](#).

Instructional Recommendations:

- Use comparison activities that pair multiple sources, such as Northern job advertisements with excerpts describing segregation, violence, or disenfranchisement in the South. Model contextualization during source analysis by asking students:
 - What was happening in the South at this time?
 - What opportunities existed in the North?
 - How does this source reflect those conditions?

Ask students to explain how the sources work together to provide a more complete understanding of the Great Migration.

Standard 5: Legacy of the Cold War 1945–present

USHC.5.CO/CX – America in the Cold-War and Post-Cold War Era

Observation: Students demonstrated difficulty distinguishing between the Cold War and post-Cold War eras. They experienced challenges identifying the technological, economic, political, and foreign policy characteristics unique to each period, including technological innovations, the shift from a manufacturing-based to a service-based economy, and changing international influences on U.S. policy. Students had difficulty determining the distinct national security challenges that shaped each era, including containing communism during the Cold War and combating terrorism in the post-Cold War period, while recognizing that both were driven by the broader goal of protecting U.S. national security.

Historical Trends: Not previously reported.

Instructional Recommendations:

- Use comparison charts, timelines, or sorting activities that require students to categorize major events and developments as either Cold War, post-Cold War, or both (e.g., containment, War on Terror, Space Race, digital revolution, manufacturing sector, service sector, etc.).
- Provide regular practice with comparison prompts, such as:
 - To what extent did U.S. national security priorities change after the Cold War?
 - How were containment and counterterrorism similar and different?
 - What economic characteristics were unique to each era?
 - How did technological developments influence U.S. society during each period?

USHC.5.CC – Similarities in Civil Rights Strategies

Observation: When told that the Delano Grape Strike included a boycott of grapes, students were generally able to identify a connection to the African American Civil Rights Movement by recognizing that both movements used economic protest strategies to achieve their goals. However, many students had difficulty analyzing a photograph of the American Indian Movement's occupation of Alcatraz and recognizing its similarity to Civil Rights Movement tactics, such as sit-ins. This suggests that while students can identify similarities when one method is explicitly stated, they need additional support in recognizing continuities across civil rights movements when those connections must be inferred from historical evidence.

Historical Trends: Similar observations noted in [2023](#), [2024](#), and [2025](#).

Instructional Recommendations:

- Use a "Sort the Sources" activity in which students:
 - examine photographs, headlines, and excerpts from civil rights movements,
 - categorize the sources by protest method, and
 - use evidence to explain continuity in protest strategies across movements.
- Use a continuity-and-change graphic organizer that requires students to compare multiple civil rights movements by identifying commonalities while also highlighting one key difference that made each movement unique.