

# Kansas Oral History Project: Example Compelling Questions

History is necessary for making sense of the present. We need it for identity, as a way of understanding our personal past. Genealogists say families need history to understand how we are connected to each other, and what our ancestors experienced. Nations use history as the basis for law and government; for example, Americans' very rights are established in the U.S. Constitution, a historical document. Though most of us understand history as a record of the written word, this approach often omits many important developments. Written history tells us what was recorded on a given day but not why, or how people of the time reacted, or what the biases the person or persons doing the recording may have had. Oral history allows us to fill in the gaps by focusing attention on people's memories and lived experiences. History, then, is part of the larger package of social studies needed for active civic engagement.

<b>Theme (Judicial, Environmental, Tribal, etc.)</b>	<b>Example Compelling Questions</b>	<b>Grade Level E=Elementary M=Middle H=High</b>
Judicial	Is an Independent Kansas Judiciary necessary?	H
Legislative	What's the greatest impact of the Kansas State Legislature on my community?	M & H
General Government	Why is diversity important in government?	M & H
Environmental and Government	To what extent should energy be generated and regulated in Kansas?	M & H
Environmental and Government	What are the people's rights to water in Kansas?	M & H
General Government	Is compromise in government effective?	M & H
General Government	Which level (City, County, State, Tribal, National) of Government impacts my community the most?	E, M, & H
General Government	What is my role in Government?	E, M, & H
General Government	What are the qualities of an effective leader of a democracy?	E, M, & H

**The Classroom Based Assessment:** The Kansas Social Studies Classroom Based Assessment (CBA) is designed to measure student understanding of the five [History, Government, and Social Studies \(HGSS\)](#) standards and four associated benchmarks that support the discipline-specific application of content in authentic situations. The standards, benchmarks, and skills allow Kansas school districts, classroom teachers, and students the opportunity to develop their own assessment that best supports local decisions concerning content, sources, and products. To prepare learners for the state-level CBA, the KOHP has developed several compelling questions, frameworks, a multi-disciplinary crosswalk, and instructional activities for use by classroom teachers.

**Civic Engagement:** Civic engagement exists as part of the current KSDE Kansas Education Systems of Accreditation (KESA) foundational structures, thus all systems need to address civic engagement in a variety of ways. School systems also have the option to apply for Civic Advocacy Network (CAN) recognition awards based on evidence of civic engagement. The KOHP can help in both these areas. Civic Engagement involves both learning in the classroom and service projects in the community. Given that part of civic engagement is educational, the KOHP can be an important tool to teach about different areas of state and local government for a variety of grade levels. There exists the possibility to create oral history projects, with the KOHP as the model, that engage the community. Further, high school students can utilize the KOHP to teach younger students about civic engagement, which itself is a part of civic engagement, an important aspect of CAN requirements.

**Speaking and Listening Skills:**

Well-developed abilities of both listening and speaking are critical for success. These skills are required for postsecondary success. With them students can positively impact the world at all levels. This work can be done through several different instruction styles and supported through quality formative and summative assessment types.

One powerful technique that provides students the opportunity to grow these skills is a mock congressional hearing summative assessment. During this process students use the compelling questions offered by the Kansas Oral History Project to dig into the world around them, finding research and resources to help answer their questions.