

**HISTORY AND SOCIAL STUDIES:**  
Content Area Task

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## **I. INTRODUCTION**

The History and Social Studies Content Area Task is focused on analyzing twenty four fourth grade assessments based on a clear and explicit rubric. This paper will outline the specific assessment and rubric as well as provide next steps for classroom instruction based on the analysis. My analysis of these assessments has focused on patterns among the whole class, targeted groups, and individual patterns as well. These emerging patterns will directly impact my next steps for increasing student performance and comprehension. Finally, the paper will conclude with how I will use what I learned from this process in the future to analyze student work.

## **II. OVERVIEW OF ASSESSMENT AND RUBRIC**

In order to better understand the next steps I have identified, it is important to have some background knowledge on the rubric given to the students and the specific aspects of the assessment itself. The settlement assessment was taken at the end of an interactive, engaging unit full of lessons focusing on the big ideas and essential question. The unit was guided by the essential question: *What factors are involved when settling in a new place?* The students learned about four different settlements (Roanoke, Jamestown, Plymouth Pilgrims, and the Spanish Missions and Pueblos) as well as the various benefits, challenges and outcomes associated with settling for each of these groups. The big ideas of the unit were that many people died within the colony's early years, that not all settlements survived, that some survived and became friends with the Native Americans and that compromise was as essential part of settling.

The assessment prompt asked students to describe the factors involved in settling in a new place including benefits, challenges, outcomes and big ideas of the different settlements. The rubric was given to the students beforehand so that they knew exactly what was expected of

them prior to the assessment. In order to be “advanced,” the student must list four benefits, four challenges, four outcomes, and have only one historically inaccurate statement. To be “proficient,” the student must list three benefits, three challenges, three outcomes and have only two historically inaccurate statements. In order to be “basic,” a student must list one or two benefits, one or two challenges, one or two outcomes, and have three or more historically inaccurate statements. Finally, to be “below basic,” the student does not list any benefits, challenges or outcomes, and is historically inaccurate.

### **III. NEXT STEPS**

#### **1) *Whole Class***

There were many students who had difficulty distinguishing between a benefit, a challenge and an outcome. In a lot of the assessments, students had a tendency to list a benefit as a challenge or an outcome and vice versa. For example, student #7 stated that an outcome of settlement was bad weather and that benefits of settlement were a Native American attack and that some settlers died. Furthermore, student # 14 stated in the assessment that “some benefits are they were dying and had no food.” As a result, I would re-teach the explicit difference between benefits, challenges, and outcomes to the whole group through the use of a t-chart and a modeled think aloud. For example, in a whole group setting I would create and act out a situation in which I am moving to a new city for a new job. I would act out how happy I am to move because I get to live in a beautiful city in a bigger house and make more money at this new job. Then, I would act out how sad I am because it will be challenging leaving my old friends in my old neighborhood and the fear that I won’t be able to see my family and friends very often.

After the mini-skit, I will ask students to try and identify some benefits and challenges from this situation and I will write these ideas on the board in a t-chart. We will discuss the differences between benefits and challenges and I will explicitly provide them with a definition

of each. Then, I also would address the meaning of an ‘outcome’ and ask students to brainstorm plausible outcomes for my situation of moving. I will also list these in the t-chart and paraphrase their responses so that all students understand that an outcome is the result of the action. I truly think this will help the students be able to distinguish the differences between benefits, challenges and outcomes as it will benefit *all* the students.

## ***2) Targeted Support for Groups***

There were 5 students who mixed up the facts with the specific settlements. For example, student #11 stated that a benefit for Roanoke is that they wanted to spread their religion and have freedom of religion. These are in fact benefits of settlement, however they were benefits for Plymouth and the Spanish missions respectively. Furthermore, students #17, 29, 30, and 33 all had similar examples in their assessments in which they mismatched the facts with the wrong settlements. I think this problem is also an organizational problem. As a result, I would pull out this group of five students and provide this group with sentence frames to help them organize their essay. The sentences frames I would introduce and model for them would be:

A benefit for       (name of settlement)       was \_\_\_\_\_.  
A challenge for       (name of settlement)       was \_\_\_\_\_.  
An outcome for       (name of settlement)       was \_\_\_\_\_.

In addition, I would also re-teach this group the benefits, challenges and outcomes for each of the settlements focusing first on Roanoke, then moving to Jamestown, then Plymouth and finally Spanish Missions. In order to help them be able to distinguish each settlement, I would create a poster with a picture of each settlement alongside the facts. I think this would truly help the students be able to visualize and differentiate between settlements and improve their ability to recall the correct information for the assessment.

There is a different group of three students whom I would provide further targeted support for in a small group setting. With this group, I would re-teach the difference between

freedom of religion and spreading religion because these students mixed up these concepts. For example, student # 17 stated that “the third benefit is that the Plymyth colony spread there religion” and student #21 thought that the Native Americans were looking for freedom of religion. Student #30 also believed that “another reason is to spread religion, for example, the Pilgrims from Plymouth.” To me, this shows general confusion among these three students in terms of the difference between these two causes for settlement. As a result, I would pull these students aside and re-teach them how the Pilgrims were fleeing from England in order to be able to practice their own religion whereas the Spanish wanted to build missions in the New Land so that they could convert and spread Christianity. I would check for understanding and create a t-chart so that the students would visually understand the difference between freedom of religion and spreading religion in order to increase this group’s comprehension level.

The third group of students I would provide targeted support for is the group of students who placed in “Basic.” I would divide up this group according to my results from the Class Matrix of Student Scores (attached) and work with one group of 7 students who only listed 1 benefit, another group of 3 students who only listed 1 challenge, another group of 10 students who only listed 1 outcome. For each of these three groups, I would re-teach that specific group’s target area. For example, I’d re-teach all the benefits of settling to the first group, all the challenges of settling to the second group, and all the outcomes of settling to the third group. I think this kind of specific support will target their weak area in order to improve upon their current level of comprehension. This is also a way to differentiate instruction to meet the specific needs of these individual students in a small group setting.

### ***3) Patterns for Individuals***

In analyzing the overall student performance, there is only one outlying student who placed in “Below Basic” for not listing any benefits, challenges, or outcomes and providing

historically inaccurate information. I would definitely provide a lot of extra individualized support for this student #5 and re-teach the big ideas of each settlement. Based on this students' best learning style, I would provide lots of visuals, dramatizations and/or graphic organizers in order to review the information in a way that builds upon this students' strengths. I believe that a lot of the other individual student needs will be addressed in the target support for groups as outlined in the previous section for next steps.

#### **IV. CONCLUSION**

This process has truly taught me a lot about how analyzing student work can have direct implications in classroom instruction. Furthermore, I have realized the importance of paying close attention to emerging patterns in terms of the whole class, target groups as well as individual patterns. Assessments can shed light on how to further differentiate instruction in your classroom to address the specific needs of all your students. I also think it is important to create a chart that reflects not only the overall scores of your students, but also a matrix of scores based on the rubric. For example, in these 24 assessments I found that overall there were 2 advanced students, 4 proficient/advanced students, 9 proficient students, 6 basic/proficient students, 2 basic students, and 1 below basic student. This knowledge helps me identify whole class patterns, however it is the more detailed, specific matrix of students scores (divided across benefits, challenges, outcomes, and historical accuracy) which tells me more about next steps and differentiated instruction. I will definitely use this strategy to assess my future students' work and let it guide how I adjust, re-teach, or differentiate instruction as a result. This process has taught me that student assessments can be clues for teachers to reflect upon where their students need extra support.

# SUPPORTING DOCUMENTS :

### Class Matrix of Student Scores

List Names below each of the matrix boxes to determine individual, group and class needs

	Below Basic	Basic	Proficient	Advanced
Benefits	Does not list any benefits for settling (5) (14)	Lists one or two benefits for settling (7) (16) (17) (21) (22) (23)	Lists three benefits for settling (2) (3) (4) (10) (11) (15) (18) (25) (28) (29) (30) (31)	Lists four benefits for settling (12)
Challenges	Does not list any challenges to settling (5)	Lists one or two challenges to settling (3) (30) (31)	Lists three challenges to settling (1) (2) (7) (11) (14) (16) (18) (27) (31)	Lists four challenges to settling (4) (10) (12) (22) (23) (25)
Outcomes	Does not list any outcomes of settling (31)	Lists one or two outcomes of settling (1) (2) (5) (7) (11) (14) (16) (17) (21) (27)	Lists three outcomes of settling (4) (10) (15) (31) (22) (23) (18)	Lists four outcomes of settling (12) (25) (28) (30)
Historically Accurate	Historically Inaccurate (5)	Makes three or more historically inaccurate statements (11) (14) (31)	Makes two historically inaccurate statements (17) (7) (21) (23)	Does not make or makes only one historically inaccurate statements (1) (2) (4) (10) (12) (15) (16) (18) (22) (23) (27) (28) (29) (30) (31)

## Students' Overall Scores:

<i>Advanced</i>	2
<i>Proficient-Advanced</i>	4
<i>Proficient</i>	9
<i>Basic-Proficient</i>	6
<i>Basic</i>	2
<i>Below Basic</i>	1