



# NCSS Publications Manual

Approved by the NCSS Board of Directors January 31, 2024

The NCSS Publications Committee produced this manual at the request of the  
NCSS Publications Task Force.  
This manual was developed by members of the NCSS Publications Committee (2020–2022)  
and edited by Jeremy Stoddard, Chair of the Committee.

NCSS Publications Committee  
Jeremy Stoddard, Chair, 2020–2022  
Linda Black, Associate Chair 2020–2022, Chair 2022–2024

## **NCSS Publications Manual (approved January 31, 2024)**

In 2020, the NCSS Publications Committee was charged with developing a publications manual that will serve as a guide for authors, reviewers, and editorial staff of NCSS's three periodic journals: *Social Education*, *Social Studies and the Young Learner*, and *Middle Level Learning* (which is an online publication). This manual was developed to address inconsistencies in the review and editorial processes across journals and to help foster new directions for these publications to address current needs and to attract new audiences and authors to the journals.

This manual is organized into seven sections ranging from the Aims and Scopes of each of the three journals to how they are indexed and made accessible to readers. One key goal of the manual is to provide transparency and clear processes for the management of the core NCSS publications. This includes articulated vision and mission statements for the publications, clear processes for manuscript review, decision, and editorial processes, and guidelines for how the journals will function, including the roles of NCSS publications staff, editors, and editorial board members. This publications manual, and the guidelines it stipulates, is subject to the approval of the NCSS Board of Directors. Any revisions to the roles and processes outlined in this manual should be made and approved through the NCSS Publications Committee and then presented to the Board for approval.

### **1. Aims and Scope for Journals**

**Social Education**, a peer-reviewed journal, invites author submissions of the following kinds:

- Substantive articles in teaching and learning about anthropology, archaeology, civics, economics, geography, history, law, philosophy, political science, psychology, religion, sociology, and other related humanities and social sciences;
- Viewpoints, analyses, and criticism of current issues and policies related to social studies;
- Strategies and resources for teaching topics and perspectives historically marginalized in or missing from the social studies curriculum;
- Ideas and techniques for strengthening social studies education at all levels: elementary, middle, high school, and higher education;
- Significant research findings, interpretations, or theories in social studies education;
- Articles that relate work in other academic disciplines (such as the natural sciences, mathematics, literature, and the arts) or areas of skills or knowledge (e.g., media and information literacy; taking civic action) to the social studies.

**Middle Level Learning**, a supplement to *Social Education* which is published online three times a year and focuses on social studies in the middle grades (6–8), invites author submissions of the following kinds:

- Substantive articles in teaching and learning about anthropology, archaeology, civics, economics, geography, history, law, philosophy, political science, psychology, religion, sociology, and other related humanities and social sciences in the middle grades;
- Viewpoints, analyses, and criticism of current issues and policies related to social studies in the middle grades;
- Strategies and resources for teaching topics and perspectives historically marginalized in or missing from the social studies curriculum;
- Ideas and techniques for addressing issues specific to the middle grades such as academic and social/emotional development and identity formation;

- Significant research findings, interpretations, or theories in social studies education;
- Articles that relate work in other academic disciplines (such as the natural sciences, mathematics, literature, and the arts) or areas of skills or knowledge (e.g., media and information literacy; taking civic action) to middle grades social studies.

***Social Studies and the Young Learner***, which is published four times a year, focuses on how social studies (history, geography, civics, economics, anthropology, and other related subjects in the social sciences and humanities) is taught in the PK–5 classroom. The goal of *Social Studies and the Young Learner* is to (a) capture and enthuse elementary teachers across the country and (b) provide relevant and useful information about the teaching of social studies to elementary students. The editor especially encourages submission of manuscripts authored by PK–5 classroom teachers or co-authored by professors and classroom teachers. There are no established issue themes or topics for manuscripts; the editor invites author submissions of the following kinds:

- Lead articles that provide background on a major issue in teaching or curriculum for the elementary classroom;
- Articles focused on children’s literature that provides a review of the book or books and describes how to use them in the classroom;
- Ideas for making the elementary social studies curriculum more inclusive of marginalized perspectives and topics;
- Teaching strategies or lessons for core elementary social studies content that include a pullout with resources or handouts for use in classrooms;
- Articles describing strategies for building classroom community conducive to the development of democratic citizenship and civic agency.

## 2. Publications Personnel and Role Description

### NCSS Editorial Staff

Director of Publications: The overall management of NCSS publications is the responsibility of the Director of Publications. The Director of Publications has final decision-making authority and oversight over all of NCSS’s publications. The Director of Publications works with the NCSS Publications Committee, which is an advisory body.

#### NCSS Editorial Staff:

Senior Editor: Manages manuscript review and the publication production for *Social Education* and *Middle Level Learning*.

Associate Editor: Edits manuscripts for *Social Studies and the Young Learner* that have been approved by the Editor and reviewers, as well as NCSS books and e-books. Manages production of *Social Studies and the Young Learner*.

Art Manager: Does the graphic design and layout of NCSS journals and other publications.

### Appointed Editors, Department Editors, and Special Issue Editors

Editors (Appointed): Each journal (*Social Education*, *Social Studies and the Young Learner*, and *Middle Level Learning*) will have an appointed Editor who is also an NCSS member. The process for selecting these editors will be established by the NCSS Board of Directors and the Publications Committee in conjunction with the NCSS staff editors. Editorial appointments will be for five years with the possible reappointment for one additional five-year term. The Editor

will work with NCSS publications staff to set the direction for the journal, recruit authors and reviewers, and assist with the review process and selection of manuscripts for the journal. The Editor may also contribute to the journal as an author or as a special issue editor.

Editors for the three NCSS journals (*Social Education*, *SSYL*, *MLL*) should be selected through an open search process. A search committee for these positions should include the NCSS publications staff and members of the NCSS Publications Committee. A call for nominations (including self-nominations) should be placed approximately one year in advance of an editorial position coming available to allow time for both the search and a smooth editorial transition. A call should be shared with all NCSS members and should encourage members from underrepresented groups within the social studies community in particular to consider being nominated. The search committee should evaluate each application based on the role of the editor for the journal and experience within the NCSS community.

Editorial Boards: Editorial boards should be selected by members of the journal editorial team, the appointed editor, and members of the NCSS Publications Committee. The editorial team should work with the NCSS Publications Committee to identify potential members who match the areas of expertise needed for the journal's editorial board. The editorial team should work to identify a diverse editorial board that represents as much as possible the areas of expertise and content within the social studies and reflects the diversity of the NCSS community.

Department Editors of *Social Education* (Appointed): There are four appointed department editors for *Social Education*: Democracy Education, Elementary Education, Instructional Technology, and Research and Practice. Each department editor provides regular leadership for their department through writing a feature column or editing manuscripts for this section of the journal. The review process for these manuscripts is managed by the Department Editor. Department Editors will serve a term of five years, with the possibility of reappointment for one additional term, and will be selected by members of the *Social Education* Editorial Board in consultation with the *Social Education* editorial staff. The Editorial Board should select a diverse group of individuals to serve as editors for these department/sections, establish a clear and transparent process to select department/section editors, and, in conjunction with NCSS staff, publicize and solicit applications to serve in these positions from a diverse group of individuals. The opportunity to be a department editor should be publicized to the social studies community, with a special effort to attract individuals from historically marginalized and underrepresented groups. When a department editor has finished their term, the *Social Education* editorial staff and editorial board should review the relevance of the department. The result of this review may include changing or even replacing the department being vacated.

Department Editors of *Social Education* (Institutional Agreements): There are four department editors resulting from agreements between NCSS and other cooperating organizations: C3 Teachers, the American Bar Association, the Teaching with Primary Sources program of the Library of Congress, and the National Archives, which provides the Teaching with Documents column. These editors are appointed by the institution on terms set by those institutions. These editors provide regular feature columns or edited manuscripts for these sections of the journal. The review process for these manuscripts is managed by the Department Editor. These agreements and the content provided to *Social Education* or other NCSS publications should be reviewed every five years for relevance and quality by the NCSS Publications Committee and *Social Education* Editorial Board. Recommendations from these reviews should be made to the Director of Publications and NCSS Executive Director to inform any upcoming renewal or renegotiation of arrangements with partner institutions.

Special Issue Editors of *Social Education*: Special themed issues beyond the regular Departments identified above are selected to address timely topics in the field. Potential editors for special themed issues of *Social Education* can submit a proposal to the editorial team of *Social Education* that describes the general theme and proposal for the special issue. A special issue generally includes a mix of several full length and shorter manuscripts that represent a range of perspectives on the special issue topic. The decisions for approving special issues as well as final decisions on manuscripts accepted for a special issue reside with the *Social Education* editorial team. The Editor for the special issue manages the peer review process for the issue's manuscripts. In planning the issue, the Editor should publicize a call for submission of manuscripts on the topic selected so that the opportunity to submit to such issues is widely advertised to diverse audiences.

### **3. Editorial Board Appointments and Roles**

Editorial Boards: Each journal will maintain an editorial board that includes members who provide advice and expertise for the editor and journal and also serve as a pool of manuscript reviewers. This section outlines the appointment term, make-up, and role of the editorial boards for each journal. Each journal utilizes its editorial board differently given the different goals and structure of the journal. Therefore, editorial board members' roles may vary between journals.

#### ***Social Education***

##### Editorial Board Term and Selection Process

Board members will serve a three-year appointment with the possibility of reappointment for a second three-year term at the discretion of the editors. The journal editor will work with the Publications Committee and existing editorial board members to identify and recruit new editorial board members. A call for openings on the editorial board will also be made to the NCSS community.

##### Make-up of the Editorial Board

The editorial board will include between 15 and 20 members from universities and other academic institutions, district or state-level specialists, classroom teachers, curriculum or non-profit organizations, and other social studies educators. This board will ideally include regional representation as well as expertise and experience across the disciplines and areas within NCSS (e.g., economics, geography, psychology, history, civics/government, AP, multicultural education).

##### Role and Opportunities

Editorial board members may serve in the following ways per the needs of the journal and at the discretion of the journal editor:

- Assist in identifying diverse contributors for the journal. Members should attempt to either acquire or submit 1–2 manuscripts per year for possible publication.
- Serve as a manuscript reviewer (up to 2–3 per year).
- Serve as an ambassador for the journal and NCSS.
- Take advantage of opportunities to contribute to the journal.
- Take advantage of opportunities to recruit contributors in areas of expertise.
- Provide advice to the editorial team to shape the future of the journal.
- Assist in the identification and recruitment of new editorial board members and authors from state-level conferences or journals.

- Help to identify current problems to address each year and in particular areas informed by research.
- Assist in finding contributors who deal with subjects not currently covered enough in *Social Education*, such as geography, psychology, and sociology.
- Participate in editorial board meetings 1–2 times a year; one meeting at the annual conference and a second virtual meeting.
- Evaluate departmental columns, recommend new columns, and solicit department editors from among diverse communities. One department column should cover the social sciences, and another should cover geography.

### ***Middle Level Learning***

#### Editorial Board Term

Board members will serve a three-year appointment with the possibility of reappointment for a second three-year term at the discretion of the editor. The journal editor will work with the Publications Committee and existing editorial board members to identify and recruit new editorial board members. A call for openings on the editorial board will also be made to the NCSS community.

#### Make-up of the Editorial Board

The editorial board will include between eight and ten members from universities and other academic institutions, district or state level specialists, classroom teachers, curriculum or non-profit organizations, and other social studies educators. This board will ideally include regional representation as well as expertise and experience across the disciplines and areas within NCSS (e.g., economics, geography, psychology, history, civics/government, multicultural education).

#### Role and Opportunities

Editorial board members may serve in the following ways per the needs of the journal and at the discretion of the journal editor:

- Assist in identifying diverse contributors for the journal.
- Serve as a manuscript reviewer (up to 2–3 per year).
- Serve as an ambassador for the journal and NCSS.
- Take advantage of opportunities to contribute to journal.
- Take advantage of opportunities to recruit contributors in areas of expertise.
- Provide advice to the editorial team to shape the future of the journal.
- Assist in the identification and recruitment of new board members and authors from state-level conferences or journals.
- Help to identify current problems to address each year, and in particular areas informed by research.
- Participate in editorial board meetings 1–2 times a year; one meeting at the annual conference and a second virtual meeting.

### ***Social Studies and the Young Learner (SSYL)***

#### Editorial Board Term

Board members will serve a three-year appointment with the possibility of reappointment for a second three-year term at the discretion of the editor. The journal editor will work with the

Publications Committee and existing editorial board members to identify and recruit new editorial board members. A call for openings on the editorial board will also be made to the NCSS community.

#### Make-up of the Editorial Board

The editorial board will include between 15 and 20 members from universities and other academic institutions, district or state level specialists, classroom teachers, curriculum or non-profit organizations, and other social studies educators. This board will ideally include regional representation as well as expertise and experience across the disciplines and areas within NCSS (e.g., economics, geography, psychology, history, civics/government, AP, multicultural education).

#### Role and Opportunities

Editorial board members may serve in the following ways per the needs of the journal and at the discretion of the journal editor:

- Assist in identifying diverse contributors for the journal.
- Serve as a manuscript reviewer (up to 2–3 per year).
- Serve as an ambassador for the journal and NCSS.
- Take advantage of opportunities to contribute to journal.
- Take advantage of opportunities to recruit contributors in areas of expertise.
- Provide advice to the editorial team to shape the future of the journal.
- Assist in the identification and recruitment of new editorial board members and authors from state-level conferences or journals.
- Help to identify current problems to address each year, and in particular areas informed by research.
- Assist in finding contributors who deal with subjects not currently covered enough in SSYL, such as geography, psychology, and sociology.
- Participate in editorial board meetings 1–2 times a year; one meeting at the annual conference and a second virtual meeting.

### **4. Author / Submission Information**

Authors should read the guidelines below as they prepare their papers for *Social Education*, *Middle Level Learning*, or *Social Studies and the Young Learner*. **They should then submit their work online at [www.editorialmanager.com/ncssjournals](http://www.editorialmanager.com/ncssjournals).** After registering, they will receive an email with a temporary user ID and password and follow the steps for uploading a manuscript, title page, figures, tables, or graphics.

*Rights of authors:* NCSS allows authors of articles in its journals to use copies of their published articles freely in their teaching and professional development work. Authors should contact the NCSS Director of Publications to seek permission to use any portion of published NCSS journal articles over 250 words as part of a new publication.

#### **Guidelines for Contributors to *Social Education***

***Social Education***, a peer-reviewed journal, contains a balance of theoretical content and practical teaching ideas. The resources include techniques for using materials in the PK–12 classroom, information on the latest uses of technologies in the classroom, reviews of

educational media, research on significant social studies-related topics, and lesson plans that can be applied to various disciplines. The editor especially encourages submission of manuscripts authored by classroom teachers or co-authored by professors and classroom teachers. Submissions on any topic related to social education are welcome.

### **Editorial and Peer Review**

*Social Education* is peer reviewed. Most articles will be sent out for review to external qualified reviewers in addition to a review by the *Social Education* editorial team. The review process can take three to six months, depending on reviewer availability and response time.

Editors have the final responsibility for deciding suitability for publication. If a manuscript is considered for publication, the author must be willing to work with the editor on revisions. The editors reserve the right to edit for style (including grammar, punctuation, syntax, and vocabulary), but changes in content are made with the corresponding author's consent.

### **Preparation of Manuscripts**

*Length:* In general, manuscripts should be between 1,000 and 2,500 words in length, although the editors may consider longer manuscripts in some cases.

*Formatting:* Use the title of the paper as the name of the file. Avoid automatic endnotes, superscripts, active URLs, and other special functions. Type these items directly into your manuscript. For example, a reference to note 5 may appear at the end of a sentence, like so.(5)

*Title Page:* Include the title of the paper and the name, professional title and affiliation, complete mailing address, email, and telephone number(s) of each author. If there are several authors, please indicate who is the corresponding author on the title page. Except for the title, this information should not appear on any other page, so that reviewers may be kept "blind" as to the identity of the author(s). (It is okay if a citation to your own previous book or paper appears in the notes.)

### **Photographs, Illustrations, and Figures**

It is great if you can provide illustrations, graphics, photographs, lesson plan materials, figures, and samples of students' work with articles. Do not embed photographs or any graphics within the Word document. Photographs must be sent as separate jpeg or tiff files. If photographs of young students (or their names or work samples) are included, please provide statements of parental permission.

*Image Quality:* For print publications, images must be of high resolution, providing at least 300 pixels per inch (dpi) at an image size of at least 3 × 5 inches. Low-resolution formats (images saved within a Word document, copied from a website, or placed in a PowerPoint presentation) will not work.

### **Endnotes**

Please use endnotes, which follow the main text of an article, rather than footnotes (do not automate them). Follow the Chicago Manual of Style as closely as possible (not APA style). Use authors' full names. See examples below.

Citations from books:

1. Jeanne Theoharis, *A More Beautiful and Terrible History: The Uses and Misuses of Civil Rights History* (Boston: Beacon Press, 2018), 56.



2. Alexander Keyssar, *The Right to Vote: The Contested History of Democracy in the United States* (New York: Basic Books, 2009), 111–113.
3. Thomas O. Erb, "What Team Organization Can Do for Teachers," in *Connecting the Curriculum through Interdisciplinary Instruction*, ed. John H. Lounsbury (Columbus, OH: National Middle School Association, 1992), 7–14.

Citations from journals and magazines:

4. Diana Hess, "Violence Prevention and Service Learning," *Social Education* 61, no. 5 (September 1997): 279–281.
5. Keisha N. Blain, "Eight Recommended Books by Women to Understand the Uprisings," *Ms.* (June 2, 2020): 3.

### **Uploading Your Manuscript**

Please register at [www.editorialmanager.com/ncssjournals](http://www.editorialmanager.com/ncssjournals) to receive an email with a temporary user ID and password to upload a manuscript. Then follow the steps for uploading the manuscript, title page, figures, tables, or graphics.

Manuscripts will no longer be accepted by email or on paper.

### **Reprints**

Authors of published manuscripts receive up to five complimentary copies of the printed journal in which the article appears, courtesy of NCSS. Authors are not paid for contributions.

If you have questions as you are planning your paper, please feel free to contact an NCSS staff editor at [publications@ncss.org](mailto:publications@ncss.org).

### **Tips for Authors**

#### **Who may submit an article?**

Anyone may submit an article to *Social Education*. The editors especially look for manuscripts co-authored by classroom teachers, classroom teachers and other educational professionals, or classroom teachers and professors.

#### **What are Good Topics?**

Articles in *Social Education* show how social studies (history, geography, civics, economics, anthropology, etc.) is taught in the PK–12 classroom. See *Social Education's* Aims and Scope [[www.socialstudies.org/social-education](http://www.socialstudies.org/social-education)] for examples of topics and the types of manuscripts considered for the journal.

### **Checklist**

This checklist shows the features that editors and reviewers will be watching for. Read your own paper against this checklist.

1. I have described the basic setting (grade level, time required to teach each activity, materials and resources needed)
2. The social studies content is strong (students learn history, civics, geography, economics, or anthropology, etc.). See the themes 1–10 in *National Curriculum Standards for Social Studies*, which are summarized at [www.socialstudies.org/standards/curriculum](http://www.socialstudies.org/standards/curriculum).
3. I have used inquiry methods when appropriate (see [www.socialstudies.org/standards/c3](http://www.socialstudies.org/standards/c3)).

4. Other teachers could use these ideas and methods. (Can this lesson or activity be applied to other classrooms, in other states, with a low budget, and with a reasonable commitment of time and materials?)
5. There is a clear assessment of student learning. (How is student learning measured at end of the lesson? Are discussion questions or test questions included?)
6. I have linked the subject matter in my paper to state and national content standards and to the required curriculum of my school for this grade level.
7. I have avoided using the passive voice.  
*Right:* The teacher corrects and grades the papers.  
*Wrong:* Papers are corrected and graded by the teacher.
8. I follow the Chicago Manual of Style for notes and do **not** use Endnote or Reference Manager programs.
9. Here is an example of the editors' preferred style-  
 BOOKS: Alfie Kohn, *What to Look For in a Classroom* (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 1998), 45.  
 ARTICLES: Bruce E. Larson, "The Makah: Exploring Public Issues During a Structured Classroom Discussion," *Social Studies and the Young Learner* 10, no. 1 (September/October 1997): 10–13.  
 WEBSITES: "Creating the United States," (Library of Congress), [myloc.gov/exhibitions/creatingtheus](http://myloc.gov/exhibitions/creatingtheus).
10. When citing online resources, I recommend specific, student-friendly websites on the topic under study, avoiding statements like, "Have students check Wikipedia," or "Just Google it."
11. Optional: I have included examples of classroom experience (what students said, how they responded, and pedagogical pitfalls that arose and how to avoid them).
12. Optional: I have included examples of young students' work (writing, art, quotations, photographs of students in action).

### Proofreading?

Ask a colleague to read your paper and check it for grammar, organization, and writing style.

### Who, When, and How?

Be sure to follow the basic advice found at the "Guidelines" tab to *Social Education* when you format text, type references, shoot photographs, write a cover letter, and submit your manuscript online.

### How Will My Paper Be Judged?

The following is a sample form sent to reviewers:

I. Please **make an overall recommendation** by checking the appropriate number:

- 0 Reject  
 1 Reject, but author could resubmit after **substantial** revision, additions, or re-focus  
 2 Accept, pending revision per suggestions made in this review  
 3 Accept with minor editing

II. Please **mark** with a plus (+) any item that is especially strong in the paper. Mark with a minus (-) any item that is weak. Mark (N/A) for not applicable. Then comment briefly on strengths and weaknesses of an item on the line below it—or write more elaborate comments at the very end of the form. **The reviewer's name is kept confidential.**

\_\_\_\_\_ **Scholarship:** pedagogy, content of subject discipline, and citations are relevant and current

\_\_\_\_\_ **Originality:** contributes new knowledge, examples, and/or approaches

\_\_\_\_\_ **Lucidity:** narrative is well written and logically organized

\_\_\_\_\_ **Interest:** generally lively to read and useful for this audience and profession

\_\_\_\_\_ **Balance:** presents various perspectives, avoids polemics, is fair in controversy

\_\_\_\_\_ **Classroom readiness:** conveys background, procedures, and resources useful to teachers

\_\_\_\_\_ **Classroom evidence:** gives examples of discussion, assessment, and/or student writing

\_\_\_\_\_ **Grade level:** activities are geared for the grade level and ability of the students

\_\_\_\_\_ **References:** cites useful resources and prior publications when appropriate

\_\_\_\_\_ **Content Standards:** cited, linked, or discussed at some point in the paper

**III. Write at length about any area of concern** and make specific suggestions for improvement, using the back of this page (if working on paper) or typing in additional space below (in an email or online form). Please keep a copy of your work.

#### **Other Questions?**

Please feel free to contact an NCSS staff editor at [publications@ncss.org](mailto:publications@ncss.org).

#### **Guidelines for Contributors to *Middle Level Learning***

***Middle Level Learning***, which is published online three times a year, focuses on social studies in the middle grades (6–8). All NCSS members can access the current issue of *MLL* as well as the complete collection of back issues at the online, members-only archive of publications.

#### **Editorial and Peer Review**

*Middle Level Learning* is peer reviewed. Most articles will be sent out for review by editors to external qualified reviewers in addition to a review by the *MLL* editorial team. The review process can take three to six months, depending on reviewer availability and response time.

Editors have the final responsibility for deciding suitability for publication. If a manuscript is considered for publication, the author must be willing to work with the editor on revisions. The editors reserve the right to edit for style (including grammar, punctuation, syntax, and vocabulary), but changes in content are made with the corresponding author's consent.

### **Preparation of Manuscripts**

*Length:* In general, manuscripts should be between 1,000 and 3,500 words in length, although the editors may consider longer manuscripts in some cases.

*Formatting:* Use the title of the paper as the name of the file. Avoid automatic endnotes, superscripts, active URLs, and other special functions. Type these items directly into your manuscript. For example, a reference to note 5 may appear at the end of a sentence, like so.(5)

*Title Page:* Include the title of the paper and the name, professional title and affiliation, complete mailing address, email, and telephone number(s) of each author. If there are several authors, please indicate who is the corresponding author on the title page. Except for the title, this information should not appear on any other page, so that reviewers may be kept "blind" as to the identity of the author(s). (It is okay if a citation to your own previous book or paper appears in the notes.)

### **Photographs, Illustrations, and Figures**

It is great if you can provide illustrations, graphics, photographs, lesson plan materials, figures, and samples of students' work with articles. Do not embed photographs or any graphics within the Word document. Photographs must be sent as separate jpeg or tiff files. If photographs of young students (or their names or work samples) are included, please provide statements of parental permission.

### **Endnotes**

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### **Tips for Authors**

#### **Who May Submit an Article?**

Anybody may submit an article to *Middle Level Learning*. The editors especially look for manuscripts co-authored by classroom teachers, classroom teachers and other educational professionals, or classroom teachers and professors.

#### **What are Good Topics?**

Articles in *Middle Level Learning* show how social studies (history, geography, civics, economics, psychology, sociology, and anthropology) is taught in classes in grades 6–8. See *MLL's Aims and Scope* [[insert link](#)] for examples of topics and the types of manuscripts considered for the journal.

#### **Checklist**

This checklist shows the features that editors and reviewers will be watching for. Read your own paper against this checklist.

1. I have described the basic setting (grade level, time required to teach each activity, materials and resources needed)
2. The social studies content is strong (students learn history, civics, geography, economics, or anthropology, etc.). See the themes 1–10 in *National Curriculum Standards for Social Studies*, which are summarized at [www.socialstudies.org/standards/curriculum](http://www.socialstudies.org/standards/curriculum).
3. I have used inquiry methods when appropriate (see [www.socialstudies.org/standards/c3](http://www.socialstudies.org/standards/c3)).
4. Other teachers could use these ideas and methods. (Can this lesson or activity be applied to other classrooms, in other states, with a low budget, and with a reasonable commitment of time and materials?)
5. There is a clear assessment of student learning. (How is student learning measured at end of the lesson? Are discussion questions or test questions included?)
6. I have linked the subject matter in my paper to state and national content standards and to the required curriculum of my school for this grade level.
7. I have avoided using the passive voice.  
*Right:* The teacher corrects and grades the papers.  
*Wrong:* Papers are corrected and graded by the teacher.
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ARTICLES: Bruce E. Larson, "The Makah: Exploring Public Issues During a Structured

Classroom Discussion," *Social Studies and the Young Learner* 10, no. 1 (September/October 1997): 10–13.

WEBSITES: "Creating the United States," (Library of Congress), myloc.gov/exhibitions/creatingtheus.

10. When citing online resources, I recommend specific, student-friendly websites on the topic under study, avoiding statements like, "Have students check Wikipedia," or "Just Google it."
11. Optional: I have included examples of classroom experience (what students said, how they responded, and pedagogical pitfalls that arose and how to avoid them).
12. Optional: I have included examples of young students' work (writing, art, quotations, photographs of students in action).

### Proofreading?

Ask a colleague to read your paper and check it for grammar, organization, and writing style.

### Who, When, and How?

Be sure to follow the basic advice found at the "Guidelines" tab to *Middle Level Learning* when you format text, type references, shoot photographs, and submit your manuscript online.

### How Will My Paper Be Judged?

The following is a sample form sent to reviewers:

I. Please **make an overall recommendation** by checking the appropriate number:

- 0 Reject
- 1 Reject, but author could resubmit after **substantial** revision, additions, or re-focus
- 2 Accept, pending revision per suggestions made in this review
- 3 Accept with minor editing

II. Please **mark** with a plus (+) any item that is especially strong in the paper. Mark with a minus (-) any item that is weak. Mark (N/A) for not applicable. Then comment briefly on strengths and weaknesses of an item on the line below it—or write more elaborate comments at the very end of the form. **The reviewer's name is kept confidential.**

\_\_\_\_\_ **Scholarship:** pedagogy, content of subject discipline, and citations are relevant and current

\_\_\_\_\_ **Originality:** contributes new knowledge, examples, and/or approaches

\_\_\_\_\_ **Lucidity:** narrative is well written and logically organized

\_\_\_\_\_ **Interest:** generally lively to read and useful for this audience and profession

\_\_\_\_\_ **Balance:** presents various perspectives, avoids polemics, is fair in controversy

\_\_\_\_\_ **Classroom readiness:** conveys background, procedures, and resources useful to teachers

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\_\_\_\_\_ **Classroom evidence:** gives examples of discussion, assessment, and/or student writing

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\_\_\_\_\_ **References:** cites useful resources and prior publications when appropriate

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\_\_\_\_\_ **Content Standards:** cited, linked, or discussed at some point in the paper

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**III. Write at length about any area of concern** and make specific suggestions for improvement, using the back of this page (if working on paper) or typing in additional space below (in an email or online form). Please keep a copy of your work.

#### **Other Questions?**

Please feel free to contact an NCSS staff editor at [publications@ncss.org](mailto:publications@ncss.org).

#### **Guidelines for Contributors to SSYL**

The goal of *Social Studies and the Young Learner* is to (a) capture and enthruse elementary teachers across the country and (b) provide relevant and useful information about the teaching of social studies to elementary students. The editor especially encourages submission of manuscripts authored by PK–5 classroom teachers or co-authored by professors and classroom teachers. Currently there are no established issue themes; instead, every issue is open for possible social studies topics.

#### **Submitting Your Manuscript**

Please register at [www.editorialmanager.com/ncssjournals](http://www.editorialmanager.com/ncssjournals) to receive an email with a temporary user ID and password to upload a manuscript. Then follow the steps for uploading the manuscript, title page, figures, tables, or graphics.

#### **Formatting**

**The authors' names should not appear within the paper** for purposes of blind peer review. (It is okay if a citation to your own previous book or paper appears in the notes.)

With regard to citation notes, follow *The Chicago Manual of Style*. Articles formatted in APA will be converted to *The Chicago Manual of Style*, 17th ed. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2017). See examples of notes in the journal.

Margins & Spacing: 0.75 inch margins all around; 1.5 space between lines.

Font: 12-point, Times New Roman

Length: 3,500 words maximum, including notes, references, or tables.

#### **Images and Examples**

Evidence of learning from an elementary classroom is encouraged, but not required. If possible, include examples of student work and learning—writing, photographs of projects, art, or other media. Submit tables, graphics, photographs, etc. as part of the submissions process. Please set your digital camera at high resolution if you take action photos of “students doing social studies.” Authors must obtain parental permission allowing publication of photographs of students, as well as permission for the reprinting (in *SSYL*) of copyrighted materials used in a lesson (e.g., a historical painting in a museum or a recent photograph published in the news).

### **Peer Review**

*SSYL* is peer reviewed. If a manuscript is considered for publication, the author must be willing to work with the editor on revisions. *SSYL* is published by the National Council for the Social Studies.

### **Reprints**

Authors of published manuscripts receive up to five complimentary copies of the journal in which the article appears, courtesy of NCSS. Authors are not paid for contributions.

If you have questions as you are planning your paper, please feel free to contact an NCSS staff editor at [publications@ncss.org](mailto:publications@ncss.org).

### **Tips for Authors**

#### **Who May Submit an Article?**

Anybody may submit an article to *Social Studies and the Young Learner*. The editors especially look for manuscripts co-authored by classroom teachers and professors or authored by classroom teachers alone.

#### **What are Good Topics?**

Articles in *Social Studies and the Young Learner* show how social studies (history, geography, civics, economics, psychology, sociology, or anthropology) is taught in the PK–5 classroom. The lead article often provides background on the theme for that issue. A children’s literature piece describes how to use quality books in the classroom. A pullout usually includes a lesson with handouts.

#### **Checklist**

This checklist shows the features that editors and reviewers will be watching for. Read your own paper against this checklist.

1. I have described the basic setting (grade level, time required to teach each activity, materials and resources needed)
2. The social studies content is strong (students learn history, civics, geography, economics, or anthropology, etc.). See the themes 1–10 in *National Curriculum Standards for Social Studies*, which are summarized at [www.socialstudies.org/standards/curriculum](http://www.socialstudies.org/standards/curriculum).
3. I have used inquiry methods when appropriate (see [www.socialstudies.org/standards/c3](http://www.socialstudies.org/standards/c3)).
4. Other teachers could use these ideas and methods. (Can this lesson or activity be applied to other classrooms, in other states, with a low budget, and with a reasonable commitment of time and materials?)



5. There is a clear assessment of student learning. (How is student learning measured at end of the lesson? Are discussion questions or test questions included?)
6. I have linked the subject matter in my paper to state and national content standards and to the required curriculum of my school for this grade level.
7. I have avoided using the passive voice.  
*Right:* The teacher corrects and grades the papers.  
*Wrong:* Papers are corrected and graded by the teacher.
8. I follow the Chicago Manual of Style for notes and do **not** use Endnote or Reference Manager programs.
9. Here is an example of the editors' preferred style-  
 BOOKS: Alfie Kohn, *What to Look For in a Classroom* (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 1998), 45.  
 ARTICLES: Bruce E. Larson, "The Makah: Exploring Public Issues During a Structured Classroom Discussion," *Social Studies and the Young Learner* 10, no. 1 (September/October 1997): 10–13.  
 WEBSITES: "Creating the United States," (Library of Congress), [myloc.gov/exhibitions/creatingtheus](http://myloc.gov/exhibitions/creatingtheus).
10. When citing online resources, I recommend specific, student-friendly websites on the topic under study, avoiding statements like, "Have students check Wikipedia," or "Just Google it."
11. Optional: I have included examples of classroom experience (what students said, how they responded, and pedagogical pitfalls that arose and how to avoid them).
12. Optional: I have included examples of young students' work (writing, art, quotations, photographs of students in action).

### Proofreading?

Ask a colleague to read your paper and check it for grammar, organization, and writing style.

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**III. Write at length about any area of concern** and make specific suggestions for improvement, using the back of this page (if working on paper) or typing in additional space below (in an email or online form). Please keep a copy of your work.

#### **Other Questions?**

Please feel free to contact Editor **Scott Waring** (University of Central Florida), at [Scott.Waring@ucf.edu](mailto:Scott.Waring@ucf.edu).

## **6. Manuscript Review and Decision-Making Process**

### **Guidelines for NCSS Publication Editors on the Manuscript and Decision-Making Process**

1. Peer Review: As much as possible, all manuscripts submitted to an NCSS publication will be reviewed by at least two people. Ideally, all manuscripts will include at least some form of external review. Some manuscripts may be reviewed within the journal editorial teams. If possible, the list of external reviewers who reviewed a manuscript for each volume should be published in the last issue of that volume for each journal.

2. Review Process Timeline: The review process should take no more than six months for any given manuscript from time of submission to time of communicated decision. Ideally, the majority of decisions should be made within three to four months, which is standard for most professional and academic journals. The average decision time should be reported to the NCSS Publications Committee and journal editorial boards each year.

3. Transparency: All decision letters to authors should include reviewer and editorial review comments as well as guidance from the editor as to the priorities for revision and resubmission. If a manuscript is rejected, the author should receive reviewer comments (either editorial or external) to understand the decision that was made.

When possible, decisions and other reviewer and editor comments should be shared with external reviewers so that they know the decision of the manuscript they reviewed and as a way to improve external reviews. These shared decisions will be anonymized so that the identity of the author(s) and reviewer(s) remain blinded.

4. For Department Editors (Institutional and Appointed) and Special Issue Editors, a process for peer review should be identified as part of their appointment or continued association with the journal so that the manuscripts meet the same standards as those submitted ad hoc by authors.

5. Yearly reports for each journal should be submitted to both that journal's editorial board as well as to the NCSS Publications Committee. These yearly reports should include: a summary of what was published that year; highlights from the past volume and upcoming themes or articles that are highly anticipated; an accounting of the number of manuscripts received, including a breakdown of invited, contractual, externally submitted and other submission types; a summary of the acceptance rate and number of articles accepted/rejected, and the relative health of the journal in terms of advertising revenue and readership (or other available metrics such as downloads).

## **7. Scope and Indexing for Journal**

All NCSS print journals are indexed and listed with the ERIC (Education Resources Information Center) database. Articles in NCSS journals are accessible electronically on the IngentaConnect platform.

NCSS journals are promoted through NCSS social media. After each issue is published, the NCSS social media manager sends out posts about the issue in general and about specific open-access articles.