

Honors vs. CP in Social Studies

What are some of the major differences?

Writing

CP: writing is more guided and formulaic. Students are given essay prompts that generally go one of two ways. For example: "Were the crusades a success" or "compare a modern thinker to a Greek philosopher." All necessary information needed to answer this question is provided via the textbook and class discussion with class time. Students then take a stance and choose the evidence that best backs up their point and explain it. For CP level writing, the goals are to have a clear thesis, detailed evidence, and analysis that explain how their evidence proves their point.

Honors: the writing is more independent and research-driven. Students are given a more open-ended prompt that they will have to defend. Students are not given all information needed to best defend their argument and are required to research on their own. Analysis needs to not only explain how it supports their stance but also how it is relevant. Students in honors function as historians and must create their own thesis, decide on their own evidence, and have critical analysis that evaluates sources and illustrate their understanding of the complexity of the issue. For example: "What events during the Middle Ages have had the greatest impact of the modern world" or "How do the Greeks influence the world today?" Students will also receive DBQs (Document-Based Questions) used at the AP level.

Reading

CP: the reading is done out of a textbook with fewer outside sources. This reading is then discussed in class with major points re-emphasized. Any work with primary or secondary articles is done in the classroom with guidance and peer support. The goal for CP reading is to improve general reading comprehension and note-taking skills.

Honors: the reading is also done out of the textbook, however less time is dedicated to reviewing the reading. Instead, time is spent discussing and debating as well as providing analysis of the text. This is done independently. In addition to reading from the text, honors students read from more primary and secondary sources on their own and must evaluate the text for bias, purpose, and point of view to fit into the larger historical picture to prepare them for AP. For example: Honors will receive reading that compares the Han and Roman Dynasty. They will evaluate various primary and secondary source excerpts relating to the empires and then discuss and write about the nature of empire building, the causes, and reasons for its decline. Honors students also have a summer reading so the honors curriculum operates under the assumption that students have a basic knowledge of world history upon entering the class. The goal for Honors readings is to have strong reading comprehension and ability to critically analyze a text independently.

Testing

CP: tests are mainly driven by the textbook and classroom discussion. The concepts on tests are cause and effect, compare and contrast, chronology, significance, key vocabulary, and general characteristics of a given topic. The test consists of multiple choice, matching, fill in the blank, and true false. Students will write short answers or in class essays that have been discussed and prepared for beforehand.

Honors: tests include all of the above but also have questions taken from additional readings and include more written work where the topic has been provided but not the question. Certain honors questions will be pulled from additional textbooks, the AP level and the SAT II level. The tests consist of multiple choice, matching, fill in the blank, true false, and short excerpted readings.

Note-taking

CP: take notes from a text. At the beginning, students are given explicit instruction on how to take notes from a text and the rest of the year is spent working on this skill. The notes will be discussed in class and students will be asked to check their own notes and any questions will be clarified. The goal for CP note-taking is for students to feel comfortable with the note-taking process and have the key points of the historical material.

Honors: notes quickly and independently. If they struggle in this area it is expected they will receive outside help as class time is not devoted to note taking skills. In class, note taking will not review the material from the book but more in depth coverage of one topic. For example in the section on the beliefs of Islam, the notes will consist of new knowledge not found in the book. The goal for Honors note-taking is for students to have information to draw from to create new ideas and understand the complexity of history.

What is similar?

The scope and sequence is the same at the freshman level.

The manner of homework is generally the same: read and take notes. Honors will read more.

At the freshman level, the textbook is the same.