

Examples of the Academic Language of Social Studies

Vocabulary

General academic vocabulary

- *event, evidence, cause*

Culture-specific vocabulary

- *pioneer, frontier, rebel*

Culturally-biased vocabulary

- *savage, hordes, mob, fanatic*

Specialized vocabulary

- *monarchy, revolution, slavery*

Abstract, cognitively demanding concepts

- *democracy, representation*

Grammatical Structures

Passives and impersonal structures

- *... crops such as coffee, cotton, and tobacco are cultivated by resident labor.*

Verb tenses and sequences of tenses

- *How might his experiences as a backwoodsman have helped him become a successful leader?*

Sequence of events not the same as sequence of clauses

- *This backwoodsman surprised many people when he was elected a Tennessee congressman ...*

Unclear references

- *Would it be difficult for you to move to a new place? What might you like about it?*

Long complex embedded clauses

- *He explored a large area of what was to become the Southeastern United States, including present-day ...*

Unreal past conditions

- *What might have happened to the colonists on Roanoke Island?*

Examples of the Academic Language of Social Studies (contd.)

Language Functions and Discourse Structures

Functions

- describe, explain, interpret, identify cause/effect, draw conclusions

Discourse markers

- *first, initially, next, subsequently, after that, then, finally, ultimately* (sequence)
- *as a result, because, consequently, leads to, causes, therefore, in order to, to make* (cause/effect)
- *like, as, similarly, equally, whereas, on the other hand, unlike, however, although* (comparison/contrast)

Rhetorical patterns

- *Their traditional lifestyle has disappeared; they live in modern homes, their food comes from the store, and most communities have TV.* (generalization/examples)
- *An island is a landform that is surrounded by water.* (definition/classification)
- *This is because the land is flat, not hilly and rocky like land in the Northeast.* (comparison/contrast)
- *"I found Rome a city of bricks and left it a city of marble." Augustus is supposed to have spoken these words as he lay dying. He was Rome's first emperor, and started the first of its great building programs.* (time relationships)
- *As president, he doubled the size of the United States when he purchased the Louisiana Territory from France.* (cause/effect)