**How to Answer (Social Studies) Essay Questions**

**When it comes to 8th grade social studies, students are required to think critically, or “outside the box.” Per North Carolina state standards, students are expected to answer the following terms in a question: evaluate, analyze, summarize, and compare. The one thing all four terms have in common is they require examples. Without examples, your essay has no credibility.**

**These terms have definitions you must consider when attempting to answer an essay question:**

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| **Key Essay term** | **Definition (courtesy of** [**dictionary.com**](http://dictionary.com)**)** |
| **Evaluate** | to judge or determine the significance, worth, or quality of;  **Example**: *Evaluate the degree of democratic ideals in the Articles of Confederation….*  **Translation:** “Judge HOW democratic the Articles of Confederation is….using examples.” |
| **Analyze** | to examine carefully and in detail so as to identify causes, key factors, possible results, etc.  **Example:** *Analyze differing*  *viewpoints on the scope and power of*  *state and national governments …*  **Translation:** “Break down the state and national governments based on WHAT types of powers they have (education, healthcare, etc.)….using examples.” |
| **Summarize** | to be brief and comprehensive  **Example:** *Summarize the origin of*  *beliefs, practices, and traditions that*  *represent various groups within North*  *Carolina and the United States.*  **Translation: “**Briefly talk about WHERE a lot of North Carolina’s and America’s beliefs, religious practices, etc. came from….using examples.” |
| **Compare** | to examine (two or more objects, ideas, people, etc.) in order to note similarities and differences:  **Example:** *Compare historical and*  *contemporary issues to understand*  *continuity and change in the*  *development of North Carolina and the*  *United States.*  **Translation: “**HOW are past events and current events similar….HOW are they different….using examples?” |

**Another key word to consider, depending on the question: WHY????**