

Writing Across The Discipline



**Ideas for Implementing
Writing into the
Social Studies Curriculum**

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Writing Across the Disciplines

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Table of Contents

| | |
|---|----|
| Introduction..... | 1 |
| Writing Ideas..... | 2 |
| Qualities of a Good Essay..... | 4 |
| Grading Essays Quickly..... | 5 |
| Multiple Intelligence Ideas for Writing in the Social Studies Curriculum | 5 |
| Writing Prompts for Seventh Grade Social Studies..... | 8 |
| Writing Examples for Seventh Grade Social Studies | 10 |
| Literature Connections..... | 11 |
| Writing Ideas for Eight Grade Social Studies..... | 14 |
| Section One: Colonialism | 14 |
| Section Two: Creating a New Nation | 14 |
| Section Three: The Early Republic..... | 15 |
| Section Four: America Grows and Changes..... | 16 |
| Section Five: The Nation Divided | 17 |
| Section Six: Modern America / Holocaust | 17 |
| Glossary of Terms..... | 18 |
| Resources | 20 |
| R.A.F.T.S. | 21 |
| Rubric Sample..... | 22 |
| Rubric for use with Grading Forms | 23 |
| Teacher Grading Form..... | 24 |
| Peer and Teacher Grading Form | 24 |
| Suggested Readings | 25 |

Introduction

We know what you're thinking...

“I have too much curriculum to cover in too short a time and now you want me to teach writing?”

The short answer is no. We want you to teach social studies, but writing can help you do it better.

“No one is asking you to teach writing per se, but you are being asked to include writing as an integral part of your classroom activity...” (Peha, *Writing Across the Curriculum*) The National Commission on Writing suggests that school districts insisting on the widespread use of writing across the disciplines hold the promise of improving students’ writing competence as well as deepening subject-matter knowledge.

Research indicates that to improve writing, students must write every day in every subject. Writing across the disciplines is beneficial to all students because it reinforces the importance of effective communication. With email, instant messaging and texting, students today write more than any previous generation. Students need to be effective writers because writing is a tool of higher level thinking. As technology progresses, effective writing will become even more crucial.

Effective social studies teachers support writing instruction in their curriculum because it furthers students’ understanding of history, geography, civics, government, and economics. They aren’t teaching writing as a separate subject, but are utilizing writing as a tool to teach their subject better.

Writing assignments should be used to reinforce what is being taught and to assess what students are learning. They do not need to be formal assignments, such as the traditional essay, and not all of them need to be graded. Writing assignments should be purposeful, aligned with the course you are teaching, and measure student knowledge of that course.

This handbook is not a mandated curriculum. Rather it is a collection of ideas and examples to help you implement writing in a variety of ways. All of these activities are easily adapted to any content area. Read through the book, find an idea you like and try it. You may be surprised at the results.

Writing Ideas

Writing is an integral part of all subject areas and of life. It is a skill that takes practice to master. Writing allows students to verbalize what they know. Teachers can use writing to enhance a deeper understanding of their subject. Written products enable the teacher to see if their students understand concepts taught in class. The teacher can use written assignments to see what concepts need to be reviewed or even retaught.

Writing does not have to be an essay. Any product that allows a student to verbalize an idea is practice in good writing. Below are examples of writing activities that can be used in any classroom.

Brochure – Students create a brochure on a historical event, person, or place. This is a good interdisciplinary project that includes history, geography, writing, art, and technology.

Lists – Students brainstorm ideas about a selected topic such as the causes of the Civil War. This may be completed by the students individually or as a whole class activity.

Categorizing – This activity is the next step after listing. After developing the list of causes for the Civil War, the students divide the list into categories such as economic, social and political causes. This activity teaches one of the necessary skills needed to answer a Document Based Question (DBQ).

Editorials – Students write editorials for a newspaper from the perspective of a historical figure about a historical event. This activity is an excellent segue into teaching bias.

Entrance/ Exit Ticket – Teacher poses a question – students write the answer. The entrance tickets are assigned for homework and are due as the students ‘enter’ the classroom the next day. Exit tickets are completed in class the last 3-5 minutes and turned in as students ‘exit’ the classroom. These are guide activities that allow the teacher to monitor student understanding of the subject matter being taught.

Hamburger Paragraph – The first sentence explains what the student will be writing about (top bun). The second, third, and fourth paragraphs provide supporting details to support the topic sentence (the meat). The final sentence concludes the writing with a personal thought, a personal observation, or a question for the teacher (bottom bun).

Movie Posters – Students make a movie poster highlighting key issues for a historical figure and/or time period.

Myths – Students write a myth using historical content.

Newspaper/ Magazine Article – Students write a newspaper or magazine article on a historical event, person, or place. This activity allows students to write for a real life audience and purpose.

Outlining – The students outline a reading from the textbook, newspaper, or magazine article. Various outlining techniques may be taught for use by the students.

Personal Letter/ Diary/ Journal – Students step into the time period of a specific person in history and write a historical letter, diary, or journal entry.

Poetry/ Song Lyrics – Students write poetry and song lyrics using historical content. Students may present their poem or song in front of the class.

PowerPoint/ Web Page – Students design a PowerPoint presentation or a web page on a historical event, person, or place.

RAFTS – This type of writing accesses higher level thinking in order to respond to the writing prompt. Students first decide on the elements of R.A.F.T.S., then use them when writing an essay. They should list the parts of the R.A.F.T.S. before beginning the writing process. See the appendix for examples.

R = a ROLE from which to write

A = an AUDIENCE to address

F = a FORMAT in which to write

T = a TOPIC to write about

S = a STRONG VERB that suggests the purpose of the writing.

Resumé – Students write a resume on a historical figure. This is a good activity to teach the different types of resumé formats.

Role-Playing – Students research a historical figure. Students role-play as the historical figure while presenting to the class individually or as a group of personalities in a historical setting.

Skit – Students write a skit about an historical event and then present it to the class. Costumes, props, and scenery may be added to enhance the experience for the students.

Speech – Students write a speech from the perspective of a historical person. Students may present their speech to the class to practice public speaking skills.

Student-Generated Test Questions – Students write test questions from the topic being studied in class (brainstorm types of questions and higher/ lower level of questions). These questions may be used in a quiz for the class.

Trading Cards (Think baseball) - Students create cards that have a picture on one side and statistics on the other side. Students should brainstorm common lists of statistics required such as birthplace, political office, or historical significance.

Write Around – (small group 3-4) Students are given a question to write on the top of their papers. Each student answers the question. After 1 minute students trade papers to the right and now must respond to the previous student’s answer. Trade again after 1 minute and continue this process until the students receive their own papers back. The group may then discuss their answers and how they were alike/different.

Written Interview – Students write out a list of questions that could be used to interview a historical figure. Another student in the class answers the questions as the historical personality being interviewed.

Qualities of a Good Essay

When grading essays, there are several key elements that should be considered. All good essays have a strong introduction (sometimes called a lead) which includes a thesis statement, a body that gives support through specific details, and a thought-provoking conclusion. In addition, writers should organize the information in a logical manner, choose words appropriate to the tone of the essay, and be relatively free of obvious errors. However, since this is a social studies class, the most important thing to look for is the writer’s understanding of the content.

The Introduction: The purpose of an introduction is to grab the reader’s attention and to let the reader know what the essay is about. The writer may also use the introduction to draw the reader into the historical setting of the essay. When writing a formal essay, the introduction should include a thesis statement, a sentence that makes the author’s point of view apparent. An example of this is, “The colonies were right to separate from Great Britain.” A transition sentence should be used to list the supporting facts for the thesis and to let the reader know what will be discussed in the body of the essay. This statement is sometimes called the Plan of Attack or POA. An example of this may be, “Taxes, governmental oppression, and British greed led to the colonies separation from the Mother Country”. The writer should avoid summarizing the essay: “This essay will tell you the colonies separated from Great Britain because of taxes, oppression and greed.”

The Body: The body of an essay is where the writer supports the thesis. A five paragraph essay will have three paragraphs in the body. Each of those paragraphs will address a different topic and give details to support that topic. For example, in the essay about the colonies separating from Great Britain, the first body paragraph will talk about taxes and could discuss the Stamp Act, Tea Act, and Sugar Act as specific details to explain why taxes were an important issue. The next paragraph would discuss the governmental oppression and the final support paragraph would discuss the British greed. It is important that the body paragraphs discuss the supporting details in the order that they were listed in the POA. However, do not feel that that the five paragraph essay is necessary. Compare and contrast essays often have only four paragraphs. Some four paragraph essays have scored sixes on the FCAT Writes.

The Conclusion: The purpose of a conclusion is to ensure that the reader remembers the essay after they are done reading. While it does repeat the writer’s opinion, it does not restate the thesis or summarize the entire essay. New information should never be presented in the conclusion.

The conclusion should provide a sense of closure to what has already been presented in the essay.

Grading Essays Quickly

Many content area teachers do not use essays in class because they worry that grading will be a time consuming task. While it is true that an essay takes longer to grade than a multiple-choice test, there are ways to minimize the time it takes. One way is through rubrics. By having a set rubric that remains relatively the same for each assignment, you save class time by not having to explain your expectations for every essay. Another way to cut down grading time is to grade holistically. This means instead of marking off for each mistake or error, you have criteria for each letter grade and you measure each paper according to those criteria. Many language arts teachers use a 6-1 rubric to correspond with the FCAT scoring system. A sample rubric is included in the appendix to demonstrate this. The simplest way to convert the numbers to letters is to make a score of 6 equal to an A, a score of 5 equal to a B, and so on. Teachers may choose to add additional points to the final grade when prewriting is demonstrated.

Another effective tool is peer grading. While a teacher always needs to make the final decision on a grade, by teaching the rubric effectively, students can use it to develop a preliminary score that you double check. Students are exposed to writing two ways with this strategy, once as writers and once as evaluators. Also included in the appendix are three rubrics that may be useful for peer/teacher evaluation. One is a smaller version of the master rubric and two are fill in the blank that assumes students have their own copy of the rubric. All have spaces where you can add additional requirements specific to the assignment.

As far as grading grammar, if a mistake is obvious, than mark it, but don't feel that you have to watch for every misplaced comma or misused quotation mark.

Multiple Intelligences Ideas for Writing in the Social Studies Classes

Linguistic Intelligence

Students who are strong in language skills such as reading, writing, and taking notes are strong in this intelligence.

Examples of lessons:

1. Hold a debate where students take the side of either Northerners' or Southerners' viewpoints over the issue of slavery. Another debate topic could be over the formation of the National Bank.
2. Two to three person storyboard discussing any of the historical documents, such as, the Declaration of Independence, the Constitution, or any of the peace treaties with Native Americans.

3. Have students write a five sentence paragraph answering a question on the lesson. Include a topic sentence, three detail sentences, and a concluding sentence. This activity can be used as bell work, exit work, or notes on specific subjects.

Visual Spatial Intelligence

These students love seeing the big picture – visual arts such as paintings, drawings and sculptures. They love organizers.

Examples of lessons:

1. Students take notes using visual organizers such as flow charts, Venn diagrams, and matrixes.
2. Students can create propaganda posters expressing their own biases toward any conflict or disagreement.
3. Students may use column charts to take notes on various topics.
4. Students may use head notes by coping a profile of person's head and take notes inside it.
5. Students may take wall notes using pictures and short descriptions.
6. Students move around the room looking at pictures and taking notes on various aspects of the content.

Bodily-Kinesthetic Intelligence

Students have the ability to use their bodies to express emotions such as in dance, creating a new product, acting out a skit, or role-playing.

Examples of lessons:

1. Students create a written script depicting an event in the role of a president or leader of a foreign country.
2. Students may create a moving simulation of an event such as the Boston Massacre. Include the circumstances that led up to the event as well as those that occurred afterwards. Students will write the script before acting out the simulation.
3. Students create a game depicting how a monopoly, monarchy, communistic controlled government, and capitalistic government would work. Included should be detailed directions for playing the game.
4. Students write a speech persuading people to accept their ideas or proposals about an important social issue. The speeches will be presented to the class.

Musical – Rhythmic Intelligence

Students use their recognition of rhythm and sounds to express the emotions evoked from the music. These students like to sing, rap, perform and do anything that has rhythm.

Examples of lessons:

1. Students listen to music from a country such as Africa and write down the message in the songs and the feelings expressed in the lyrics.
2. Students listen to music and lyrics and study the vocabulary used. They can look up the definitions and write about the words used to express ideas.
3. Students can create sounds such as a steam engine, howling of wind and rain, and the use of different dialects. They can use these sounds to illustrate the setting of a historical event.

Interpersonal Intelligence

Students use their ability to work cooperatively in a group and communicate verbally with other people.

Examples of lessons:

1. Students work in groups to create travel brochures for places such as the three sections of the British colonies or western expansion.
2. Students research whether they should join the patriots or the loyalists before the Revolutionary War or whether they side with Jefferson or Hamilton on early political issues. Small groups of students create posters illustrating their research.
3. Students pair up to write a list of reasons for wars, rebellions, and other events that have caused the world to change.
4. Student groups compare and contrast the differences between women today and women of the past referring back to the Women's Right's Convention in Seneca Falls, New York.
5. Students can complete a write around to discuss an important issue from a specific historical time period.

Intrapersonal Intelligences

Students express a range of emotions and thinking processes they feel themselves. Self image and the ability to transcend the self are part of this intelligence.

Examples of lessons:

1. Students examine their personal convictions of right and wrong over controversial issues such as slavery, treatment of the Native Americans, and Japanese internment during World War II.
2. Students can read a short essay on a person's beliefs from a specific time period and write a letter back to them telling their thoughts about what they read.
3. Students design a flow chart or create a storyboard about a particular movement such as Immigration, the settlement of the West or the Trail of Tears using information from their notes or textbooks.
4. Students are asked to write a summary and personal responses of important points of a lesson, a lecture, a video clip or a reading of a personal narrative.

Mathematical-Logical

Students highly gifted in this intelligence think conceptually and abstractly and have the capacity to discern logical and mathematical patterns and enjoy a sequenced delivery of instruction.

Examples of lessons:

1. Students organize a sequence of events from a mixed list of content materials.
2. Students list the similarities and differences between people, events or time periods.
3. Students compile information gathered in a survey and graph it on a pie chart.

Writing Prompts for Seventh Grade Social Studies

Expository Writing Prompts:

1. We have all known at least one person who stands out in our mind as a good citizen. Think about a person you know who deserves an award for being a good citizen. Now write to explain why you think this person should receive a citizenship award.
2. A person's culture is known to be shaped by geography. Think about a particular culture and explain how geography has impacted its people. In your essay make references to one or more of the five themes of geography.

3. Your parents are planning a trip overseas. Research a particular region of the world that you would like to visit. Now write to explain to your parents what this region is like.
4. You are studying Africa in your social studies classroom. Choose an African nation and consider one cultural tradition. Now write to explain the significance of this tradition.

Persuasive Writing Prompts:

1. The mayor of your town is planning to honor a member of your community for a good citizenship award. Think about a member of your community who deserves this award. Now write to convince the mayor of your town to give the citizenship award to the person of your choice.
2. Your parents have decided to take a family trip to Europe. Think about what country or countries in Europe you would most like to visit. Now write to convince your parents to visit the country or countries you would most like to visit.
3. Imagine you are living during the period where political parties have just emerged in America. Think about which party you feel would most benefit the nation. Now write to persuade a group of your peers to join the political party you think would be more beneficial to America.
4. Imagine you are searching the internet and you discover a program that allows you to exchange places with a student in China during the summer. Think about how visiting China would be beneficial. Now write to persuade your parents to let you participate in the foreign exchange program.
5. The governor of your state is considering making the Pledge of Allegiance obsolete in public schools. Think about whether or not you think the Pledge of Allegiance should be mandatory in public schools. Now write to persuade your governor to accept your point of view.

Writing Examples for Seventh Grade

Social Studies

1. Advertisements: Students design advertisements that represent migration or the significance of a specific settlement.
 - a. Create a page from a travel book that travelers might use to find information about unfamiliar customs. The page should include a title and a brief description of the customs.
2. Brochures: Students create brochures that represent countries.
 - a. Students can create brochures (individually or in groups) that represent different countries (i.e., Greece, Italy, etc.). Brochures should include history, geography, economics, and social aspects of the country.
3. Dialogues: Write dialogues that highlight the opposing viewpoints of two figures. Dialogues should be written in conversational tones.
 - a. Present day Democrat vs. Republican candidates.
4. Entrance Ticket: An entrance ticket is used to assess understanding of absolute and relative location.
 - a. Following a lesson on absolute and relative location students write a paragraph comparing and contrasting the two. The paragraph should include an example for each. In a follow up lesson students write an essay exploring how the five themes of geography shape a particular culture. This assignment may be given as homework or bell work.
5. Eulogies: Students write eulogies that show the virtues of a prominent historical figure or civilization. They should be written in formal language.
 - a. Eulogy to the Roman Empire.
6. Interview: Students interview a political figure.
 - a. Students interview Napoleon to gain an understanding of the Louisiana Purchase. Students will create a list of questions and possible answers that might be given by the historical figure being interviewed. Students may work in pairs with each student writing the questions and giving them to the other student to answer.
7. Journals: Assuming the role of a key figure, students write journal entries that recount that person's feelings and experiences.
 - a. Pretend you are an Arab traveler on the Silk Road to China. Write a log that describes the highlights of your trip.
 - b. Pretend you are a peasant, an aristocrat, or a member of the clergy during the French Revolution. Keep a journal of how these events affect you.
8. Letters: Write letters that convey the feelings of a key figure to a particular audience. Encourage them to use descriptive narrative and to integrate as much detailed accurate information as possible.
 - a. WWI – Write letter home from the trenches.
 - b. WWII – Bomber pilot writing home about dropping the atomic bomb.

9. Magazines: Students work in groups of four to publish a news magazine on Europe's transition to the modern world. This news magazine must feature at least three of these topics: religion, arts and architecture, science and technology, business, education, urban life, or exploration.
 - a. Should include introductory letters from the editors, table of contents, a timeline of key events, profiles of the top three newsmakers of the era, and a concluding article on the legacy of this period.
10. Poetry (Song Lyrics): Students will write about topics, events, or specific groups with empathy and emotion.
 - a. Illustrated poems about Medieval Europe; acrostic poems about Montezuma; biographical poem about the accomplishments of an important renaissance personality.
 - b. Students write bio-poems in which they personify objects of nature. In the personification the emotions, thoughts, likes, dislikes, and dreams of the objects of nature should be depicted. The students should relate the feelings of the objects of nature to the dominance of the white man and removal of the natives.
 - c. In a cross curricular assignment students create a rap song about a historical topic. The rap song should include elements of figurative language taught in language arts. (See flocabulary.com).
11. Position Papers: Students write position papers taking a definitive stance on controversial issues. Include supporting evidence, compelling arguments against opposing viewpoint, and a persuasive conclusion.
 - a. Political Election: Obama vs. McCain.
 - b. Africa's Colonialism: Beneficial or not?
 - c. Were Russians better off under communism?
12. Postcards: Students write their initial impressions after viewing images and videos.
13. R.A.F.T.S.: Students take on the role of Christopher Columbus and write a letter to Queen Isabella of Spain. The letter should convince the queen to fund his expedition across the Atlantic.
14. Resumes: Students write resumes for a variety of occupations.
 - a. Students research the components of a career in geography, compose a resume, and apply for a fictitious position.
 - b. Students choose a particular nation to research and write a resume for the position of ambassador.
15. Writing Tours: students take a tour of places – visit, read, and write about cities.

Literature Connections

These literature titles will help your students make connections to the content presented with each of the topics listed below.

1. Teaching the World:
 - a. Creech, Sharon. The Wanderer: A sailing voyage from Connecticut across the Atlantic. Rich in geographic detail.

2. Teaching Europe:
 - a. Aaseng, Nathan. You are the Explorer. Readers face the same dilemmas as explorers and must solve the problems.
 - b. Belloli, Andrea. Exploring World Art. The book places Western European Art in a broad global context.
 - c. Corona, Laurel. Life in Moscow. Focuses on life after the fall of Communism.
 - d. Connolly, Peter and Hazel, Dodge. The Ancient City: Life in Classical Athens and Rome. The book includes detailed illustrations and descriptions.
 - e. Copeland, Tim. Ancient Greece, Cambridge, UK. The book uses the Olympic Games as a method of exploring the ancient world.
 - f. Costain, Meredith. Welcome to the United Kingdom. The book includes a full overview of the UK with suggested activities.
 - g. Hart, Avery and Paul Montell. Knights and Castles: 50 Hands-on Activities to Experience the Middle Ages. Full of games, celebrations, food, customs, etc.
 - h. Kuniczak, W.S. The Glass Mountain: Twenty-Eight Ancient Polish Folktales and Fables. This book is a literate anthology of rarely anthologized tales.
 - i. Lassieur, Allison. Leonardo Da Vinci and the Renaissance in World History. The book places Da Vinci in the context of his world.
 - j. Macaulay, David. Ship. The book describes underwater archeology that uncovers caravels from the 15th Century.
 - k. Maynard, Christopher. The History News: Revolution. The book presents in fictional newspaper format facts relating to the French, American, Russian, and Chinese revolutions.
 - l. Riordan, James. Russian Folk-Tales. The book contains ten traditional folk tales.
 - m. Spires, Elizabeth. I am Arachne: Fifteen Greek and Roman Myths.
 - n. Steele, Phillip. Houses through the Ages. The book tracks the hunters from the caves of Stone Age to modern apartment houses in Western Europe.
 - o. Stroud, Jonathan. Ancient Rome: A Guide to the Glory of Imperial Rome. The book describes Ancient Rome in a travel guide format.
3. Teaching Africa:
 - a. Bower, Tamara. The Shipwrecked Sailor. An Egyptian tale told in hieroglyphs, modern Egyptian and English.
 - b. Broida, Marian. Ancient Egyptians and Their Neighbors: An Activity Guide. This guide contains the culture and customs of the Egyptians, Mesopotamians, Nubians and Hittites.
 - c. Grimes, Nikki. Is It Far to Zanzibar? Poems About Tanzania. Culture illuminated by simple poems that incorporate Swahili words.
 - d. Knight, Margy Burns. Africa is Not a Country. Distinctive customs of different areas.
 - e. Mendicott, Mary. Tales from Africa. Writers from 12 African countries retell traditional stories.
 - f. Offodile, Buchi. The Orphan Girl and Other Stories: West African Folktales. Roots of the storytelling tradition in West Africa.
 - g. Unobagha, Uzonake, Chinyelu. Off to the Sweet Shores of Africa and other Talking Drum Rhymes. Nigerian poet uses culture of her homeland to develop an original “Mother Goose” anthology.

4. Teaching Asia:
 - a. Chin, Charlie. China's Bravest Girl: The Legend of Hua Mu Lan. Bilingual epic poem from fifth-century China.
 - b. Flood Bo, et. al. Pacific Island Legends: Tales from Micronesia, Melanesia, Polynesia and Australia. Rich mixture of tales.
 - c. Gollub, Matthew. Cool Melons Turn to Frogs! Haiku master poet
 - d. Hickox, Rebecca. The Golden Sandal: A Middle Eastern Cinderella Story. The book is based on an Iraqi folk tale.
 - e. Jerusalem and the Holy Land: Chronicles from National Geographic. The book explores Muslim village life, Jewish Passover and other interesting articles.
 - f. Kimmel, Eric. The Rooster's Antlers: A Story of the Chinese Zodiac. An engaging explanation of the Chinese zodiac
 - g. Nye, Naomi. The Space Between Our Footsteps: Poems and Paintings from the Middle East. Arabic, Hebrew, Turkish and Persian poetry and art.
 - h. Pollard, Michael. The Yangtze. Explains how the river supports civilization and animal life.
 - i. Williams, Mary. The Middle East: Opposing Viewpoints. Contains articles, political cartoons, and provocative questions.
5. Teaching Civics:
 - a. Angel, Jerome and Gerberg, Mort. The U.S. Constitution for Everyone.
 - b. Barbara, A. American Government and Politics Today.
 - c. Bike, William S. Winning Political Campaigns.
 - d. Boyers, Sara Jane. Teen Power Politics: Make Yourself Heard.
 - e. Carreau, Joel. Edge City: Life on the New Frontier.
 - f. Cole, George F. and Christopher E. Smith. The American System of Criminal Justice.
 - g. Helmer, Diana Star. Women Suffragists.
 - h. Masi, Mary. Pass the U.S. Citizenship Exam.
 - i. The Oxford Essential Guide to the U.S. Government.
 - j. Schwartz, Bernard. A History of the Supreme Court.

Writing Ideas for Eighth Grade Social Studies

Section One: Colonialism

Sample Strategies:

Listing: Top 10 questions for interviewing George Washington.

Have students complete an entrance ticket summarizing the previous day's lesson.

Projects:

Students will create a brochure advertising a colony. They will try to convince English settlers to choose their colony over other's through the use of selective facts and creative word choice.

After lessons on the Native American experience, students will use personification. Students take a fictional walk through a Native American land and have a dialogue between the natural resources: lakes, plants, sun, rocks, trees, etc. The theme could be "The white man is trying to own the land."

Writing Prompts:

As a newspaper reporter write an article describing the Salem Witch Trials.

In an essay compare and contrast the settlements of the New England, Middle, and Southern colonies. In the essay discuss religious, economic, government, and society.

History-Literature Connection:

The Scarlet Letter – Nathaniel Hawthorne

The Crucible - Arthur Miller

Section Two: Creating a New Nation

Sample Strategies:

Use an exit ticket to explain what rights students have under the First Amendment and how these rights can be used on a daily basis.

Have students create a simulation of an important event such as the Boston Massacre.

Have students write a hamburger paragraph explaining the causes of the American Revolution.

Projects:

Students create trading cards for Revolutionary War generals. They can write paragraphs, create charts, or list key facts. Prior to creating the cards, the class may brainstorm possible data to compile.

Students will write a classroom constitution that includes a preamble and a bill of rights.

Writing Prompts:

As a member of Parliament, write a speech convincing your colleagues why the colonies should pay their fair share in support of the crown.

Select an occupation in the colonies and decide if you would be for or against the Revolutionary War based on that occupation. (Examples, shipbuilder in Massachusetts, shop owner in Philadelphia and a plantation owner in South Carolina)

Write a letter or an essay comparing and contrasting the settlements of the New England, Middle, and Southern Colonies. In the essay, use religious, economic and governmental ideas to King George protesting the Quartering Act, Sugar Act and Stamp Act.

History-Literature Connection:

“The Midnight Ride of Paul Revere” – Henry Longfellow

Poetry of Phyllis Wheatley

Johnny Tremain – Esther Forbes

Section Three: The Early Republic

Sample Strategies:

Use a Venn diagram to compare and contrast the presidential election of 1800 to the election of 2008.

Create an illustrated dictionary using the Cherokee language developed by Sequoya.

Projects:

Write a skit in which George Washington gives advice to a presidential candidate on how to be an effective president.

Create a journal as a member of the Lewis and Clark expedition that describes the sights, sounds, smells, and events of the trip. This journal should be at least 1 paragraph per day for 2 weeks.

Students will create a Help Wanted poster or a classified ad for the “Lowell Girls” working in the textile factories of the Northeast.

Prompt:

As a “Lowell Girl,” write a letter home describing your life in the factories.

From the point of view of a grain farmer, write a letter to Alexander Hamilton asking him to repeal the Whiskey Tax.

History-Literature Connection:

Eclipse: A Novel about Lewis and Clark – Richard Wheeler
Native American Myths

Section Four: America Grows and Changes**Sample Strategies:**

Create a sensory chart for the Trail of Tears. In different columns, write details of what they would hear, see, smell, taste, and feel.

Write a short editorial supporting or opposing South Carolina’s secession.

Create a pro and con chart for each of the three western routes to California.

Projects:

Create a physical or virtual scrapbook of your journey on the Oregon Trail.

Students will research school curriculum from a specific time period and compare it to today’s schools. This can be in the form of an essay or a visual presentation.

Prompts:

In an essay, compare and contrast life for immigrants in their native lands and their life in the United States.

Did the United States government have the right to take native Indian lands in the West? Write from the point of view of either a chief of the Sioux tribe or a settler moving to California during the Gold Rush and explain your opinion.

History – Literature Connection:

Moby Dick – Herman Melville

Civil Disobedience – Henry David Thoreau

Harriet Tubman: Conductor on the Underground Railway - Ann Petry

Section Five: The Nation Divided

Sample Strategies:

Students will understand and clearly list the positives and negatives about the Civil War. Students will write complete, substantial sentences below columns titled positives and negatives on the Civil War.

Create a web diagram showing the causes of the Civil War and giving facts or examples to illustrate each cause.

Projects:

Students empathize with the different groups involved in the Civil War: Northerners, Southerners, and slaves. After lessons on the Civil War, students will write a poem, which doesn't have to rhyme, from the perspective of each of these Civil War participants.

In groups, students discuss possible topics and issues that could stir up a civil war in America in the year 2008. Students decide on a heated issue and find support for each side's point of view. They can create classroom displays or oral presentations on their issue. Possible topics: taxes, I-Pods, foreign policy, education, gas prices, water bills, etc. The three sides who might fight each other are democrats, republicans, and independents.

Prompts:

Write an editorial to a newspaper supporting or opposing the Fugitive Slave Act.

Using Across Five Aprils as a guide, would you have supported the North or the South in the Civil War? Write a response to your reading.

History – Literature Connections:

Red Badge of Courage – Stephan Crane

“Drummer Boy of Shiloh” - Ray Bradbury

“O’ Captain, My Captain”- Walt Whitman

Across Five Aprils – Irene Hunt

“John Brown’s Body” – Stephen Vincent Benet

Section Six: Modern America / Holocaust

Sample Strategies:

Students will participate in a write-around discussion about a current issue such as the environment, alternative energy, or gun control.

Create captions for pictures taken from recent magazines or newspapers.

Projects:

Students will create resumes for current presidential candidates. Students need to research background information and compile it into a specific format.

In teams, students can research a topic and debate the pros and cons of each side.

Prompts:

Write a letter home as a soldier who liberated a concentration camp or as a guard at the camp. Describe what you do, what you see, and how you feel about it.

Write a journal entry as a prisoner of a concentration camp or as someone in hiding. Describe your situation and how you feel about it.

Should the United States have helped those who were being persecuted? Write a letter to Congress convincing them of your view. Give reasons and facts to support your idea.

Research another example of genocide in history and compare and contrast it with the Holocaust.

History – Literature Connections:

The Diary of Anne Frank – Ann Frank

The Devil’s Arithmetic – Jane Yolan

Night – Elie Weisel

Glossary of Literary Terms

Analogy: comparing two things that are similar in some ways, but otherwise unlike. (7th Grade Textbook)

Audience: An audience is a group of readers who reads a particular piece of writing. Your audience might be your instructor, classmates, the president of an organization, the staff of a management company, or any other number of possibilities.

(<http://writing.colostate.edu/guides/processes/audmod/pop2a.cfm>)

Bias: a term used to describe a tendency or preference towards a particular perspective, ideology or result. (Wikipedia)

Body Paragraphs: writing that contains the main points of the paper.

Cause and Effect: to show relationships between events and their results (Mastering Ideas).

Chronological Order: To narrate stories and historical accounts as they occur in time. (Mastering Ideas)

Conclusion Paragraph: wraps up the essay.

Conflict: a struggle between opposing forces. (7th Grade Textbook)

Conventions: refers to the punctuation, capitalization, spelling, usage, and sentence structure. Grammar errors. (Piece by Piece)

Descriptive Writing: using images in writing that appeal to the five senses. (7th Grade Textbook)

Elaboration or Support: extra sentences that support an argument and clarify meaning.

Expository Writing: the purpose is to explain, define, or tell how to do something by giving information.

Figurative Language: writing or speech that is not meant to be taken literally. (7th Grade Textbook)

Focus: refers to how clearly the paper presents and maintains a main idea, theme, or unifying point. (Piece by Piece)

Genre: the categories of writing (i.e., Romance, Fiction, Comedy, etc.).

Ideas: the content of a piece. The heart of the message. (Piece by Piece)

Introductory Paragraph: the beginning of an essay that should accomplish two tasks: grab the reader's attention and show the reader what the essay will discuss.

Organization: refers to the structure or plan of development in writing (beginning, middle, and end) and the relationship of one point to another. (Piece by Piece)

Personification: a type of figurative language in which inanimate objects are given human characteristics. (7th Grade Textbook)

Persuasive Writing: purpose is to convince the reader to accept your opinion or to take a specific action.

Point of View: the perspective from which a story is told.

Proofread: reading for errors and correcting mistakes.

Sentence Fluency: writing that has an easy flow or rhythm. Sentences are well built, with strong and varied structure. (Piece by Piece)

Sentence Structure: writing that has few grammatical errors. Writing shows an understanding of basic sentences (subject, verb, direct object).

Thesis Statement: a sentence or two that states the purpose of writing.

Tone: the writer's attitude toward his or her audience or subject.

Transition: connecting words that help readers move easily through a text.

Voice: when a writer shows through their writing that they are personally engaged with the topic.

The heart and soul of writing. (Piece by Piece)

Word Choice: writing that has rich, colorful precise language. The vocabulary clarifies and expands the ideas presented in the writing. (Piece by Piece)

Resources

1. 7th grade Prentice Hall Literature: Timeless Voices, Timeless Themes. Bronze Level.
2. Mastering Ideas: Brevard County Schools, Secondary Edition.
3. Piece by Piece: Brevard Writing Plan, Writing Cadre 2005.
4. Wikipedia: Bias.

Some Social Studies Ideas for R.A.F.T.S.

(These menus can be explored interactively at <http://writingfix.org>)

| 25 Possible Roles | 25 Possible Audiences | 25 Possible Formats |
|---|--|---|
| <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. historian 2. teacher 3. student 4. parent 5. kindergartener 6. musician 7. archaeologist 8. scientist 9. political candidate 10. news anchor 11. magazine editor 12. movie director 13. FBI agent 14. cartoonist 15. coach 16. prisoner 17. author 18. juror 19. pilot 20. soldier 21. tour guide 22. doctor 23. fictional character 24. historical figure 25. alien | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. boss 2. spouse 3. boyfriend/girlfriend 4. parent(s) 5. fan(s) 6. a younger person 7. an older person 8. public 9. teacher 10. principal 11. music producer 12. a famous person 13. leader of another country 14. The President of USA 15. mathematician 16. scientist 17. historian 18. newspaper publisher 19. protesters 20. Congressperson 21. City planner 22. magazine publisher 23. tax collector 24. potential employer 25. foreigner | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. letter/email 2. comment card 3. song/rap 4. top ten list 5. poem 6. journal entries 7. interview script 8. graphic organizer 9. commercial/jingle 10. brochure 11. news story 12. book jacket 13. flow chart 14. invoice 15. comic strip 16. crossword puzzle 17. personal/classified ad 18. obituary 19. owner's manual 20. CD cover/song list 21. greeting card 22. menu 23. concertina/mini-book 24. picture dictionary 25. mnemonic device |
| | 25 Possible Topics | 25 Possible Strong Verbs |
| | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Ancient Egypt 2. Ancient Greece and Rome 3. Christianity 4. Judaism 5. Communism 6. Capitalism 7. democracy 8. monarchy 9. Bill of Rights 10. The Constitution 11. election process 12. elements of culture 13. The Civil War 14. World War I 15. World War II 16. Revolutionary War 17. Vietnam War 18. current events 19. Middle East/terrorism 20. trade/economy 21. maps 22. longitude/latitude 23. time zones 24. laws/punishment 25. travel | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. persuade 2. defend 3. object 4. categorize 5. convince 6. inspire 7. demonstrate 8. predict 9. discourage 10. investigate 11. argue 12. judge 13. influence 14. arrange 15. announce 16. compare 17. critique 18. evaluate 19. analyze 20. apply 21. support 22. develop 23. formulate 24. estimate 25. design |

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Visit <http://WritingFix.org> for interactive suggestions on how to use writing as a thinker's tool in the classroom.

Rubric Sample

| | 6 | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |
|-----------------------|---|--|--|--|--|--|
| Content (Ideas) | Essay is focused on the topic, has plenty of supporting information, and shows the student understands the topic completely | Essay is focused and includes adequate support. Student understands most of the topic. | Generally focused on topic and has some supporting information. Student understands the basic topic, but the essay contains some errors. | Essay is generally focused, but may get off topic or lack some supporting information. Student has some understanding of the topic but the essay contains many errors. | Essay veers off topic often. Support is inadequate. Student has little understanding of the topic. | No clear main idea, no supporting information, no understanding of topic |
| Organization | Information is presented in a logical order. Strong introduction and conclusion. Strong, focused paragraphs. | Information is in a logical order. Includes an adequate introduction and conclusion. | Information is generally in a logical order with few mistakes. Weak intro or conclusion. | An organization pattern has been attempted, but essay is still confusing. May lack an intro or conclusion. | Essay is in paragraph form, but information is not organized. Weak or missing intro or conclusion. | No organization. Essay is just random thoughts. No intro or conclusion. |
| Word Choice | Words are specific and accurate. High-level vocab is used correctly. Little repetition. | Words are specific and accurate. High level vocab is attempted. Some repetition. | Some specific words, some general words. Basic vocab is usually correct. Some repetition. | Words are vague. Basic vocab is usually used correctly. Lots of repetition. | All vague words, no specifics. Numerous words used incorrectly. Lots of repetition. | Misused words, vague words, too much repetition. |
| Grammar (Conventions) | Complete sentences. Few if any grammar or spelling mistakes. No internet language. | Complete sentences. A few grammar or spelling mistakes. No internet language. | Most sentences complete. Generally follows grammar or spelling rules, but has errors. No internet language. | A few incomplete sentences. Common words misspelled. Many grammar mistakes. | Gross errors in grammar or sentence structure. | Gross errors in grammar and sentence structure. |

Rubric for use with Grading Forms

| | 6 | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |
|--------------------------|---|--|--|--|--|--|
| Content (Ideas) | Essay is focused on the topic, has plenty of supporting information, and shows the student understands the topic completely | Essay is focused and includes adequate support. Student understands most of the topic. | Generally focused on topic and has some supporting information. Student understands the basic topic, but the essay contains some errors. | Essay is generally focused, but may get off topic or lack some supporting information. Student has some understanding of the topic but the essay contains many errors. | Essay veers off topic often. Support is inadequate. Student has little understanding of the topic. | No clear main idea, no supporting information, no understanding of topic |
| Organization | Information is presented in a logical order. Strong introduction and conclusion. Strong, focused paragraphs. | Information is in a logical order. Includes an adequate introduction and conclusion. | Information is generally in a logical order with few mistakes. Weak intro or conclusion. | An organization pattern has been attempted, but essay is still confusing. May lack an intro or conclusion. | Essay is in paragraph form, but information is not organized. Weak or missing intro or conclusion. | No organization. Essay is just random thoughts. No intro or conclusion. |
| Word Choice | Words are specific and accurate. High-level vocab is used correctly. Little repetition. | Words are specific and accurate. High level vocab is attempted. Some repetition. | Some specific words, some general words. Basic vocab is usually correct. Some repetition. | Words are vague. Basic vocab is usually used correctly. Lots of repetition. | All vague words, no specifics. Numerous words used incorrectly. Lots of repetition. | Misused words, vague words, too much repetition. |
| Grammar (Conventions) | Complete sentences. Few if any grammar or spelling mistakes. No internet language. | Complete sentences. A few grammar or spelling mistakes. No internet language. | Most sentences complete. Generally follows grammar or spelling rules, but has errors. No internet language. | A few incomplete sentences. Common words misspelled. Many grammar mistakes. | Gross errors in grammar or sentence structure. | Gross errors in grammar and sentence structure. |
| Addition Criteria | | | | | | |
| Addition Criteria | | | | | | |

Mark the correct box for each criteria

Name _____ Final Grade _____

Essay Title _____

Teacher Grading Form

Name _____
Title _____

| | | Comments |
|--------------|-------|----------|
| Content | _____ | |
| Organization | _____ | |
| Word Choice | _____ | |
| Grammar | _____ | |
| Criteria 1 | _____ | |
| Criteria 2 | _____ | |
| Final Grade | _____ | |

Peer and Teacher Grading Form

Name _____
Title _____

| | Student Score | Teacher Score | Comments |
|--------------|---------------|---------------|----------|
| Content | _____ | _____ | |
| Organization | _____ | _____ | |
| Word Choice | _____ | _____ | |
| Grammar | _____ | _____ | |
| Criteria 1 | _____ | _____ | |
| Criteria 2 | _____ | _____ | |
| Final Grade | _____ | | |

Suggested Readings

Writing on Demand, Anne Ruggles Gere, Leila Christenbury, Kelly Sassi , Heinemann Press, Portsmouth, NH, 2005

Reading History, A Practical Guide to Improving Literacy, Janet Allen with Christine Landaker, Oxford University Press, Oxford, New York, 2005

Content-Area Writing, Every Teacher's Guide, Harvey Daniels, Steven Zemelman, Nancy Steineke, Heinemann , Portsmouth, NH, 2007

Writing Across the Curriculum Guide, The Northern Nevada Writing Project, <http://nnwp.org>, 2005

Subjects Matter, Every Teacher's Guide to Content-Area Reading, Harvey Daniels and Steven Zemelman, Heinemann, Portsmouth, NH, 2004

Programs and Practices, Writing Across the Secondary School Curriculum, Pamela Farrell-Childers, Anne Ruggles Gere and Art Young, Boynton/Cook Publishers, Heinemann, Portsmouth, NH, 1994

History Alive, Engaging All Learners in the Diverse Classroom, Teachers' Curriculum Institute, 1999

Flocabulary, www.flocabulary.com

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Dr. Richard A. DiPatri
Superintendent
Brevard Public Schools

Ms. Brenda Blackburn
Associate Superintendent,
Division of Curriculum
and Instruction
Equity Coordinator

Dr. Walter Christy, Director
Secondary Education

Ms. Eva Lewis, Director
ESE Program Support Services
ADA/Section 504 Coordinator

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An **employee** or **applicant** having a grievance concerning employment may contact:

Ms. Susan Standley, Director
Office of
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Ms. Joy Salamone, Director
Human Resources Services
and Labor Relations

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