



# Writing Strategies for Social Studies



Sarah Kartchner Clark





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# Writing Strategies for Social Studies



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# Introduction:

## Writing Across the Curriculum

### What Is Writing?

For thousands of years, humans have been communicating by writing down characters, symbols, numbers, or letters with implied meaning. Being able to write and to write well is more important today than ever before. According to <http://www.dictionary.com>, the definition of writing is the making of letters or characters that constitute readable matter with the intent to convey meaning. Writing demands that one not only know how to read what one has written, but also know the rules of writing that dictate how characters or letters are to be written and therefore understood.

What is writing? Is it brainstorming? Is it spelling? Is it scribbling words and phrases? Is it a report? Is it a simple paragraph? Writing in the classroom can be simply defined as any symbolic representation (Hefflin and Hartman 2002). As Hefflin and Hartman (2002) explain, the definition of writing includes representations that are “linguistic, graphic, pictorial, or otherwise.” This broad definition of writing welcomes a variety of writing formats.

Because educators understand the need for improved reading and writing skills in students, there has been a renewed focus on teaching literacy skills over the past several decades. This emphasis and focus, however, has not yielded the desired results. The number of students graduating from high school without the literacy skills needed to thrive in a global community continues to increase (Fisher and Ivey 2005). National attention has been refocused on the literacy needs of students, but so far this emphasis has been on the importance of reading and writing in language arts, and it has not affected the content areas. The focus on literacy has not changed the way that content areas are taught (e.g. Lesley 2005; O’Brien, Stewart, and Moje 1995; O’Brien and Stewart 1989). There is still much work to be done in the area of reading, writing, and comprehension in the content areas.

Most educators agree on the need for writing instruction in the content areas but differ on where instruction should occur. Because of curriculum demands, many teachers feel there is not enough time to teach writing in the content areas; adding one more component is just too much strain on the time and quality of lessons. However, researchers claim that most writing assignments do not need to be graded, which eliminates a major concern about the teacher workload (Worsley and Mayer 1989; Hightshue 1988; Self 1987).

Writing is powerful. Writing is an instrument of thinking that allows students to express their thoughts. Writing helps students understand and share their perceptions of the world around them. Teachers can give students power in their world by teaching them to write and to write well. The written word “... enables the writer, perhaps for the first time, to sense the power of ... language to affect another. Through using, selecting and rejecting, arranging and rearranging language, the student comes to understand how language is used” (Greenberg and Rath 1985, p. 12).

## **Writing Across the Curriculum**

Social Studies teachers may wonder where writing fits in the social studies curriculum. What do runon sentences have to do with forms of government and geography? The answer lies in the fact that writing is the means through which students are able to articulate complex terms and synthesize concepts. Writing is a tool that students can use to understand and dissect the subject of social studies. Writing is a tool that allows students to translate complex ideas into words and language that they understand.

There is an overemphasis on the process of writing instead of using writing to assist comprehension and understanding (Fisher and Frey 2004). In general, writing assignments in social studies mainly consist of asking students to write the answers to the questions at the end of the textbook chapter, with an occasional formal social studies report or research report required with little direction from the teacher. Evidence shows social studies achievement increases when students are actively engaged in reading, thinking, and writing about what they are learning.

Research shows that there are two forms of writing that need to take place across all subject matters being taught. One form is called writing to learn, and the other form is learning to write. Anne Walker (1988) explains that the two forms are parts of a virtual circle. Writing allows students to become active in their learning. Active learning requires active thinking. In order to write, students need to be actively thinking (Steffens 1988; Walker 1988). A teacher who works as a facilitator of knowledge will encourage deeper thinking, therefore increasing student understanding (Self 1987; Hamilton-Wieler 1988).

### **Does Writing Across the Curriculum Work?**

Research studies (Gere 1985; Barr and Healy 1988) seem to suggest that writing in the content areas does make a difference. Barr and Healy (1988) state that “schools succeed when the emphasis by both teachers and students is on writing and thinking about relevant and significant ideas within the subject areas.” The encouragement of writing across the curriculum leads to higher-order thinking skills (Gere 1985). Shifts in student attitudes have also been documented as a great benefit to writing across the curriculum (Winchester 1987).

Is there enough time to write and cover all the objectives and demands of the social studies curriculum? Research shows that writing can help meet those objectives and demands. Here are three time-saving advantages to consider (Worsley and Mayer 1989; Hightshue 1988; Self 1987):

- Social studies teachers find that they need less review time if students write about the concepts.
- Social studies teachers spend less time reteaching content after testing if they have incorporated writing strategies in the curriculum.
- Most writing in social studies classrooms does not need to be heavily graded, so the teacher’s workload is decreased.

## **The Reading/Writing Connection**



According to Gay Su Pinnell in the article “Success of Children at Risk in a Program That Combines Writing and Reading,” “As children read and write they make the connections that form their basic understandings about both. Learning in one area enhances learning in the other. There is ample evidence to suggest that the processes are inseparable and that we should examine pedagogy in the light of these interrelationships. Hence, the two activities should be integrated in instructional settings. Teachers need to create supportive situations in which children have opportunities to explore the whole range of literacy learning, and they need to design instruction that helps children make connections between reading and writing.”

Writing is the expression of ideas and thoughts gathered while reading. Social Studies texts are often heavily loaded with difficult vocabulary words and complex concepts that are challenging for students to understand. Encouraging students to both read and write helps them understand the information presented. When students read content without writing about it, they miss a crucial step in the process of understanding the information.

## **Ideas and Questions to Consider**

The emphasis on literacy is not enough. The new emphasis is on *content literacy* (Fisher and Ivey 2005). Content literacy supports the view that students construct knowledge through activities such as reading, discussion, and writing. Students must begin to personally connect with the content information they are learning and gathering as they study social studies.

Fisher and Frey (2004) explain that learning is language-based. Telling students information is not sufficient. Students must think about, read about, talk about, and write about information in order to synthesize it and to retain it. Reading and writing are critical to all learning. Questions to ask about how to incorporate reading and writing into content area learning are suggested by Hefflin and Hartman (2002):

- How do you determine what to write about?
- What is the goal and the purpose of the writing?
- How will the writing be assessed?
- What is being activated or constructed by the writing?
- What supports the bridge between what the students write and read?
- Who does the writing in social studies class?
- What role does discussion play in preparing to write?
- What role does discussion play during writing?
- How will you know the writing activity or assignment is successful?
- How will you know when to use which writing strategy?

## **Writing to Learn**

Writing helps create the bridge between the content knowledge and understanding. Reading from the textbook and answering the questions is a very passive way to learn. A wide variety of writing assignments and activities can help students become actively

engaged in social studies. Examples include social studies observation journals, free writes, vocabulary journals, observation reports, topic analyses, diagrams, and charts. All of these writing formats encourage students to think about social studies and connect prior knowledge or experiences with new learning.

Writing to learn is expressive writing that encourages students to write about what they are thinking and learning. Examples of this type of writing are journal entries, reflections, reading responses, question-answering, personal notations, etc.

Not all writing-to-learn activities must be graded. Teachers should offer feedback and comments but should not feel compelled to grade the spelling, grammar, organization, and content of these writing activities. The purpose of writing-to-learn activities is to promote active learning, encourage discussion, engage all students, and encourage thinking. There is usually a required time set aside to complete the writing. These less formal writing assignments may be expanded into more formal assignments.

## **Writing to Apply**

When students use their new knowledge in social studies to write in a more formal manner, they are writing to apply. In these activities, students are asked to analyze and synthesize information, and then communicate their thoughts in a coherent, organized manner. This type of writing can be more challenging for students because they need to not only understand the content and be able to process it at a higher level, but also communicate it using the strategies of the writing process, the features of the chosen genre, and the conventions of the grade level. Teachers are most likely comfortable with this type of writing in social studies class, as it may have been what they were exposed to in school.

Some familiar examples of this type of writing are social studies lab reports and research reports. However, there are many other options to consider: microthemes, friendly letters, business letters, social studies fiction stories, and more.

Unlike writing-to-learn activities, writing-to-apply activities are meant to be graded. With these assignments, students are showing what they have learned and demonstrating the capability to communicate it in a formal writing format. A variety of assessment options are described in Part 3 of this book.

# Introduction:

## Motivating Students to Write

### Social Studies Library

One of the easiest and most effective ways to improve literacy is to allow time for students to read during class. Students who frequently read a wide variety of materials have better vocabularies and better reading comprehension skills. As Ryder and Graves (2003) point out, wide reading fosters automaticity in students because it exposes them to more words in different contexts, provides them with knowledge on a variety of topics, and promotes life-long reading habits. Teachers can create a social studies library corner by collecting and providing books for students to read. Social Studies teachers have an intimate knowledge of social studies-based reading materials for a wide range of reading abilities, so they can recommend books to any student to read outside of class.

Lesley Mandel Morrow, president of the International Reading Association (2003–04), explains that research indicates children in classrooms with literature collections read 50 percent more books than children in classrooms without such collections. Work with the school librarian or media specialist to build and create a social studies library corner. There is a variety of reading materials available on these topics:

- communities (people in the community, jobs in the communities, places to visit, etc.)
- families and culture (family organization, traditions, culture, ways of living, etc.)
- United States history (colonial times, Revolutionary War, Civil War, westward expansion, Industrial Revolution, foreign wars, etc.)
- world history (ancient civilizations)
- biographies (Madame Curie, George Washington, Martin Luther King, Jr., George Washington Carver, Thomas Alva Edison, Harriet Tubman, etc.)

### The Writing Process Center

The writing process involves the different stages from developing an idea to publishing a piece of written work. Students need support to create a finished product. Teachers can set up permanent stations throughout their classrooms for each stage of the writing process. This not only motivates students at each stage of the writing process but also makes it easier to incorporate all stages of the process. This way the students will have access to all the materials needed to work through the writing process. Here are some ideas for each station of the writing process:

- **prewriting** – books with writing suggestions and ideas, story starts, writing samples, pieces of writing about social studies, blank graphic organizers, books and magazines about social studies topics, and encyclopedias
- **drafting** – established rubrics and criteria, music available for students who need a relaxing environment as they write, resources, pencils, erasers, floor pillows, and

comfortable places to sit and write

- **revising** – peer editing checklists, samples of quality writing, rubrics, word lists (such as a list of vivid verbs to replace more overly used verbs), etc.
- **editing** – dictionaries, thesauruses, writing reference books, colored pens or pencils, and proofreading checklists
- **publishing** – computers, pens, bookbinding materials, sample finished products, a printer, colored pencils for illustrations and diagrams, rulers, and a variety of lined and unlined paper

## **Spotlight Reading**

Set aside a time each week for students to read aloud and share the writing they have accomplished. These writings may be less formal pieces such as journals, free writes, or feature analyses, or they may be formal writing pieces like observation reports or social studies experiment reports. This practice keeps students focused and aware of an audience as they write, and it allows them the opportunity to give and receive feedback. It is an effective way to validate the hard work and effort of students and may even eliminate the need for the teacher to formally assess a piece of writing. Finally, this spotlight reading also provides an opportunity for students to hear their writing aloud. They will automatically think of things they are learning about social studies objectives and they will become more aware of what they need to change to improve their writing.

## **Bulletin Board Writing Display**

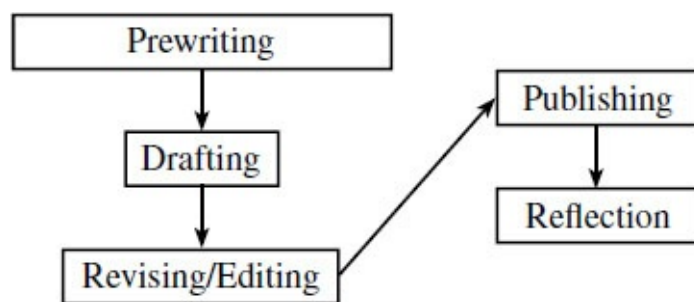
Student exposure to writing is often limited. Therefore it is imperative for the teacher to provide students with a wide variety of writing samples relating to social studies (Ryder and Graves 2003). These samples should be available for students to look at and use as models. Designate a bulletin board in the classroom to display these writing samples. Be sure to add to the collection frequently so that students remain interested and curious about the new additions. Encourage students to bring in samples of writing that are related to social studies. This will also help them locate and identify writing samples related to social studies.

# Introduction:

## The Writing Process

“A writer,” says Britton, “draws on the whole store of his experience, and his whole social being, so that in the act of writing he imposes his own individuality” (1975, p. 47). The most complex form of writing is the college-level argumentative essay. Taking notes is the least complex form of writing. Writing for meaning and expressing oneself to others is intricate and complex work. Using the writing process helps the writer take a piece of writing from the beginning, or brainstorming, to the end, or the published piece. This process is especially important to follow as students write reports and other social studies writing assignments. The writing process at the emergent writing level is usually conducted as a group, though on occasion it is done individually. Students in higher grades who have more familiarity with the writing process can complete it individually.

What is the writing process? It includes prewriting, drafting, editing/revising, publishing, and reflection. Read the description of the writing process steps below. There are different points to consider at each step of the writing process.



### Prewriting

This is the phase where all writing begins. At this stage, writers generate ideas, brainstorm topics, web ideas together, or talk or think about ideas. Teachers explain that students may get writing ideas from personal experiences, stories, pictures, magazines, newspapers, television, and a variety of other sources.

This phase sets the foundation for a specific piece of writing. Before brainstorming or prewriting can begin, students need instruction on the genre or format (lab report, journal entry, visual presentation, etc.), audience (the teacher, fellow classmates, social studies competition judges, etc.), and purpose (to explain, to persuade, to inform, etc.). These elements impact the types of information to brainstorm.

Students need to have a clear understanding of a social studies topic before they are expected to write or report on it. Teachers can provide resources for research and model note-taking strategies. Social Studies topics are often complex and difficult to understand, so discussion will help prepare students to write. Note-taking ([pages 99–107](#)) and diagram and mapping strategies ([pages 108–139](#)) can help students organize the major points in their writing.

What does prewriting look like?

- researching a chosen topic
- analyzing the characteristics of the intended genre
- examining sample writing pieces
- discussing the topic with the teacher, a partner, or the class
- brainstorming ideas about the topic
- using webbing or other graphics to organize information
- discussing the assessment tool

## Drafting

At the drafting stage of the writing process, students begin to put their ideas on paper. Students need to keep in mind the genre or format, audience, and purpose. For beginning writers, pictures and drawings may very well be part of the composition. Teachers should encourage students to write as much as they can on their own throughout the writing process.

Another area that students struggle with is writing in an orderly manner. Students should already have graphic organizers, notes, or outlines from the prewriting stage that can help them sequence and organize their writing.

What does drafting look like?

- working fairly quickly
- leaving blank spaces for missing words
- guessing at spelling
- focusing on simply putting ideas on paper
- using notes or graphic organizers to stay focused
- drafting a preliminary version of the writing assignment (story, letter, report, essay, etc.)

## Revising and Editing

This phase of writing consists of two parts: revision looks at the organization and the structure of the writing, while editing looks at the mechanics of the writing. Students must understand how to do both. When revising, students analyze their writing for the required traits: sequencing words in a lab report, descriptive language in a social studies fiction story, topic sentences and supporting details in a persuasive essay. They also ask questions of their writing: *Does it make sense? Is anything out of order? Should anything be added or deleted?* Use the Self-Assessment Survey ([pages 194–195](#)) to give students an opportunity to evaluate their own writing. Individual Teacher Conferences ([pages 198–199](#)) are also helpful to give students feedback throughout the writing process.

What does revising and editing look like?

- reading the writing aloud to make sure that it makes sense

- adding missing information
- deleting unnecessary, incorrect, or duplicate information
- proofreading for spelling, capitalization, grammar, and punctuation
- self-analysis by students
- conferences with peers or the teacher

## **Publishing**

Publishing allows students to celebrate their hard work. It occurs after the other steps are completed and the student is ready to produce the final copy, which can be handwritten or typed on a word processor. Teachers should consider the abilities of their students. The goal is to present the written information attractively, so others can enjoy it.

What does publishing look like?

- creating a final copy
- adding illustrations, borders, a cover, etc.
- sharing orally
- publishing “in-house” in a class book
- posting on a classroom bulletin board

## **Reflecting**

Reflection is a key element in the writing process. It encourages the writer to think about his or her writing, look at the writing from a different point of view, and see progress in writing effort. Reflection also allows the writer to look back at brainstorming and the beginning of a writing project to see if the original goals were met.

What does reflection look like?

- Reading what has been written and asking the following questions:

*Is that what I wanted to say?*

*Is there more I should have written?*

*Which is my favorite part in this writing?*

*Did I write this piece the way I planned to?*

*What can I learn from this assignment?*

*How can I continue to improve my writing?*

## **Differentiating Instruction**

For ELLs, teachers need to modify writing assignments and rubrics to fit students' individual language proficiencies. They will benefit from preteaching and frequent review and application of new vocabulary, so that they can incorporate those words into their writing. Also, teachers can provide scaffolding by way of graphic organizers for teaching content and developing and organizing their thoughts during the prewriting phase.

Sentence or paragraph frames can help these students express their ideas in a more coherent manner when they begin drafting their writing. Frequent writing conferences can help the teacher assess learning and identify needs.

Students who are reading or writing below grade level will benefit from scaffolding as well. They may need to be constantly reminded to refer to their rubric—which should be adapted to address their individual needs—to meet the expectations of the assignment. Teachers can provide graphic organizers during the prewriting phase to help these students get started in an organized fashion. When revising and editing, teachers can model how to identify errors and make changes so that these students have a clear understanding of this difficult stage of the writing process.

Gifted students can be challenged at each step of the writing process to work more independently, create longer or more elaborate pieces, use multiple sources, write from a different point of view, incorporate richer vocabulary, or write with a greater variety of sentence structures. Teachers should also adapt rubrics to challenge these students.



# Introduction:

## Writing Instruction

### What Great Teachers Do to Encourage Writing in Social Studies

- 1. Share vocabulary-rich books and reading materials about the subjects you are studying in social studies class.** Sloan (1996) explains that the best source of learning about social studies vocabulary is reading good books that use the words. This allows the teacher to introduce them, allows the opportunity for students to hear them in context, and provides an opportunity to discuss the social studies vocabulary words.
- 2. Provide plenty of time for students to experience the writing process** (Corona, Spangenberg, and Venet 1998). It takes time to teach the writing process, but it is worth it. Taking a writing project from planning to publication is very meaningful to students because it validates their efforts and understanding of social studies concepts.
- 3. Allow time for students to evaluate others' writing and receive teacher feedback** (Corona, Spangenberg, and Venet 1998). Writing is communication. Students need to share their writing with others, both giving and receiving feedback from peers and teachers. This helps to cement students' understanding of social studies concepts. The process also provides teachers with the opportunity to clarify and reteach concepts as needed.
- 4. Offer daily writing opportunities to your students.** "A writer-centered classroom emphasizes using written expression to communicate ideas. Writing is an important part of all areas of the curriculum" (Corona, Spangenberg, and Venet 1998, p. 29). Be sure to include a wide variety of assignments. Some assignments might be more formal while others may be more casual. Also include a range of different types of writing such as journal entries, outlines, poetry, reports, short stories, etc. Students usually benefit from having a choice about what they are to write about. Encourage students to use social studies vocabulary when they write.
- 5. Encourage students to be aware of and look for new and interesting social studies words.** Students can just browse through books looking for words that catch their attention and add them to their vocabulary journals. They may also be assigned to look for specific social studies words that are being studied in class. Finally, create a Social Studies Word Wall in your classroom (see [pages 21–24](#)).
- 6. Incorporate practice and repetition as a way for students to become familiar with vocabulary words and how they are to be used** (Laflamme 1997). Students can be exposed through writing, discussions, modeling, classroom exercises, and reading.

- 7. Teach students the strategies to read, understand, and write about increasingly complex text.** These same strategies can help students work through difficult concepts to arrive at deep learning. Students who can recognize text patterns will be better prepared to use those patterns in their own writing (Fisher and Ivey 2005).
- 8. Focus students' reading and writing on big ideas.** Don't get caught up in the details. Rote learning does not lend itself to lifelong learning. Focusing on themes, concepts, and big ideas lends itself to linking new information to prior knowledge as well as life experiences and events that are happening in the world today.

## **Writing Venues in the Social Studies Classroom**

Social Studies teachers can easily incorporate the same techniques that language arts teachers have used for years to help students become more strategic and skilled writers and to help them comprehend and write about the social studies materials they encounter. There are a variety of ways to teach students new ideas and to incorporate writing into the social studies curriculum. The first is to consider changing class configurations to use writing in social studies. Content-area teachers often lecture to the whole class and seldom pair students together or assign small groups to work together for reading and writing. Following are suggestions for the types of configurations a social studies teacher can consider:

### **Large groups are best for:**

- introducing a new writing strategy
- modeling think-alouds to show how good writers work through a piece of writing
- practicing think-alouds to apply a strategy to students' own writing and allowing students to share their experiences and ideas using the strategy

### **Small groups are best for:**

- providing more intensive instruction for students who need it
- introducing gifted students to a new writing piece or strategy so that they can apply it independently to more challenging writing assignments
- preteaching new strategies to ELLs or students who are below grade level
- preteaching new vocabulary to ELLs

### **Conferences are best for:**

- checking a student's understanding of social studies concepts and the writing strategies being used
- providing intensive writing strategy instruction to a student who may need extra attention
- coaching a child in how he/she might reveal his/her thinking by writing to others
- pushing a child to use a strategy to think more deeply than he or she might have imagined possible

- individually editing and correcting student writing

### **Pair students with partners:**

- to discuss free writes, dialogue journals, think-pair-share, etc.
- to edit and gather input on product writing pieces

## **Habits of Highly Effective Writers**

Duke and Pearson (2001) have established that good readers read and write a lot. They also set goals, make predictions, and read selectively. Many of the same practices of good readers are also done by good writers. Here are some more specific suggestions for highly effective writers:

- **Good writers write all the time.** The more experience one has writing, the better writer he or she becomes. Learning to write takes practice and more practice!
- **Good writers read a lot.** Reading provides a great model for writers as to what the finished product looks like (Fisher and Ivey 2005). Students who read will know how to write better than those who do not.
- **Good writers are aware of correct spelling.** There are no excuses for poor spelling. Commit to learning and using correct spelling in writing—even in the rough draft, if possible. Good writers use all the resources available and understand the limitations of computer spell-check programs.
- **Good writers appreciate critiques and feedback.** Good writers have a “thick skin” and ask for input and suggestions from many different sources.
- **Good writers keep a learning log handy.** The learning log can be used to store good writing ideas, to document what is being learned, to activate prior knowledge, and to question what is being learned (Brozo and Simpson 2003; Cwilka and Martinez-Cruz 2003; Fisher and Frey 2004). Using this learning log also helps cement learning and helps students avoid writer’s block.
- **Good writers write for a variety of purposes.** Learning to write in a variety of formats makes for a well-rounded, experienced writer. Teachers should expose students to different types of social studies writing formats.
- **Good writers read and edit other people’s writing.** Good writers look for opportunities to work with others to improve their writing. Peer editing groups are an excellent way to get feedback and reinforcement from peers. This feedback is important for the self-image of the writer (Gahn 1989). Editing others’ work will also help students recognize writing errors, such as an off-topic response, a weak topic sentence, a lack of supporting detail, weak vocabulary, and errors in spelling or grammar.
- **Good writers think objectively.** Good writers need to be able to step back and really look at their writing. Some writers are so happy to be done with their writing that they never really look at it again.
- **Good writers read it out loud!** Teachers can encourage students to give their writing a voice. Many errors or additions are discovered when a student listens to the writing

being read aloud.

- **Good writers use and create rubrics and checklists.** Huba and Freed (2000) reiterate the importance of using and creating rubrics and checklists, which help to clarify the expectations for writing assignments. Rubrics and checklists also enable students to become self-directed in mastering the content learning.

# Introduction:

## How to Use This Book

The focus of this research-based book is to demonstrate how to incorporate more writing in the social studies class. Increasing the use of writing is a key way to promote stronger literacy in the content areas. Research shows that using writing in social studies is the best way to help students understand the complex concepts and terms introduced in the content areas. This book provides social studies teachers with the information needed to implement writing activities and assignments that correlate with social studies objectives and goals. The strong research connection in this book helps tie what teachers actually do in the classroom with the most current research available.

### **Part 1: Writing to Learn in Social Studies**

This section is composed of strategies for using writing to learn in social studies. These include vocabulary development, previewing and reviewing, journal-writing, note-taking, and diagramming and mapping. These strategies use writing as a tool for students to process and personalize what they learn so that they are able to synthesize and break down the complex social studies terms and concepts.

### **Part 2: Writing to Apply in Social Studies**

This section offers strategies for using writing to apply new knowledge in social studies: authoring skills, summarizing, and writing applications in all genres. These strategies provide opportunities to utilize the entire writing process to compose a piece of writing that incorporates their social studies knowledge. Teachers may wish to use strategies from [Part 1](#) as building blocks for working toward these application assignments.

### **Part 3: Assessment**

This section describes several holistic assessment options for writing in the social studies classroom. Each strategy listed in the book includes the purpose for and benefits of the strategy and its connection to writing and social studies, the grade levels for which it is appropriate, and the McREL standards that it meets. A step-by-step activity description follows, along with variations, if appropriate, and differentiated instruction to accommodate all types of students. These alterations and suggestions are written for English Language Learners, gifted students, and students who are reading and writing below grade level.

# Journal-Writing Strategies for Social Studies (cont.)

## Double-Entry Journal

### Background Information

The United States has a long history of immigration. In 1907, the United States had the largest immigrant population in the world. In 1910, the United States had the largest immigrant population in the world. In 1920, the United States had the largest immigrant population in the world. In 1930, the United States had the largest immigrant population in the world. In 1940, the United States had the largest immigrant population in the world. In 1950, the United States had the largest immigrant population in the world. In 1960, the United States had the largest immigrant population in the world. In 1970, the United States had the largest immigrant population in the world. In 1980, the United States had the largest immigrant population in the world. In 1990, the United States had the largest immigrant population in the world. In 2000, the United States had the largest immigrant population in the world. In 2010, the United States had the largest immigrant population in the world. In 2020, the United States had the largest immigrant population in the world.

### Origin/Language/Address

Country of Origin: \_\_\_\_\_  
Language: \_\_\_\_\_  
Address: \_\_\_\_\_

### Gender

Male \_\_\_\_\_ Female \_\_\_\_\_

### Stage of Writing Process

Pre-writing \_\_\_\_\_ Writing \_\_\_\_\_ Revising \_\_\_\_\_

### Age

Age: \_\_\_\_\_

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# Journal-Writing Strategies for Social Studies (cont.)

## Double-Entry Journal

### Grade 3-5 Example

Topic: THE AZTECS

Text Passage	Student Response
"In the Aztecs, the Mexican government tried to figure out how their nation, the Aztecs, organized the Aztecs. In Aztec, Aztec means 'one who has been taken out of his home'." (Scherer, 2001)	"I am Aztec. I was taken to the Aztecs. It is interesting to read about the Aztecs who were captured there. I can picture the Aztecs in my mind."

Reference: Scherer, S. (2001). *One Who Has Been Taken Out of His Home: The Aztecs and the Aztecs*. (pp. 21-22). (New York, NY: Scherers, Inc.)

### Grade 6-8 Example

Topic: WORLD WAR I

Text Passage	Student Response
"When other nations were starting, President Wilson was the only one who said that the United States would remain neutral. Wilson's intention was to keep the United States out of the war." (Scherer, 2001)	"Why couldn't the United States remain neutral? It seems that the U.S. entered in more ways than they had to. Why?"

Reference: Scherer, S. (2001). *The United States in World War I: The Aztecs and the Aztecs*. (pp. 21-22). (New York, NY: Scherers, Inc.)

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## Double-Entry Journal

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Topic: \_\_\_\_\_

Text Passage	Student Response
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

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# Introduction:

## Correlation to McREL Standards

### Correlation to Standards

The No Child Left Behind (NCLB) legislation mandates that all states adopt academic standards that identify the skills students will learn in kindergarten through grade 12. While many states had already adopted academic standards prior to NCLB, the legislation set requirements to ensure the standards were detailed and comprehensive.

Standards are designed to focus instruction and guide adoption of curricula. Standards are statements that describe the criteria necessary for students to meet specific academic goals. They define the knowledge, skills, and content students should acquire at each level. Standards are also used to develop standardized tests to evaluate students' academic progress.

In many states today, teachers are required to demonstrate how their lessons meet state standards. State standards are used in the development of Shell Education products, so educators can be assured that they meet the academic requirements of each state.

### How to Find Your State Correlations

Shell Education is committed to producing educational materials that are research and standards based. In this effort, all products are correlated to the academic standards of the 50 states, the District of Columbia, and the Department of Defense Dependent Schools. A correlation report customized for your state can be printed directly from the following website: <http://www.shelleducation.com>. If you require assistance in printing correlation reports, please contact Customer Service at 1-800-877-3450.

### McREL Compendium

Shell Education uses the Mid-continent Research for Education and Learning (McREL) Compendium to create standards correlations. Each year, McREL analyzes state standards and revises the compendium. By following this procedure, they are able to produce a general compilation of national standards.

Each reading comprehension strategy assessed in this book is based on one or more McREL content standards. The chart on the following page shows the McREL standards that correlate to each lesson used in the book. To see a state-specific correlation, visit the Shell Education website at <http://www.shelleducation.com>.

### Identifying Learning Objectives and Goals

When teaching a lesson that involves social studies reading, the first step is to identify the learning objectives and goals for the lesson. The teacher should identify the goals of the lesson and discuss them directly with the students. Their understanding of the expectations and purpose of the lesson will help them to better gauge their own learning. Some of these goals may address language arts standards as well as social studies standards. This is the

first step in helping students develop the metacognitive skills necessary for self-monitoring. Planning for reading lessons with the goals in mind allows teachers to determine their objectives and address the learning standards required by the school district, state, and nation. By doing so, teachers naturally build into their lessons a means of assessing students' learning.

<b>Grades</b>	<b>Standard I</b>	<b>Uses the general skills and strategies of the writing process</b>	<b>Page</b>
1–2, 3–5, 6–8	1.1	Uses prewriting strategies to plan written work	32–36, 47–51, 52–55, 56–59, 60–63, 82–84, 109–111, 112–115, 116–118, 119–122, 123–126, 127–129, 130–134, 135–139, 141–142, 143–145, 154–156, 157–158, 159–162
1–2, 3–5, 6–8	1.2	Uses strategies to draft and revise written work	40–42, 47–51, 52–55, 60–63, 85–87, 141–142, 143–145, 157–158, 159–162
1–2, 3–5, 6–8	1.4	Evaluates own and other's writing	71–73, 146–148, 149–152, 187–188, 189–190, 191–192, 193–195, 196–197, 198–199
3–5, 6–8	1.5	Uses strategies (content, style, and structure) to write for different audiences and purposes (to inform, explain, etc.)	64–67, 75–78, 94–97, 172–173
1–2	1.6	Uses writing and other methods to describe familiar persons, places, objects, or experiences	68–70, 79–81, 91–93, 94–97
1–2, 3–5	1.8, 1.6	Uses strategies to write for a variety of purposes	64–67, 75–78, 94–97, 172–173
3–5, 6–8	1.7, 1.6	Writes expository compositions	166–167, 170–171, 178–179, 180–181
1–2	1.7	Writes in a variety of forms or genres	172–173, 174–175, 176–177, 178–179, 180–181, 182–183
3–5, 6–	1.8, 1.7	Writes narrative	91–93, 182–183



8		accounts	
6–8	1.8	Writes compositions about autobiographical incidents	91–93, 182–183
3–5	1.10	Writes expressive compositions	64–67, 68–70, 71–73, 79–81, 88–90, 91–93, 94–97
3–5, 6–8	1.11, 1.12	Writes in response to literature	68–70, 71–73, 88–90, 149–152, 154–156, 157–158, 159–162, 164–165
6–8	1.11	Writes compositions that address problems/solutions	170–171
3–5	1.12	Writes personal letters	174–175, 176–177
6–8	1.13	Writes business letters and letters of request	174–175, 176–177

Grades	Standard 2	Uses the stylistic and rhetorical aspects of writing	Page
1–2	2.1	Uses descriptive words to convey basic ideas	21–24, 37–39
3–5, 6–8	2.1	Uses descriptive language that clarifies and enhances ideas	21–24, 37–39

Grades	Standard 4	Gathers and uses information for research purposes	Page
3–5	4.1	Uses a variety of strategies to plan research	82–84
1–2	4.2	Uses a variety of sources to gather information	28–31, 112–115, 119–122, 123–126, 130–134
3–5	4.3	Uses dictionaries to gather information for	43–45

		research topics	
6–8	4.3	Uses a variety of resource materials to gather information for research topics	<a href="#">25–27</a> , <a href="#">28–31</a> , <a href="#">43–45</a> , <a href="#">82–84</a>
6–8	4.5	Organizes information and ideas from multiple sources in systematic ways	<a href="#">43–45</a> , <a href="#">99–101</a> , <a href="#">102–104</a> , <a href="#">105–107</a> , <a href="#">109–111</a> , <a href="#">112–115</a> , <a href="#">119–122</a> , <a href="#">123–126</a> , <a href="#">127–129</a> , <a href="#">130–134</a> , <a href="#">168–169</a>
6–8	4.6	Writes research papers	<a href="#">184–185</a>
3–5	4.7	Uses strategies to gather and record information for research topics	<a href="#">25–27</a> , <a href="#">28–31</a> , <a href="#">43–45</a> , <a href="#">99–101</a> , <a href="#">102–104</a> , <a href="#">105–107</a> , <a href="#">109–111</a> , <a href="#">112–115</a> , <a href="#">116–118</a> , <a href="#">119–122</a> , <a href="#">123–126</a> , <a href="#">127–129</a> , <a href="#">130–134</a>
3–5	4.8	Uses strategies to compile information into written reports or summaries	<a href="#">168–169</a> , <a href="#">184–185</a>

# Teaching Social Studies Vocabulary Through Writing

## Social Studies Vocabulary and Writing

Extensive research shows that the size of a student's vocabulary is directly related to a student's ability to read (Laflamme 1997). The larger the vocabulary, the easier it is for the student to read. The connection between vocabulary and writing is even stronger. One's ability to write is directly tied to one's ability to understand and use vocabulary words. Unlike with reading, students do not have the benefit of using context clues to determine the meaning of words. As writers, they are creating the context clues!

Becker (1977) has determined that the deficiencies a student may have in vocabulary may lead to poor academic achievement. With the pressure to increase the social studies, technology, and mathematical skills of students, there is no room to fail. Enriching the vocabulary of students is a necessity if we want students to continue to build and learn social studies-related terms.

Because students are exposed to a large number of social studies vocabulary words in the social studies classroom, they need opportunities to interact with these words to become familiar with them and build them into their background knowledge. Students will not internalize and remember these words by reading alone. They must learn to know and understand these words well enough to write about them. Their writing and comprehension skills depend upon it. According to Corona, Spangenberg, and Venet (1998), "At any level, written communication is more effective when a depth of vocabulary and command of language is evident" (p. 26). Research about vocabulary demonstrates the need for an emphasis on writing for students to understand new terms. Writing is the way a student can personalize unfamiliar terms and incorporate them into his or her vocabulary.

National social studies standards also emphasize that students need the ability to communicate their understanding of social studies ideas and information (National Research Council 1996). This means that students should be engaged in activities where they discuss and write about social studies terms and concepts, as well as generate questions, predict answers, and evaluate evidence. Building students' vocabulary will assist teachers in accomplishing this task. The following strategies provide teachers with vocabulary exercises and activities to help build students' vocabulary in the subject of social studies.

So how do students increase their vocabulary in order to incorporate it into their writing? Research suggests that we learn the meaning of words by using them in the context of "old" words we already know and understand (Adams 1990). New learning is continually building on old or previous learning. The same is true for old and new vocabulary words. New vocabulary words are learned by building on known words. We use these "old" words to describe and define new vocabulary. Most of learning is acquired through language (Adams 1990). The learning occurs through accessing prior language and

connecting it to new language.

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