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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

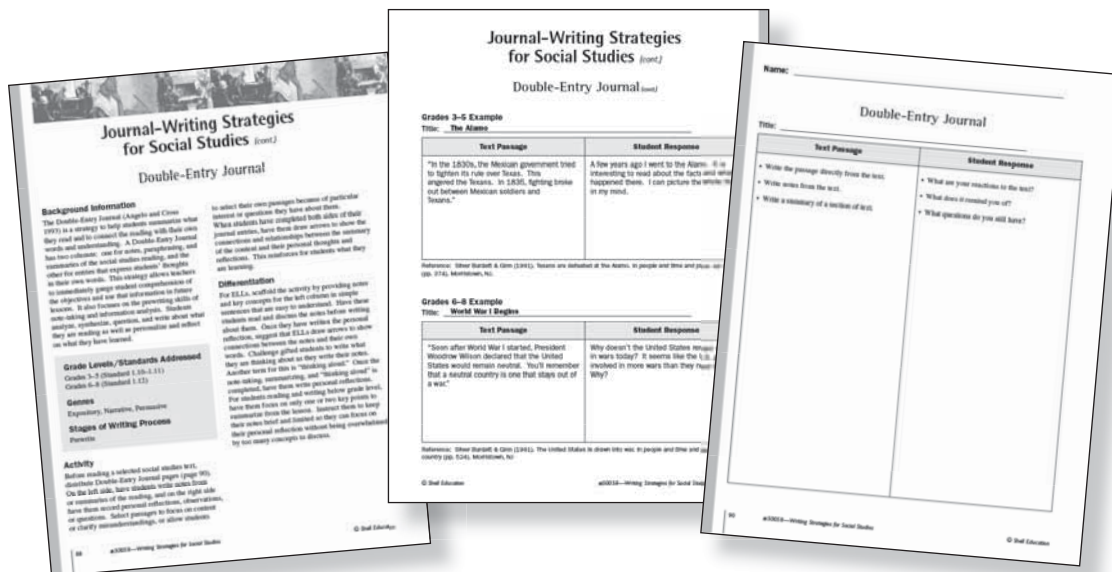
This section is composed of strategies for using writing to learn in social studies. These include vocabulary development, previewing and reviewing, journal-writing, note-taking, and diagramming and mapping. These strategies use writing as a tool for students to process and personalize what they learn 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.





Writing Strategies for Previewing and Reviewing in Social Studies *(cont.)*

Probable Passages

Background Information

The Probable Passages strategy (Wood 1984) incorporates writing directly into a social studies lesson. This strategy is primarily used with basal readers but Readence, Bean, and Baldwin (1981) suggest that this strategy can be adapted for use with expository text. Its focus is to use key concepts or terms to make predictions about the content of a text. Students use key terms or concepts provided by the teacher to write short passages that could appear in the text. The goal is not necessarily to have their information correct the first time. The goal is to write using the types of language and sentence structure common to the genre and use the process of analyzing the information against a reliable source.

Grade Levels/Standards Addressed

Grades 1–2 (Standards 1.1–1.2)

Grades 3–5 (Standards 1.1–1.2)

Grades 6–8 (Standards 1.1–1.2)

Genres

Expository, Summary, Narrative, Persuasive

Stages of Writing Process

Prewrite, Draft, Revise

Activity

Before reading a selected social studies text, distribute the Probable Passages activity sheet (page 63). Introduce the topic and write the key vocabulary words on the board or overhead. Discuss the meanings of these words, and then call on students to define and use the words orally

in sentences. Once students are familiar with the words, have them look for relationships among the words in the same way that writers look for related information while composing a rough draft. *Which word might be a main idea? Which words have common meanings or definitions? Which words go together? Which words are examples of another word?* You may want to construct a simple outline or diagram of how the words might be related as a quick prewriting scaffold. Then instruct students to write a short passage using the outline. There is no strict format to follow except that the key words must be utilized. Allow time for students to share their passages with partners or table team for feedback and input. After reading the selected social studies text, have students compare and contrast their Probable Passages with the text. This step is key because students are analyzing their own writing against published writing to verify information.

Differentiation

Provide clear, simple definitions and visuals of the key terms for ELLs to refer to as they write their paragraphs because it might be difficult for them to use complex terms they have just learned. Provide sentence frames and examples of how to write a paragraph for the ELLs as well. Instruct gifted students to write more than a paragraph or provide additional words for them to incorporate. Also, challenge them to write the passage and leave the key words blank then exchange with a partner to see if they can fill in the blanks. For students reading and writing below grade level, spend individual time in a writing conference working through the writing of the paragraph. Also, provide definitions for the key terms.

Writing Strategies for Previewing and Reviewing in Social Studies *(cont.)*

Probable Passages *(cont.)*

Grades 1–2 Example

Key Concepts:

farmers, workers, America, own, land, living, skills

Prewrite:

America, farmers and workers
own land
living, skills

Probable Passage:

Many of the people who came to America were farmers and workers. They wanted to own land to make a living. They had many skills.

How does your passage compare to the text?

My topic sentence includes farmers and workers, but the book's topic sentence only has farmers.

Grades 3–5 Example

Key Concepts:

Jamestown, ships, Chesapeake Bay, ocean, settlers

Prewrite:

Jamestown settlers
ships, ocean
Chesapeake Bay

Probable Passage:

The settlers moved to Jamestown. They came by ships across the ocean. They came to Chesapeake Bay.

How does your passage compare to the text?

My facts are correct, but I have very few details. That is probably because I didn't know much about the subject at first. Now, if I were to rewrite the passage, I would include many more details and more description about the colony.

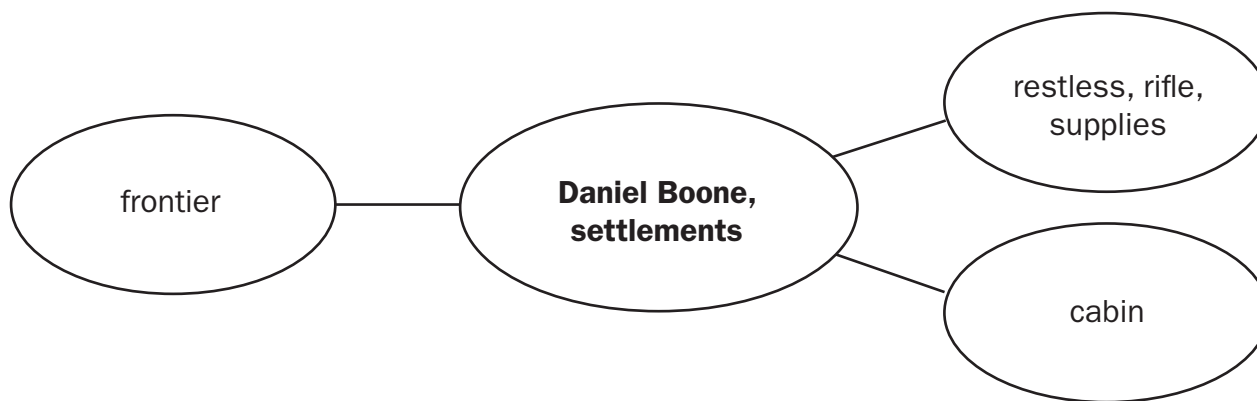
Writing Strategies for Previewing and Reviewing in Social Studies *(cont.)*

Probable Passages *(cont.)*

Grades 6–8 Example

Key Concepts:

settlement, Daniel Boone, frontier, restless, cabin, rifle, supplies

Prewrite:**Probable Passage:**

Daniel Boone liked to set up new settlements. He loved the frontier and exploring. He would get restless and take his rifle and supplies to go in search of wilderness. Each time he found a new place, he would have to build a new cabin.

How does your passage compare to the text?

Both paragraphs are about Daniel Boone. I'm surprised that most of my details were correct. I think next time, I would like to incorporate more vivid verbs and descriptive language to make my writing more interesting.

Name: _____

Probable Passages

Directions: Write down the key concepts for the lesson. Use a prewriting strategy and then write a probable passage using these words. After reading, compare your passage to the text.

Key Concepts:

Prewrite:

Probable Passage:

How does your passage compare to the text?
