

Handouts

*Including Primary Source Documents,
Teaching Suggestions, and Models*

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Writing Projects and Primary Source Excerpts

When giving students primary sources, begin by having them highlight unfamiliar and/or antiquated language on their copies of the excerpts. Discuss terms as a class or have students research them on the Internet in pairs. Students can write in the modern-day meanings of the terms on their printouts—or have students rewrite entire excerpts using modern language.

Primary source excerpts are provided in parallel sets following this list of instructional ideas.

Note that Document Based Questions (DBQ's) are often used for assessment, but reframing them as writing projects can be even more productive in the social studies classroom.

The TeachingAmericanHistory.org document library is an excellent resource for primary source material:

<http://teachingamericanhistory.org/library/>

See also this Library of Congress link for helping teachers find useful primary sources:

<http://blogs.loc.gov/teachers/2012/02/document-based-questions-and-primary-sources/>

Note: Common Core Standards references below have been given using the grade 7 indicator, but the standards for grades 6 and 8 are similar. The ELA-Literacy prefix has been omitted.

I. The Olive Branch Petition; John Adams' letter

Writing Project

John Adams wrote a letter intended just for his friend, but without his permission the audience turned into hundreds of British newspaper readers and their leaders. What does this tell your students about the importance of tailoring your writing to your audience? Assign them to write the letter Adams might have written if he had known who would be reading his words. Of course, Adams did not agree with the Olive Branch Petition. But he still would have said something different to an audience of British newspaper readers from what he said in his letter to a friend. What might it have been? (See CCS W.7.4 on audience and purpose.)

Reader Response Prompts

- Compare John Adams' attitude toward the situation with Great Britain to the attitude expressed in the Olive Branch Petition. Why are they different? Explain them in terms of actions as well as attitudes.
- Was compromise with Britain possible? Why or why not? Of the two writers, whose ideas won out, and why?

- How does the Olive Branch Petition describe the British government ministers? How does it describe the king? Compare the two descriptions and tell why they are different. How do the differences show the writer’s awareness of his audience and purpose?
- If John Adams’ letter had not been intercepted, could war have been avoided? Why or why not? Use information from the Olive Branch Petition and Adams’ letter to support your answer—even assuming the British did not read the letter.

Resources

Allen, Thomas B. *George Washington, Spymaster: How the Americans Outspied the British and Won the Revolutionary War*. Des Moines, IA: National Geographic, 2004.

Harness, Cheryl. *The Revolutionary John Adams*. Des Moines, IA: National Geographic Children’s Books, 2006.

Sheinkin, Steve. *King George: What Was His Problem? The Whole Hilarious Story of the American Revolution*. New York: Square Fish, 2009.

II. Letter from Abigail Adams to John Adams; Tory Nicholas Cresswell’s journal

Writing Project

If your students are not already familiar with the concept, introduce the idea of Document Based Questions (DBQ’s) and share examples. Then assign students to work individually or in pairs or small groups to write their own DBQ’s about these two primary sources. As they brainstorm, they should come up with 7–10 questions, some of which will be better than others. Have them rank the questions from best to worse using the criterion of which are more likely to inspire a rich piece of writing. Check their work and then put each group’s top 3–4 questions in a hat or bowl. Each student will draw a question and write a reader response of 1–2 paragraphs. [See CCS RI.7.1–3 and 5–6 on analyzing informational text.]

Reader Response Prompts

- For many years the work women did was considered less important than the work men did, and women are not often described in historical records. Abigail Adams is known for being a supporter and a good friend to her husband John. Use evidence from the letter to explain the importance of Abigail Adams in the American Revolution.
- What was it like to live during the Revolutionary War? How do the letter and the journal entry add to the knowledge you’ve acquired from the textbook and other sources?
- Why wasn’t Abigail Adams more discouraged? What gave her hope? How is it possible to have hope during the dark days of a war?

Resources

Anderson, Laurie Halse. *Independent Dames: What You Never Knew About the Women and Girls of the American Revolution*. New York: Simon and Schuster Books for Young Readers, 2008.

Sheinkin, Steve. *The Notorious Benedict Arnold: A True Story of Adventure, Heroism, and Treachery*. New York: Flash Point (Macmillan), 2010.

III. Senator John C. Calhoun’s “Slavery a Positive Good” speech; Frederick Douglass’s rebuttal

Writing Project

Have students make charts with John C. Calhoun’s arguments for slavery in one column and Frederick Douglass’s rebuttals or arguments against slavery in the other. They will turn their charts into 2–3 paragraphs explaining the beliefs or statements of each side. Next, they will conduct library and/or online research to find further arguments made by slaveholders and abolitionists at the time. They should add the arguments to their writing, including at least one quote from another slaveholder and one from another abolitionist as evidence for these ideas. Another option is to give students the complete texts from Calhoun and Douglass so they can use them to add items to their charts and writing—this will make it possible to align arguments and rebuttals more closely. After the work is completed, assign students to write conclusions giving their own thoughts (analysis) about the clash of ideas between those who supported slavery and those who were against it. Who argued their position more effectively in these excerpts, and why? What evidence from the texts supports that conclusion? (See CCS W.7.9b and RI.7.6–9 on analyzing arguments, as well as W.7.7–9 on doing research.)

Reader Response Prompts

- John C. Calhoun compares slaves to poor laborers. In what ways are slaves and poor laborers alike, and how are they different? If a slave is well fed and clothed and has good shelter, does that make his life better than that of a poor laborer who does not have enough food, clothing, or shelter, as Calhoun argues? Why or why not?
- When Christopher Columbus came to the Americas, he wrote to the king and queen of Spain that the Indians he had encountered would make good slaves. Compare this to Calhoun’s attitude. Nations have conquered other nations for centuries, often seeing themselves as superior to the people they conquered. Why do people like Columbus and Calhoun believe that they and their cultures are superior? What would you say to argue with their point of view?
- According to Frederick Douglass, what do slaveholders think about the ideas of freedom and of rights when it comes to themselves and the Southern states? What is ironic about these beliefs?

Resources

Full text of John C. Calhoun's speech:

<http://teachingamericanhistory.org/library/document/slavery-a-positive-good/>

Full text of Frederick Douglass's rebuttal:

<http://teachingamericanhistory.org/library/document/the-address-of-southern-delegates-in-congress-to-their-constituents-or-the-address-of-john-c-calhoun-and-forty-other-thieves/>

Douglass, Frederick. *Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass*. Clayton, DE: Prestwick House, Inc., 2004. [Editions from other publishers are also available.]

Russell Freedman. *Abraham Lincoln and Frederick Douglass: The Story Behind an American Friendship*. New York: Clarion Books, 2012.

IV. The Declaration of Independence; South Carolina's Declaration of Immediate Causes

Writing Project

Explain that the writers of South Carolina's Declaration of Immediate Causes deliberately used some of the language from the US Declaration of Independence. Students will work through the two documents individually and in pairs, marking similar ideas and phrasing. Then they will write up their analyses individually, along with their ideas about why South Carolina leaders created the parallel ideas. How did it reflect their decision to secede from the Union? Students should cite specific evidence as well as inferences in their work. [See CCS W.7.9b and RI.7.6–9 on analyzing arguments and RI.7.1–7.3 on analyzing informational text.]

Reader Response Prompts

- How were the American colonists rebelling against Britain and the Southerners rebelling against the Union alike? How were they different? Do the differences matter? Why or why not?
- Historically, the Patriots won the Revolutionary War and the North won the Civil War. Are the winners always right, or are they just the winners? Explain the viewpoints of each side in both wars.
- List the complaints given in these excerpts. Do you think the complaints of each group justified going to war? Note that 25,000 soldiers died in the American Revolution (about 1 percent of the US population) and 625,000 died in the Civil War (about 2 percent of the US population).
- What do you think would have happened if the Civil War had not taken place? How might that have affected the role of slavery in the United States over time, for example?

Resources

A Map of American Slavery:

http://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2010/12/10/opinion/20101210_Disunion_SlaveryMap.html? r=1&

Battles and Casualties of the Civil War map:

<http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-srv/lifestyle/special/civil-war-interactive/civil-war-battles-and-casualties-interactive-map/>

Murphy, Jim. *The Boys' War: Confederate and Union Soldiers Talk about the Civil War*. New York: HMH Books for Young Readers, 1993.

V. Letter from the mayor and city council of Atlanta to General Sherman; his response

Writing Project

Have half the class read General Sherman's letter and write the letter they think the mayor and city council must have written to prompt his response. Have the other half read the mayor and city council's letter and then write a letter from General Sherman turning them down. How would he respond logically to the points they made? Give students the actual corresponding letters to read and discuss in connection with their own writing. Then hold a class discussion about the situation and the two historic letters. (See CCS W.7.1 on writing an argument and W.7.9b and RI.7.6–9 on analyzing arguments.)

Reader Response Prompts

- In your own words, explain General Sherman's reasons for not canceling the evacuation of the city. What were his goals? Why?
- Some people think General Sherman did not care what happened to civilians in a war. Argue for or against that opinion using evidence from Sherman's letter.
- Civilians always get hurt in a war zone. For example, in the Iraq War, more than 100,000 civilians were killed. (Some say the numbers are even higher.) Also killed were 4,800+ troops from the US and other countries. Is it possible for civilians to be better protected? If so, how?
- Some people are against all wars, while others are in favor of certain wars. When is war justified? What are some reasons wars are fought? In your opinion, what are the worst and best reasons for fighting a war? Can war be avoided? *Should* it be avoided?
- List some of the costs and benefits of a war. Can the two be balanced? Why or why not? What's the difference between an economic cost and a human cost? What is the effect of people having their houses, farms, and towns destroyed? What about the loss of a father or brother?

Resources

The Historic Present—A small series about General Sherman’s letter:

<http://thehistoricpresent.wordpress.com/2012/04/11/shermans-letter-to-atlanta-setting-the-scene/> [See all 3 parts.]

Jefferson Davis’s farewell speech to the US Senate:

<http://teachingamericanhistory.org/library/document/farewell-speech/>

VI. Bonus Primary Source (A Weak Congress): Letter from Congressman Rufus King to his friend Elbridge Gerry

Writing Project

Assign students to work individually or in pairs to write plans for solving the problems Congress was facing. How will they address the issues Rufus King describes? They should conduct library and/or Internet research to find out what other problems the new Congress had to deal with. Later, when students study the Constitutional Convention, have them compare their ideas to the plan that was actually put in place. (See CCS W.7.2 and RI.7.1–3 on writing and analyzing informative/explanatory text, as well as W.7.7–9 on research.)

Reader Response Prompts

- Some people think today’s federal government has too much power and that the states should have more power. At the time this letter was written, the federal government had much less power than the state governments. Why is each situation a problem? How can the power be balanced effectively between the two levels of government?
- What does Rufus King want from Elbridge Gerry? Do you think he will get the things he asks for? Why or why not?
- List the problems Rufus King talks about. Which problems are the worst, and why?
- Americans such as Patrick Henry were very worried about giving the national government more power. And the national government *did* get more power. Write a letter telling Patrick Henry how this has affected our country since his day.

Resources

National Archives—The Founding Fathers, Massachusetts

http://www.archives.gov/exhibits/charters/constitution_founding_fathers_massachusetts.html

US Army Center of Military History—Rufus King

<http://www.history.army.mil/books/RevWar/ss/king.htm>

VII. Additional questions about audience and purpose

These questions are useful if you have your class compare one or more sets of paired primary source documents. (See CCS W.7.4 regarding audience.)

1. What is the audience and purpose of each piece of writing (or speech)?
2. How did the different audiences and purposes affect the way each piece was written?
3. What is the historic, social, cultural, and personal context of each piece of writing? How does this information affect your understanding of each primary source?

Excerpt from the Olive Branch Petition, adopted by the Second Continental Congress on July 5, 1775, and sent to King George III, who refused to read it

To the King's Most Excellent Majesty. Most Gracious Sovereign,

We your Majesty's faithful subjects of the colonies of New-hampshire, Massachusetts-bay, Rhode island and Providence plantations, Connecticut, New-York, New-Jersey, Pennsylvania, the counties of New Castle, Kent, and Sussex on Delaware, Maryland, Virginia, North Carolina and South Carolina, in behalf of ourselves and the inhabitants of these colonies, who have deputed us to represent them in general Congress, entreat your Majesty's gracious attention to this our humble petition...

Your Majestys ministers persevering in their measures and proceeding to open hostilities for enforcing them, have compelled us to arm in our own defence, and have engaged us in a controversy so peculiarly abhorrent to the affection of your still faithful colonists, that when we consider whom we must oppose in this contest, and if it continues, what may be the consequences, our own particular misfortunes are accounted by us, only as parts of our distress....

Attached to your Majestys person, family and government with all the devotion that principle and affection can inspire, connected with Great Britain by the strongest ties that can unite societies, and deploring every event that tends in any degree to weaken them, we solemnly assure your Majesty, that we not only most ardently desire the former harmony between her and these colonies may be restored but that a concord may be established between them upon so firm a basis, as to perpetuate its blessings uninterrupted by any future dissensions to succeeding generations in both countries....

We beg leave further to assure your Majesty that notwithstanding the sufferings of your loyal colonists during the course of the present controversy, our breasts retain too tender a regard for the kingdom from which we derive our origin to request such a reconciliation as might in any manner be inconsistent with her dignity or her welfare. These, related as we are to her, honor and duty, as well as inclination induce us to support and advance; and the apprehensions that now oppress our hearts with unspeakable grief, being once removed, your Majesty will find your faithful subjects on this continent ready and willing at all times, as they ever have been with their lives and fortunes to assert and maintain the rights and interests of your Majesty and of our Mother Country.

We therefore beseech your Majesty, that your royal authority and influence may be graciously interposed to procure us releif [sic] from our afflicting fears and jealousies occasioned by the system before mentioned, and to settle peace through every part of your dominions... that your Majesty be pleased to direct some mode by which the united applications of your faithful colonists to the throne, in pursuance of their common councils, may be improved into a happy and permanent reconciliation....

That your Majesty may enjoy a long and prosperous reign... is our sincere and fervent prayer.

Letter from John Adams to James Warren dated 24 July 1775—intercepted by British spies and published in London newspapers just when the Olive Branch Petition reached England. The second sentence refers to the petition and its chief author, John Dickinson.

Dear Sir,

In Confidence, I am determined to write freely to you this Time. A certain great Fortune and piddling Genius whose Fame has been trumpeted so loudly, has given a silly Cast to our whole Doings. We are between Hawk and Buzzard. We ought to have had in our Hands a Month ago, the whole Legislative, Executive and Judicial of the whole Continent, and have compleatly modelled a Constitution, to have raised a Naval Power and opened all our Ports wide, to have arrested every Friend to Government on the Continent and held them as Hostages for the poor Victims in Boston—And then opened the Door as wide as possible for Peace and Reconcilliation: After this they might have petitioned and negotiated and addressed, etc. if they would. Is all this extravagant? Is it wild? Is it not the soundest Policy?

One Piece of News—Seven Thousand Weight of Powder arrived here last Night. We shall send along some as soon as we can—but you must be patient and frugal.

We are lost in the extensiveness of our Field of Business. We have a Continental Treasury to establish, a Paymaster to choose, and a Committee of Correspondence, or Safety, or Accounts, or something, I know not what that has confounded us all Day.

Shall I hail you Speaker of the House, or Counsellor or what—What Kind of an Election had you? What Sort of Magistrates do you intend to make? Will your new Legislative and Executive feel bold, or irresolute? Will your Judicial hang and whip, and fine and imprison, without Scruples? I want to see our distressed Country once more—yet I dread the Sight of Devastation.

You observe in your Letter the Oddity of a great Man. He is a [strange] Creature. But you must love his Dogs if you love him, and forgive a Thousand Whims for the Sake of the Soldier and the Scholar.

John Adams

Excerpt from a letter from Abigail Adams to her husband John during the Revolutionary War, dated 7 September 1776

I have felt uneasy to Hear from you. The Report of your being dead, has no doubt reach'd you by Bass who heard enough of it before he came away. It took its rise among the Tories who as Swift said of himself "By their fears betray their Hopes" but How they should ever take it into their Heads that you was poisond at New York ... I cannot tell. I am sometimes ready to suspect that there is a communication between the Tories of every State, for they seem to know all news that is passing before tis known by the Whigs.

We Have had many Stories concerning engagements upon Long Island this week, of our Lines being forced and of our Troops retreating to New York. Particulars we have not yet obtaind. All we can learn is that we have been unsuccessfull there; having Lost Many Men as prisoners among whom is Lord Sterling and General Sullivan.

But if we should be defeated I think we shall not be conquered. A people fired like the Romans with Love of their Country and of Liberty, a zeal for the publick Good, and a Noble Emulation of Glory, will not be disheartned or dispirited by a Succession of unfortunate Events. But like them may we learn by Defeat the power of becomeing invincible.

From the journal of a Tory (Loyalist) in New Jersey during the Revolutionary War.
His name was Nicholas Cresswell.

Brunswick, New Jersey—Friday, June 20th, 1777. This morning [I] left New York in company with Colonel Cotton and Colonel Reid on board a sutling sloop for this place. When we got through the Narrows we were entertained with one of the most pleasing and delightful scenes I ever saw before. Four hundred sail of [British] ships, brigs, schooners and sloops with five sail of the Line all under-way and upon a Wind at once, in the compass of two miles. A gentle breeze and fine clear day added greatly to the beauty of this delightful view. They are all bound to Perth Amboy, it is said, to take the Troops on board. About noon we got to the mouth of the Raritan River with flood tide. This River is very crooked and very narrow. We often saw scouting parties of the Rebels and just as we passed a Row Galley that lay in the River, some of the Rebel Rifle men fired upon her from amongst the Weeds, who returned it with two or three great Guns which soon drove the Rascals out of their lurking places and made them seek for safety in their heels.

A little before we got up to the Town we met several sloops loaded with provisions, household furniture, and camp equipage which informed us that the Royal Army was defeated by the Rebels.... We had heard a heavy cannonade all day and at that instant heard them very busy with small arms, which served to put us in a very great panic. The two Colonels and two of the Boat's hands were for returning immediately, but the Master of the Boat and myself absolutely refused to return till we had been at Brunswick.... While we were disputing about it, a party of the Rebels and a party of our Army begun to fire upon each other across the River about two miles below us.

Excerpt from “Slavery a Positive Good,” a speech given by South Carolina Senator John C. Calhoun—first given on 6 February 1837 to the US Senate; reprinted and published in 1849 [paragraph breaks added]

But I take higher ground. I hold that in the present state of civilization, where two races of different origin, and distinguished by color, and other physical differences, as well as intellectual, are brought together, the relation now existing in the slaveholding States between the two, is, instead of an evil, a good—a positive good.

I feel myself called upon to speak freely upon the subject where the honor and interests of those I represent are involved. I hold then, that there never has yet existed a wealthy and civilized society in which one portion of the community did not, in point of fact, live on the labor of the other. Broad and general as is this assertion, it is fully borne out by history.... I might well challenge a comparison between [ancient modes of class relations] and the more direct, simple, and patriarchal mode by which the labor of the African race is, among us, commanded by the European.

I may say with truth, that in few countries so much is left to the share of the laborer, and so little exacted from him, or where there is more kind attention paid to him in sickness or infirmities of age. Compare his condition with the tenants of the poor houses in the more civilized portions of Europe—look at the sick, and the old and infirm slave, on one hand, in the midst of his family and friends, under the kind superintending care of his master and mistress, and compare it with the forlorn and wretched condition of the pauper in the poorhouse.

But I will not dwell on this aspect of the question; I turn to the political; and here I fearlessly assert that the existing relation between the two races in the South, against which these blind fanatics are waging war, forms the most solid and durable foundation on which to rear free and stable political institutions. It is useless to disguise the fact. There is and always has been in an advanced stage of wealth and civilization, a conflict between labor and capital. The condition of society in the South exempts us from the disorders and dangers resulting from this conflict; and which explains why it is that the political condition of the slaveholding States has been so much more stable and quiet than that of the North....

Excerpt from “The Address of John C. Calhoun and Forty Other Thieves,” a rebuttal by free black abolitionist Frederick Douglass to Senator Calhoun’s republished “Slavery a Positive Good” speech—9 February 1849

How completely has slavery triumphed over the mind of this strong man! It holds full, complete and absolute control in [Senator Calhoun’s] mind; so much so, that seeing it, he cannot and does not desire to see anything else than slavery. The right of speech, the freedom of the press, the liberty of assembling, and the right of petition have in his judgment no rightful existence in the Constitution of the United States.

Slavery is there; he knows it to be there; it has a right to be there; and anything inconsistent with it is wrong, immoral, and has no right to be there. This is evidently the state of mind which Mr. Calhoun brings to the consideration of this subject. To reduce his reasoning to its real point and pith, it amounts to this—that where a people have not power to legislate for the overthrow of what *they think* an evil, they have no moral right to think, or speak, or do anything else which may induce those who have legislative power to exercise it for the removal of such evil. It is on this reasoning that he builds his complaint against the Northern States, as wanting in respect to the institutions and sovereignty of the Southern States; that they have not by legislative enactment silenced the voice of free speech, and suppressed the publications of the abolitionists....

Slavery is not only a wrong done to the slave, but an outrage upon man—not merely a curse to the South, but to the whole Union, and has no rightful existence anywhere.... Slaveholders have no rights more than any other thief or pirate. They have forfeited even the right to live, and if the slave should put every one of them to the sword to-morrow, who dare pronounce the penalty disproportioned to the crime, or say that the criminals deserved less than death at the hands of their long-abused chattels? All this talk about the rights of slaveholders and the rights of slave States is the height of impudence. By what equity, by what morality are they justified? And upon what foundation do they rest their right of property in human flesh? Why, none other or better than may be set up by a band of robbers. We meet John C. Calhoun and the “forty thieves” associated with him, as being no better, or more entitled to respect, than a ship’s company of pirates; and the time is coming when they will be so regarded generally. It shall not avail that the Constitution and laws sanction slavery. “There is a law above all earthly statutes, written on the heart,” and by that law, unchangeable and eternal, no man can be or hold a slave.

Excerpt from the US Declaration of Independence—4 July 1776

When in the Course of human events, it becomes necessary for one people to dissolve the political bands which have connected them with another, and to assume among the powers of the earth, the separate and equal station to which the Laws of Nature and of Nature's God entitle them, a decent respect to the opinions of mankind requires that they should declare the causes which impel them to the separation.

We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness. —That to secure these rights, Governments are instituted among Men, deriving their just powers from the consent of the governed, —That whenever any Form of Government becomes destructive of these ends, it is the Right of the People to alter or to abolish it, and to institute new Government, laying its foundation on such principles and organizing its powers in such form, as to them shall seem most likely to effect their Safety and Happiness. Prudence, indeed, will dictate that Governments long established should not be changed for light and transient causes; ... [b]ut when a long train of abuses and usurpations, pursuing invariably the same Object evinces a design to reduce them under absolute Despotism, it is their right, it is their duty, to throw off such Government, and to provide new Guards for their future security. —Such has been the patient sufferance of these Colonies; and such is now the necessity which constrains them to alter their former Systems of Government. The history of the present King of Great Britain is a history of repeated injuries and usurpations, all having in direct object the establishment of an absolute Tyranny over these States. To prove this, let Facts be submitted to a candid world...

In every stage of these Oppressions We have Petitioned for Redress in the most humble terms: Our repeated Petitions have been answered only by repeated injury. A Prince whose character is thus marked by every act which may define a Tyrant, is unfit to be the ruler of a free people.

Nor have We been wanting in attentions to our British brethren. We have warned them from time to time of attempts by their legislature to extend an unwarrantable jurisdiction over us. We have reminded them of the circumstances of our emigration and settlement here. We have appealed to their native justice and magnanimity, and we have conjured them by the ties of our common kindred to disavow these usurpations, which, would inevitably interrupt our connections and correspondence. They too have been deaf to the voice of justice and of consanguinity. We must, therefore, acquiesce in the necessity, which denounces our Separation, and hold them, as we hold the rest of mankind, Enemies in War, in Peace Friends....

We, therefore, the Representatives of the united States of America, in General Congress, Assembled, appealing to the Supreme Judge of the world for the rectitude of our intentions, do, in the Name, and by Authority of the good People of these Colonies, solemnly publish and declare, That these United Colonies are, and of Right ought to be Free and Independent States; that they are Absolved from all Allegiance to the British Crown, and that all political connection between them and the State of Great Britain, is and ought to be totally dissolved; and that as Free and Independent States, they have full Power to levy War, conclude Peace, contract Alliances, establish Commerce, and to do all other Acts and Things which Independent States may of right do. And for the support of this Declaration, with a firm reliance on the protection of divine Providence, we mutually pledge to each other our Lives, our Fortunes and our sacred Honor.

Excerpt from the Declaration of Immediate Causes, in which South Carolina seceded from the Union—20 December 1860

... The ends for which this Constitution was framed are declared by itself to be “to form a more perfect union, establish justice, insure domestic tranquility, provide for the common defence, promote the general welfare, and secure the blessings of liberty to ourselves and our posterity.”

These ends it endeavored to accomplish by a Federal Government, in which each State was recognized as an equal, and had separate control over its own institutions. The right of property in slaves was recognized by giving to free persons distinct political rights, by giving them the right to represent, and burthening them with direct taxes for three-fifths of their slaves; by authorizing the importation of slaves for twenty years; and by stipulating for the rendition of fugitives from labor.

We affirm that these ends for which this Government was instituted have been defeated, and the Government itself has been made destructive of them by the action of the non-slaveholding States. Those States have assumed the right of deciding upon the propriety of our domestic institutions; and have denied the rights of property established in fifteen of the States and recognized by the Constitution; they have denounced as sinful the institution of Slavery; they have permitted the open establishment among them of societies, whose avowed object is to disturb the peace and to eloign the property of the citizens of other States. They have encouraged and assisted thousands of our slaves to leave their homes; and those who remain, have been incited by emissaries, books and pictures to servile insurrection.

For twenty-five years this agitation has been steadily increasing, until it has now secured to its aid the power of the Common Government.... A geographical line has been drawn across the Union, and all the States north of that line have united in the election of a man to the high office of President of the United States whose opinions and purposes are hostile to slavery. He is to be entrusted with the administration of the Common Government, because he has declared that that “Government cannot endure permanently half slave, half free,” and that the public mind must rest in the belief that Slavery is in the course of ultimate extinction....

On the 4th March next, this party will take possession of the Government....

The Guaranties of the Constitution will then no longer exist; the equal rights of the States will be lost. The slaveholding States will no longer have the power of self-government, or self-protection, and the Federal Government will have become their enemy.

Sectional interest and animosity will deepen the irritation, and all hope of remedy is rendered vain, by the fact that public opinion at the North has invested a great political error, with the sanctions of a more erroneous religious belief.

We, therefore, the people of South Carolina, by our delegates, in Convention assembled, appealing to the Supreme Judge of the world for the rectitude of our intentions, have solemnly declared that the union heretofore existing between this State and the other States of North America, is dissolved, and that the State of South Carolina has resumed her position among the nations of the world, as a separate and independent State; with full power to levy war, conclude peace, contract alliances, establish commerce, and to do all other acts and things which independent States may of right do.

Excerpt from the mayor and city council's letter asking General William T. Sherman to reconsider his order to evacuate Atlanta—12 September 1864

We the undersigned, Mayor and two of the Council for the city of Atlanta, for the time being the only legal organ of the people of the said city, to express their wants and wishes, ask leave most earnestly but respectfully to petition you to reconsider the order requiring them to leave Atlanta.

At first view, it struck us that the measure would involve extraordinary hardship and loss, but since we have seen the practical execution of it so far as it has progressed, and the individual condition of the people, and heard their statements as to the inconveniences, loss, and suffering attending it, we are satisfied that the amount of it will involve in the aggregate consequences appalling and heart-rending.”

Many poor women are in advanced state of pregnancy, others now having young children, and whose husbands for the greater part are either in the army, prisoners, or dead. Some say: ‘I have such a one sick at my house; who will wait on them when I am gone?’ Others say: ‘What are we to do? We have no house to go to, and no means to buy, build, or rent any; no parents, relatives, or friends, to go to.’ Another says: ‘I will try and take this or that article of property, but such and such things I must leave behind, though I need them much....’

We only refer to a few facts, to try to illustrate in part how this measure will operate in practice. As you advanced, the people north of this fell back; and before your arrival here, a large portion of the people had retired south, so that the country south of this is already crowded, and without houses enough to accommodate the people, and we are informed that many are now staying in churches and other out-buildings.

This being so, how is it possible for the people still here (mostly women and children) to find any shelter? And how can they live through the winter in the woods—no shelter or subsistence, in the midst of strangers who know them not, and without the power to assist them much, if they were willing to do so?”

...We know your mind and time are constantly occupied with the duties of your command... but thought it might be that you had not considered this subject in all of its awful consequences, and that on more reflection you, we hope, would not make this people an exception to all mankind, for we know that no such instance ever having occurred—surely never in the United States—and what has this helpless people done, that they should be driven from their homes, to wander strangers and outcasts, and exiles, and to subsist on charity?

...[O]f those who are here, we are satisfied a respectable number, if allowed to remain at home, could subsist for several months without assistance, and a respectable number for a much longer time, and who might not need assistance at any time.

In conclusion, we most earnestly and solemnly petition you to reconsider this order, or modify it, and suffer this unfortunate people to remain at home, and enjoy what little means they have.

Excerpt from General William T. Sherman's response to the mayor and city council's letter regarding the evacuation of Atlanta—2 September 1864

Gentlemen:

I have your letter of the 11th, in the nature of a petition to revoke my orders removing all the inhabitants from Atlanta. I have read it carefully, and give full credit to your statements of the distress that will be occasioned, and yet shall not revoke my orders, because they were not designed to meet the humanities of the case, but to prepare for the future struggles in which millions of good people outside of Atlanta have a deep interest. We must have peace, not only at Atlanta, but in all America. To secure this, we must stop the war that now desolates our once happy and favored country. To stop war, we must defeat the rebel armies which are arrayed against the laws and Constitution that all must respect and obey....

The use of Atlanta for warlike purposes is inconsistent with its character as a home for families. There will be no manufactures, commerce, or agriculture here, for the maintenance of families, and sooner or later want will compel the inhabitants to go. Why not go now, when all the arrangements are completed for the transfer, instead of waiting till the plunging shot of contending armies will renew the scenes of the past month? Of course, I do not apprehend any such thing at this moment, but you do not suppose this army will be here until the war is over.... I assert that our military plans make it necessary for the inhabitants to go away, and I can only renew my offer of services to make their exodus in any direction as easy and comfortable as possible.

You cannot qualify war in harsher terms than I will. War is cruelty, and you cannot refine it.... You might as well appeal against the thunderstorm as against these terrible hardships of war. They are inevitable, and the only way the people of Atlanta can hope once more to live in peace and quiet at home, is to stop the war, which can only be done by admitting that it began in error and is perpetuated in pride.

We don't want your negroes, or your horses, or your houses, or your lands, or anything you have, but we do want and will have a just obedience to the laws of the United States. That we will have, and, if it involves the destruction of your improvements, we cannot help it.

But, my dear sirs, when peace does come, you may call on me for anything. Then will I share with you the last cracker, and watch with you to shield your homes and families against danger from every quarter.

Now you must go, and take with you the old and feeble, feed and nurse them, and build for them, in more quiet places, proper habitations to shield them against the weather until the mad passions of men cool down, and allow the Union and peace once more to settle over your old homes at Atlanta.

Yours in haste, W. T. Sherman, Major General Commanding

Letter from Congressman Rufus King to his friend Elbridge Gerry, dated 30 April 1786, about the troubles of a weak Congress and national government during the Articles of Confederation period. Gerry had resigned from Congress to serve in Massachusetts state government.

We go on in Congress as when you left us. Three days since October [and] only have nine States been on the Floor. Eight are now here, when we shall have nine is a melancholy uncertainty. I proposed a few days since that Congress should resolve, that provided on a certain day, ... [if] the States were not so represented as to give power to administer the Government, Congress would adjourn without delay. Something of this kind must be done. It is a mere farce to remain here as we have done since last October. Foreigners know our situation and the friends of free Governments through the world must regret it.

Resolves have been passed upon Resolves—and letter after letter has been sent to the deficient States, and all without the desired effect. We are without money or the prospect of it in the Federal Treasury; and the States, many of them, care so little about the Union, that they take no measures to keep a representation in Congress. The civil list [government workers] begin to clamour—there is not money to pay them.... The handful of troops over the Ohio are mutinous and desert because they are unpaid. The money borrowed in Europe is exhausted and this very day our Foreign Ministers have it not in their power to receive their salaries for their support.

Where, my dear friend, will the evils consequent to this inattention in the States terminate? The people of the States do not know their dangerous situation; this torpor and inactivity should alarm the Guardians of the People; but indeed the Legislatures seem the least attentive. Pray think of our situation and advise me. I can open my heart with freedom to you; you are now at home, and will be concerned in the Government of the State [nation]. Can there be no means devised whereby Massachusetts can yield something to the common Treasury? Since the organization of the Board of Treasury, the State has paid nothing.... [P]oor as we are I hope we could do more than we now accomplish....

Chunk Writing Process

CAUTIONS (for teachers):

- Do not ask students to write more than a paragraph or two on one topic per day.
- Do not have students organize their paragraph chunks until Step 6.
- Do not correct grammar, spelling, and punctuation until Step 8. If the student independently catches mistakes along the way, she may correct them, but you should resist the urge to correct any convention errors till Step 8. Let students know that this is the plan.

PROCESS (addressed to students):

1. Generating and selecting topics
 - Brainstorm 7–8 topics.
 - Choose the 3 best topics and brainstorm subpoints for each to test their potential.
 - Choose the best one. With a partner, add 2–3 items to its subpoints list.
2. Chunk drafting for topic subpoints
 - Write a paragraph or two for one point each day in random order.
 - Type and print.
3. Idea and detail development
 - In 1–2 sessions with a partner or small group, raise and record questions about each chunk of writing.
 - Answer questions requiring additional detail for 2–3 subpoints per day.
 - For questions requiring research, see Step 4.
4. Research phase
 - Depending on how many questions remain that require research, brainstorm again with a partner or small group to list research questions.
 - Brainstorm possible sources and methods for answering the questions.
 - Conduct research: find specific answers, but also keep an eye out for previously unimagined but intriguing material to add to your writing.
 - Documentation—for each source accessed, record complete reference information (the researched material’s “address”). Print, copy, or record entire articles or posts when possible. Be sure to save web addresses as needed.
 - Highlight research printouts for key information.
 - Decide whether to quote, paraphrase, or summarize research material and where to put it.
 - Make sure new material supports rather than overwhelms your own ideas.
 - Without looking at the original source material, summarize or paraphrase key research material; look at the original only to quote.
 - Add new material to each chunk and print.

5. Filling in the blanks
 - With your teacher, consider any information that might still be missing. What will readers want to know about the topic?
 - Research as needed; write one or two additional paragraphs.
6. Creating organization and transitions
 - Cut up and organize the printed chunks in a logical order.
 - Rearrange them the same way on the computer and print.
 - Design transitions between the new paragraphs as needed, from words and phrases to a sentence or two.
 - Type in transitions and print.
7. Writing the introduction, conclusion, and title
 - Brainstorm ideas for intriguing introductions (“hooks”).
 - Choose the top 2–3 and write a paragraph for each one, auditioning them.
 - Select the best one.
 - Brainstorm ideas for conclusions, making sure to end with a twist that builds on the material in the middle of the paper rather than just repeating the introduction.
 - Choose the top 2–3 conclusions and write a paragraph for each one.
 - Select the best one.
 - Brainstorm ideas for a new, catchier and/or more specific title.
 - Select the best one.
 - Type in new material and print.
8. Editing: finding and solving error trends
 - Proofread the paper with a partner and mark errors. Look for error trends, or repeated errors of the same type.
 - Your teacher will check the paper, adding to the error trends list if necessary.
 - Your teacher will give you a mini-lesson on your top error trend (e.g., sentence fragments), helping you identify such errors on the first page or two of the paper.
 - For homework, you will search for other errors of the same type in the remainder of the paper and correct them.
 - Your teacher will check your corrections and help you with them.
 - Input your corrections.
 - Run a spell check.
 - Print the paper out.
9. Final proofreading
 - Proofread with a partner one more time—mostly because making corrections can actually introduce new errors.
 - Type in any final corrections and print.
10. Publish/share out
 - Share with your class, teacher, family, and/or some other audience.

Models of Levels of Detail

Out of Focus—No Detail (Level 1)

Benjamin Franklin was a very talented man. He could do many things, like inventing new ideas. He helped our country. He also visited other countries. Benjamin Franklin accomplished a lot during his lifetime and he is still famous today. Americans are proud of how smart and talented he was.

Wide-Angle Lens—Teaser Detail (Level 2)

Benjamin Franklin was a man of many talents, like Leonardo da Vinci. He was an inventor, scientist, writer, printer, politician, musician, postmaster, and diplomat. He started a fire department, a public library, and a university. His most famous experiment was flying a kite in a thunderstorm. His most famous invention is the lightning rod. No wonder he is admired to this day.

Medium Lens—Basic Detail (Level 3)

Few people have been able to match Leonardo da Vinci for being a polymath, or multi-talented “Renaissance man,” but Benjamin Franklin did. He was a respected scientist, especially studying the properties of electricity, which no one understood at the time. There was a lot more to it than the famous kite experiment! Franklin also studied population demographics, oceanography, light, weather, and refrigeration. He was a well-known writer and printer, too, publishing a newspaper and *Poor Richard’s Almanack*. As an inventor, he created a special stove, bifocals, and the lightning rod. He started a fire department, a public library, and a university. He was a musician and composer, as well. To top it all off, Franklin worked to build a new nation, acting as a diplomat to England and France and helping to write both the Declaration of Independence and the US Constitution. Anyone would be proud to accomplish a small fraction of what Benjamin Franklin did in his lifetime.

Zoom Lens—Developed Detail (Level 4)

Young Benjamin Franklin wanted to do and learn just about everything, and being an apprentice in his older brother’s print shop wasn’t enough for him. He asked to publish some of his writing in his brother’s newspaper, but James said no. Sixteen-year-old Ben invented a false persona, a woman named Mrs. Silence Dogood. He slid her clever, funny letters to the newspaper under the print shop door at night. James published them, and Boston quickly fell in love with Mrs. Dogood. In fact, when Mrs. Dogood wrote that she planned to remarry, men started sending marriage proposals to her in care of the paper. Fourteen letters later, Benjamin told his brother that he was the true author. James was furious. Not long afterward, Ben left his apprenticeship without permission and ran away to start a new life.

MAIN SOURCE: Krull, Kathleen. *Benjamin Franklin*, Giants of Science. New York: Viking, 2013.

Uses for Levels of Detail (with Additional Examples)

Level 1 (Out of focus/No detail)

Should be avoided—it's vague and boring! Language is largely abstract.

Ex. Government is very interesting and important for everyone.

Level 2 (Wide-angle lens/Teaser detail)

Should be used for introducing and wrapping up ideas as well as for transitions. Some language is concrete, but the writing is general, written in summary style. This level is less appropriate for examples and other details in the middle of the text—which are merely mentioned.

Ex. The American colonists were frustrated with the British government for three reasons.

Level 3 (Medium lens/Basic detail)

Used for supporting details and examples. Language is more concrete, but examples are described briefly rather than developed. Details occur more densely than in Level 2 writing.

Ex. The committee for writing the Declaration of Independence chose John Adams to write the first draft, but Adams convinced the others that Thomas Jefferson should do it. Jefferson only had a few weeks to draft the document, get feedback, and revise.

Level 4 (Zoom lens/Developed detail)

Used for extended examples and historic accounts. Details about specific events and people give this level of writing color and depth. It paints a picture.

Ex. The Boston Tea Party involved three ships and 342 chests of tea—tea worth one million dollars in today's money. The next morning it was discovered that a lot of the tea was floating on top of the water. Not wanting it to be salvaged, some of the Sons of Liberty went out in boats and pushed the tea under the water with their oars to make sure it was ruined.

Level 5 (Super zoom/High detail)—rarely used in student history writing

Only used for highly detailed accounts and descriptions, most often by fiction writers. This level of detail isn't always available to historians, even in primary sources such as letters and journals. Level 5 writing has an immediacy that writing at lower levels of detail lacks.

Ex. Everyone was yelling, rushing forward, and suddenly the soldiers started firing. Crispus Attacks was in front, so he caught the worst of it as balls from two different British muskets slammed into his chest. Crispus cried out just once as he died, falling backwards onto the snowy street. The musket balls kept coming. Another colonist went down.

Writing Ideas for the History/Social Studies Classroom

1. Reader response to primary source without prompts

Train students to really think and say something worthwhile by having them share some of their responses in class—then use these ideas as discussion starters or extenders. Be sure to have different students share their work. Keep an eye out for intriguing ideas in what may otherwise be a bland piece of writing. Also keep an eye out for thought-provoking questions. Spotlight the good stuff in a fun, casual way that will make students want to write good stuff, too.

2. Reader response to primary sources with prompts

See examples given above. These prompts are a little like DBQ's, except that they are not intended for assessment. They can involve 3–5 related questions instead of 1–2, and the responses will be less formal. You can sometimes assign students to write prompts for themselves, for each other, or for the whole class. The questions should be analytical, prompting complex thought and class discussions. The best ones often build on student opinions about the people, events, and decisions of history and ask them to support their ideas with evidence from the text, as the Common Core Standards require. Consider having students compare related topics, such as South Carolina leaders' decision to secede from the Union and American colonists' decision to break off from Great Britain. (See example in primary source section.)

3. Reader response to primary sources consisting of questions

Here you simply have students write a long series of questions about the primary source, at least 8 if not 10 or 12. See also #4 below. Note that you can do reader responses with your class only about twice a week for good yield without burning kids out on it. You might want to cycle through the ideas given in #1–3 here. Follow up on reader response work with a class discussion.

4. Have 2–3 students write or text a dialogue about a history topic

Most students like texting, so have them use their skills to write about a history topic. They can do this on paper if you don't have the proper technology in your classroom. After writing 10 or so back-and-forth sets, students should come up with 4–5 intriguing ideas or questions to share in a larger class discussion. Another option is to have them write fictional dialogues between two figures who were linked in history OR who never met but faced similar challenges or took similar actions, e.g., Attila the Hun and Genghis Khan.

4. Short opinion piece and mini research follow-up

Students will write a 2- or 3-paragraph opinion piece about a history topic. Then they will note the most striking idea or ideas on a separate sheet of paper. Next, they will trade papers with a partner. Each partner will underline what they feel is the most intriguing idea or ideas. When they are finished, they will share their thoughts with each other. This acts as a quick test of audience: what do readers want to know about this topic? What makes them curious? Also, what promising idea(s) did the writer bring up?

[cont. on next page]

Partners will then write 3–5 focused research questions about the most interesting ideas they both identified in the opinion piece. The questions may need to be narrowed with the teacher’s help so that they don’t properly require the writing of a 6-page paper. Each writer will choose just one of the questions and specifically research to answer it. Finally, the writer will incorporate the answer into the original opinion piece.

Mini research is a relatively painless way for you to train students to incorporate research into their writing without losing control of it. It is much less intimidating for the kids, of course.

5. Why did Aristotle/Joan of Arc/Gorbachev make a particular choice that affected the course of history?

Although primary source material helps, we can’t really get inside the head of a historical figure. But students *can* write their opinions about why a key person in history made an important choice. They can begin supporting their ideas with evidence from the student textbook or class discussion and by making inferences also based on the evidence. Then they can conduct online or library research to find additional evidence or expert opinions. Does what they find make them change their stance on the question in any way? This is another writing project where the idea of mini research—answering just 1 or sometimes 2 focused questions—can be effective.

6. Chunk writing in groups (See Chunk Writing handout.)

Vary the chunk writing approach by having a group of students divide up a brainstorm list of subtopics about a history topic. Each student will write their chunk, and then the group will meet to ask questions to elicit further detail. You can require the addition of at least 3 different detail ideas/sentences per chunk so students don’t just let each other off the hook. Next, the group will come up with 2–3 more questions that will require research to answer. Each student will find the answers and add the research information to their chunk, which might now consist of 2–3 paragraphs instead of 1. You can require each student to add at least one quote and one paraphrase. The group will then come up with an organizational plan for combining their chunks. Finally, they will work together to add transitions along with an introduction and conclusion.

Check their work along the way and challenge them to take it up a notch, especially if students appear to be simply going through the motions. Although the ideal is for students to come up with good questions, you can add a few questions here and there by way of modeling. This works best if you take a genuine interest in the topic: “Well, what *I’d* like to know is -----.”

7. Historic opinion pieces and editorials

This is a familiar project when used with current events, but try having students write op-ed pieces for a historic newspaper and audience. (You may wish to start by telling them that “op-ed” doesn’t stand for “opinion-editorial,” as most people think, but for “opposite the editorial page.”) The simplest way to approach this project is by having students use current op-ed models, but to write about controversial events in history, such as whether the US should fight in a particular war—e.g., World War II or the Vietnam War. A better approach is to find primary source op-ed pieces from the era in question and have students try to match the style, adapting their writing to that historic audience and public opinion of the time. Here are a few sites to check:

<http://guides.library.upenn.edu/historicalnewspaperonline>,

<http://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/>, <https://paperofrecord.hypernet.ca/default.asp#USA>, and

<http://www.smalltownpapers.com/>. (Other newspaper sites are available by subscription.)

Summarizing, Paraphrasing, and Quoting

Method	What to do with the text	Relative length	When to use
<i>Summarizing</i>	Give the most important ideas.	Much shorter than the original	To tell readers about what's in a longer text.
<i>Paraphrasing</i>	Put all of the ideas in your own words.	About the same length as the original	All ideas matter, but the wording is not amazing.
<i>Quoting</i>	Use exact words in quote marks.	The original words (plus an intro phrase)	Words are really well written or important.

Important note for students: CHANGING A FEW WORDS IS NOT PARAPHRASING!

The best paraphrasing works like this:

- A paraphrase is introduced by the person's name and a speech verb, often followed by "that." For example: "[Name] believes that..." or "[Name] states that..."
- While some basic nouns and verbs must be kept, other words should be changed.
- Paraphrasing isn't about just changing some of the words. The way the sentences are put together must also be changed.
- The easiest, most successful way to paraphrase is to read the original first and then **not** look at it while you write. You may need to wait 10–15 minutes to do this.
- Write the *ideas*, not the words.
- Fix your paraphrase a little by looking at the original again, but be careful not to make it too close. Just polish it.

The best quoting works like this:

- Usually only 1–3 very strong or interesting sentences are chosen.
- Quotes are often the words of an important person, but they can also be the words of an ordinary person with something important to say.
- A quote is introduced by phrases such as "[Name] said," or "According to [name]...."
- The actual quote is set off by quotation marks—or is set as a special indented [block] paragraph if it's more than a few sentences long.

Teachers, for practice, give students a primary source excerpt of 1 or 2 pages and have them:

- 1) Underline 1–2 intriguing or catchy sentences to use as a quotation.
- 2) Put a box around 4–5 sentences with rich ideas and write a paraphrase of them on a separate sheet of paper.
- 3) Write a 1-paragraph summary of the entire selection. Be sure to include key points.

See also worksheet with models below. [Good paraphrases: 1—B, 2—A, 3—A, 4—B]

Looking at Paraphrasing

With a partner, analyze which paraphrase is appropriate and which is a problem. Write notes about your analysis and be ready to explain your ideas to the class.

Quote #1: Thomas Jefferson once said, “I hold it that a little rebellion now and then is a good thing, and as necessary in the political world as storms in the physical.”

Paraphrase A: Thomas Jefferson once said that a small rebellion every so often is a positive thing that is as necessary in the political world as storms are in the physical world.

Paraphrase B: According to Thomas Jefferson, a rebellion can sometimes clean up the political world the way a storm can clean up the natural world.

Notes _____

Quote #2: The Great Depression had a strong grip on the United States of America. But as President Franklin D. Roosevelt stated in his first Inaugural Address, “So, first of all, let me assert my firm belief that the only thing we have to fear is fear itself—nameless, unreasoning, unjustified terror which paralyzes needed efforts to convert retreat into advance.”

Paraphrase A: The Great Depression had a strong grip on the United States of America. But as President Franklin D. Roosevelt stated in his first Inaugural Address, the people of the US should be most fearful about being fearful. He said that blind terror about the future would paralyze Americans, keeping them from moving forward instead of backward.

Paraphrase B: The Great Depression had a strong grip on the United States of America. But as President Franklin D. Roosevelt stated in his first Inaugural Address, the only thing Americans needed to fear was fear itself—the kind of fear that is nameless, illogical, and unjustified, and which paralyzes people’s efforts to turn retreat into forward motion.

Notes _____

Note that in this case, the original words are so strong that they should probably be quoted, not paraphrased.

Quote #3: The US Constitution begins, “We the People of the United States, in Order to form a more perfect Union, establish Justice, insure domestic Tranquility, provide for the common defense, promote the general Welfare, and secure the Blessings of Liberty to ourselves and our Posterity, do ordain and establish this Constitution for the United States of America.”

Paraphrase A: The introduction to the US Constitution says that the people of the United States of America have approved and accepted the Constitution in order to accomplish the following goals: strengthen the union of states, promote justice and peace, protect the land from invasion, improve the wellbeing of everyone in the country, and establish freedom for themselves and generations to come.

Paraphrase B: The introduction to the US Constitution says that the people of America, in order to form a better Union, establish justice, insure domestic peace, provide for the defense of everyone, promote the welfare of Americans, and safeguard the blessings of freedom for ourselves and our children, approve and set up the Constitution for the United States of America.

Notes _____

Quote #4: Florence Nightingale explained what it was like to be a woman in the 1850s: “Women never have a half-hour in all their lives (excepting before or after anybody is up in the house) that they can call their own, without fear of offending or of hurting someone. Why do people sit up so late, or, more rarely, get up so early? Not because the day is not long enough, but because they have ‘no time in the day to themselves.’”

Paraphrase A: Florence Nightingale said in 1852 that women never have even 30 minutes in life (unless it’s before or after anybody in the house is awake) that they can call their own, or they might offend or upset someone. Why do people stay up late or, less often, get up so early? It’s not because the day isn’t long enough, but because they really don’t have time in the day to themselves.

Paraphrase B: Florence Nightingale once explained that women living in the 1850s had no time to themselves unless they stayed up late or got up early, when no one else was awake. A woman might even upset the members of her household by not spending all of her time on them. So if a woman was up very late or got up early in the morning, maybe she was just trying to steal a few minutes to herself.

Notes _____

Notes from Discussion at the End of the Session

At the end of the NCSS session, we held a Q&A that turned into a good discussion about issues raised during the workshop. The following are notes on some key ideas that came up. I have used T with a number to indicate a particular teacher asking a question or making a suggestion and K to indicate my comments. Those of you present for the discussion will understand, of course, that I am reproducing all of this from memory and won't get it quite right.

T1: How do I find time to respond to student work? I have so many students!

K: Try meeting with a different batch of them each week. But it is hard to do. Not marking up all of the papers for conventions will save you some time. Another thing you can do is give lessons on certain common error trends to the whole class; for example, you could do a lesson about run-ons.

T3: Team up with a teacher from English/Language Arts. Let him/her handle more of the writing issues while you focus on the history content.

T4: I do that, too. It works out really well.

T2: Have students help each other. The ones who are better at writing can help the ones who aren't.

T5: One thing I do is give students my comments without showing them where they go. The kids have to figure it out.

T6: I teach developmentally disabled [*resource?*] students. What about them?

K: If you break the work down into smaller pieces, they can do it, too.

T7: I'm lucky if I can get my middle school students to write a good paragraph. The idea of a 10-page paper is overwhelming!

K: I didn't mean to scare anyone with the 10-page paper. What I did want to point out is that kids can write more, with better detail, than you might expect using the chunk writing approach. But you're right—that's why the mini-research project I mentioned helps. Focus it tightly and it's easier to train the kids to write and to do things like incorporate research material.

T8 [high school teacher]: Hey, if you [T7] can get them to write a good paragraph, I can show them how to put those paragraphs together when they get to me.

K: Just don't have them write [highly structured] 5-sentence paragraphs! You can say, "Give me some reasons in your paragraph."

T10: They want a specific number of sentences, but I won't tell them.

K: Sometimes I say, “At least 5 or 6 sentences” so they won’t poop out on the writing. Or I see how little they’ve written and say, “You need to write more. Keep going.” [They know when they’re bs’ing, so they’re not actually surprised to hear this!]

T9: A lot of times students don’t know anything about the topic. How can they write without doing some research?

K: Good point. They can start with the general knowledge they have built through reading the textbook and participating in class discussions.

T8: I teach both general and AP US History. When I came to this conference I decided to focus on attending sessions to help my general students because they’re the ones I’m struggling with. And as we’ve talked, I realize that a lot of what you [Kate and the teachers in this discussion] are suggesting are things I’m doing with my AP students already, so why am I not doing them with my general students, too?

K: Yeah, it’s that idea of saving the best stuff for the gifted kids, but most, if not all of it, can be done with general ed kids—who will probably really thrive on it.

That’s all I’ve got in my notes! Teachers who stayed after, thanks for your thoughtful comments and conversation. It was a pleasure to meet you!