6th-8th Grade Guidance for Literacy Task Design in the Social Science Classroom

(Literacy tasks have reading and writing about social science topics at the core of all multi day lessons/units).
The purpose of providing guidance for designing literacy tasks is to provide classroom teachers with crucial steps in designing high quality student learning tasks that integrate reading and writing aligned with the standards that can be easily integrated with the Illinois Social Science Standards. This document provides guidance into the necessary steps of task design. Literacy Tasks should be a part of multi-day lessons and units in order to integrate and implement the standards.

Steps for Designing Literacy Tasks

Step 1 Determine the focus of the task. Standards can be clustered to help drive a number of key components of multi-day lessons/units. (For example, essential questions, assessments, writing to reading prompts, etc.) Examples of ways standards can be clustered for a task are as follows:

Possible Combined Standards for Literacy Task Prompt

- Review aspects of a text that reveal an author’s point of view and purpose (e.g., load language, inclusion or avoidance of particular texts)
  
  Clustered Standards: (RH. 1 & 6)

- Integrate visual information with other information (print, digital) to analyze the relationship between primary and secondary sources on the same topic.
  
  Clustered Standards: (RH. 1, 7, & 9)

- Distinguish among fact, opinion, and reasoned judgment in a text
  
  Clustered Standards: (RH.1, 8, & 9)

- Identify key steps in a text’s description of a process (e.g., how a bill becomes law, how interest rates are raised or lowered).
  
  Clustered Standards: (RH.1 & 3)

- Analyze the relationship between a primary and secondary source on the same topic.
  
  Clustered Standards: (RH.1 & 9)

RH: Reading for History/Social Studies
Determine anchor text (focus text) and coordinating texts/multimedia to accompany the anchor text.

### Online Resources for Texts

- **Illinois Classrooms in Action Social Science Resources** – This site provides teachers with a one-stop shop of all resources for Illinois Social Science Teachers: [http://www.ilclassroomsinaction.org/social-science.html](http://www.ilclassroomsinaction.org/social-science.html)

- **Readworks** – [www.readworks.org](http://www.readworks.org): ReadWorks provides research-based units, lessons, and authentic, leveled non-fiction and literary passages directly to educators online, **for free**, to be shared broadly. The link for Social Studies content is as follows: [http://www.readworks.org/social-studies-reading-passages](http://www.readworks.org/social-studies-reading-passages)

- **Newsela** – [www.newsela.com](http://www.newsela.com): Newsela is a free resource that presents articles on a range of topics such as: War and Peace, Science, Kids, Money, Law, Health, Arts, and Sports. The system enables you to convert the articles into higher or lower Lexiles so you can use them with any grade from 3-12.


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<tr>
<th>Question Consideration: Transform the following <em>Reading Standards</em> into questions/tasks/activities throughout the unit.</th>
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Determine what type of writing required by students to show understanding of content we want students to do during and/or after to show understanding and hold thinking.

Writing in the Social Science classroom should happen routinely over extended time frames (time for reflection and revision) and shorter time frames (a single sitting or a day or two) for a range of discipline-specific tasks, purposes, and audiences (WHST.10).

When creating culminating task/writing prompts, teachers can return to step 1 to view clustered standards for ideas. The standards require students to be able to write arguments (WHST.1) and informational/explanatory (WHST.2) writings. Writing can appear in many forms – from note taking, to short summaries, to learning logs, essays, a quick write or a formal report. See the following link for the 6th-8th Grade Social Science Writing Standards: http://www.corestandards.org/ELA-Literacy/WHST/6-8/

**Task Template for Culminating Tasks**

The following task frame is one way to design a prompt where students can show their learning after reading/researching a variety of sources.

Today you will research ________________ by reading _______________________ and watching a video clip about ______________________. As you review these resources think about the following question:
“_______________________________
_______________________________?”

Gather evidence from each source to answer the question.

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**Classroom Example**

Today you will research the development and one-time use of the atomic bomb. First you will read a speech by Robert Oppenheimer, the director of the Manhattan Project. Then you will read a letter from a group of scientists to President Harry S. Truman asking him not to use the bomb. Finally, you will read about President Truman and his decision to drop the bomb. As you review these sources, create an informational/explanatory essay that presents both sides of the argument. Use evidence from all texts in your essay.