



# 6<sup>th</sup>-8<sup>th</sup> 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).



# 6<sup>th</sup> – 8<sup>th</sup> Grade Literacy Task Design

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

**Step 2**

Determine anchor text (focus text) and coordinating texts/multimedia to accompany the anchor text.

<b>Literacy Task Texts</b>	<b>Anchor Text</b>	<b>Coordinating Text</b>	<b>Coordinating Text</b>
	 Textbook Segment	 Article	 Video
	<b>Anchor Text</b>	<b>Coordinating Text</b>	<b>Coordinating Text</b>
	 Article	 Primary Source	 Textbook Segment

### 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>
- **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>
- **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.
- **Library of Congress** - <http://www.loc.gov/teachers/>: The Library of Congress offers classroom materials to help teachers effectively use primary sources. Grade Specific Primary Source Information is at the following link:  
<http://www.loc.gov/teachers/standards/standards.php?standards=common&st=CCK12&gr=6&su=Language+Arts&loid=&formLocation=> Choose a grade level and search for resources.

**Step #3**

Develop questions for each text using the reading standards for 6<sup>th</sup> -8<sup>th</sup> grades. **Question Guidance:** <http://achievethecore.org/page/46/complete-guide-to-creating-text-dependent-questions>

**Question Consideration:** Transform the following *Reading Standards* into questions/tasks/activities throughout the unit.

RH.1	<input type="checkbox"/> Cite specific textual evidence to support analysis of primary and secondary sources.
RH.2	<input type="checkbox"/> Determine the central ideas or information of a primary or secondary source; provide an accurate summary of the source distinct from prior knowledge or opinions.
RH.3	<input type="checkbox"/> Identify key steps in a text's description of a process related to history/social studies (e.g., how a bill becomes law, how interest rates are raised or lowered).
RH.4	<input type="checkbox"/> Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in a text, including vocabulary specific to domains related to history/social studies.
RH.5	<input type="checkbox"/> Describe how a text presents information (e.g., sequentially, comparatively, causally).
RH.6	<input type="checkbox"/> Identify aspects of a text that reveal an author's point of view or purpose (e.g., loaded language, inclusion or avoidance of particular facts).
RH.7	<input type="checkbox"/> Integrate visual information (e.g., in charts, graphs, photographs, videos, or maps) with other information in print and digital texts.
RH.8	<input type="checkbox"/> Distinguish among fact, opinion, and reasoned judgment in a text.
RH.9	<input type="checkbox"/> Analyze the relationship between a primary and secondary source on the same topic.

RH.10: By the end of grade 8, read and comprehend history/social studies texts in the grades 6-8 text complexity band independently and proficiently.

## Step 4

### 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 6<sup>th</sup> -8<sup>th</sup> 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.

#### 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.