

Identifying the writing knowledge and skills that students need to continue to develop in years 9 & 10: social studies

This activity is intended to be used by teachers of years 9 and 10 to help them identify the writing knowledge and skills their students need to continue to develop so that their writing supports them to be successful, independent learners.

This activity is part of a collection of activities that focuses on developing teachers’ understanding of the writing demands and tasks associated with a range of subjects. All of the activities involve either a group of teachers of a specific subject area working together, or a group of teachers who work across different subjects working together. Select the activities that will work best in your school and for your teachers.

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| **1.** | **The context** |
| Teachers in the social studies department are investigating how they can strengthen their students’ ability to use their writing to support their learning. In a previous PLD session they analysed the typical learning tasks in their programmes to identify the different ways that students use their writing in social studies. They know that as well as needing to be able to create texts specifically to communicate what they have learned in a particular topic, students also need to create texts that can persuade others to think differently or follow a particular course of action. Their students are also required to use their writing to support their thinking as they undertake various activities.  |
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| **What to do …**  |  | **Record your answers** |
| Consider the writing knowledge and skills that students use in social studies. List or highlight the writing tasks associated with the typical teaching and learning activities in your programme. Note the kinds of knowledge and skills these require. |  |  |

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| **2.** | **Turning to the writing framework** |
| The teachers turn to the writing framework to check their understanding of the writing-related knowledge and skills that year 9 and 10 students need in social studies. They glance through three aspects, using the illustrations specifically developed for social sciences: *using writing to think and organise for learning; creating texts to communicate current knowledge and understanding;* and *creating texts to influence others.* The teachers focus on the tasks the students were asked to do, and the annotations which highlight the way the students used their writing as they responded to those tasks. |
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| **What to do …**  |  | **Record your answers** |
| Work in pairs to investigate the range of writing-related knowledge and skills students need in order to be successful, independent learners in social studies.Each pair takes one of the “purpose” aspects in the social sciences illustrations (*using writing to think and organise for learning; creating texts to communicate current knowledge and understanding;* and *creating texts to influence others).*1. Open and read the “Big ideas behind the illustrations set” which is at the top of each set of illustrations.
2. Look closely at the annotations and tasks in the illustrations. Note the link between the writing knowledge and skills required by the task and the actual writing expertise the students demonstrate in their response.
3. Identify the step-up in the students’ writing expertise from the previous signpost.

Each pair shares the results of their inquiry with the other teachers. |  |  |

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| **3.** | **Providing opportunities for students to develop their writing-related knowledgeand skills** |
| The teachers know that their students’ learning in social studies is supported when they can use their writing to organise and carry out their inquiries, and create texts with structures and language that are appropriate for particular purposes. Using what they have learnt from their investigations, they plan to focus on each of these in turn over the next 10 weeks as part of their social studies programme in order to increase the opportunities for their students to further develop their writing.  |
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| **What to do …**  |  | **Record your answers** |
| Develop a plan to focus on each of the three aspects (*using writing to think and organise for learning; creating texts to communicate current knowledge and understanding ;* and *creating texts to influence others*) over the next 10 weeks.Make sure the plan Includes a way to share examples of different learning opportunities for each aspect during this period. |  |  |