

Writing-to-Learn: Social Studies

What is it?

Writing-to-learn

fosters critical thinking and learning.

It is writing that uses impromptu, short, or informal writing tasks, designed by the teacher, which are included throughout the lesson to help students think through key concepts and ideas.

Strategy: Question-Answer Relationship (QAR)

QAR is a way of describing for students that there are four types of questions and possible places for finding answers to those questions. Pearson and Johnson (1978) described the four types of questions as textually explicit (literally stated in the text); textually implicit (suggested or implied by the text); and script implicit (in the reader's background knowledge or "script" inside the reader's head). These are known as Right There, Think and Search, and On Your Own type questions.

What does it do?

Assists students in identifying the "type" of question they are encountering, so they will employ the correct skills to find an answer. This technique reinforces students ability to comprehend and retain knowledge by using the strategic reading habit of applying their background knowledge and experiences to infer answers and make connections to other knowledge.

How to implement:

After reading, viewing, or listening, students work in small groups to write questions in the three categories about the material just presented. Students should trade questions with another group, answer them, and then give feed back on the categorization of the questions they answered.