Document-Based Investigations
Teach Students to Think Critically | Grades 6–12
Promote **Inquiry** and **Active Learning**

Inquiry is at the center of learning, challenging and preparing students for college and career. That is why you will find **Document-Based Investigations in EVERY** lesson.

**Document-Based Investigations**

- Support active inquiry and ask students to think critically as they read.
- Encourage students to analyze primary sources like a historian.
- Culminate with evidence-based writing tasks at the end of each module.

**Sources of Inquiry**

Students focus on inquiry, critical thinking, close reading, and writing as they work with a variety of historical, visual, and video sources including:

- Art
- Articles
- Artifacts
- Chronicles
- Documents
- Letters
- Manuscripts
- Maps
- Newspapers/Pamphlets
- Passages from Novels
- Photographs
- Poems
- Political Cartoons
- Portraits
- Quotes
- Speeches
- Supreme Court Cases

Examples from *United States History*
Engaging students to analyze primary sources like a historian.
Learning Builds on Investigating History

Nurture Critical Thinking

**Essential Questions** spark curiosity, guide instruction, and ask students to apply knowledge through writing tasks.

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**Essential Question**

**Why did the Allies win World War II?**

In this module, you will learn that, during World War II, the Allied forces defeated the Axis powers, the Jewish people suffered through the Holocaust, and Europe and Japan were left devastated. As you read the module, look for political, economic, and military factors that contributed to the ability of the Allies to overcome the aggression of the Axis powers. When you are done, you may be assigned to write a short essay answering the Essential Question for this module.

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**Module 22: Essential Question—Writing**

**Why did the Allies win World War II?**

Write an argument answering this question. Your essay should include key people, events, and turning points in World War II. Be sure to cite evidence to support your position and organize your essay into an introduction, body, and conclusion.
Point-of-use skills support

Drop-down arrows offer additional support for students who struggle with analysis of primary sources.
The Beginning of Writing

Like other early forms of writing, Chinese writing developed from pictographs—symbols that look like what they represent. Over time, the symbols became more complex and looked less like real objects. While most writing was done on bamboo paper, the writing on bone and shell that has survived were used as oracles.

Analyze Sources

What do you observe about these symbols and lines of writing?

Start Typing...
A Wild West Dime Novel

At the beginning of the twentieth century, the dime novel was required reading for many Americans who were fascinated by the Wild West. The dime novel pictured here tells of the adventures of Stella, the girl range rider.

“Dimes” novels cost 5 or 10 cents and usually were published weekly in series. Most were short, rarely running to more than 40 pages.
The Germans Stopped at Stalingrad

At Stalingrad, the Russians used the city’s environment to their advantage, fighting a deadly urban war. Stalingrad’s great distance from Germany also aided Russia, making it hard for the Germans to supply and reinforce troops. And the Soviet winter killed many German soldiers and ruined equipment. In this photo, Soviet troops launch an attack during the battle for Stalingrad.

In what way was the strategy the same for Hitler and Stalin at Stalingrad?
Effects of the Arms Race
As the United States and the Soviet Union rushed to produce nuclear weapons, many civilians lived in fear of a catastrophic attack. Eisenhower’s policies of retaliation and brinkmanship heightened those fears. Across the country, civil defense agencies tried to prepare people for how to survive in the case of such an attack.
Modules end with an **Essential Question** writing task and cumulative DBI

**Revisit Essential Question—End-of-Module Writing**
Students are asked to demonstrate their understanding of the module content by answering the Essential Question.

**Document-Based Investigation: Part 1**
Students are provided the opportunity to review each Document-Based Investigation and strengthen their answers to prepare for the Performance Task in Part 2.

**Essential Question—Writing**
In this module, you’ve learned about how, during World War II, the Allied forces defeated the Axis powers, the Jewish people suffered through the Holocaust, and Europe and Japan were left devastated. Now it’s your turn to demonstrate your understanding of the module content by writing an essay.

**Why did the Allies win World War II?**
Write an argument answering this question. Your essay should include key people, events, and turning points in World War II. Be sure to cite evidence to support your position and organize your essay into an introduction, body, and conclusion.

**Part 1: Short Answer**
In this module, you have analyzed several sources. Review your answers to the questions you have already seen, and answer any questions that you haven’t already completed.
Document-Based Investigation

Part 2: Write a Compare and Contrast Essay

**Historical Context**
World War II continued and expanded the concept of total war initiated in World War I. In total war, entire national economies were directed toward the war effort. In World War II, governments’ mobilization of labor, materials, and propaganda resulted in unprecedented buildups of military armament. Soldiers amassed by the millions across three continents in large-scale battles to defeat one another. Along with the military personnel who were killed, civilians were casualties of war at a rate never before seen.

**Task**
Each principal Allied and Axis nation experienced total war in ways that greatly impacted both personnel on the battlefield and their civilian populations. Write an essay in which you compare and contrast the ways that the total war approach defined each Allied and Axis nation during World War II.

Complete the following steps as you plan and compose your essay.
1. Review your notes and sources before you start writing.
2. Use at least four of the sources in Part 1, and develop the topic with relevant, well-chosen evidence from the documents.
3. Cite specific evidence from each of the three sources in your response.
4. Plan your essay so that it includes an introduction, several body paragraphs, and a concluding paragraph.
5. Organize your essay in a clear and logical way that highlights comparisons and contrasts.
Uncover the Connections

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