Writing Across Disciplines:
An Expansion of Composition in the Classroom
Writing to Learn in Social Studies

Fall 202
What is Writing Across Disciplines?

What does “Writing Across Disciplines” mean?

Defining “Writing Across Disciplines,” requires clarity around the terms “Writing” and “Across Disciplines.” Most simply, writing is communicating. Student writers communicate with themselves, peers, teachers and others. Writing in the classroom can have many purposes and audiences and may be formal or informal. In the academic setting, writing can serve as a tool to promote student learning, to allow students to demonstrate their thinking and understanding of the content and/or concepts taught, and/or to share with others in a real-world setting. These types of writing are called Writing to Learn, Writing to Demonstrate Learning and Writing for Publication. “Across Disciplines” refers to using the types of writing—as defined here—in English/language arts as well as other disciplines, such as social studies, science, math and visual and performing arts.

What is Writing Across Disciplines, and what is its purpose?

Writing Across Disciplines is an expansion of Composition in the Classroom, a resource developed by reading and writing teachers to help Kentucky educators provide students with opportunities to develop into confident, independent and proficient writers. Composition in the Classroom and its expansions support teachers implementing existing High-Quality Instructional Resources (HQIRs) adopted by school districts as well as educators teaching in districts that have not yet adopted a primary HQIR in reading and writing. The tips, suggestions and tasks in Composition in the Classroom and its expansions should not replace adopted HQIR but should serve to supplement instruction towards the full depth and rigor of the Kentucky Academic Standards. For more information regarding high-quality literacy curricula, districts and school leaders may access The Reading and Writing Instructional Resources Consumer Guide, a tool for evaluating and selecting instructional resources for alignment to the Kentucky Academic Standards (KAS) for Reading and Writing.

Composition in the Classroom is organized around three modes of writing in the Kentucky Academic Standards (KAS) for Reading and Writing, including information regarding standards instruction through Writing to Learn, Writing to Demonstrate Learning and Writing for Publication. Writing Across Disciplines, however, contains sample discipline-specific writing tasks, organized by each of the three types of writing mentioned above. This resource is grounded in the KAS for Reading and Writing, which includes the Interdisciplinary Literacy Practices as well as each discipline’s content specific standards. The ten Interdisciplinary Literacy Practices are part of the KAS for Reading and Writing, appearing on every page of the standards document but should not be confused as additional standards. They should guide teachers in providing intentional opportunities for students to engage in deeper learning by practicing the behaviors of a literate citizen. The student practices serve as the overarching goals for literacy instruction for each student across the state. These practices are further clarified by possible teacher and student actions. These actions do not define curriculum, but rather they demonstrate how teachers can provide opportunities for students to experience the literacy practices and how students will apply these practices, so they may become an innate part of life across the disciplines and beyond school. This resource aims to bring more clarity around what these practices look like in action.
While *Composition in the Classroom* primarily serves English/language arts teachers and their students, *Writing Across Disciplines* attends to the needs of all teachers and their students. Because of its widespread classroom use already, the developers chose to begin the expansion with a focus on Writing to Learn, a professional learning space that will hopefully both affirm and stretch educators' practices. Subsequent releases will focus on Writing to Demonstrate Learning and Writing for Publication.

Writing Across Disciplines is created to provide what *Composition in the Classroom*, alone, does not. While *Composition in the Classroom* provides general characteristics of each type of writing (Writing to Learn, Writing to Demonstrate Learning and Writing for Publication) and examples of strategies teachers can implement to engage students in each of the types of writing, this expansion includes a more disciplinary, or specialized, look at writing. *Writing Across Disciplines* intends to show more precisely how to ensure opportunities for students to engage in discipline-specific literacies or learning that uses reading and writing skills specific to each field to teach or demonstrate content knowledge and for publication purposes as well. The sample tasks in *Writing Across Disciplines* represent some of the types of reading and writing experts in each field (e.g., economists, biologists, literary scholars, mathematicians, etc.) might authentically engage in to deepen their own expertise.

**Writing TO LEARN Across Disciplines**

*Writing to Learn*, as previously described, is an instructional strategy used to promote student learning. Teachers utilize this instructional strategy to help deepen students' understanding of the subjects they are studying, to engage students in thinking, to provide opportunities for applying, extending and developing skills, and to help students reflect on their learning. Typically, Writing to Learn is informal writing with the student as the primary audience. Rather than emphasizing formal composition skills, Writing to Learn helps students obtain content knowledge and build capacity to analyze, synthesize, comprehend and express their thinking in writing. Most simply stated, Writing to Learn is any writing students engage in that promotes learning. Therefore, Writing to Learn Across Disciplines refers to using Writing to Learn in English/language arts as well as other disciplines, such as social studies, science, art, math and visual and performing Arts. The first section of this expansion, Writing to Learn Across Disciplines, provides samples of Writing to Learn tasks for each discipline. Explicit reading-writing connections are intentionally present throughout the sample tasks, requiring students to read and think deeply about text, or “anything that communicates a message,” as defined by the KAS for Reading and Writing. Throughout the sample tasks, readers engage in passages, videos, graphs, data sets, experiments or other forms of communication while processing and documenting their learning through writing.
How to Read the Writing to Learn Templates

Each content area template begins broadly with a compilation of possible Writing to Learn strategies that experts in the field deem especially applicable to learning that discipline’s content. The remainder of each template provides authentic content-specific Writing to Learn samples, organized into elementary and secondary levels. These samples can help educators recognize the presence or absence of Writing to Learn instructional strategies within their curricula, equipping them with the knowledge to identify when the curriculum does not include adequate opportunities for students to engage in Writing to Learn. Because the types of texts involved in reading and writing vary across disciplines, each sample contains discipline-specific approaches to Writing to Learn.

Teacher Notes is a section for additional information the teacher may need to know regarding the Writing to Learn tasks. This space coaches teachers as they make sense of and think through implementation of the Writing to Learn tasks and/or the writing experiences within their curricula. “Extra” details they may need to know in order to fully understand how the tasks align with standards, how to access and/or utilize accompanying resources as well as explicit explanations for how the tasks utilize Writing to Learn in the sequence of a larger unit are located here.
### Writing to Learn in Social Studies Instruction

#### Implementing Writing to Learn in Social Studies Instruction

While there are many more Writing to Learn strategies that fit well in social studies classrooms, some examples include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Graphic organizers
- Graffiti boards
- Annotating texts
- Mind mapping
- Think, Write, Pair, Share
- Source Analysis sheets
- Note taking strategies (Cornell notes, etc.)
- Active reading strategies

#### About the Writing to Learn in Social Studies Tasks in This Resource

The Grade 2 task requires students to identify cultural elements of the Maya through the creation of a graffiti board. Identifying the cultural elements of the Maya supports students in their investigation of the supporting question (2.I.Q.2) “How did cultural groups connect and interact in the past and today to shape the culture of modern Mexico?” as they begin to compare this group with other diverse North American cultural groups in Mexico from the past and today.

In Grade 5 the purpose of the task is to give students an opportunity to utilize Writing to Learn, recording on a graphic organizer and organizing their thinking as they analyze primary and/or secondary sources that will support them when answering the supporting question, “Why did the colonists demand no taxation without representation?”

The Grade 8 Writing to Learn task is aligned to both the disciplinary strands and inquiry practices of the Kentucky Academic Standards (KAS) for Social Studies. The purpose of this task is to give students an opportunity to analyze a primary source by using a graphic organizer to record and organize their thinking. Students will use the information learned in this Writing to Learn task to answer the supporting question, “How did the Missouri Compromise temporarily save the Union?”

World History for Grades 9-10 is a task aligned to both the disciplinary strands and inquiry practices of the Kentucky Academic Standards (KAS) for Social Studies. The purpose of this task is to provide students an opportunity to corroborate sources to understand how continuities in the desire for cheap labor led to chattel slavery within the Atlantic System. Students will Write to Learn as they gather information and evidence from credible sources, corroborate these sources and organize their thinking by creating a Mind Map. Students will use the information learned through the Writing to Learn used in this task to answer the supporting question, “What incentives caused individuals, organizations and governments to use slavery and other systems of forced labor for the purpose of production across the globe between 1300-1888?”
## Sample Task Featuring Writing to Learn: Second Grade Social Studies

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Social Studies Disciplinary Strand Standards Alignment</th>
<th>Inquiry Practices Alignment</th>
<th>Reading and Writing Standards Alignment</th>
<th>Interdisciplinary Literacy Practices Connections</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>2.H.CH.1</strong> Identify and compare the diverse North American cultural groups of the past and today.</td>
<td><strong>2.I.Q.2</strong> Identify supporting questions that help answer compelling questions about communities found in North America.</td>
<td><strong>RI.2.1</strong> Ask and answer such questions as who, what, where, when, why, and how, and make and support logical inferences to construct meaning from the text.</td>
<td><strong>ILP 2:</strong> Employ, develop and refine schema to understand and create text.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In this task, students are identifying cultural elements of the Maya, which will help them later to compare this group in Mexico from the past and today.</td>
<td>Students are working toward 2.I.Q.2 by gathering evidence from multiple sources that will help them answer the supporting question.</td>
<td><strong>C.2.5</strong> Conduct shared research and writing projects that build knowledge about a topic.</td>
<td><strong>ILP 3:</strong> View literacy experiences as transactional, interdisciplinary and transformational.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Sample Task Featuring Writing to Learn

In small groups, create a [graffiti board](#) representing Mayan culture using information you have gathered from the sources provided below:

- NoticiasMVS. (n.d.). *Pueblos Indígenas en México* [infographic]. [http://noticiasmvsfotos.blob.core.windows.net/media/infografias/8a206f5d5c58f9e85b3774ff6fd05a2b.jpg](http://noticiasmvsfsotos.blob.core.windows.net/media/infografias/8a206f5d5c58f9e85b3774ff6fd05a2b.jpg).

You may use a poster, chart paper or whiteboard and collectively write words, phrases and sentences and draw pictures that represent Mayan culture.
This Writing to Learn task is a part of the Grade 2 Strongly Aligned Assignment with Teacher Notes from the Social Studies Student Assignment Library.

The graffiti board strategy allows students to organize the information they learn from the sources about the Mayan culture in text and images, allowing students to process their learning through both linguistic and non-linguistic means. Because Writing to Learn is informal writing, this strategy supports students in synthesizing information from the sources and expressing their thinking through text and images. Organizing elements of Mayan culture, one example of Writing to Learn, will support students’ learning as they gather evidence to prepare for responding to the supporting question, “How did cultural groups connect and interact in the past and today to shape the culture of modern Mexico?”

Student Examples:
### Sample Task Featuring Writing to Learn: Fifth Grade Social Studies

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Social Studies Disciplinary Strand Standards Alignment</th>
<th>Inquiry Practices Alignment</th>
<th>Reading and Writing Standards Alignment</th>
<th>Interdisciplinary Literacy Practices Connections</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>5.H.CO.1</strong> Analyze the role conflict and collaboration played in the founding of the United States.</td>
<td><strong>5.I.UE.2</strong> Analyze primary and secondary sources on the same event or topic, noting key similarities and differences in the perspective they represent.</td>
<td><strong>RI.5.6</strong> Analyze multiple accounts of the same event or topic, noting important similarities and differences in the perspective they represent.</td>
<td><strong>ILP 8:</strong> Engage in specialized, discipline specific literacy practices.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td><strong>RI.5.7</strong> Analyze information from multiple print and non-print formats, demonstrating the ability to locate an answer to a question quickly or to solve a problem efficiently.</td>
<td><strong>ILP 9:</strong> Apply high level cognitive processes to think deeply and critically about text.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td><strong>RI.5.9</strong> Integrate information from several texts on the same theme or topic.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td><strong>C.5.5</strong> Conduct short research projects that use several sources to build knowledge through investigation of different aspects of a topic.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td><strong>C.5.6</strong> Summarize relevant information from experiences, or gather relevant information from multiple print and digital sources; summarize or paraphrase applicable information in notes and finished work and provide a list of sources.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td><em>See Teacher Notes for an explanation of the KAS for Reading and Writing reading strand and how these standards align to the task.</em></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The Task

With a partner, you will examine the Stamp Act from both the British and Colonists’ perspectives. The sources you will utilize are listed below:


Read and analyze these sources with your partner. As you work, use the graphic organizer below to guide you as you compare the British and American Colonist perspective:

| Stamp Act Summary |  
|-------------------|---
|                   | Include who created it, who it impacted, what it did, and what caused it |

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>British Perspective</th>
<th>Colonists’ Perspective</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Do the British have the right to tax the colonists? Cite evidence from the sources.</td>
<td>Do the British have the right to tax the colonists? Cite evidence from the sources.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Do the British believe the colonies have the obligation to help the British? Cite evidence from the sources.</td>
<td>Do the colonists believe the British are entitled to the colonists’ help? Cite evidence from the sources.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Summarize in detail the OVERALL feelings of the British on the Stamp Act.</td>
<td>Summarizes in detail the OVERALL feelings of the colonists on the Stamp Act.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Compare the British and American Colonist perspective on the Stamp Act by analyzing the similarities and differences in their positions.
This Writing to Learn task is a part of the Grade 5 Strongly Aligned Assignment with Teacher Notes from the Social Studies Student Assignment Library.

A note about the Kentucky Academic Standards for Reading and Writing: Guiding Principles 1-6 give students an opportunity to practice skills in analyzing Key Ideas and Details and Craft and Structure. Guiding Principles 7-9 require readings of multiple texts and assume integrated engagement in Standards 1-6.

This graphic organizer offers multiple Writing to Learn opportunities. Each component requires students to focus on a different aspect of the content and would likely take place over multiple settings/days. For instance, students crafting a summary in the first box is Writing to Learn. Answering each set of perspective questions is also Writing to Learn. Students using what they learned about each group’s perspective to analyze the similarities and differences is Writing to Learn as well. Each of these Writing to Learn tasks requires increasingly complex reading, writing and thinking skills and works together to comprise the full graphic organizer. Because this task carries a heavier cognitive load for students, teachers need a firm understanding of the reading strand within the Kentucky Academic Standards for Reading and Writing. This knowledge reduces over-identification and misalignment of standards. Seen in the Reading and Writing Standards Alignment box above, the standards in this task focus on integration of knowledge and ideas (Standards 7-9) even though students are responding to questions that require them to explain what the text says explicitly and from inferences (RI.5.1), citing evidence from texts that supports the central ideas (RI.5.2), and thinking about relationships or interactions between the British and Colonists (RI.5.3). These standards require students to analyze a single text at a time, which is happening in this sample Writing to Learn task; however, they are also required to go beyond single texts, aligning more closely to Guiding Principles 7-9. Standards 7-9 require readings of multiple texts, expecting the reader to apply Standards 1-6 as needed in each singular text to then integrate knowledge and ideas across multiple texts.

In short, this task requires both analysis (required by all reading standards) and synthesis (required by Standards 7-9, Integration of Knowledge and Ideas). When a task such as this one demonstrates this level of complexity, teachers should recognize the task as synthesis and align instruction to the appropriate Integration of Knowledge and Ideas standard.
**Student example:**

**Stamp Act Summary**
(Include who created it, who it impacted, what it did, and what caused it)

The stamp act was created in 1765 by British Parliament. It was a tax put upon the American Colonies. The tax was on legal paper goods like marriage licences, and other documents. This caused the colonies to be upset and started a boycott.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>British Perspective</strong></th>
<th><strong>Colonist Perspective</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Do the British have the right to tax the colonists?</td>
<td>Do the British have the right to tax the colonists?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yes because they are under the rule of the king. The king had the right to tax and make laws however he wanted to.</td>
<td>Yes, the British had a right to tax them, but the colonists wanted to be represented.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Do the British believe the colonies have the obligation to help the British?</td>
<td>Do the colonists believe the British are entitled to the colonists' help?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yes because they got the same rights as the British people under the rule of the king.</td>
<td>Yes because the understand that they are under the rule of the king.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Summarize in detail the overall feelings of the British on the Stamp Act.</td>
<td>Summarize in detail the overall feelings of the colonists on the Stamp Act.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>They feel like they had the right to tax them on whatever they wanted.</td>
<td>They said they would pay the tax but they needed representation.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Compare the British and colonists perspective on the Stamp Act by analyzing the similarities and differences in their positions.**

They both had a government that taxed them. The British had representation in Parliament, but the Colonies did not. They were both under the the rule of the king.
Sample Task Featuring Writing to Learn: Eighth Grade Social Studies

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Social Studies Disciplinary Strand Standards Alignment</th>
<th>Inquiry Practices Alignment</th>
<th>Reading and Writing Standards Alignment</th>
<th>Interdisciplinary Literacy Practices Connections</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| 8.H.CO.2 Describe the conflicts and compromises that shaped the development of the U.S. government between 1783-1877. | 8.I.UE.3 Gather relevant information from multiple sources while using the origin, authority, structure, context and corroborative value of the sources to guide the selection to answer compelling and supporting questions.  
*Students are working toward 8.I.UE.3 by examining a primary source related to the supporting question and determining its origin, authority, structure and context.* | RI.8.1 Cite relevant textual evidence to support analysis of what the text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text.  
C.8.5 Conduct short research projects to answer a question (including a self-generated question), drawing on several sources and generating new avenues for inquiry. | ILP 8: Engage in specialized, discipline specific literacy practices.  
ILP 9: Apply high level cognitive processes to think deeply and critically about text. |

The Task

Examine the [Missouri Compromise of 1820](#) using the [Analyze a Written Document](#) tool. You may work independently or in small groups to answer the questions provided on the tool.

Teacher Notes

This Writing to Learn task is a part of the [Grade 8 Strongly Aligned Assignment with Teacher Notes](#) from the [Social Studies Student Assignment Library](#).

In this task, students use Writing to Learn to gather information from a primary source document. Students are asked to observe the parts of the document, make sense of it and determine how to use it as historical evidence. Sourcing the Missouri Compromise and recording their analysis will support students in comprehending the document and understanding its purpose and significance. This knowledge will support students as they investigate the supporting question, “How did the Missouri Compromise temporarily save the Union?”
Student example:

Analyze a Written Document

Meet the document.

Type (check all that apply):
- Letter
- Speech
- Chart
- Newspaper
- Report
- Email
- Other

Describe it as if you were explaining to someone who can't see it.

Think about: Is it handwritten? Is it typed? Is it all in the same font? Are there stamps or other marks? What else do you see on it?

It is hand written on a light blue paper, it was written in Congress.

Observe its parts.

Who wrote it?
- SIXTEENTH CONGRESS

Who read/received it?
- ROUTE OF THE MISSOURI TERRITORY

When is it from?
- March 4th, 1820

Where is it from?
- Columbus

Try to make sense of it.

What is it talking about?
- This Missouri was to become a slave state and Maine became a free state and it was very important to the nation's未来.

Write one sentence summarizing the document:
- There would be boundaries on where slave territory can go and where free territory can go.

Why did the author write it?
- The author wrote it to inform the reader about the Missouri Compromise.

Quote evidence from the document that tells you this:
- "A parallel of thirty-six degrees of north latitude was not parallel to the Thirty-six Degrees Line as we read in thirty minutes."

How a slave was in a free state for years and then went back to a slave state but he wasn't free for some reason.

Use it as historical evidence.

What did you find out from this document that you might not learn anywhere else?
- I learned more about what the Missouri Compromise was about.

What other documents or historical evidence are you going to use to help you understand this event or topic? I would use books because the wiki re-wrote it for me.
**Sample Task Featuring Writing to Learn: High School World History**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Social Studies Disciplinary Strand Standards Alignment</th>
<th>Inquiry Practices Alignment</th>
<th>Reading and Writing Standards Alignment</th>
<th>Interdisciplinary Literacy Practices Connections</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>HS.WH.CH.5</strong> Analyze how continuities in the desire for cheap labor led to slavery and other systems of forced labor across the globe between 1300-1888.</td>
<td><strong>HS.WH.I.UE.2</strong> Gather information and evidence from credible sources representing a variety of perspectives relevant to compelling/supporting questions in world history.</td>
<td><strong>RI.9-10.7</strong> Analyze various accounts of a subject presented in different print and non-print formats, determining which details are emphasized in each account.</td>
<td><strong>ILP 6:</strong> Collaborate with others to make new meaning.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>C.9-10.6</strong> Gather relevant information from multiple authoritative print and digital sources, using advanced searches effectively; assess the usefulness of each source in answering the research question; integrate information into the text selectively to maintain the flow of ideas, avoiding plagiarism and following a standard format for citation.</td>
<td></td>
<td><strong>ILP 7:</strong> Utilize digital resources to share and learn with others.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>See Teacher Notes for an explanation of the KAS for Reading and Writing reading strand and how these standards align to the task.</em></td>
<td></td>
<td><strong>ILP 8:</strong> Engage in specialized, discipline specific literacy practices.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**The Task**

Examine the [Missouri Compromise of 1820](https://example.com) using the [Analyze a Written Document](https://example.com) tool. You may work independently or in small groups to answer the questions provided on the tool.
Teacher Notes

To investigate how continuities in the desire for cheap labor led to chattel slavery within the Atlantic System, students will gather information and evidence from the following sources:


As students engage with the sources, they should corroborate the sources. The Stanford History Education Group (SHEG) states that “Corroboration asks students to consider details across multiple sources to determine points of agreement and disagreement.” According to SHEG, a student who engages in corroboration asks the following questions of the sources:

- What do other documents say?
- Do the documents agree? If not, why?
- What are other possible documents?
- What documents are most reliable?

As students are corroborating these sources, have them create a Mind Map to visually organize their information. Mind mapping is a non-linear, graphic way of organizing information that allows students to focus on the relationships between ideas. For more information on Mind Mapping, watch this [Mind Mapping video](#) or visit the [Mind Mapping website](#). For the purposes of this assignment, students would identify sugar as their main topic of study. Students would then complete the following:

- Have students identify sugar as the main topic of their map by placing it in the center and drawing a circle around it.
- Have students write down the main ideas that stem from sugar based on the information students read in the sources.
- Have students provide evidence for the main ideas that stem from sugar based on the information students read in the sources.
- Have students be creative and add visual interest by having students use both printed and sketched images to support their exploration of the main topic.
Student example:

Sugar and slavery permanently tainted the British legacy morally and ethically.

Cheap labor leads to cheap products as seen throughout all of history.

The adoption of slave labor in sugar colonies cheapened the commercial value of sugar because of a cheap labor system.

Sugar was once a luxury good because it could only be produced in certain areas.

Sugar became essential to British society and went from a delicacy to a household item.

The paired developments of the sugar and slave trades changed the economic and ethical landscape of the British Empire.

As the desire for sugar increased the search for colonies and slaves ramped up.

The sugar trade directly fueled and encouraged the fire that was the slave trade.

Sugar was used in tea and many everyday commodities.

Sugar created a dependency of the British economy on that of slave labor.