

CREATING AN ACTIVE CLASSROOM

This Social Studies program places a strong emphasis on **inquiry** through the Quests. There are three types of Quests: Document-Based Writing Inquiry, Project-Based Learning Inquiry, and Discussion Inquiry.

Each inquiry type requires students to formulate and express their own arguments based on evidence. To support this learning approach, the program integrates **Active Classroom strategies** throughout each topic. These strategies encourage students to begin building their own arguments and collecting evidence about the past and present in every lesson.

You can use these strategies to help students participate in their own learning as you call upon them to **draw, write, speak, decide**.

Look for the **Active Classroom** logo  in the Teacher Edition for suggestions of where to use the strategies described below.

|  Active Classroom Strategies | |
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| Activity Name | How to Activate |
| Quickdraw | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Pair students and give them 30 seconds to share what they know about a concept or Key Term by creating a symbol or drawing. |
| Graffiti Concepts | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Ask students to reflect on the meaning of a concept or idea and create a visual image and/or written phrase that represents that concept. Allow approximately three to five minutes.• Next ask students to post their “graffiti” on the board or on chart paper and ask students to look at all the various responses.• Next discuss similarities and differences in the responses as a group. |
| Word Wall | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Ask students to choose one of the Key Terms for the lesson and create a visual image with a text definition. Allow approximately three to five minutes.• Ask students to post their words on the board or on chart paper and ask students to look at all the various responses.• Discuss similarities and differences in the responses as a group.• Pick a few favorites and post them on the class “Word Wall” for the year. |
| Cartoon It | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Ask students to make a quick drawing of one compelling image from this lesson on a piece of paper.• Next ask students to turn their drawing into a political cartoon that illustrates a key concept or main idea from the lesson by adding a text caption or text “bubbles.”• Ask students to share their cartoons with a partner or within small groups. |
| Wallpaper | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Ask students to review information they have learned in a topic and design a piece of “wallpaper” that encapsulates key learnings.• Then have students post their wallpaper and take a “gallery” walk, noting what others have written and illustrated in their samples. |

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| Quick Write | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ask students to write what they know about a key idea or term in 30 seconds. |
| Make Headlines | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Have students write a headline that captures the key idea in a map, photo, timeline, or reading. • Ask students to share their headline with a partner. |
| Circle Write | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Break into groups and provide a writing prompt or key question. • Have students write as much as they can in response to the question or prompt for one minute. • Next have students give their response to the person on their right. That person should improve or elaborate on the response where the other person left off. • Continue to pass each response to the right until the original response comes back to the first person. • Each group then reviews all the responses and decides which is the best composition and shares that with the larger group. |
| Write 1-Get 3 (or Write 5-Get 4) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ask a question with multiple answers, such as: What are four key characteristics of _____ (a dictator)? What are the five key causes of _____? • Have students write down one response and then go around the room asking for three other responses. If they think a response is correct, ask them to write it down. • Have students keep asking and writing until they have three more responses on their page. • Have students share and discuss responses with the class. |
| Sticky Notes | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ask students to spend three minutes jotting down their response to a critical thinking question on a sticky note. • Ask students to work in pairs and share their responses. • Next ask students to post their sticky notes on the board or on chart paper and read all the notes. • Discuss similarities and differences in the responses as a group. |
| Connect Two | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Select 10 to 12 words or phrases you think are important for students to know prior to reading a selection. • List the words and phrases on the board. • Ask students to "Connect Two" or choose two words they think might belong together, and state the reason. "I would connect _____ and _____ because _____." Consider posting their Connect Two statements on the board. • As students read the text they should look for evidence to support or refute their Connect Two statements. |
| Conversation With History | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ask students to choose one of the people mentioned or pictured in the text and write down a question they would like to ask that person if they could. • Next ask students to write what they think that person would say in response and then what they would say in response to that. |

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| Walking Tour | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Post passages from a reading around the room. • Ask small groups to tour the room and discuss each passage. • Summarize each passage as a class. • Alternatively, assign each small group to a passage and have them summarize that passage for the rest of the class. |
| Audio Tour | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ask students to work in pairs. Have the first student give the second a verbal “tour” of a map, graph, or infographic. • Have the second student give the first an explanation of what the graphic shows. |
| My Metaphor | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Post the following metaphor on the board: This (map, timeline, image, primary source) shows that _____ is like _____ because _____. • Ask students to fill in the metaphor prompt based on their understanding of the source. |
| Act It Out | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Choose an image in the lesson and ask students to think about one of the following questions as appropriate to the image: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> What may have happened next in this image? What may have happened just before this image? What do you think the people in this image are thinking? What do you think the people in this image are saying to each other? |
| If Photos/Images/ Art Could Talk | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ask the following questions about an image in the course: What do you think the person in this photo would say if they could talk? What’s your evidence? |
| See-Think-Wonder | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ask students to work in pairs. • Ask them to look at an image, map, or graph and answer these questions: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> What do you see? What does that make you think? What are you wondering about now that you’ve seen this? • Have students share their answers with the class. |
| A Closer Look | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Project a map or image on the board and divide it into four numbered quadrants. • Have students count off from 1 to 4 into four small groups. Have each group look closely at the part of the image in their quadrant. • Have each small group report on what they observed and learned as a result of their focus on this part of the image. |

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| Take a Stand | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ask students to take a stand on a yes-or-no or agree/disagree critical thinking question. • Ask students to divide into two groups based on their answer and move to separate areas of the classroom. • Ask students to talk with each other to compare their reasons for answering yes or no. • Ask a representative from each side to present and defend the group's point of view. • Note: you can adapt this activity to have students take their place on a continuum line from 1 to 10 depending on how strongly they agree or disagree. |
| Rank It | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • List a group of items/concepts/steps/causes/events on the board. • Ask students to rank the items/steps . . . according to X criteria (which is most important, which had the greatest impact . . . most influential, essential, changed, affected). • Ask students to provide a justification for the ranking decisions they made. • Then ask students to work in pairs to share their rankings and justifications. • Poll the class to see if there is agreement on the ranking. <p>OR</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Place stickies on the board with key events from the lesson or topic. • Break students into small groups and ask each group to go up and choose the sticky that they think describes the most significant event. • Ask the group to discuss among themselves why they think it is most significant. • Ask one person from each group to explain why the group chose that event. |
| Sequence It | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Place key events from a lesson or topic on sticky notes on the board. • Ask students to place the events in chronological order. • You could do this activity with multiple groups in different parts of the classroom. |
| PMI Plus/Minus/Interesting | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Place students in groups and give each group a three-column organizer with headings Plus/Minus/Interesting for recording responses. • Ask students to analyze a text or examine an issue and then answer these three questions in their organizer: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. What was positive about this text/issue? 2. What was negative about this text/issue? 3. What was interesting about this text/issue? |