

DBQs For Social Studies

Daniel Schwarz, Milton Bowens
Published by *K20 Center*

This work is licensed under a Creative Commons CC BY-SA 4.0 License

Time Frame 120-150 minutes

Essential Question(s)

How can I use document-based questioning (DBQ) to enhance my students' learning?

Summary

This professional development will provide participants with literacy strategies to use in their classrooms as they implement document-based questions (DBQs).

Learning Goals

- Participants will identify reading and writing strategies that support student acquisition of text-based arguments.
- Participants will create a process for using DBQs within the classroom.

Attachments

- CER—DBQs for Social Studies.docx
- CER—DBQs for Social Studies.pdf
- DBQ Action Plan—DBQs for Social-Studies.docx
- DBQ Action Plan—DBQs for Social-Studies.pdf
- Instructional Strategy Note Sheet—DBQs for Social Studies.docx
- Instructional Strategy Note Sheet—DBQs for Social Studies.pdf
- It's OPTIC-al—DBQs for Social Studies.docx
- It's OPTIC-al—DBQs for Social Studies.pdf
- Presenter Slides—DBQs for Social Studies.pptx
- The Document Based Lesson—DBQs for Social Studies.docx
- The Document Based Lesson—DBQs for Social Studies.pdf

Materials

- Presenter Slides (attached)
- The Document-Based Lesson (attached, one per participant)
- It's OPTIC-al (attached, one half-sheet per participant)
- Instructional Strategy Note Sheet (attached, one per participant)
- DBQ Action Plan (attached, one per participant)
- CER (attached, one half-sheet per participant)
- How Am I Feeling? What Am I Thinking? handout (attached, one per participant)
- Sticky Notes (preferred pink, yellow, and green)
- Stoplight Stickies Poster
- Highlighters
- Devices with Internet

Engage

Presenter's Note: DBQ Presentation

The DBQ Project is a copyrighted program of purchased primary source document kits. These kits are designed through an inquiry method to encourage critical thinking skills in students. This presentation is intended to supplement purchased DBQ kits with additional literacy and inquiry strategies. The strategies presented here, however, can be accomplished with **any** primary source documents.

If DBQ kits have not been purchased by the school site, you have the option to use the primary source documents found in the attachments with these strategies.

Show **slide 2**. Introduce yourself and the topic of the session.

Show **slide 3**. Introduce the session goals. Participants will identify reading and writing strategies that empower students to develop text-based arguments and will create a plan for using DBQs in their instruction.

Presenter's Note: Poster Preparation

For this activity, prepare a Stoplight Stickies poster in advance.

In the Stoplight Stickies strategy, participants use red (pink), yellow, or green sticky notes to color-code their comfort level in understanding a new topic or practicing a new skill. Participants place the sticky note on a board, poster, or chart paper in a designated, color-coded area.

Show **slide 4**. Using the Stoplight Stickies strategy, have participants self-identify their comfort level using document-based question kits. The color **red (pink)** indicates the participant is uncomfortable or is a beginner; **yellow** indicates the participant is somewhat comfortable or is an intermediate user; and **green** indicates the participant is very comfortable or is an expert.

After brief reflection, invite participants to choose a color of sticky note and write questions or comments on their sticky note. Then, have participants place the sticky note on a board, poster, or chart paper in a designated, color-coded area you have set up for the session. Solicit a few responses from the group by selecting random sticky notes from the Stoplight poster.

Presenter's Note: Image Preparation

The **slide 5** image is representative of images as sources. You may wish to use another visual, photograph, or art piece that is connected to the specific curriculum needs for the target audience.

You may wish to have participants work in pairs to deepen their knowledge through substantive conversation.

Show **slide 5.**

Pass out the **It's OPTIC-al handout**. Using the It's OPTIC-al graphic organizer, guide participants in making observations and inferences using an image or a photograph.

Have participants analyze the image or photograph by breaking down its component elements:

- **O: Observations**. What general impressions does the work generate?
- **P: Parts**. What details come to mind about the image?
- **T: Title**. What does the title imply about the image? If there is no title, ask participants to title the work.
- **I: Interrelationships**. How do the individual components work with one another to convey a message?
- **C: Conclusion**. What is the overall message or effect? Include details about time period and importance.

Technology Option:

To incorporate technology into this activity, have participants come in front of the group to circle their evidence if tools such as SMARTBoards or Newline Boards are available. This is something teachers could invite their students to do in their own classrooms.

Explore

Presenter's Note: Reading Preparation

Prior to the activity, identify a primary source for use that is associated with the topic represented in the image you choose for the Engage It's OPTIC-al. The Library of Congress has primary sources available for use, all as easy-to-use PDFs with historical background information and teaching ideas.

Show **slide 6**. Give teachers their primary source reading. Explain the CUS and Discuss reading strategy to read the source. Have them **circle** new words, **underline** details to support the main idea, and **star** the main ideas as they read.

Technology Option:

To incorporate technology with this strategy, **circle**, **underline**, and **star** the reading as a group using a tool such as a SMARTBoard or Newline Board. Remind participants that completing this activity together can also model the strategy to help struggling readers in their classrooms.

Explain

Presenter's Note: Document-Based Lesson

The Document-Based Lesson is included in the attachments. The 700-word document examines the DBQ pedagogy as a critical thinking process.

Reisman, Avishag. (2012, November 11). The 'Document-Based Lesson': Bringing disciplinary inquiry into high school history classrooms with adolescent struggling readers. Journal of Curriculum Studies, 44:2, 233-264, DOI: 10.1080/00220272.2011.591436

Show **slide 7**. Once participants have had the chance to explore a primary source as their students would, ask them to read about the benefits of DBQs in the classroom.

Pass out the **Document-Based Lesson** article for participants to Why-Light. Ask participants to read actively by highlighting the sentences or passages that seem important and explain why they are highlighting that piece in the margins.

Technology Option:

Like CUS & Discuss, Why-lighting is another reading strategy that can be carried out with technology and used to help struggling readers.

Show **slide 8**. Pass out the **CER handout**. Invite participants to develop a CER about the benefits of using DBQs in the classroom. Ask them to pull evidence for their CER from the Document-Based Lesson article. Allow time for participants to share out with the group when everyone is finished writing their CER.

Extend

Presenter's Note: Exploring Resources

Take this opportunity to highlight some resources for using DBQs. Participants may have access to the DBQ Project Online, depending on their school/district, but all participants have access to the resources provided by the Library of Congress. Invite participants to explore either of these resources and select a DBQ source that aligns with their curriculum.

Show **slide 9.** Invite participants to explore the DBQ Project Online, if available. If not, have them visit the Library of Congress and select a topic relevant to their classroom curriculum.

Show **slide 10.** Use the How Am I Feeling? What Am I Thinking? strategy to have participants document their thoughts and feelings on implementing a DBQ in their classroom. Have participants draw a vertical line dividing a sticky note in half. Ask them to write on one side of the note how they feel so far about the concept of DBQs in their classroom. Have them write on the other side of the note what they understand about the topic at this point. Invite participants who are willing share out their thoughts/feelings about implementing DBQs.

Presenter's Note: Addressing Participants' Concerns

It is likely that many participants want to incorporate DBQs in their instruction but lack the time to do so. The last portion of this professional development is dedicated to working time for participants to plan for implementing a DBQ in their classroom.

As the facilitator, you may recommend that participants select different topics or units of study and then share across the group in order to not duplicate efforts. For participants who are feeling hesitant about using DBQs, you might recommend working groups to increase scaffolding and collaboration.

Evaluate

Show **slide 11**. Give participants the **DBQ Action Plan** handout. Schedule working time for participants to come up with actionable steps for using DBQs in the classroom with consideration for how to incorporate technology in this process. Ask participants to also consider the obstacles that are barriers to success in carrying out their plan. If time allows, have participants share with a partner or the group to hear each other's ideas and concerns. They may choose to revise their own plans or be able to offer a suggestion to others as a result.

Show **slide 12**. Give participants the **Instructional Strategy Note Sheet** handout. Have participants make explicit the connections between what they have done in each of the strategies and students using DBQs in the classroom. Ensure participants recognize the strategies they have taken part in are similar to what they would ask their students to do in unpacking documents.

Schedule time for participants to reflect on how the strategies were used in the professional development and how they might use them in the classroom to complete their LEARN Strategy Reflection on the Instructional Strategy Notes handout.

Follow-up Activities

A recommended follow-up activity for this professional development is to debrief the participants' experiences in implementing the DBQs they planned for in this activity.

Research Rationale

Critical thinking capabilities are heightened when students are taught how to generate arguments, make thoughtful contributions to historical discourse, and evaluate and interpret multiple sources of information that contain conflicting perspectives (De La Paz, Ferretti, Wissinger, Yee, & MacArthur, 2012). It is essential to prompt students with tasks such as formulating an argument or explanation from evidence in order to foster a deeper comprehension than that which comes from simple recall, description, or summarization (Wiley, Griffin, Steffens, & Britt, 2020). Educators must scaffold this process as research suggests that, without instruction, most students struggle significantly when asked to use primary sources to construct an argument (De La Paz, et al., 2012). Modeling appropriate activities or tasks to develop an argument from evidence will benefit students who require additional instruction (Wiley, Griffin, Steffens, & Britt, 2020).

Resources

- De La Paz, S., Ferretti, R., Wissinger, D., Yee, L., & MacArthur, C. (2012, Oct. 3). Adolescents' disciplinary use of evidence, argumentative strategies, and organizational structure in writing about historical controversies. Written Communication, 29(4), 412-454.
- Geralt. (n.d.). [Photograph]. Pixabay. https://pixabay.com/illustrations/usa-america-constitution-signing-1779925/
- K20 Center. (n.d.). Claim, evidence, reasoning (CER). Strategies. https://learn.k20center.ou.edu/strategy/156
- K20 Center. (n.d.). CUS and discuss. Strategies. https://learn.k20center.ou.edu/strategy/162
- K20 Center. (n.d.). How am I feeling? What am I thinking? Strategies. https://learn.k20center.ou.edu/strategy/187
- K20 Center. (n.d.). It's OPTIC-al. Strategies. https://learn.k20center.ou.edu/strategy/99
- K20 Center. (n.d.). Stoplight stickies. Strategies. https://learn.k20center.ou.edu/strategy/92
- K20 Center. (n.d.). Why-lighting. Strategies. https://learn.k20center.ou.edu/strategy/128
- Library of Congress. (n.d.). Finding primary sources. Library of Congress. https://www.loc.gov/teachers/usingprimarysources/finding.html
- Reisman, A. (2012, November 11). The 'Document-Based Lesson': Bringing disciplinary inquiry into high school history classrooms with adolescent struggling readers. Journal of Curriculum Studies, 44:2, 233-264, DOI: 10.1080/00220272.2011.591436
- Wiley, J., Griffin, T.D., Steffens, B., & Britt, M.A. (2020, Feb.). Epistemic beliefs about the value of integrating information across multiple documents in history. Learning and Instruction 65.