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Literacy Academy 2025

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PRESENTATION TITLE

Enhancing Disciplinary Literacy in the Social Studies Classroom



Literacy Academy
2025

Presenters



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Checking In

When you think of disciplinary literacy in social studies/history, what comes to mind?

How do students currently engage with content texts in your classroom?

Today's Learning Objectives

- Identify effective literacy strategies for supporting students' reading, writing, and thinking in social studies content areas
- Explore ways to scaffold student engagement with text sets
- Facilitate classroom discourse grounding in disciplinary thinking based on primary and secondary sources

Poll

On average, what percentage of instructional time is dedicated to reading in the content areas?

1. More than 50%
2. Approximately 25%
3. Less than 10%

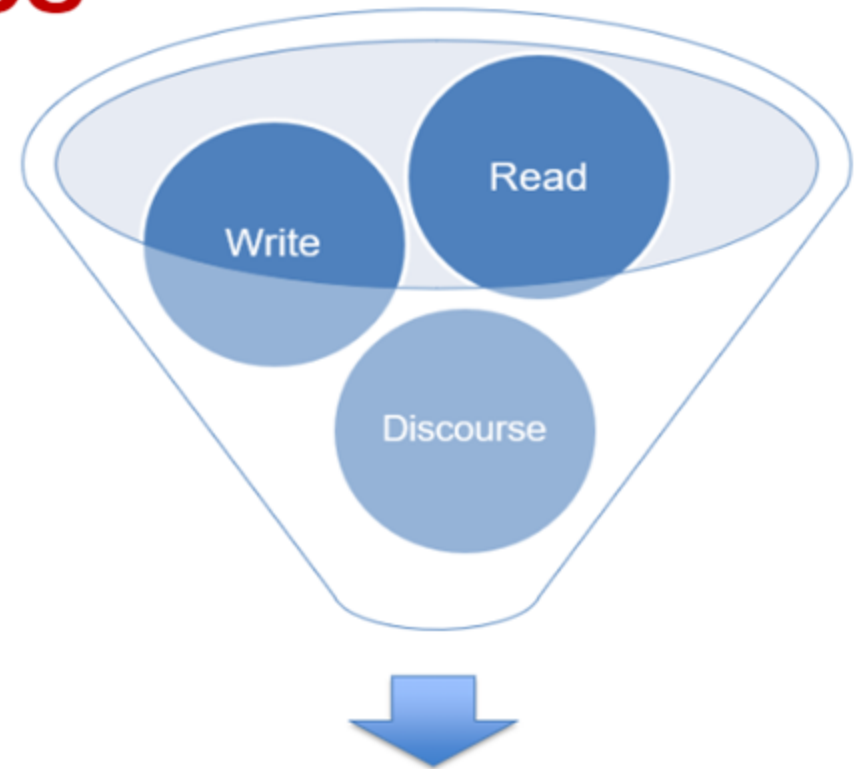
Instructional Shifts Required by ALL Content Areas by Ohio's 6-12 Literacy Standards

1. Regular practice with **complex text** and **academic vocabulary**
2. Reading, writing, and discussion **grounded in evidence** from the text
3. **Building knowledge** through content-rich **informational text**

The Case for Literacy Across the Disciplines

The standards insist that instruction in reading, writing, speaking, listening, and language be a **shared responsibility** within the school.

(Ohio's Learning Standards, ELA 2017)



**Literacy Across
the Disciplines**


Why Literacy Across the Disciplines Matters

The demands associated with increased text complexity for adolescents comes at a time when reading instruction evaporates.

(Shanahan, 2019).

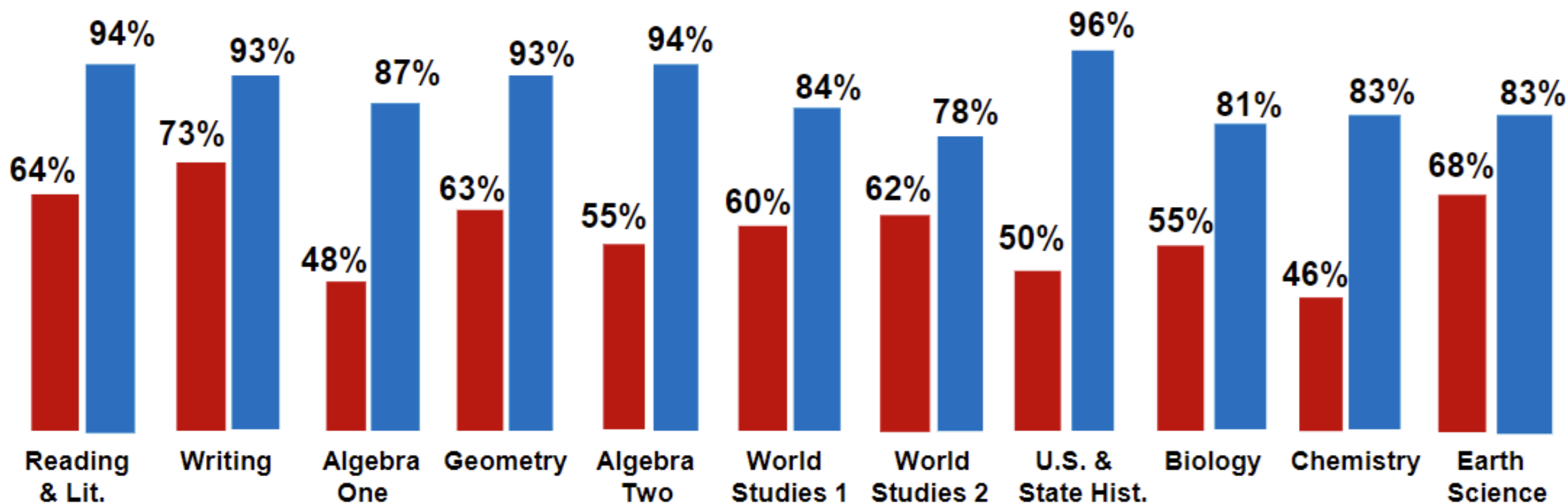


**Increased
Demands of
Complex
Texts**



**Evaporation
of Tier 1
Literacy
Instruction**

Improved Passage Rates on State Assessments After 5-Year Implementation of 15 B-D-A Routines at Stuart HS, VA



Connecting to R-TFI (Item 1.9)

R-TFI Item	2 Points	Suggested Data Sources	1 and 0 Points
1.9 Teachers determine ways to enhance students' understanding of written text.	<p>Teachers determine ways to incorporate quality text that imparts discipline-specific information into daily lessons to increase students' opportunities to read and understand core subjects.</p> <p>AND: Students' understanding of written text is enhanced by designing lessons that include the following:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1 Before students read text, teachers design instruction to activate students' topical prior knowledge and increase the accessibility of the text for all students by previewing portions of text, orienting students to the text structure, pre-teaching critical vocabulary, decoding difficult multi-syllable words, and providing a clear purpose for reading. 2 While students are reading text, teachers design instruction so students can focus on critical content; use questioning, note-taking, and graphic organizers to expand understanding of information beyond what is stated in the text; engage in peer discussions about the text; write about the text; and engage in discipline-specific discourse. 3 After students have read text, teachers design instruction for students to organize and summarize information learned from reading, as well as apply, analyze, and synthesize new knowledge and understanding 	<p>Sampling of disciplinary text</p> <p>Sampling of teacher lessons</p> <p>Student products developed after reading text</p>	<p>1 point: At least 2 of the criteria from the 2-point response are in place.</p> <p>0 points: The criteria from the 2-point or 1-point response are not in place.</p>

When social scientists read, they...

Identify bias

**Untangle
conflicting
perspectives &
claims**

**Corroborate
information &
sources**

**Contextualize
sources**

**Examine text
structure**

**Compare &
contrast events,
documents,
perspectives,
visuals**

**Infer what is
not explicit**

When social scientists write, they...

**Create
timelines &
accompanying
narratives**

**Use multiple
sources**

**Organize
perspectives
into a whole**

**Systemize
large
quantities of
information**

**Use the past as
a mirror to the
present**

**Summarize
consequences
of an event**

**Rely on
primary &
secondary
sources**

When social scientists think, they...

**Sift through
fragments of
information**

**Consider ideas
across periods
of time**

**Compare &
contrast
varying
accounts**

**Connect causes
with effects**

Recognize bias

**Synthesize
information**

**Consider belief
systems of time
periods &
cultures**

Text Sets

...are intentionally grouped sets of **texts** and **media resources** focused on a **specific topic** designed to help ALL learners build background knowledge and vocabulary through a **volume of reading** on science, social studies, and other high-interest topics.

Constructing a Text Set

Elements	Considerations
<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Centered on one topic/idea- Includes a variety of resources in varying complexity- Resources are purposefully ordered- Activities for completion after each resource	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Does it deepen understanding?- Is the topic specific enough?- Will I be able to find a range of accessible and appropriately complex texts on this topic?- Is this text rich and complex?

Stair-Stepping Texts

Target Text

Informational Text

Visual Text



Text Sources for Enhancing Disciplinary Literacy in the Social Studies Classroom
Literacy Academy, 2025

Boston Massacre

Source One: Thomas Preston

Captain Thomas Preston was an officer in the British army. While in jail, he wrote this narrative. A British tax collector brought this account to London on a ship that left Boston on March 16, 1770. The account was then re-printed in Boston newspapers in June 1770 after copies of the London newspaper were brought to Boston.

Thomas Preston (Modified)

At about 9 some of the guards informed me that people were gathering to attack the troops. On my way there, I heard the crowd threaten the troops. About 100 people went towards the Custom House where the king's money is kept. They immediately surrounded the soldier there and threatened him. I was told that they were going to carry off the soldier and probably murder him. I immediately sent an officer and 12 men to protect both the soldier and the king's money. I followed them to prevent, if possible, any problems. I feared that the officer and soldiers might be **provoked** by the insults of the rioters. I told the troops to go out without loading their weapons and I never gave orders to load them.

The mob still increased, striking their clubs together, and calling out, "Come on you rascals, you bloody backs, you lobster scoundrels, fire if you dare." At this time I was between the soldiers and the mob, trying to **persuade** them to leave peacefully. Someone asked me if I was going to order the men to fire. I answered no, saying that I was in front of the **guns** and would be shot if they fired. While I was speaking, one of the soldiers was hit with a stick, stepped a little to one side, and instantly fired. When I turned to ask him why he fired without orders, I was struck with a club on my arm.

The soldiers were attacked by a great number of heavy clubs and snowballs were thrown at them. All our lives were in danger. At the same time, someone from behind called out, "**Damn your bloods** — why don't you fire?" Instantly three or four of the soldiers fired and then three more fired in the same confusion. The mob then ran away, except three unhappy men who instantly died. When I asked the soldiers why they fired without orders, they said they heard the word fire and thought it came from me. This might be the case as many of the mob called out fire, but I told the men that I gave no such order. My words were, don't fire, stop your firing.

Source: The Case of Capt. Preston of the 29th Regiment, Public Advertiser (London), April 28, 1770

Source B: Samuel Drowne

Directed Reading-Thinking Activity

Directed Reading-Thinking Activity	
DR-TA for (title): _____	
Prediction Question(s): _____ _____ _____	
Using the title, your own background knowledge, and any other contextual clues, make your predictions.	
Before reading:	
During reading:	
During reading:	
During reading:	
After reading:	

Collaborative Conversations

One prediction I made was _____ because _____.

Evidence that supports my change in prediction are _____.

In my opinion _____ due to _____.

One difference between my idea and yours is _____. Let's discuss further.

Directed Reading-Thinking Activity	
DR-TA for (title):	_____
Prediction Question(s):	_____ _____ _____
Using the title, your own background knowledge, and any other contextual clues, make your <u>predictions</u> .	
Before reading:	_____ _____ _____
During reading:	_____ _____ _____
During reading:	_____ _____ _____
During reading:	_____ _____ _____
After reading:	_____ _____ _____

What does disciplinary literacy look like in a social studies classroom?

- Inquiry invites students to create habits of thinking that allows for students to think like historians, geographers, economists, and engaged citizens.
- Inquiry moves students from memorization to interacting with primary sources. Students ask questions and look to primary sources for the answers. Students are not record keepers, students are active investigators of sources.

What does inquiry look like in the social studies classroom?

American Revolution,
aligned with grade 8
SS

[Boston Massacre from Digital Inquiry Group](#)



Primary Sources

Source One: Thomas Preston

At about 9 some of the guards informed me that people were gathering to attack the troops.

Source Two: Samuel Drowne

Samuel Drowne of Boston, of lawful age, testified that about nine o'clock of the evening of the fifth day of March...

Reflection:

How did evaluating primary sources connect to the reading, writing, and thinking skills of social scientists?

Social Studies Resources for Primary Sources

Smithsonian Learning Lab: [Teaching with Primary Sources](#)

National Archives: [Document Analysis](#)

Library of Congress: [Teacher's Guides and Analysis Tool](#)

[Digital Inquiry Group](#) (DIG)-you must register for a free account

[Boston Tea Party Ship Middle Grade Resources](#)

QUESTIONS?

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