

DBQ (Document Based Questions)

The DBQ Project provides professional development for social studies and language arts teachers who teach upper elementary through high school. Our goal is to help teachers accelerate students' reading, thinking, and writing skills by incorporating three or four document based questions into their courses each year. We offer workshops for teachers and coaches to help districts and other education communities integrate reading and writing into the social studies curriculum. We believe that using DBQs regularly is an important and engaging way to build students' confidence reading and using non-fiction and informational texts. Our mission is to help teachers help students read smart, think straight, and write clearly.

Full- Day Workshop – 9/25/13

The full day workshop is designed to get teachers new to the pedagogy excited about the process. It is also reinvigorating for those teachers already steeped in DBQ experience.

The day includes an overview of the DBQ Project 6-Step Method where teachers go through all the steps in a lively, interactive session. The morning emphasizes strategies teachers can use to engage students in document analysis and argument development. In the afternoon, we emphasize the elements of a powerful DBQ essay and introduce teachers to writing supports they can use to promote strong, evidence-based writing. Participants also spend time analyzing student work and norming student essays using our DBQ Project rubric.

Follow-Up Workshop – 11/14/13

Several weeks after the Introductory Workshop, the Follow-up Day allows teachers to discuss and examine student work from their own classes. We review the DBQ Project Method and allow teachers plenty of time to ask questions about things that happened in their own classes. Teachers gain a great deal of knowledge about evaluating and scoring writing, developing a district-wide DBQ standard for writing, and they think about how to modify the units to meet the needs of their own students.

DBQ Project Materials

We produce materials for U.S. History, World History, and Civics.

Schools have a choice of how to make the materials available to students.

- Some schools buy a binder for individual teachers, teams, or schools and they photocopy the lessons for each student.
- Other schools buy the binder plus class sets of student books. This approach saves the cost of photocopying because students use the printed books.

Photocopying privileges extend to individual schools. We do not have photocopy rights for teachers to post documents electronically on websites, even if they are password protected.

We produce materials of different lengths too.

- The DBQs in U.S. History and World History have 10 questions each. Each question is written in two versions: the long version and the short version. The long version contains 16-20 documents that students use to answer the question. The short version is the exact same question but we vetted the documents so students use only 10 documents to answer the question.
- Our Mini-Qs are shorter. Each Mini-Q question contains questions with 4-6 documents each. Mini-Qs are written in two versions: the enhanced version and the clean version. The enhanced version has more scaffolding and support for young or inexperienced students. The clean version looks more like our longer DBQs. The lessons are structured but less highly scaffolded than in the enhanced version.