

ANNALS OF AMERICAN HISTORY ACTIVITY

STUDYING HISTORY THROUGH WRITING

TEACHER TIPS



Overview

This is a multi-disciplinary activity incorporating reading, writing, and American history. This activity is to be completed using a document from Encyclopædia Britannica's *Annals of American History*. Students should have existing knowledge on how to read and assess various forms of writing.

This activity enables students to further develop analytical skills by critiquing a historical document. In this three-part activity, students will first analyze the document by answering questions about the author's purpose, audience, writing style, emotional appeal, and impact on American history. The students will then write a review of this document, and finally, interpret the message with a current day perspective.

Learning Objectives

- To learn about American history through the original words of history-makers.
- To identify various literary tools in writings and to analyze their usage in context.
- To develop group skills in language arts, including critique and discussion.
- To build and enhance nonfiction reading comprehension skills.

Materials

- Internet access to *Annals of American History* at <http://america.eb.com> . You can print the document before class if Internet access is not available.
- *Annals of American History* handout: "Studying History Through Writing Activity".
- Document Title - your choice for student's use with the activity's handout.
- Pen for completing activity handout.
- Printer for printing image as assigned in Part Two: Your Review. You may skip this part of the activity if Internet access is not available.

Suggested Procedure

1. Choose a document from the *Annals of American History* for the students to analyze.
2. Distribute and discuss the *Annals of American History* handout: "Studying History Through Writing Activity".
3. If you think the students need additional vocabulary review, read and discuss the Pre-Reading Vocabulary Check section of the handout before beginning the group work.
4. Access the *Annals of American History* at <http://america.eb.com> . Perform the search to locate and view the assigned document. Additional information on how to search the Annals may be found below.

5. Have students work individually or in groups to read the assigned document and complete the “Studying History Through Writing Activity” handout.
6. Discuss the reading and the student responses to the questions in Part One: Document Analysis when the students have completed the entire activity.
7. With the entire class, have students share responses and pictures from Part Two: Your Review.
8. With the entire class, discuss the responses to Part Three: Writing for Today.

PRE-READING VOCABULARY CHECK Answer Key

- | | |
|------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 1. <u> C </u> Form of text | A. The style that follows established forms, customs, or rules. |
| 2. <u> D </u> Purpose | B. The person or persons who are the intended readers. |
| 3. <u> G </u> Style | C. The shape of the text you need to produce such as: article, diary entry, essay, letter, note, poem, and short story. |
| 4. <u> B </u> Audience | D. The reason or intention for a piece of writing. |
| 5. <u> F </u> Informal | E. Any piece of writing, ranging from a single word to a complete book. |
| 6. <u> E </u> Text | F. The style that is casual or familiar. |
| 7. <u> A </u> Formal | G. The characteristic features of a piece of writing, according to the writer's purpose and target audience (for example, the choice of formal or informal vocabulary; whether or not the writer uses the first person). |

About *Annals of American History*

As an online resource, *Annals of American History* illuminates U.S. history from 1493 to modern times in over 2,000 primary documents—the original words of history-makers. History, society, and everyday life come into focus through a variety of documents and media. You may access this resource through an Internet browser at <http://america.eb.com> .

Documents in the *Annals* reveal a complete historical landscape: government, expansion, national character, foreign relations, business, war, diversity, education, the arts, family life, and religion. Use the selected document to expand knowledge, stimulate discussion, and provoke original thought for research.

Media in the *Annals* include images, video, and audio clips. Each image (art, illustration, or photograph) depicts a figure, event, or scene from everyday life from American history. Each video and audio clip captures a speech or significant moment in history.

Here are some important documents and authors from American history included in *Annals of American History*.

Selected Documents

Discovery of the New World - 1493
Give Me Liberty or Give Me Death - 1775
The Declaration of Independence - 1776
The Articles of Confederation - 1781
The Constitution of the United States – 1787
The Bill of Rights - 1789
The Gettysburg Address - 1863
A Program for Social Security - 1935
The Moon Landing - 1969

Selected Authors

Samuel Adams	Patrick Henry
Jane Addams	Thomas Jefferson
Susan B. Anthony	John F. Kennedy
Neil Armstrong	Abraham Lincoln
Hillary Clinton	Ronald Reagan
Christopher Columbus	Eleanor Roosevelt
Emily Dickinson	Franklin D. Roosevelt
Benjamin Franklin	George Washington

Searching the *Annals*

Discovering history in the *Annals* is easy. Start by choosing one of the options on the Home page.

- Select a time period from the Timeline.
- Select a letter to Browse by Author.
- Select a link to start browsing Topics in American History.
- Enter a keyword in the search box to Search the *Annals of American History*.

Each document begins with an Introduction, which appears in italics. The Introduction explains the document's historical context and provides some background about the author. The original source information is also provided here.

Quick-Click Dictionary

To find spellings, meanings, and word choices for writing, use the *Merriam-Webster Collegiate Dictionary*. It's easy! **Double-click** any word on any page to look it up in the dictionary.

Multimedia

To find the pictures or video clips in *Annals of American History*, select an option from the Timeline or Topics in American History, or run a search. On the following page, use the **Show Only** menu at the top of the page to select "Multimedia" and then click the "Go" button.

Additional Resources

Also of interest are study guides for writing found in Encyclopædia Britannica's *Britannica Online School Edition* in the Learning Materials section under Language Arts. Access these resources through an Internet browser at <http://school.eb.com> .

- Britannica Study Guide: Purpose and Audience
http://school.eb.com/browse/learning?topic=g612_language_writing
- Britannica Study Guide: Persuasive Writing
http://school.eb.com/browse/learning?topic=g612_language_writing
- Teacher Resources: How to Write a Book Review
<http://school.eb.com/browse/teachers?topic=resources>