

Components of a History Unit

Every history unit is made up of the following lesson types:

History Labs

History labs are inquiry-based lessons that teach scholars to master the big ideas of the unit by investigating historical documents. During these labs:

- You introduce a historical question that scholars will answer by the end of class.
- Scholars start to answer this question by building their background knowledge about the topic.
- Scholars will gain an understanding of the lesson content and then answer the day's historical question by studying historical documents and finding evidence to support their thinking.
- At the end of every lesson, scholars engage in a discussion about their ideas and the evidence that supports them, and they demonstrate mastery of the historical content and ideas via daily Exit Tickets.

History labs are structured in three ways, and specific guidance is given in every unit.

- **Source Analysis:** All scholars read the same set of documents during their investigation and debate how they help answer the historical question posed that day.
- **Jigsaw:** Scholars are divided into groups. Each group reads a different set of documents about a single topic then presents information about its assigned topic to the class. Scholars discuss how each presentation helps to answer the historical question posed that day.
- **Gallery Walk:** Scholars are divided into groups and rotate between stations. Each group has a set of documents about a single topic. After visiting all of the stations, scholars discuss how these documents help answer the historical question posed that day.

Writing Lessons

Scholars will write one or two creative or analytical essays during dedicated writing lessons within every unit. These can be narrative letters from the perspective of an individual in the past or argumentative essays in response to Document-Based Questions. As in history labs, scholars will investigate historical documents to inform their writing. When they are writing creative essays, scholars will study these documents to inform their chosen perspectives and better contextualize themselves in the past; for analytical essays, they will analyze historical documents to help them write persuasive arguments that

answer questions about the big ideas. In Year 1, scholars will master writing 200- to 300-word paragraphs over the course of the school year; scholars in Years 2 and 3 will practice writing longer essays.

As a history teacher, you are also a teacher of writing! Your job is to build enthusiasm for writing and revision by investing yourself in knowing scholars' work, reading it carefully and intelligently, and providing regular written feedback. This is the key to helping your scholars develop into phenomenal writers.

You will use the [Four-Point Argumentative Writing Rubric](#) to evaluate History Exit Tickets as well as argumentative writing pieces.

Project-Based Learning and Simulations

During the year, scholars will bring the past to life through projects and historical simulations. In Year 1, projects often culminate in artwork and creative writing, such as creating a memorial for enslaved Africans or a colonial political cartoon. In Years 2 and 3, scholars increasingly engage in multiday research projects from a menu of topics and present their findings to their peers.

In addition, scholars will engage in historical simulations and structured role-plays, such as a mock constitutional convention or a senate debate over the Compromise of 1850.

Projects and simulations are a critical part of inquiry-based teaching and learning. These lessons:

- Require scholars to apply their knowledge of big ideas in history in a creative, engaging context;
- Give scholars an opportunity to showcase and present their learning to their peers and families at school events throughout the year.

You will use the [Four-Point PBL Rubric](#) to evaluate projects in History.

Geography

Our scholars must know not only where places are but how historical events influence geography over time. Each unit in Years 1 and 2 includes specific Geography goals based on the places that scholars study in class. We teach geography by:

- Referencing maps in class and in scholar sourcebooks throughout the unit;
- Dedicating lessons in Year 1 units to map-making projects; and
- Having scholars study maps at home.