

The following document is a “snapshot” or preview of the book *Reading to Learn in Social Studies: Grades 6-8*. This series is designed to assist educators in the development of reading strategies specific to the social studies classroom. Each book provides practical methods for increasing literacy by illustrating strategies that assist students in learning to read social studies and reading to learn social studies. These strategies are effective whether a teacher is using Region 4 materials or adopted textbooks. Detailed teacher notes are provided to assist the teacher in the implementation of these materials.

Each book includes:

- An examination of content area reading strategies for the social studies classroom
- Strategies for planning lessons designed to integrate learning to read and reading to learn in the social studies classroom
- Strategies for the delivery of rigorous and relevant instruction that includes reading in verbal passages, symbolic text, and data using the 5E model (Engage, Explore, Explain, Elaborate, and Evaluate)
- Techniques to develop quantitative literacy:
 - Main Idea
 - Summarization
 - Inferential Thinking
 - Text Comparison
- Techniques for the implementation of appropriate assessment in social studies

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Preface

As we work with social studies educators, we often ask them to describe the greatest challenges they have in teaching social studies content. Consistently, teachers tell us that students struggle in their attempts to read and understand social studies text. The large specialized load of vocabulary and the non-linear flow of social studies exposition are difficult for students. They need help in learning to process and retain information from these challenging pieces, in both verbal and graphic formats.

In response to these concerns from teachers, we have written this book, *Reading to Learn in Social Studies, Grades 6–8*. We have looked at research and found what we believe will work for the social studies classroom.

The content of this book focuses on the student: what will make the student successful in handling difficult social studies text. It also focuses on helping social studies content specialists build capacity in reading instruction without taking away from the social studies curriculum that must be taught.

This book is organized according to the 5E Model Lesson design. The sections are:

- Engage – Piques the reader’s interest and accesses prior knowledge
- Explore – Gives the reader an opportunity to think about his/her own reading processes and about the struggles students have with reading social studies text
- Explain – Explains how to help students as they deal with social studies text, including specific strategies and examples of how to use them in the social studies curriculum
- Elaborate – Proposes a sample lesson for each grade – 6, 7, and 8 – that integrates reading strategies from the Explain section
- Evaluate – Discusses how reading is a part of the assessment process and what students need to know and be able to do to succeed on assessment items

It is our desire that this book will be a valuable tool for you as a teacher as you support your students. There are many examples that are useful in more than one social studies classroom scenario and are easily implemented. There are blackline masters you can duplicate and use with your students. There are model lessons with facilitation questions that address the process of reading in the social studies discipline.

We hope the purchase of this book will be a practical building block in your professional development and that you and your students reap many benefits from what you learn.

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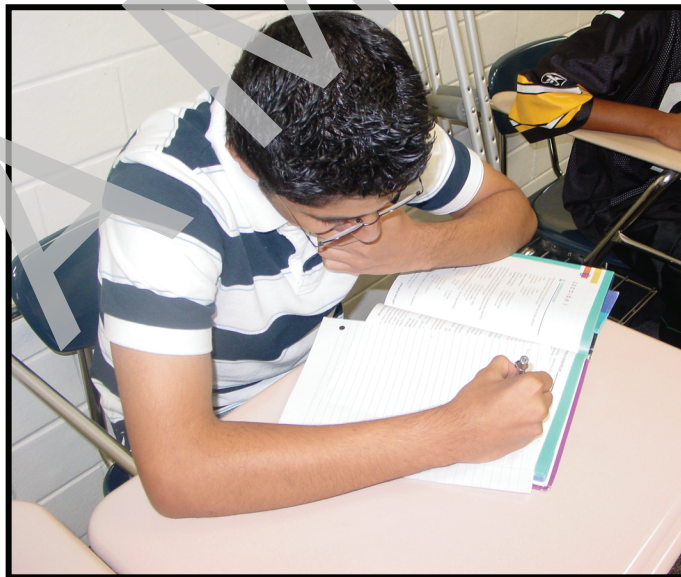
Introduction to Engage Section

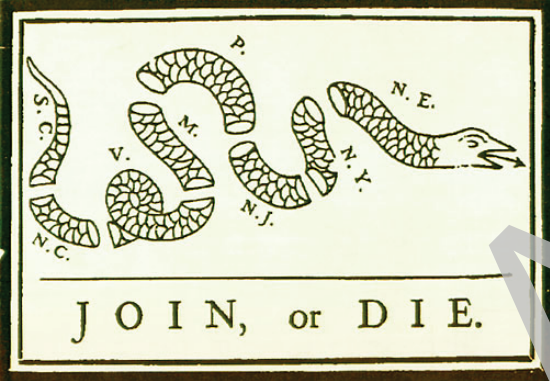
Recently, a conversation between two social studies teachers was overheard as they were leaving a department meeting. It seems that the principal had discussed plans for all social studies teachers to purposely address reading in instruction. One of the teachers was quick to indicate that she was not a reading teacher and that she did not have enough time to teach her content let alone teach reading.

In fact, she said that she felt that any student who had completed third grade should know how to read. If the student did not know how to read, he or she should probably be placed in a special reading class; this social studies teacher wanted no part of this reading mandate. However, what this teacher failed to consider was the nature of the discipline.

What is social studies? Why is reading one of the most important skills students must possess in order to learn social studies? The answers to these and many other reading related questions will be answered as we begin our journey into *Reading to Learn in Social Studies*.

This might be a good time to consider what you expect to learn from reading this book. A good way to help set purpose for reading is to use an anticipation guide. Please take time now to complete the anticipation guide on the next page before we continue with our learning.



Source	Before Reading	After Reading
<p>"I know not what course others may take, but as for me, give me liberty or give me death!"</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Patrick Henry</p>	<p>I think this means...</p>	<p>Now I think this means...</p>
<p>"Listen my children, and you shall hear, Of the midnight ride of Paul Revere."</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Longfellow</p>	<p>This reminds me of...</p>	<p>I wonder...</p>
 <p style="text-align: right;">Benjamin Franklin, artist</p>	<p>I think this means... or I am confused because...</p>	<p>Now I think this means...</p>

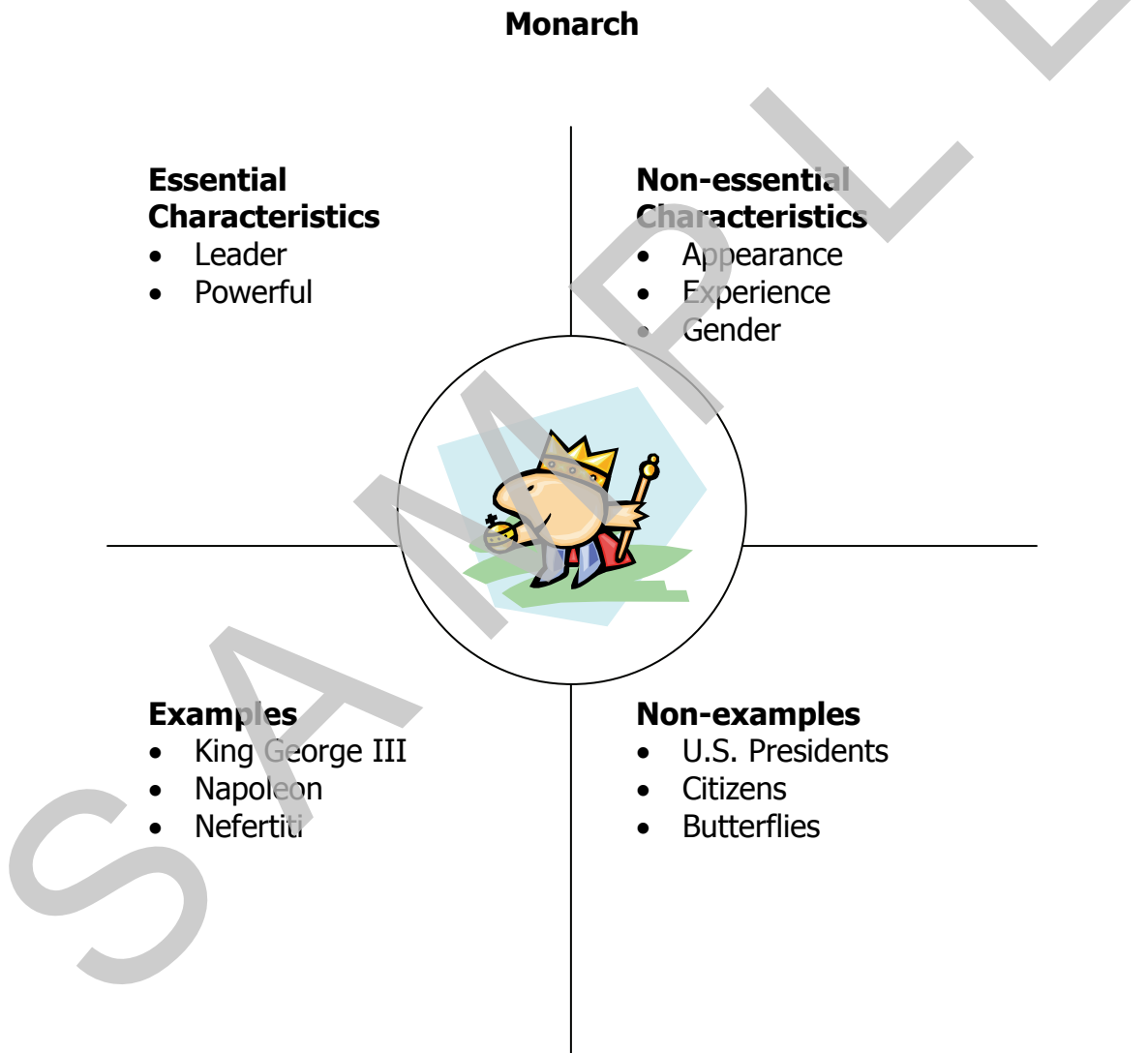
(Adapted from Santa, 2004, pp. 158–159)

Fruyer model (visual boxing)

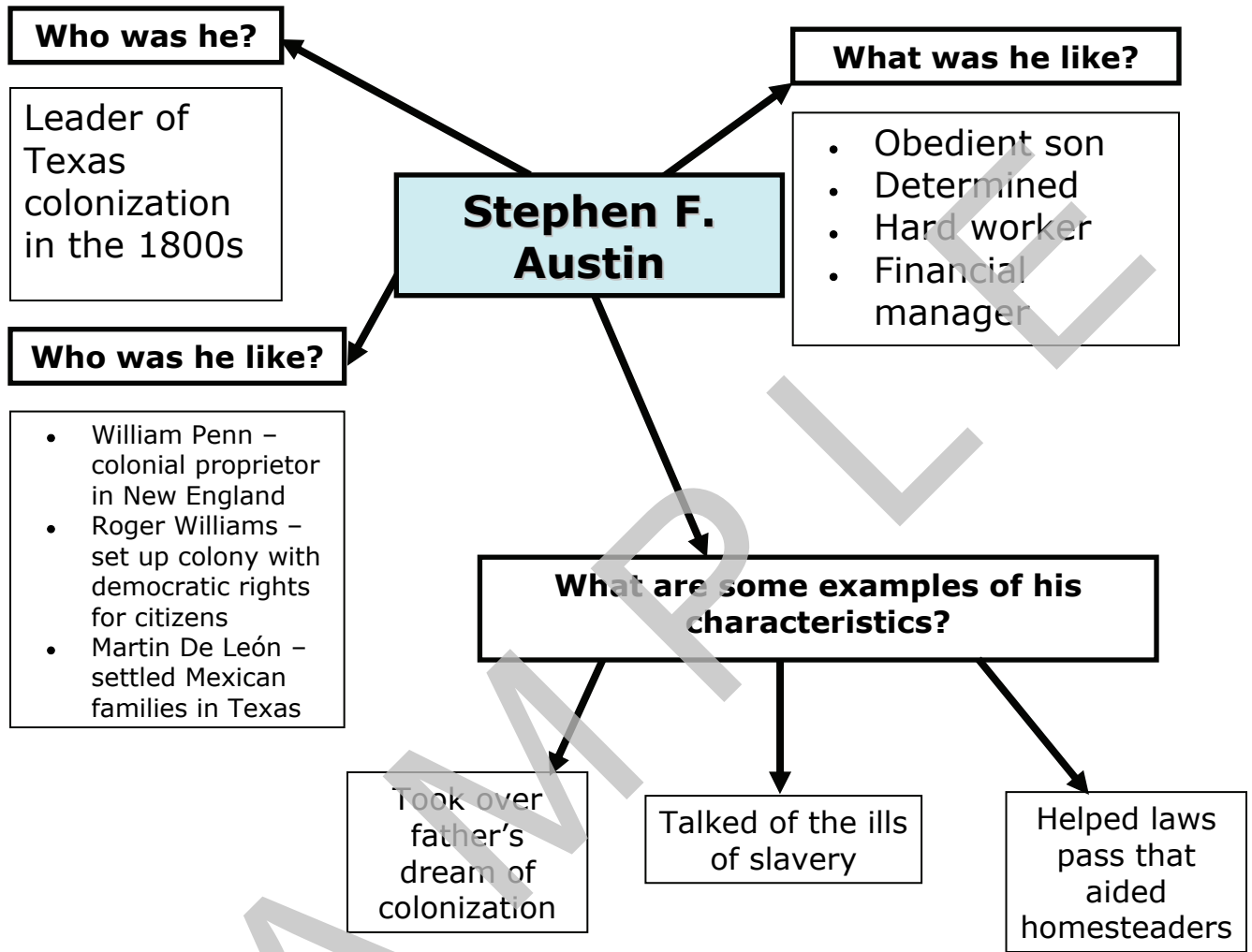
Using a quadrant format, students will identify aspects of the new word. The quadrants contain:

- Essential characteristics
- Non-essential characteristics
- An example
- A non-example
- Center circle – a picture

An example for “Monarch” might be:



This format can also be used to analyze one person, such as one of the examples from the previous illustration.



Students are analyzing historical figures and also distinguishing between fact and opinion. They can list a characteristic of a person, but they must also back that characteristic up with some facts in the example section.

One may want to consider the relationship between *Reading to Learn in Social Studies* and assessment. There is a very strong correlation between reading skills and success on statewide assessments in the social studies. For example, according to the Performance Level Descriptors for the Texas Assessment of Knowledge and Skills (TAKS) in grades 8, 10, and 11 (TEA, 2006), if students are to meet the standards they must have the ability to:

- Read and understand grade-level social studies documents, including primary and secondary sources.
- Use grade-level and content appropriate vocabulary.
- Organize historical information both chronologically and thematically.
- Utilize grade-level social studies skills, such as identifying cause-and-effect relationships, comparing and contrasting, interpreting, and analyzing.
- Read and understand maps, graphs, tables, and other visuals.

One of the surest ways to be certain that the students have these skills is for them to be given the proper tools to develop these skills, to be taught how and when to use these tools, and to be given the opportunity not only to practice these tools, but also to take ownership of these tools. If students know how to process written and visual information as it is presented on the social studies assessment, they will have a greater opportunity to meet the standard and hopefully exceed expectations.

Formative Assessment

What role do reading strategies play in the formative assessment? Before reading, the teacher is able to assess prior knowledge through the use of the K-W-L, or students may be asked to respond to stimuli such as an artifact, picture, audio recording, or other media.

Using brainstorming, the teacher may find that the students have sufficient knowledge or that they may be lacking in their understanding of a concept. This data informs the teacher so that he or she can make the necessary adjustments in their teaching and learning plan. At this stage of the learning process, the teacher could pose questions or ask the students to pose questions about their new learning.

After the teacher has set the purpose for the reading assignment, the students begin the actual reading. This is considered the “during reading” stage, and for the most part, the student is engaging in self-assessment. However, at times, peer and teacher assessment may be more appropriate. Students may use selective highlighting, journaling, or read and say something, or read and write something.

Other strategies may include the use of note taking guides, sticky note discussions, or the use of graphic organizers. Based on the outcome of these experiences, students may be asked to re-visit what they have just read, said, or heard. At this point, the teacher may make a decision to adjust the instruction or to re-teach.

There are also many opportunities to assess during the “after reading” stage. Students may be asked to give the main idea and supporting details, to write a summary, to engage in a discussion in pair, small groups, or in a large group. Students may be asked to complete some type of product that shows that they understand the concept.

Assessment should not be considered a method for punishment, but should be used as an integral part of the learning process. Reflection is also a crucial part of this stage. The teacher is able to assess learning by allowing students to reflect on their new learning; reflection may be written or oral.

Based upon these reflections, the teacher may debrief with the students about the reading experience. During the debriefing, the teacher may ask students about the reading strategies that they used. Students may answer questions similar to the following:

- Before I read, I _____.
- While I read, I _____.
- After I read, I _____.

By reviewing the answers to these questions, the teacher can assess the students’ ability to select and use the appropriate reading strategies.

Ongoing assessment is very important to the learning process since the teacher is able to monitor and adjust as needed based on the results of formative assessment. Reading strategies also allow for a naturalistic approach to assessment. Vacca and Vacca report that a naturalistic approach to assessment is based on direct responses from the individual and uses methods within the natural classroom environment (Vacca, 1999).

Now we will look at summative assessment. As stated previously, the summative assessment measures what students have learned at the end of a set of learning activities.

