



Reading to Learn, Writing to Connect

Strategies for Connecting
Reading and Writing Skills with
World Studies Content Curriculum

A Curriculum for Grades 4–12

Developed by:

World Affairs Council

In partnership with:

**Washington State Council
for the Social Studies**

With support from:

The Russell Family Foundation



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World Affairs Council

The World Affairs Council promotes dialogue and debate about international issues critical to our world today. Its educational outreach program, the Global Classroom, connects teachers and students with international resources, ideas, and people. For more information, please call (206) 441-5910 or visit www.world-affairs.org

Washington State Council for the Social Studies

The Washington Council for the Social Studies is a statewide organization of educators dedicated to helping the students of Washington State learn about themselves, their communities, and their world so that they can act as informed, involved citizens. For more information, please call (206) 568-1195, or (866) 568-1195 outside of the Seattle area, or visit www.learningspace.org/socialstudies.

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Reading to *Learn*, *Writing to Connect* will be available on-line at this web site after June 30, 2002.

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Foreword



It would be very odd to think about going out into the world and having a math experience, a language arts experience, or a social studies experience. Our lives are not arranged according to disciplines or categories. We read books, go to work or school, shop for groceries or clothes, attend movies and sporting events, and, hopefully find time to walk in the woods, ski down a mountain, shoot hoops in the park, visit with family and friends, or walk our dogs in the “off leash” areas of our towns and cities. We live in the world, not within a discipline, and we bring our full range of knowledge and skills to whatever we do.

It makes perfect sense, then, to embrace the linkage between social studies and literacy. When we read, we are reading about something, and that something exists in a unique context. We can not appreciate the book if we do not understand the times, values, and issues of the people and era in which the story occurs. The author could not have written the story unless he or she had a profound understanding of the people and places of her story. Consider any story set in a certain location. The author must know what people eat, wear, see, hear, smell, who they might talk with, what they would talk about, what they would be doing during a typical day, what rules they would be expected to follow, what would get them in trouble, what sources of conflict were present, how different classes, races, political groups, and economic groups got along (or did not), the roles of men and women and children, the ways of family, etc. An author who does not know these things cannot write a story, and a reader who only reads according to today’s values and mores cannot appreciate what is happening in the story.

At the same time, students of the social studies cannot learn about other times and places if they can not read for meaning. We must know how to read and evaluate different kinds of texts, understand how to critically question that which we are reading, and know how to recognize or allow for bias and limitations caused by the point of view of the writer. We also require the skills of the language arts to communicate about what we have learned in ways that inform others.

The linkage of social studies and language arts, of literacy of the word and of the world as they say, is a powerful connection. Students learn best when they are actively involved in the learning, and when they are encouraged to make the learning meaningful. The material in this curriculum encourages that kind of learning. Students are active, they are collaborative, they are critical thinkers, they are researchers, they are reporters, and they are, most of all, readers and writers, using their skills to learn about the world in which they live.

Doug Selwyn, President
Washington State Council for the Social Studies
Seattle, Washington

Note to Educators



Reading does not consist merely of decoding the written word or language; rather, it is preceded by and intertwined with knowledge of the world.

Paulo Freire

Dear Educator:

Our children are eager to build connections — connections between their lives and the lives of children living in other parts of the world, connections that demonstrate the universality of the human condition, connections that give meaning to lessons learned in the classroom. Reading builds these connections by immersing students in other worlds and challenging them to think more deeply about places well beyond our borders.

Reading to Learn, Writing to Connect was developed to support social studies and language arts teachers as they bring reading and writing skills together with world studies content curriculum. Literacy and cultural literacy come together such that students are empowered with the key to unlocking worlds that they could never before imagine, information previously beyond their reach, and cultures much unlike their own. The units range from recreating the 1962 “Century 21 World Fair” to publishing a travel magazine to reading stories about winter traditions in cultures around the world. Experienced teachers present hands-on strategies for teaching about world geography through literature, engaging students in research about countries, and using short stories that explore human issues.

This curriculum represents a partnership between the World Affairs Council and the Washington State Council for the Social Studies, with support from The Russell Family Foundation. We now extend this partnership to you, the teacher, as you make the world come alive for your students.

We hope that this curriculum helps you in your teaching, and we look forward to hearing from you about ways we can continue to support you as you bring the world into your classroom.

Sincerely,



Nancy Bacon
Director of Educational Programs
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The World Affairs Council and the Washington State Council for the Social Studies thank The Russell Family Foundation for their support of this curriculum and the outreach involved in the *Reading to Learn, Writing to Connect* project.

Standards Addressed by Lessons in Reading to Learn, Writing to Connect

	Chapter 1 World's Fair	Chapter 2 Travel Magazine	Chapter 3 World Geography	Chapter 4 Country Report	Chapter 5 Winter Solstice	Chapter 6 We're All Just People
NCSS Standards						
Culture	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
People/Places/Environments		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Power/Authority/Government	✓		✓			✓
Science/Technology/Society	✓			✓		✓
Global Connections	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Civic Ideals & Practices	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓
NCTE Standards						
Reading	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Writing	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Research	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Analysis	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Washington State Essential Academic Learning Requirements						
History						
1- Major ideas, themes, developments	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓
2- Impact of ideas and technology on history	✓		✓	✓		✓
3- Impact of technology, ideas, and creativity	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓
Geography						
1- Maps, charts, and other geographic tools	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓
2- Physical and human characteristics of place/region		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
3- Interaction between people, environment, and culture		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Civics						
2- Purposes and organization of governments and laws		✓			✓	
3- Purposes of int'l relationships and how U.S. foreign policy is made	✓		✓			
4- Principles of democratic civic involvement						✓
Economics						
1- Impact of scarcity			✓	✓		✓
2- Essential characteristics of modern economies	✓	✓				
3- Role of government and institutions in modern economies						
Grade Level						
Upper elementary (4–5)	✓	✓				
Middle (6–8)	✓		✓	✓	✓	
High (9–12)						✓