

COMMON CORE: Literacy

Lessons for Social Studies Educators

Reading Standard 6. Point of View

Reading Standards: Gr. 6-8	Reading Standard: Gr. 9-10	Reading Standard: Gr. 11-12
6. Point of View		
Identify aspects of a text that reveal an author's point of view or purpose.	<i>Compare the point of view of two or more authors for how they treat the same or similar topics, including which details they include and emphasize from their respective accounts.</i>	Evaluate authors' points of views on the same historical event or issue <i>by assessing the authors' claims, reasoning, and evidence.</i>

Overview: Understanding an author's point of view, or perspective, toward an event or issue in history of contemporary situations is vital to comprehending the issue itself and the motivations of individuals and groups as they respond to events. By reading and interpreting primary and secondary sources, identifying an author's point of view, including the details of evidence (facts, examples, reasoning) he/she uses to support this point of view, students will gain a deeper understanding of social studies content knowledge. In addition, they will come to realize that history is not found in one version of events, but through the consideration of multiple sides and perspectives.

Lesson Ideas:

1. Use the provided powerpoint presentation to introduce and reinforce student understanding of the concepts of "point of view", "purpose" of a text, and an author's "tone." (The powerpoint utilizes passages from the Declaration of Independence as an example. Therefore, some brief background information may be required by the teacher prior to its use.)
2. Use the SOAPS strategy, especially the "Multiple Documents SOAPS Matrix" to reinforce students' ability to identify an author's "purpose" which inevitably leads them to identifying an author's "point of view." (The matrix is designed for comparing up to four documents/author's perspectives toward the same event, situation, or issue.) Similarly, the SOAPStone document analysis tool is effective for high school students required to include an analysis of an author's tone in their attempt to fully understand "point of view."
3. To introduce students to the idea of directly opposing viewpoints, use a modified version of the "Dialectic Journal" strategy. For example, as students note, in the lefthand column of the T-chart, the main ideas from each paragraph of the Declaration of Independence, summarizing Jefferson's perspective and details offered to support his point of view, they are asked to assume the viewpoint of King George III, reading his "Proclamation of Rebellion". In the righthand column of the Dialectic Journal's T-chart, they are asked to quote direct passages from the proclamation which would directly respond to the main ideas presented by Jefferson. (This exercise is an engaging opportunity for students to work in pairs. When complete, volunteer pairs would be encouraged to present an oral reading to the class of their T-chart's notes, assuming the "voices" of Jefferson versus King George.)

Lesson Developed by Pam Merrill, Edmond Public Schools, Edmond, Oklahoma

4. Use of Venn Diagrams is one of the most well-documented research-based strategies and can be adapted for comparing three and four documents, presenting three and four points of view toward the same topic. For example, students can be given the Three-way “triangle” Venn diagram to compare Jefferson’s point of view from the Declaration of Independence to the writing of James Otis (*Rights Asserted*) to the Olive Branch Petition. This Venn diagram requires students to restate each author’s “point of view” after noting similarities and differences in details (facts and examples) used by each author. Upper level students can use the Four-Way Venn diagram to add one additional author’s viewpoint, William Pitt (*Defense of the Colonies*). This Venn strategy asks students to both note each author’s point of view and to identify common evidence (facts, examples, and reasoning used by all four authors in addressing the same topic.

5. All secondary students can find the graphic organizer, Four Perspectives, as a useful tool for note-taking during the reading and analysis of up to four documents dealing with the same topic from multiple perspectives. This simplified organizer requires students to merely note specific passages from each document which offer clues to the author’s point of view.

6. Writing through the eyes and perspectives of others can be an effective instructional strategy for deeper understanding of an author’s purpose and point of view. Two of the most highly recommended short writing strategies (“Poem for Two Voices” and “RAFT”) are not engaging and creative exercises, allowing for differentiated instruction. High school students should be capable of developing “Point of View Letters in Response” which requires a more thorough analysis of the reasoning and arguments made by an author in order to compose a letter in response, using direct references to the evidence and reasoning made by the author. (Examples of these strategies can be found here.)

IN CONGRESS, JULY 4, 1776

The unanimous Declaration of the thirteen united States of America

(Paragraph 1.) When in the Course of human events it becomes necessary for one people to dissolve the political bands which have connected them with another and to assume among the powers of the earth, the separate and equal station to which the Laws of Nature and of Nature's God entitle them, a decent respect to the opinions of mankind requires that they should declare the causes which impel them to the separation.

(Paragraph 2.) We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness. — That to secure these rights, Governments are instituted among Men, deriving their just powers from the consent of the governed — That whenever any Form of Government becomes destructive of these ends, it is the Right of the People to alter or to abolish it, and to institute new Government, laying its foundation on such principles and organizing its powers in such form, as to them shall seem most likely to effect their Safety and Happiness.

(Paragraph 3.) Prudence, indeed, will dictate that Governments long established should not be changed for light and transient causes; and accordingly all experience hath shewn that mankind are more disposed to suffer, while evils are sufferable than to right themselves by abolishing the forms to which they are accustomed. But when a long train of abuses and usurpations, pursuing invariably the same Object evinces a design to reduce them under absolute Despotism, it is their right, it is their duty, to throw off such Government, and to provide new Guards for their future security. — Such has been the patient sufferance of these Colonies; and such is now the necessity which constrains them to alter their former Systems of Government.

(Paragraph 4.) The history of the present King of Great Britain is a history of repeated injuries and usurpations, all having in direct object the establishment of an absolute Tyranny over these States. To prove this, let Facts be submitted to a candid world.

Line 4.1 He has refused his Assent to Laws, the most wholesome and necessary for the public good.

Line 4.2 He has forbidden his Governors to pass Laws of immediate and pressing importance...

Line 4.3 He has dissolved Representative Houses repeatedly, for opposing with manly firmness his invasions on the rights of the people...

Line 4.4 He has sent hither swarms of Officers to harass our people and eat out their substance...

Line 4.5 He has kept among us, in times of peace, Standing Armies without the Consent of our legislatures...

Line 4.6 For quartering large bodies of armed troops among us...

Line 4.7 For cutting off our Trade with all parts of the world...

Line 4.8 For imposing Taxes on us without our Consent...

Line 4.9 For depriving us in many cases, of the benefit of Trial by Jury...

Line 4.10 He has plundered our seas, ravaged our coasts, burnt our towns, and destroyed the lives of our people...

Line 4.11 He has excited domestic insurrections amongst us, and has endeavoured to bring on the inhabitants of our frontiers, the merciless Indian Savages...

Line 4.12 In every stage of these Oppressions We have Petitioned for Redress in the most humble terms: Our repeated Petitions have been answered only by repeated injury...

(Paragraph 5.) We, therefore, the Representatives of the united States of America, in General Congress, Assembled, appealing to the Supreme Judge of the world for the rectitude of our intentions, do, in the Name, and by Authority of the good People of these Colonies, solemnly publish and declare, That these united Colonies are, and of Right ought to be Free and Independent States, that they are Absolved from all Allegiance to the British Crown, and that all political connection between them and the State of Great Britain, is and ought to be totally dissolved; and that as Free and Independent States, they have full Power to levy War, conclude Peace, contract Alliances, establish Commerce, and to do all other Acts and Things which Independent States may of right do. — And for the support of this Declaration, with a firm reliance on the protection of Divine Providence, we mutually pledge to each other our Lives, our Fortunes, and our sacred Honor.

New Hampshire: Josiah Bartlett, William Whipple, Matthew Thornton

Massachusetts: John Hancock, Samuel Adams, John Adams, Robert Treat Paine, Elbridge Gerry

Rhode Island: Stephen Hopkins, William Ellery

Connecticut: Roger Sherman, Samuel Huntington, William Williams, Oliver Wolcott

New York: William Floyd, Philip Livingston, Francis Lewis, Lewis Morris

New Jersey: Richard Stockton, John Witherspoon, Francis Hopkinson, John Hart, Abraham Clark

Pennsylvania: Robert Morris, Benjamin Rush, Benjamin Franklin, John Morton, George Clymer, James Smith, George Taylor, James Wilson, George Ross

Delaware: Caesar Rodney, George Read, Thomas McKean

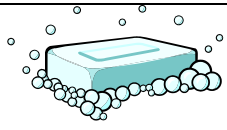
Maryland: Samuel Chase, William Paca, Thomas Stone, Charles Carroll of Carrollton

Virginia: George Wythe, Richard Henry Lee, Thomas Jefferson, Benjamin Harrison, Thomas Nelson, Jr., Francis Lightfoot Lee, Carter Braxton

North Carolina: William Hooper, Joseph Hewes, John Penn

South Carolina: Edward Rutledge, Thomas Heyward, Jr., Thomas Lynch, Jr., Arthur Middleton

Georgia: Button Gwinnett, Lyman Hall, George Walton



SOAPS

Document 1.

Document 2

Document 3

Document 4

Who is the Speaker?

What is the Occasion?

Who is the Audience?

What is the Purpose?

What is the Subject?



SOAPSTONE

Overview:

“Too often students approach a text with no particular plan. To novice readers, the text contains a series of facts that they discover and report to the teacher....Thus, students typically respond by repeating the details of the piece to show they know what it says...Each piece of reading should give students the opportunity to practice and develop the intellectual skills by which they make meaning from material...”

College Board, Interdisciplinary Strategies for Social Studies, 2004

The SOAPSTONE strategy as introduced in the College Board’s “Interdisciplinary Strategies for Social Studies” training is an expanded version of SOAPS. The additional element, “tone,” reflects the attitude of the author, which includes his/her perspective, point of view, and even bias.

Materials Needed:

SOAPSTONE Guide

Reading or primary source material

Procedure:

As students examine their assigned text or source, ask them to respond to the following in complete sentences or short phrases, as the instructor desires. This initial analysis is useful as an important stepping stone toward development of an essay which requires analysis of multiple sources in order to address a given prompt. However, it is just as useful to initiate students to understanding common elements of all primary sources, whether they be documents, illustrations, photographs, sound recordings, posters, maps, graphs, etc.

SOAPSTONE



Who is the <u>Speaker?</u>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The voice that is speaking. Identification of the historical person (or group of people) who created the primary source.• What do we know about this historic or contemporary person?• What role does he play in an historic event?
What is the <u>Occasion?</u>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• What is the time and place? The context in which the primary source was created?• What is the <i>Geographic</i> and <i>Historic</i> intersection at which this source was produced?
Who is the <u>Audience?</u>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The readers to whom this document is directed• The audience may be one person, a small group, or a large group; it may be a certain person or a certain people.
What is the <u>Purpose?</u>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• What is the reason behind the text;• Why was it written? What goal did the author have in mind?
What is the <u>Subject?</u>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• What is the general topic, content, or idea contained in the text?• Summarize in a few words or phrase.
What is the <u>Tone?</u>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• What is the attitude expressed by the speaker?• Examine the choice of words, emotions expressed, imagery used to determine the speaker's attitude.



DIALECTICAL JOURNAL

Overview:

To avoid reading assignments becoming merely passive experiences, the dialectical notebook or journal is a method for students to both review the key concepts they have read while requiring them to question what they read.

Materials Needed:

Paper or Spiral Notebook

Procedure:

1. Students should divide their paper into two vertical columns. One will be labeled "text" and the other labeled "response." As students read, they are to record important points in the text column, giving them a good summary of the material for later reference.
2. Also, while they read, students should record questions, comments, or ideas in the response column. These responses are used in class to clear up any problems students might have in completely understanding their reading assignment. This column actually becomes an "intellectual history" of their own thought processes. It will also become the basis for later writing assignments.

Important Information:

**Personal Reactions or
Reflections? Questions?**

Dialectic Journal

Title of Document: Author:	Title of Document: Author:
Summarize the point of view expressed in this document:	Quote Direct Passage from this document in which the author expresses his opposing point of view:
Para. 1	
Para. 2.	
Para. 3	
Para. 4	
Para. 5	

Title of Document:

Author:

Passages Reflecting Point of View:

Title of Document:

Author:

Passages Reflecting Point of View:

Subject: *(Event, Issue, Situation?)*

Title of Document:

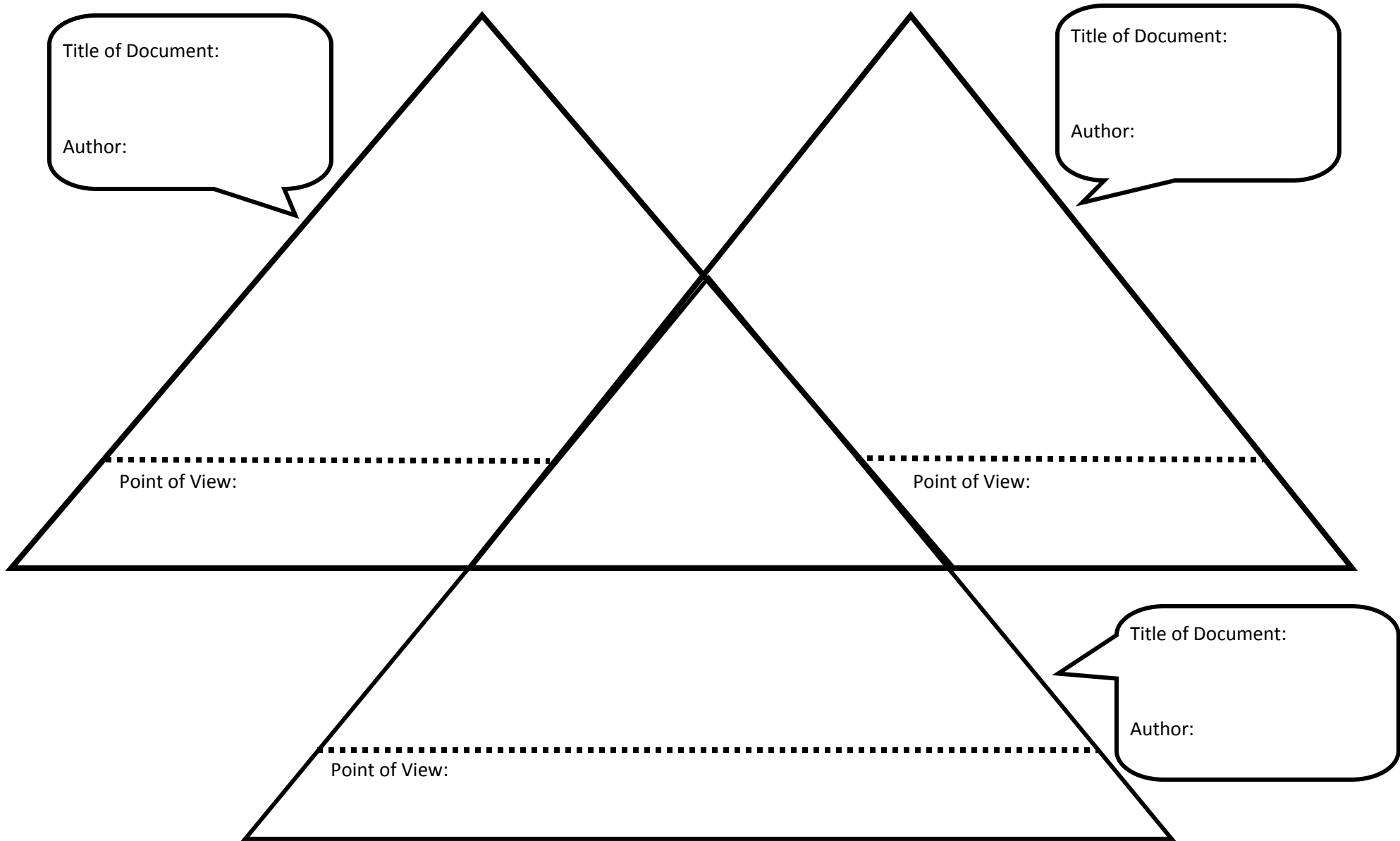
Author:

Passages Reflecting Point of View:

Title of Document:

Author:

Passages Reflecting Point of View:



Compare, on the graphic organizer above, the Points of View (Author's Perspectives) on the same topic discussed in the three documents you have analyzed. Note details unique from the each of the three texts (facts or examples) in the separate triangles; note details similar to all three documents in the center triangle. Summarize in one sentence the Point of View of each author within the space provided above.

Title of Document:

Author:

Point of View: (Perspective Toward Subject)

Title of Document:

Author:

Point of View: (Perspective)

Common Ideas, Evidence, Reasoning:

Title of Document:

Author:

Point of View: (Perspective)

Title of Document:

Author:

Point of View: (Perspective)



POEM FOR TWO VOICES

Overview:

Encouraging exchange of ideas and active debates of opposing viewpoints is one of the strongest, most memorable instructional strategies, according to recent research. One method for combining creative writing with the study of factual events in a history, geography, or economics class is use of the **“Poem for Two Voices.”** This strategy requires students to put themselves into another person’s “shoes” in another time or place, inquiring as to what that individual might say if we could listen to a debate between him/her and an individual from his/her opposing point of view.

This strategy can be an effective follow-up to the analysis of primary sources expressing two opposing viewpoints, asking students to quote from the source or rephrase it in their own words, as they write the “poem.”

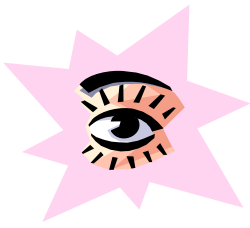
Student poems also make for good classroom performances and readers’ theatres, involving groups of students or the entire class.

Procedure:

1. Engage students in a study of two points of view toward an historic or contemporary event. Ask students to jot down important reasoning behind the differing perspectives, which they will later use for reference when writing their “Poems for Two Voices.”
2. Introduce students to the strategy by showing them a sample of a Poem for Two Voices or assigning them to read a sample aloud, as a class. ***(See sample below.)***
3. Assign students into pairs. Each member of the pair is to represent one of two opposing viewpoints. Together, the pair will create a “Poem for Two Voices,” writing statements from their own perspectives AND finding common ground for statements made by both perspectives.

A POEM FOR TWO VOICES

I am _____		I am _____
<i>(Declare what side I have taken this side of the debate.)</i>	<i>(Declare the subject for our debate)</i>	<i>(Declare what side I have taken this side of the debate.)</i>
<i>(Explain the reasoning behind my point of view.)</i>	<i>(Declare a point of agreement.)</i>	<i>(Explain the reasoning behind my point of view.)</i>
<i>(Respond to the previous statement made by my opponent.)</i>	<i>(Declare another point of agreement or rephrase earlier statement.)</i>	<i>(Respond to the previous statement made by my opponent.)</i>
<i>(Use extended reasoning or elaboration to explain my point of view.)</i>	<i>(Summarize with a strong statement what we both agree upon.)</i>	<i>(Use extended reasoning or elaboration to explain my point of view.)</i>

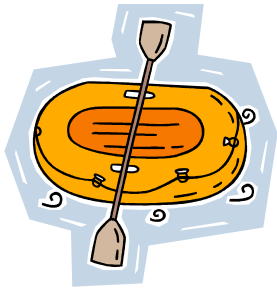


Point of View Letters in Response

Overview: This strategy includes elements of primary document analysis, easy note-making skills, evaluation of historical perspective (POINT OF VIEW) and preparation to letter-writing from an opposing historic viewpoint. It is effective in helping students glean from a primary document supporting evidence of historic perspective and assisting them to understand multiple viewpoints toward the same topic. Easily adapted to any grade level, this strategy can be accomplished in one class period, either individually or by students working in pairs. A possible extension to the lesson might be the creation of student "Poems for Two Voices." (See *STEPS online handbook, Edmond Public Schools, www.edmondschools.net*)

Procedure:

1. Give students a primary source document that expresses a clear point of view toward a topic. One that include supporting arguments, evidence, and reasoning is needed. (The following example has been taken from a letter addressed to his former master, published by Frederick Douglass in his *North Star* newspaper.)
2. Ask students to make two columns on their own piece of paper. In the lefthand column, they should take note of at least three main points the author of the document tries to make. (For example, Douglass' letter discusses several criticisms of slavery as he directly experienced it.) Students should restate the major points in only brief, concise phrases in this lefthand column.
3. Ask students to re-read the document and in the righthand column, jot down the exact passages from it which support each of the three major points from the lefthand column. This is a vital step in the process which requires students to doublecheck their first interpretation of the document by looking for specific evidence supporting their initial conclusions.
4. Finally, ask students to attempt to write a brief summary of the main purpose of the document. Why was it written? What was the overall message?
5. Next, students will assume the role of an opposing viewpoint to the one found in the primary document. (For example, using the Douglass letter, students would be asked to assume the role of Douglass' former slaveowner. What would his reaction be toward the letter? What is his point of view toward slavery and the criticisms Douglass made? How would he justify his perspective?) Using a separate piece of paper, students will develop a response to at least two of the points discussed by the author of the primary document. At this first step, they will be formulating merely an outline of what might become a complete letter of response. As part of the outlining process, ask students to make direct reference to passages from the primary document as part of their response. (For example, in the sample outline, the former slaveowner, Thomas Auld, directly quotes Douglass on several major points before he begins to discuss his opposing viewpoint and defend it.)
6. If desired, students may wish to create a final product, a letter of response. But the goals of document analysis from multiple perspectives and the identification of supporting evidence and argument has been achieved through the outlining process.



“RAFT” Student Products

This is an effective strategy that integrates reading and writing in a non-traditional way. It asks that students take what they have read and demonstrate their depth of understanding. The RAFT format is flexible and offers limitless opportunities for creativity for both you and your students.

When first using “RAFT” with your students, students are required to develop a product after responding to the specifics for each element in the acronym; they as follows:

Role: In developing the final product, what role will the student “assume”? (Writer? Historic Character? Artist? Politician? Scientist? etc.)

Audience: Who should the student consider as the audience for his/her product? (Other students? Parents? Local community? Other characters in history? Citizens in other nations?)

Format: What is the best product that will demonstrate the student’s understanding of the text? (A writing task? Art work? Action plan? Project? Debate? etc.)

Topic: This is the focus/subject of the final product. (Who will be the main focus of the product? What event will constitute the centerpiece of the action?)

Proclamation of Rebellion

23 August 1775.



Whereas many of our subjects in divers parts of our Colonies and Plantations in North America, misled by dangerous and ill designing men, and forgetting the allegiance which they owe to the power that has protected and supported them;

after various disorderly acts committed in disturbance of the public peace, to the obstruction of lawful commerce, and to the oppression of our loyal subjects carrying on the same;

have at length proceeded to open and avowed rebellion, by arraying themselves in a hostile manner, and traitorously preparing, ordering and levying war against us:

And whereas, there is reason to apprehend that such rebellion hath been much promoted and encouraged by the traitorous correspondence, counsels and comfort of diverse wicked and desperate persons within this realm:

To the end therefore... we have thought fit... to issue our Royal Proclamation, hereby declaring, that ...all our Officers, civil and military, are obliged to suppress such rebellion, and to bring the traitors to justice,

... all our subjects of this Realm...are bound by law to be aiding and assisting in the suppression of such rebellion, and to disclose and make known all traitorous conspiracies against us, our crown and dignity...

**Given at our Court at St. James's the twenty-third day of August,
one thousand seven hundred and seventy-five,
in the fifteenth year of our reign.**

God save the King



By the KING,
A PROCLAMATION.
For suppressing Rebellion and Sedition.

G E O R G E R.



HEREAS many of Our Subjects in divers Parts of Our Colonies and Plantations in *North America*, misled by dangerous and ill-designing Men, and forgetting the Allegiance which they owe to the Power that has protected and sustained them, after various disorderly Acts committed in Disturbance of the Publick Peace, to the Obstruction of lawful Commerce, and to the Oppression of Our loyal Subjects carrying on the same, have at length proceeded to an open and avowed Rebellion, by arraying themselves in hostile Manner to withstand the Execution of the Law, and traitorously preparing, ordering, and levving War against Us. And whereas there is Reason to apprehend that such Rebellion hath been much promoted and encouraged by the traitorous Correspondence, Counsels, and Comfort of divers wicked and desperate Persons within this Realm: To the End therefore that none of Our Subjects may neglect or violate their Duty through Ignorance thereof, or through any Doubt of the Protection which the Law will afford to their Loyalty and Zeal; We have thought fit, by and with the Advice of Our Privy Council, to issue this Our Royal Proclamation, hereby declaring that not only all Our Officers Civil and Military are obliged to exert their utmost Endeavours to suppress such Rebellion, and to bring the Traitors to Justice; but that all Our Subjects of this Realm and the Dominions thereunto belonging are bound by Law to be aiding and assisting in the Suppression of such Rebellion, and to disclose and make known all traitorous Conspiracies and Attempts against Us, Our Crown and Dignity; And We do accordingly strictly charge and command all Our Officers as well Civil as Military, and all other Our obedient and loyal Subjects, to use their utmost Endeavours to withstand and suppress such Rebellion, and to disclose and make known all Treasons and traitorous Conspiracies which they shall know to be against Us, Our Crown and Dignity; and for that Purpose, that they transmit to One of Our Principal Secretaries of State, or other proper Officer, due and full Information of all Persons who shall be found carrying on Correspondence with, or in any Manner or Degree aiding or abetting the Persons now in open Arms and Rebellion against Our Government within any of Our Colonies and Plantations in *North America*, in order to bring to condign Punishment the Authors, Perpetrators, and Abettors of such traitorous Designs.

Given at Our Court at St. *James's*, the Twenty-third Day of *August*, One thousand seven hundred and seventy-five, in the Fifteenth Year of Our Reign.

God save the King.

L O N D O N :

Printed by *Charles Eyre* and *William Strahan*, Printers to the King's most Excellent Majesty. 1775.

James Otis, The Rights of the British Colonies Asserted and Proved (1763)



James Otis

It is . . . true in fact and *experience*...that empire follows the balance of *property*...But, it will never follow that government is *rightfully* founded on property alone. What shall we say then? I think it has an everlasting foundation in the *unchangeable will of GOD*, the author of nature, whose laws never vary...*Government* is therefore most evidently founded *on the necessities of our nature*. It is by no means an *arbitrary* thing depending merely on *human will*.

The *end* of government being the *good* of mankind points out its great duties: it is above all things to provide for the security and happy enjoyment of life, liberty, and property.

...If life, liberty, and property could be enjoyed in *solitude* there would be no need of government. But the experience of ages has proved that such is the nature of man, a weak, imperfect being... that the valuable ends of life cannot be obtained without assistance... Men they cannot live together without contests. These contests require some arbitrator to determine them..

The form of government is by *nature* and by *right* so far left to the *individuals* of each society that they may alter it...to any other form they please... But how seldom this right has been asserted, history will abundantly show...GOD Almighty has given to all men a natural right to be *free*, and they have it ordinarily in their power to make themselves so if they please.

In order to form an idea of the natural rights of the colonists, I presume it will be granted that they are the common children of the same Creator with their brethren of Great Britain. Nature has placed all such in a state of equality and perfect freedom... The colonists are by the law of nature freeborn, as indeed all men are, white or black. No better reasons can be given for enslaving those of any color...

The colonists, being men, have a right to be considered as equally entitled to all the rights with the Europeans, and they are not to be restrained in the exercise of any of these rights...By being members of society they have not renounced their natural liberty and if 'tis taken from them without their consent they are enslaved.

Now can there be any liberty where property is taken away without consent? Has this whole continent of near three thousand miles in length...and some millions of as loyal, useful subjects, white and black, the election of one member of the House of Commons? Is there the consent of the colonists whether taxes and impositions are laid on their trade by the crown or Parliament? I say, in a state of nature no man can take my property from me without my consent; if he does, he deprives me of my liberty and makes me a slave.

We all think ourselves happy under Great Britain. We love, esteem, and reverence our mother country, and adore our King..His Majesty GEORGE III is rightful King and sovereign, and, with his Parliament, the supreme legislative of Great Britain... this constitution is the most free one and by far the best now existing on earth; by this constitution every man in the dominions is a free man; no parts of His Majesty's dominions can be taxed without their consent; every part has a right to be represented in the legislature...the colonies are now in such a state as to make it best for the good of the whole that they should...be represented in some proportion... in the legislature of the nation; this would firmly unite all parts of the British empire in the greater peace and prosperity.

James Otis, Massachusetts lawyer, member of Massachusetts State Legislature

William Pitt's Address to Parliament



Gentlemen, Sir, I have been charged with giving birth to sedition in America. They have spoken their sentiments with freedom against this unhappy act, and that freedom has become their crime...Some tells us America is obstinate; America is almost in open rebellion. I rejoice that America has resisted.

I come not here armed at all points, with law cases and acts of parliament... to defend the cause of liberty: if I had...I would have cited them, to have shown that even under former arbitrary reigns, parliaments were ashamed of taxing a people without their consent, and allowed them representatives. ...For the defense of liberty, upon a constitutional principle, it is a ground on which I stand firm; on which I dare meet any man...

None of these thought, or ever dreamed, of robbing the colonies of their constitutional rights...With the enemy at their back, with our bayonets at their breasts, in the day of their distress, perhaps the Americans would have submitted to the imposition, but it would have been taking an unjust advantage. I am no courtier of America; I stand up for this kingdom. I maintain that the parliament has a right to bind, to restrain America. Our legislative power over the colonies is sovereign and supreme...When two countries are connected together, like England and her colonies, without being incorporated, the one must necessarily govern; the greater must rule the less; but rule it, as not to contradict the fundamental principles that are common to both.

The gentleman asks, when were the colonies emancipated? But I desire to know, when were they made slaves? The profits to Great Britain from the trade of the colonies is two million a year...You owe this to America: this is the price America pays you for her protection...Improper restraints have been laid on the continent... Much is wrong; much may be amended for the general good of the whole....

A great deal has been said of the strength of America. It is a topic that ought to be cautiously meddled with. In a good cause, the force of this country can crush America to atoms. I know the valour of your troops. I know the skill of your officers...In such a cause, your success would be hazardous. America, if she fell, would fall like a strong man.

The Americans have not acted in all things with prudence and temper. They have been wronged. They have been driven to madness by injustice. Will you punish them for the madness you have occasioned? Rather let prudence and temper come first from this side. I will undertake for America, that she will follow the example.

At the same time, let the sovereign authority of this country over the colonies be asserted in as strong terms as can be devised... that we may bind their trade, and exercise every power whatsoever - except that of taking money out of their pockets without their consent.

*William Pitt, Member of the House of Commons and former Prime Minister, British Parliament,
January 14, 1766*

The Rights of the Colonists

by Samuel Adams

*The Report of the Committee of Correspondence
to the Boston Town Meeting.*

November 20, 1772

Natural Rights of the Colonists as Men.

Among the natural rights of the Colonists are these: First, a right to life; Secondly, to liberty; Thirdly, to property. Governors have no right to seek and take what they please...The right to freedom being the gift of God Almighty, it is not in the power of man to voluntarily become a slave.

The Rights of the Colonists as Subjects.

A state is a society of men, united together to promote their mutual safety and prosperity. The absolute rights of Englishmen are security, personal liberty, and private property.

All persons born in the British American Colonies are, by the laws of God and by the law of England, entitled (have a right) to all the liberties and privileges of subjects born in Great Britain.

The supreme power cannot take from any man any part of his property without his consent. These are some of the first principles of law and justice.

The Olive Branch Petition

IN CONGRESS IN PHILADELPHIA

October 26, 1774

To the King's most excellent Majesty:

MOST GRACIOUS SOVEREIGN, We, your majesty's faithful subjects, of the colonies

...beg leave to lay our grievances before the throne.

A standing army has been kept in these colonies ever since the conclusion of the late war; and this army has been used to enforce the collection of taxes.

Humble petitions, from the representatives of the people, have been fruitless.

Assemblies have been repeatedly dissolved.

Commerce has been burdened with oppressive restrictions.

In the last session of Parliament, an act was passed for blocking up the harbor of Boston.

Your majesty, we doubt not your royal wisdom...We ask but for peace, liberty, and safety. Your royal authority over us and our connection with Great Britain, we shall always support and maintain. ...We present this petition only to obtain relief...that your majesty may enjoy a long and glorious reign over loyal and happy subjects.

By order of the Congress,
Henry Middleton, President.

The petition was written by John Dickinson and adopted July 8, 1775; it reached London on August 14, 1775. George III's reply, the Declaration of Rebellion was issued on the 23rd.