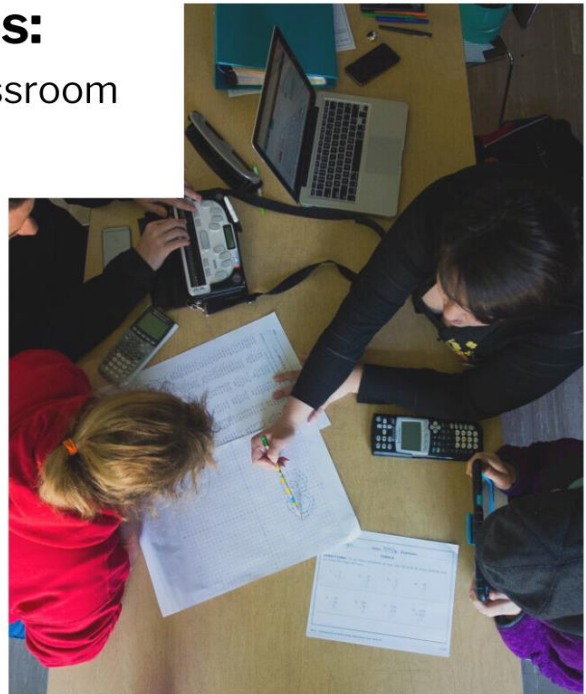




**Writing Across Disciplines:**  
An Expansion of Composition in the Classroom  
*Fall 2023*



# What is Writing Across Disciplines?

## What does “Writing Across Disciplines” mean?

Defining “Writing Across Disciplines” requires clarity around the terms “Writing” and “Across Disciplines.” Most simply, writing is communicating. Student writers communicate with themselves, peers, teachers and others. Writing in the classroom can have many purposes and audiences and may be formal or informal. In the academic setting, writing can serve as a tool to promote student learning, to allow students to demonstrate their thinking and understanding of the content and/or concepts taught, and/or to share with others in a real-world setting. These types of writing are called Writing to Learn, Writing to Demonstrate Learning and Writing for Publication. “Across Disciplines” refers to using the types of writing—as defined here—in English/language arts as well as other disciplines, such as social studies, science, math and visual and performing arts.

## What is Writing Across Disciplines, and what is its purpose?

*Writing Across Disciplines* is an expansion of [Composition in the Classroom](#), a resource developed by reading and writing teachers to help Kentucky educators provide students with opportunities to develop into confident, independent and proficient writers. *Composition in the Classroom* and its expansions support teachers implementing existing [High-Quality Instructional Resources](#) (HQIRs) adopted by school districts as well as educators teaching in districts that have not yet adopted a primary HQIR in reading and writing. The tips, suggestions and tasks in *Composition in the Classroom* and its expansions should not replace adopted HQIR but should serve to supplement instruction towards the full depth and rigor of the *Kentucky Academic Standards*. For more information regarding high-quality literacy curricula, districts and school leaders may access [The Reading and Writing Instructional Resources Consumer Guide](#), a tool for evaluating and selecting instructional resources for alignment to the *Kentucky Academic Standards (KAS) for Reading and Writing*.

*Composition in the Classroom* is organized around three modes of writing in the *Kentucky Academic Standards (KAS) for Reading and Writing*, including information regarding standards instruction through Writing to Learn, Writing to Demonstrate Learning and Writing for Publication. *Writing Across Disciplines*, however, contains sample discipline-specific writing tasks, organized by each of the three types of writing mentioned above. This resource is grounded in the *KAS for Reading and Writing*, which includes the Interdisciplinary Literacy Practices as well as each discipline’s content specific standards. The ten Interdisciplinary Literacy Practices are part of the *KAS for Reading and Writing*, appearing on every page of the standards document but **should not be confused as additional standards**. They should guide teachers in providing intentional opportunities for students to engage in deeper learning by practicing the behaviors of a literate citizen. The student practices serve as the overarching goals for literacy instruction for each student across the state. These practices are further clarified by [possible teacher and student actions](#). These actions do not define curriculum, but rather they demonstrate how teachers can provide opportunities for students to experience the literacy practices and how students will apply these practices, so they may become an innate part of life across the disciplines and beyond school. This resource aims to bring more clarity around what these practices look like in action.

While *Composition in the Classroom* primarily serves English/language arts teachers and their students, *Writing Across Disciplines* attends to the needs of all teachers and their students. Because of its widespread classroom use already, the developers chose to begin the expansion

with a focus on Writing to Learn, a professional learning space that will hopefully both affirm and stretch educators' practices. The second release added Writing to Demonstrate Learning and the final release will include Writing for Publication.

Writing Across Disciplines is created to provide what *Composition in the Classroom*, alone, does not. While *Composition in the Classroom* provides general characteristics of each type of writing (Writing to Learn, Writing to Demonstrate Learning and Writing for Publication) and examples of strategies teachers can implement to engage students in each of the types of writing, this expansion includes a more disciplinary, or specialized, look at writing. *Writing Across Disciplines* intends to show more precisely how to ensure opportunities for students to engage in discipline-specific literacies or learning that uses reading and writing skills specific to each field to teach or demonstrate content knowledge and for publication purposes as well. The sample tasks in *Writing Across Disciplines* represent some of the types of reading and writing experts in each field (e.g., economists, biologists, literary scholars, mathematicians, etc.) might authentically engage in to deepen their own expertise.

## **Writing TO DEMONSTRATE LEARNING Across Disciplines**

[Writing to Demonstrate Learning](#), as previously described, is necessary in every classroom for teachers to ascertain how well students are understanding the content, skills or concepts taught. Teachers use this type of writing to provide students opportunities for applying and demonstrating the skills they have learned in class and for assessing students' understanding of the subjects they are studying.

Regularly asking students to think and write about text at the higher levels of Bloom's Taxonomy (i.e., analysis, synthesis, evaluation) can help students not only think through the content but also reveal the depth of their knowledge. Though this kind of writing certainly can promote learning, it is especially used to help teachers understand how well students are learning. Typically, Writing to Demonstrate Learning takes the form of an academic exercise with the teacher as the primary audience and, thus, would not be suitable for publication. When students Write to Demonstrate Learning, their responses will be graded, marked or scored with a rubric to provide feedback to both the teacher and the student on their progress towards mastery. While feedback may focus on compositional or technical skills as a writer, teacher feedback usually focuses on content and conceptual understandings. Most simply stated, Writing to Demonstrate Learning is any composition intended to serve as a measurement of the student's depth of learning.

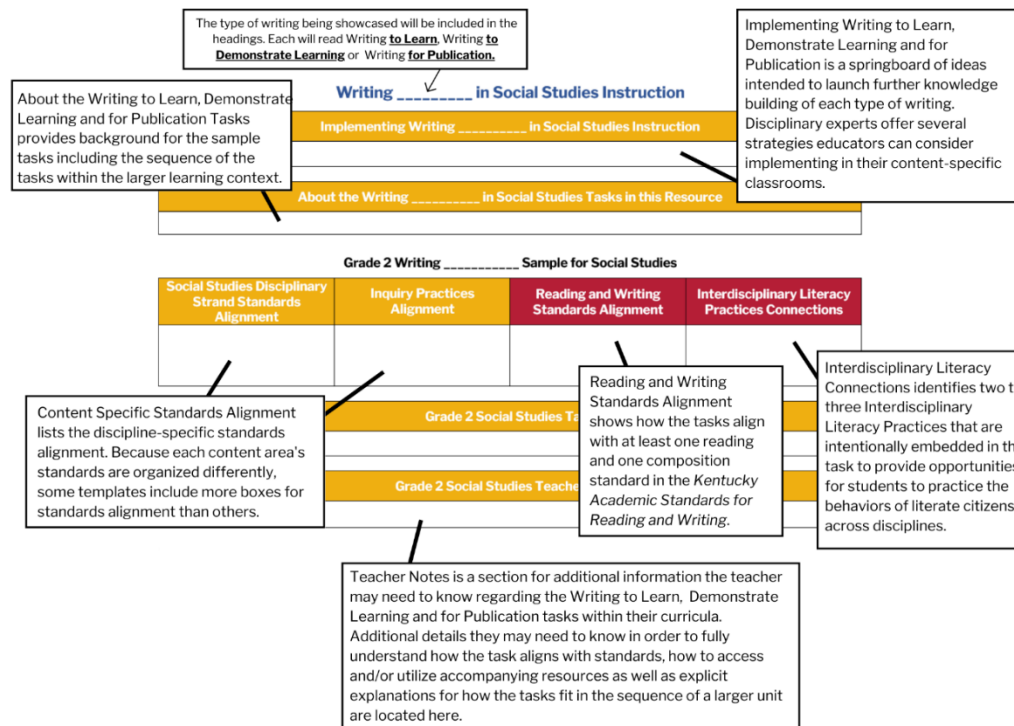
While students may demonstrate their learning through paragraphs or essays, at all ages, student composition should not be limited to traditional formats or restricted to writing on paper or drafting in a word processing document. Instead, students should have numerous opportunities to use digital resources to create, publish, research and update individual or shared products and to take advantage of technology's capacity to link to other information and to display information flexibly and dynamically. This may even require students to incorporate a variety of communication methods into one Writing to Demonstrate Learning composition.

Like Writing to Learn, Writing to Demonstrate Learning Across Disciplines refers to using Writing to Demonstrate Learning in English/language arts as well as other disciplines such as math, science, social studies, and visual and performing arts. The first section of this expansion, Writing to Learn Across Disciplines, provides samples of Writing to Learn tasks for each discipline. The Writing to Demonstrate Learning section is the second of three sections that will make up the complete expansion and provides samples of Writing to Demonstrate Learning. Explicit reading-writing connections are intentionally present throughout the sample tasks, requiring students to read and think deeply about text, or "anything that communicates a message," as defined by the *KAS for Reading and Writing*. Throughout the sample tasks,

readers engage in passages, videos, graphs, data sets, experiments or other forms of communication while processing and documenting their learning through Writing to Demonstrate Learning.

## How to Read the Writing Across Disciplines Templates

Each content area template begins broadly with a compilation of possible Writing to Learn, Writing to Demonstrate Learning and Writing for Publication strategies that experts in the field deem especially applicable to learning that discipline's content. The remainder of each template provides authentic content-specific sample tasks, organized into elementary and secondary levels. These sample tasks can help educators recognize the presence or absence of Writing to Learn, Writing to Demonstrate Learning or Writing for Publication instructional strategies within their adopted high-quality instructional resource (HQIR), equipping them with the knowledge to identify when the curriculum does not include adequate opportunities for students to engage in both types of writing. Because the types of texts involved in reading and writing vary across disciplines, each sample contains discipline-specific approaches each type of writing.



# Writing to Demonstrate Learning in Social Studies Instruction

## Implementing Writing to Demonstrate Learning in Social Studies Instruction

In Social Studies, Writing to Demonstrate Learning showcases student learning for teachers to assess mastery of the *Kentucky Academic Standards (KAS) for Social Studies*. Within social studies, a student's ability to effectively communicate their own conclusions and listen carefully to the conclusions of others can be considered a capstone of social studies disciplinary practices. Students may demonstrate their learning through traditional essays, reports, tables, diagrams, graphs and multimedia presentations. In a world of ever-expanding communication opportunities inside and outside their school walls, students should also be able to utilize newer media forms in order to share their conclusions and hear the voices of those whose conclusions may differ from their own.

All valid claims must be based on relevant and logical evidence. For students to construct coherent arguments and explanations in the social studies disciplines, they must substantiate those claims using evidence. This skill requires students to collect, evaluate and synthesize evidence from primary and secondary sources to develop and support a claim. Writing to Demonstrate Learning provides teachers the opportunity to ascertain whether students understand the content and concepts taught. This kind of writing helps teachers understand how well students are learning. Writing to Demonstrate Learning in the social studies classroom is essential in supporting Kentucky students when learning how to develop and substantiate evidence-based claims while considering multiple perspectives.

Writing to Demonstrate Learning can take many forms in the social studies classroom, as there are many ways in which students can communicate their conclusions and the explanations and arguments they construct. Some of these ways include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Quick writes , entry or exit slips
- Multimodal and digital communications
- PowerPoint/Google Slides presentations
- Videos, speeches or posters
- Answers to short answer and extended-response prompts
- Summaries of reading or an activity
- Explanation or analysis of a process, content or text(s) that have been read
- Essays or research papers primarily presenting or explaining information
- Responses to Tasks Aligned to [Supporting Questions](#)
- Responses to Tasks Aligned to [Compelling Questions](#)

Teachers are also encouraged to leverage writing as a tool for deeper learning using Writing to Learn tasks described in [Writing to Learn in Social Studies](#).

## About the Writing to Demonstrate Learning in Social Studies Tasks in this Resource

The elementary task below is designed for Grade 3 students and requires students to answer the supporting question “Why do countries depend on each other to produce products?” To prepare students to answer the supporting question, students explore concepts of economic interdependence and how physical and cultural characteristics impact a region. During their exploration of sources, students discover the connection between the resources available in a region and the products regions produce and trade. At the conclusion of their investigations, students are required to complete the Task Aligned to the Supporting Question. The Task Aligned to the Supporting Question requires students to demonstrate their knowledge of the disciplinary strand standards and the inquiry practice standards to construct their response. Responding to this task requires students to synthesize their understanding of the disciplinary strand standards and inquiry standards because students are required to answer the supporting question while explaining the relationship between two or more sources in their response.

The middle school task below is for Grade 6 students and requires students to answer the supporting question, “What characteristics do River Valley Civilizations have in common?” To prepare students to answer the supporting question, students examine a variety of sources that address the origins, functions and structures of governments in River Valley Civilizations, how they were shaped by their physical environments, and how these civilizations compare. At the conclusion of their investigations, students are required to complete the Task Aligned to the Supporting Question. The Task Aligned to the Supporting Question requires students to demonstrate their knowledge of the disciplinary strand standards and the inquiry practice standards to construct their response. Responding to this task requires students to synthesize their understanding of the disciplinary strand standards and inquiry standards because students are required to answer the supporting question while citing relevant evidence and using maps and/or spatial thinking to determine similarities and differences among complex societies.

The high school task below is aligned to US History and requires students to answer the supporting question, “How have global interactions resulting from September 11, 2001, impacted American culture and society from 2001 to the present?” To prepare students to answer the supporting question, students examine multiple sources to investigate how global interactions and legislative, executive and judicial decisions resulting from September 11, 2001, have impacted American culture and society. At the conclusion of their investigations, students are required to complete the Task Aligned to the Supporting Question. The Task Aligned to the Supporting Question requires students to demonstrate their knowledge of the disciplinary strand standards and the inquiry practice standards to construct their response. Responding to this task requires students to synthesize their understanding of the disciplinary strand standards and inquiry standards because students are required to answer the supporting question while using appropriate evidence to construct and revise claims in their responses.

## Grade 3 Writing to Demonstrate Learning Sample for Social Studies

Social Studies Disciplinary Strand Standards Alignment	Inquiry Practices Alignment	Reading and Writing Standards Alignment	Interdisciplinary Literacy Practices Connections
<p><b>3.E.ST.1</b> Describe examples of economic interdependence.</p> <p><b>3.G.GR.1</b> Explain how physical and cultural characteristics of world regions affect people, using a variety of maps, photos and other geographic representations.</p>	<p><b>3.I.U.E.2</b> Explain the relationship between two or more sources on the same theme or topic.</p>	<p><b>RI.3.9</b> Explain the relationship between information from two or more texts on the same theme or topic.</p> <p><b>C.3.2</b> Compose informative and/or explanatory texts, using writing and digital resources, to examine a topic and provide information.</p>	<p><b>ILP 5:</b> Apply strategic practices, with scaffolding and then independently, to approach new literacy tasks.</p> <p><b>ILP 8:</b> Engage in specialized, discipline-specific literacy practices.</p>

### Grade 3 Social Studies Task

**Task Aligned to the Supporting Question:**

Using your knowledge of economic interdependence and how physical and cultural characteristics of world regions affect people, answer the supporting question.

Supporting question: **Why do countries depend on each other to produce products?**

Be sure to explain the relationship between two or more sources in your response.

### Grade 3 Social Studies Teacher Notes

This example of Writing to Demonstrate Learning is a synthesis task intended to occur after students have engaged in numerous learning opportunities and is part of the [Grade 3 Strongly Aligned Assignment with Teacher Notes](#) from the [Social Studies Student Assignment Library](#).

## Grade 3 Social Studies Teacher Notes

The Assignment with Teacher Notes linked above explains the instructional process and sequence, showing how students engage with both disciplinary strand standards and inquiry standards through a series of tasks to investigate the supporting question: “Why do countries depend on each other to produce products?” To demonstrate students’ mastery of these standards and ability to answer the supporting question with evidence from the sources they analyzed, students are asked to respond to a Task Aligned to the Supporting Question. This task provides students an opportunity to answer the supporting question guiding the investigations, while demonstrating their mastery of the aligned disciplinary strand standards and inquiry standards. For this task, students are asked to demonstrate their knowledge of economic interdependence and how a region is affected by its physical and cultural characteristics. Additionally, students are asked to explain the relationship between two or more sources in their response.

The sample student response below comes from a third grade Kentucky classroom where students were using traditional text, or paragraph composition, to Demonstrate Learning. However, this is not the only way students may Write to Demonstrate Learning. The *Kentucky Academic Standards Interdisciplinary Literacy Practice 1* states that, “Text is anything that communicates a message.” This is important for social studies educators to know and consider as they assign Writing to Demonstrate learning. While traditional print may often be an appropriate medium, and even most used writing, when asking students to Write to Demonstrate their Learning, students should be exposed to and have opportunities to demonstrate their learning using a variety of text formats, including but not limited to verbal and visual representations and multiple formats when necessary to communicate more clearly.

In this example, the student responds to the supporting question, “Why do countries depend on each other to produce products?” by explaining that countries have different resources available to them. This student response can be used to assess whether the student has demonstrated mastery of the aligned disciplinary strand standards and inquiry practices. Some questions to consider when evaluating this task include:

- Did the student’s response describe examples of economic interdependence?
- Did the student’s response explain how the physical and cultural characteristics of a region affect people?
- Did the student’s response explain the relationship between two or more sources on the same topic?

### **Student example:**

*Countries depend on each other to produce products because certain countries have things that other countries don't. For example, South America produces a lot of oranges because it is always warm there. So, South America has to trade with other countries that need oranges but can't grow them. The reason some countries can't grow oranges is because their weather is not warm all year long, or, even worse, their weather is cold all year long. We rely on South America to give us oranges. However, South America relies on the USA to give them things like oil. That is why countries depend on each other to produce products. Some countries have things that other countries can't have.*



## Grade 3 Social Studies Teacher Notes

Note that in this example, the student did not demonstrate mastery of 3.I.UE.2, “Explain the relationship between two or more sources on the same theme or topic.” In order to successfully demonstrate mastery of this standard, the response should include two sources to support the claim, such as using a map in conjunction with a chart to explain why countries depend on each other to produce products.

### Grade 6 Writing to Demonstrate Learning Sample for Social Studies

Social Studies Disciplinary Strand Standards Alignment	Inquiry Practices Alignment	Reading and Writing Standards Alignment	Interdisciplinary Literacy Practices Connections
<p><b>6.C.CP.1</b> Explain the origins, functions and structures of governments in River Valley Civilizations and Classical Period Empires between 3500 BCE-600 CE.</p> <p><b>6.G.HE.1</b> Analyze how physical environments shaped the development of River Valley Civilizations and Classical Empires between 3500 BCE-600 CE.</p> <p><b>6.G.GR.1</b> Use maps and other geographic representations, geospatial technologies, and spatial thinking to determine similarities and differences among River Valley Civilizations and Classical Empires between 3500 BCE-600 CE.</p>	<p><b>6.I.UE.1</b> Develop claims, citing relevant evidence, in response to compelling and supporting questions.</p>	<p><b>RI.6.7</b> Integrate information presented in print and non-print formats to develop a coherent understanding of a topic or issue.</p> <p><b>C.6.2</b> Compose informative and/or explanatory texts to examine a topic and convey ideas, concepts and information through the selection, organization, and analysis of relevant content.</p>	<p><b>ILP 1:</b> Recognize that text is anything that communicates a message.</p> <p><b>ILP 4:</b> Utilize receptive and expressive language arts to better understand self, others and the world.</p> <p><b>ILP 8:</b> Engage in specialized, discipline-specific literacy practices.</p>



## Grade 6 Social Studies Task

### Task Aligned to the Supporting Question:

Using your knowledge of the origins, functions and structures of governments and how physical environments shaped the development of River Valley Civilizations, develop a claim, citing relevant evidence, to answer the following question: “What characteristics do River Valley Civilizations have in common?” Be sure to use maps and/or spatial thinking to determine similarities and differences among complex societies.

## Grade 3 Social Studies Teacher Notes

This Writing to Demonstrate Learning task is a synthesis task intended to occur after students have engaged in numerous learning opportunities and is part of the [Grade 6 Strongly Aligned Assignment with Teacher Notes](#) from the [Social Studies Student Assignment Library](#).

The assignment with Teacher Notes linked above explains the instructional process and sequence, showing how students will complete a series of tasks to investigate the supporting question: “What characteristics do River Valley Civilizations have in common?” Throughout these tasks, students will be examining the origins, structure and functions of governments of River Valley Civilizations and how the physical environment shaped their development. Additionally, students will utilize maps and other geographic representations to compare these civilizations. The Task Aligned to the Supporting Question asks students to write a claim to respond to this question, citing relevant evidence. Since this task requires students to synthesize their understanding of the disciplinary strand standards and inquiry standards aligned to this task, this response is considered Writing to Demonstrate Learning.

Below is an example from a Kentucky classroom of a student’s response to this task. This response includes two common characteristics among River Valley Civilizations: each had a form of monarchy as their government, and they all formed along rivers. The student provides evidence of these commonalities from the sources they investigated. This piece of writing can be used to assess students’ mastery of the disciplinary strand standards and inquiry practices aligned to this task. Some questions to consider when evaluating this task include:

- Does the student’s response explain the origins, functions and structures of governments in River Valley Civilizations?
- Does the student’s response analyze how physical environments shaped the development of River Valley Civilizations?
- Does the student’s response demonstrate that maps or spatial thinking were utilized?
  - Note: The *KAS for Social Studies Glossary of Terms* defines “spatial” as the relationships and interactions that occur within a place, anchored in a physical location; arrangement of a phenomenon (such as people or density) across the Earth’s surface. Spatial thinking asks students to use the tools of geographers, such as maps and graphs, to support reasoning and solve problems.

## Grade 3 Social Studies Teacher Notes

- Does the student's response include a claim that cites relevant evidence to answer the supporting question?

### Student example:

All the river valley civilizations had some kind of monarchy. According to source B, Egypt had a theocratic monarchy. Mesopotamia had city states with a king and assembly. China had a dynasty which is a type of monarchy. India had a king that led the three branches of government. This proves that all the river valley civilizations had a type of monarchy.

All the river valley civilizations formed along a river. According to the map, Mesopotamia formed along the Tigris River. Egypt formed along the Nile. India formed along the Indus river. China formed along the Yangtze river. This proves that all the river valley civilizations formed along a river.

## High School Social Studies Writing to Demonstrate Learning Sample

Social Studies Disciplinary Strand Standards Alignment	Inquiry Practices Alignment	Reading and Writing Standards Alignment	Interdisciplinary Literacy Practices Connections
<p><b>HS.C.CP.2</b> Analyze legislative, executive and judicial branch decisions in terms of constitutionality and impact on citizens and states.</p> <p><b>HS.UH.CE.6</b> Analyze how global interactions impacted American culture and society from 1890-present.</p>	<p><b>HS.UH.I.UE.3</b> Use appropriate evidence to construct and revise claims and counterclaims relevant to compelling and/or supporting questions in U.S. history.</p> <p><b>HS.UH.I.CC.2</b> Engage in disciplinary thinking and construct arguments, explanations or public communications relevant to compelling and/or supporting questions in U.S. history.</p>	<p><b>RI.11-12.7</b> Integrate and evaluate multiple sources of information presented in different print and non-print formats in order to address a question or solve a problem.</p> <p><b>C.11-12.2</b> Compose informative/explanatory texts to examine and/or convey complex ideas, concepts and information clearly and accurately through the effective selection, organization and analysis of content.</p>	<p><b>ILP 1:</b> Recognize that text is anything that communicates a message.</p> <p><b>ILP 4:</b> Utilize receptive and expressive language arts to better understand self, others and the world.</p> <p><b>ILP 9:</b> Apply high level cognitive processes to think deeply and critically about text.</p>

### High School Social Studies Task

**Task Aligned to the Supporting Question:**

How have global interactions resulting from September 11, 2001, impacted American culture and society from 2001 to the present?

Answer the supporting question, using your understanding of:

- Global interactions and how they impacted American culture and society from 2001 to the present; and
- Legislative, executive and judicial branch decisions in terms of constitutionality and impact on citizens and states.

In your response, analyze legislative, executive and judicial branch decisions due to September 11, 2001, in terms of constitutionality and impact on citizens and states. Be sure to use appropriate evidence to construct and revise claims in your response.

## High School Social Studies Teacher Notes

This Writing to Demonstrate Learning task is a synthesis task intended to occur after students have engaged in numerous learning opportunities and is part of the [High School Strongly Aligned Assignment 3 with Teacher Notes](#) from the [Social Studies Student Assignment Library](#).

The assignment with Teacher Notes linked above explains the instructional process and sequence, showing how students engage with a series of tasks to investigate the supporting question: “How have global interactions resulting from September 11, 2001, impacted American culture and society from 2001 to the present?” Throughout these tasks, students will investigate multiple sources to analyze the constitutionality of legislative, executive and judicial decisions resulting from the events of September 11, as well as how these events impacted American culture and society. To demonstrate students’ mastery of these standards and ability to use evidence to support a claim, students are asked to construct a response to the Task Aligned to the Supporting Question. Since this task requires students to synthesize their understanding of the disciplinary strand standards and inquiry standards aligned to this task, this response is considered Writing to Demonstrate Learning.

Below is an example of a student response to this task from a Kentucky classroom. In their response, they state the claim that provides several ways the events of September 11, 2001, impacted American culture and society, including ongoing wars, immigration and deportation, the “friendly-ish” skies and big surveillance. The student explains each of these impacts in more detail, providing information from the sources they examined. The teacher can use this piece of writing to determine how well students were able to demonstrate their mastery of the aligned disciplinary strand standards and inquiry practices by assessing this piece. Some questions to consider when evaluating this task include:

- Does the student’s response successfully analyze how the global events of September 11, 2001, impacted American society and culture?
- Does the student’s response analyze how the constitutionality of legislative, executive and judicial decisions resulting from September 11, 2001, impacted citizens and states?
- Does the student’s response include a claim to answer the supporting question using appropriate evidence?
- Does the student’s response demonstrate disciplinary thinking with relevant arguments?

## High School Social Studies Teacher Notes

### Student example:

Global interactions that has resulted from September 11/2001, that has impacted American culture and society from 2001 to the present is on going wars, immigration and deportation, the friendly-ish skies and big surveillance.

First, the ongoing wars that still impacts us today is how the citizens of America are constantly risking their lives to protect America from these ongoing wars. The effects of 9/11 have caused many wars on terror. According to George W. Bush, a former US president he states that "Any nation that continues to harbor or support terrorism will be regarded by the United States as a hostile regime."

Secondly, the effect 9/11 has caused with immigration and deportation. The United States have set up tighter immigration and to keep terrorists out of the country. While this has kept us become a more secure country this is also racial profiling. Meaning that not all people that immigrate to look for a better life is a terrorist, they just want a better life.

Thirdly, the friendly-ish skies has impacted us in many different ways to this day because of 9/11. This is meaning that our airports have become a lot more secure, with full body scans, searches, and cargo searches, which has made our skies a safer place it has kept our airports hostile and a lot of trouble just to fly on a plane.

Fourthly, big surveillance has also still affects us in the present. While surveillance across the country has increased significantly since the tragedy of 9/11 you can get checked for weapons just going to work, school or even the mall. While according to the author of "How 9/11 changed America" states that "Our Surveillance State was a fraction of its current size." So, this means that citizens have a lot less freedoms while also losing a lot of time with the hassle of it all.

All in all there are many different ways that global interactions have impacted American culture and society from 2001 to the present. These include ongoing wars, immigration and deportation, the friendly-ish skies, and big surveillance.

