



Analyze Media: Grades 6–8

OVERVIEW:

In today's digital world, information is available in a variety of formats at the click of a button. Therefore, students must learn to sift through data, facts, details, and opinions to make meaning from a variety of sources. While teachers have long taught students how to read and evaluate written texts, the same time and instruction has not always been given to other forms of text from which historians collect information. The following lessons are designed to help students develop their historical thinking skills as they learn to collect, analyze, and synthesize information from visual and digital media.

Mini-Lesson I

Evaluate Infographics (30–40 minutes)

Background: Infographics are a succinct, visual way to present information and are prominent in today's digital and increasingly visual world. Because of their prevalence and range of uses, the purpose of an infographic is not always immediately clear. Therefore, it is important that students learn to apply critical literacy skills to infographics. The following mini-lesson provides specific teaching suggestions for modeling this strategy using the infographic "Roman Republic vs. the United States" in the *Expedition: Learn!* lesson "Roman Contributions to Republican Governance." However, instruction can be adjusted to align with a different topic.

- As needed, define infographics for students. Invite students to turn and talk to discuss the following:
 - Share an example of an infographic you have encountered. What was the purpose of the infographic?
- Drawing on student discussions, emphasize that infographics appear in a variety of places—on social media, the news, magazines, textbooks, etc. Emphasize that they are also used for a variety of different reasons, including marketing a product, sharing statistics, or illustrating opinions.
- Share that it is important when studying history or making informed decisions that students learn how to read and analyze an infographic.
- Display the [Tips for Reading Infographics anchor chart](#).
- Using the infographic on page 4-Build in the lesson, work through each of the steps of reading an infographic, thinking aloud to model the process. For example:
 - **Step 1:** *The title of this infographic is "Roman Republic vs. the United States." I think this infographic will compare and contrast the Roman Republic with the United States government.*
 - **Step 2:** *There are five main parts to this infographic: Executive Branch, Legislative Branch, Judicial Branch, Legal Code, and Citizenship. Each main part breaks down the Roman Republic on one side and the United States on the other.*



- **Step 3:** *I am surprised that the Roman Republic has the same three branches of government as the United States. However, I can see that there are many differences within each of the branches. For example, in the Roman Republic, judges only served for one year. In the United States, judges serve for life.*
 - **Step 4:** *Encyclopedia Britannica created this infographic for a lesson called “Roman Contributions to Republican Governance.” I think the purpose of this chart is to help students compare and contrast the Roman Republic with the United States to gain a better understanding of how the Roman Republic may have influenced the United States.*
 - **Step 5:** *The main idea of this infographic is that the Roman Republic had many principles of government that are still being used today. I wonder why the Roman Republic ended. I also wonder if there are other countries that use these same principles today.*
- As time allows, invite students to practice the steps using the “A Government Run by the People” infographic on page 5-Build in the same lesson.

Mini-Lesson II

Analyzing Information in Text Features (30–40 minutes)

Background: Once students have learned how to explain the information in a text feature and how it contributes to their understanding of a text, they are ready to move onto deeper analysis of the text feature. Students can learn to examine the patterns they notice and explain the role the text feature plays in the text. The following mini-lesson provides specific teaching suggestions for modeling this strategy using the article “The Effects of Westward Expansion” and the text feature “Forced Removal” on page 4-Build of the *Expedition: Learn!* lesson “The Impact of Westward Expansion on American Indian Nations.” However, instruction can be adjusted to align with a different topic.

- Reinforce for students that text features (maps, graphs, charts, images, sidebars, etc.) are part of the structure of informational texts. Authors use text features to add additional information or to clarify the information in the text. Emphasize that as critical readers, it is students’ job to consider both the text and the text features, combining the information to explain what they learned about the topic.
- As needed, define the following academic vocabulary word:
 - *integrate*: to combine or connect to form one idea
- Help students access an article in *Expedition: Learn!* related to an area of student interest or a topic being studied in class. Invite students to conduct a first read of the article and record the gist. For example:
 - *As the U.S. expanded westward in the early 1800s, many Indigenous peoples were forcibly removed from their lands, often through treaties or the Indian Removal Act. The most tragic result was the Trail of Tears, where thousands of Native Americans died during forced relocations, while some groups resisted or escaped removal.*
- Display the [Analyzing and Integrating Text Features organizer](#). Share with students that when reading an informational text, they can use this strategy to analyze the information contained in the text feature and integrate it with the knowledge they gain from the text.
- Work through each of the steps on the organizer, thinking aloud to interpret the text feature and jot responses. For example:
 - **O: Overview:** *The text feature shows a map of part of the United States (the Southeast and a bit of the Southwest).*
 - **P: Parts:** *Looking at the map key, I see the two most important parts are the American Indian lands ceded after 1830 and the removal routes.*
 - **T: Title:** *The title, “Forced Removal: The Trail of Tears,” indicates that the main purpose of the map is to show the routes that Indigenous people took when they were forcibly removed from their ancestral lands.*

- **I: Interrelationships:** *Indigenous peoples from all over were forced to move to a designated “Indian Territory” west of the states.*
- **C: Conclusion:** *Both the text and the map show that Indigenous peoples were forcibly removed from their lands. The text feature illustrates how far these people had to travel from their homes and the fact that they all were sent to the same place.*
- Reinforce for students how the text feature helps to illustrate and expand on the ideas in the text.
- Distribute an Analyzing and Integrating Text Features organizer and invite students to work with a partner to practice the strategy. Have students reread the articles in the *Expedition: Learn!* lesson being explored and ask them to analyze one of the text features. If using the lesson “The Impact of Westward Expansion on American Indian Nations,” ask students to analyze the text feature “Some Major American Indian Nations” on page 2-Build.
- Debrief the task, discussing how students can integrate the knowledge gained from the text and the knowledge gained from the text feature. Emphasize the importance of text features and the role they play in comprehension and building content knowledge.
- As a check for understanding and to further assess students’ development of the skill, invite students to complete the related multiple-choice questions contained in the *Expedition: Learn!* lesson that was used for modeling and practice.

Mini-Lesson III

Integrating Information from a Video (30 minutes)

Background: While we often spend time developing students’ ability to read and interpret written texts, students are not often provided explicit instruction in how to gather information from a video and integrate it with both their prior knowledge and information from a text. However, the ability to integrate information from multimodal sources is crucial for students. The following mini-lesson explicitly teaches students how to integrate information from a video using the *Expedition: Learn!* lesson “The Impact of Westward Expansion on American Indian Nations” and the video “American Progress, 1872” from page 8-Connect in the lesson.

- Help students access the *Expedition: Learn!* lesson “The Impact of Westward Expansion on American Indian Nations.” Ask students to read the articles independently and record the gist. For example:
 - *Westward expansion in the 1800s led settlers to seek new land, causing conflicts with Indigenous peoples who were often forced to leave their ancestral homes. Despite treaties, most American Indian nations were confined to reservations by the end of the century, with events like the Trail of Tears highlighting the devastating effects of relocation.*
- Drawing on students’ work with analyzing text features, emphasize that videos are one type of text feature that can be added to articles to add and clarify information. Share with students that just as they critically read and interact with written information, they need to do the same when watching a video.
- Display the [Activate-Watch-Think-Write anchor chart](#). Tell students that as they watch the video “American Progress, 1872,” they will use this strategy to interact with the video and integrate the information from the text with what they learn from the video.
- Introduce the steps of the strategy and how to interact with the video, stopping to think aloud. For example:
 - **Activate:** *I know from the title of the video that it is going to be about the United States in 1872. The articles discuss westward expansion and its impact on Indigenous peoples.*



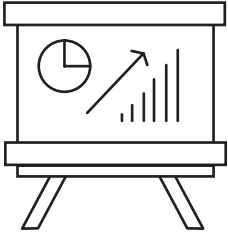
- **Watch and Think:** Play the video. Demonstrate how to pause and rewind to make connections and ask questions, jotting your thinking as needed. Sample stopping points include:
 - Stop at 1:08. *I wonder why Americans thought it was their “God-given right to develop the West.”*
 - Stop at 1:23. *Many people in the Whig party believed that Manifest Destiny was hostile and pompous. I want to know more about why these people felt this way.*
 - Stop at 2:02. *I wonder if slavery impacted the forced relocation of Indigenous peoples from their land.*
 - **Write:** Model writing a summary of the text and video, demonstrating how to integrate information from the two sources. For example:
 - *Westward expansion was driven by the belief that Americans were destined to spread across the continent. This belief justified the displacement of Indigenous peoples, as settlers saw it as their “God-given right” to take their land. Manifest Destiny fueled the government’s actions, like the Indian Removal Act and broken treaties that forced Indigenous peoples from their homelands and confined them to reservations. These actions aligned with the idea that expansion was inevitable and justified, no matter the cost to American Indians.*
- Emphasize for students the importance of interacting with the video in order to add to and clarify your understanding of the topic.
 - Invite students to practice the strategy with a partner, engaging in another *Expedition: Learn!* video, such as “Key Moments in the Civil Rights Movement” on page 4-Build in the lesson “The Civil Rights Movement.”
 - Debrief, inviting students to share their summaries and how stopping to make connections and ask questions helped them better understand the topic.
 - As a check for understanding and to further assess students’ development of the skill, invite students to complete the related multiple-choice questions contained in the *Expedition: Learn!* lesson used for modeling and practice.

Check for Understanding

If you observe ...	Then try ...
students struggling to interpret information within an infographic	providing students with the purpose of the infographic. This helps scaffold students' thinking and reduces the cognitive load, allowing them to focus on the details and information shared.
students struggling to integrate information from text features and text	providing students with sentence stems and sentence frames to support their analysis and integration. For example: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The text feature is a _____. It includes _____, _____, and _____. This connects to the part of the text that says _____. The author included the text feature to _____.
students struggling to integrate information from text features and text	providing students with guided notes which include suggested points in the video where students should stop and process the information presented.



Tips for Reading Infographics



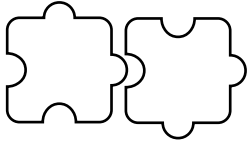
Step 1:

- Look at the title.
- What is this about?



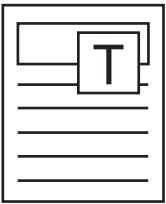
Step 2:

- Skim the whole infographic.
- What are the parts or features of the infographic?



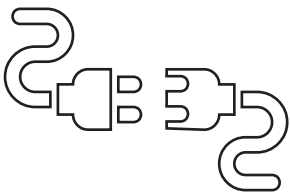
Step 3:

- Dig in—break down the parts by writing or talking.
- What information is being shared?
- What surprises or confuses you?



Step 4:

- Read the fine print.
- Who made the infographic?
- What was their purpose?

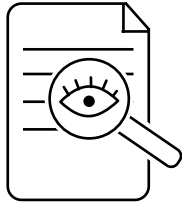


Step 5:

- Gather your thoughts.
- What is the main idea?
- What questions do you have?

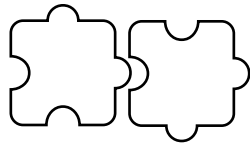
Analyzing and Integrating Text Features

O:
Overview



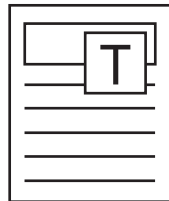
Write one sentence describing what you see:

P:
Parts



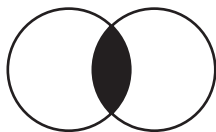
What are the important parts of the text feature?

T:
Title



What do you learn from the title or caption of the text feature?

I:
Interrelationship



How do the elements work together? What patterns or relationships do you see?

C:
Conclusion



Write a statement that explains the central idea of the text feature and the role the text feature plays in the text.

Activate-Watch-Think-Write**Activate your background knowledge:**

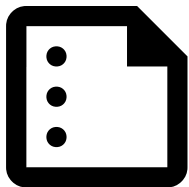
- Read the title of the video and think about what you know about the topic.

**Watch the video at your own pace:**

- Use the pause button to stop when you make a connection or have a question.
- Use the rewind button to rewatch a section when you are confused and have a question.

**When you pause or rewind:**

- Stop to record your thinking, connections, and questions.

**After the video:**

- Write a summary of what you learned from the video, explaining how it connected to the text and your prior knowledge.