

Unit Four Overview

A Nation Divided and Rebuilt

The lessons provided in this unit require the integrated application of the *historical thinking, source analysis, writing, and learning skills* taught throughout the Advanced courses grades six through eight. The emphasis remains on the skills used to answer a DBQ. This is extended by the introduction of one new historical thinking skill, multiple causation. These historical thinking and writing lessons use primary sources and images to teach and reinforce the historical thinking and document analysis skills for the unit.

The thinking, reading, and writing skills that are reinforced in Unit Four require synthesized application of skills taught throughout the course as well as an understanding of multiple causation. The goal of Advanced Grade Eight is for students to be able to independently apply all the historical thinking skills introduced in Advanced Grades Six and Seven in preparation for advanced high school courses.

The chart below is taken from the Social Studies Skills Framework for Grade 8 (Advanced 8, Unit 1 Appendix). It shows which skills are suggested for instruction and reinforcement in Unit Four. Unit Four requires the application of all skills taught throughout the course so it is appropriate to integrate any of the Advanced Grade 8 skills into instruction to meet student needs.

Advanced Skills: Unit Four			
Historical Thinking	Source Analysis	Writing Focus	Learning Skill
<i>Historical Thinking Skills from 8.1, 8.2, and 8.3</i> <i>Multiple Causation</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none">identifying and evaluating the many factors and circumstances that contribute to the development of historical events	<i>Source Analysis Skills from 8.1, 8.2, and 8.2</i>	<i>Writing Skills from 8.1, 8.2 and 8.3</i>	<i>Learning Skills from 8.1, 8.2, and 8.3</i>

Historical Thinking Skills: Unit Four

Multiple Causation is the thinking skill selected for development in Unit Four. It is important for students to understand that cause and effect is not linear, that multiple actions and ideas underlie significant historical and current events. Introduction of this historical thinking skill at this point in the year extends student analytical and DBQ writing skills in preparation for the Advanced final exam for semester 2 of U.S. History. It is also an important understanding when taking advanced level high school courses.

Why Teach Multiple Causation?

Analysis of multiple causation is important to understanding the complexity of events, but it is also essential to truly understand historical interpretation. When historians argue over the causes of events, they generally acknowledge multiple causes but disagree about which of those causes or categories of causes are most important. The same could be said about contemporary conflicts and issues. Students enhance their evaluation of evidence and arguments when they know to look for multiple causation of events and question single cause explanations. It also allows them to see that from the same evidence a variety of interpretations can be drawn. In Advanced Grade Eight, students will expand their understanding of historical interpretation by learning that:

- many factors and circumstances contribute to the development of historical events.

Although applied in this unit to U.S. history, it is hoped that students transfer this thinking skill to the world outside the classroom, developing the ability to consider multiple interpretations, conclusions, and perspectives.

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