

# Unit Three Overview

## *Geography Shapes Latin America*

**T**he third unit of the Advanced Grade Seven curriculum builds upon the instructional models of the previous two units. The unit once again uses primary sources (both visuals and text) to teach and reinforce the historical thinking and document analysis skills for the unit. You may notice however, that fewer lessons have been provided. This is because a primary focus of this unit is to develop extended essay writing skills of students. Focused writing instruction requires time for instruction, guided practice, targeted feedback, revision, and independent practice.

**The thinking, reading, and writing skills** that are taught and reinforced in Unit Three build important habits that will be used throughout the course. It is expected that students will have some familiarity with primary sources from Units One and Two and from Grade Six.

<b>Advanced Skills</b>		
<b>Historical Thinking</b>	<b>Reading: Document Analysis</b>	<b>Writing</b>
<p><i>Determining Relevance</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>evidence is selected and evaluated to support a particular point of view</li> </ul>	<p><i>Context</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>analyzing a document by considering how the time and place of its origin affect its content</li> </ul>	<p><i>Using Relevant Evidence</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>providing and explaining relevant evidence</li> </ul>

## Why Teach Context?

**I**dentifying context is often a neglected skill in reading instruction and assessment. Context is vital, however, to developing historical thinking. Understanding the events and culture that surround a given piece of evidence is essential in order to fully understand its significance and relevance. Understanding context helps us as modern readers to set aside assumptions and biases that may lead us to faulty conclusions or generalizations. This is true whether we are analyzing an artifact from the distant past or forming an opinion about proposed public policy. Context reminds us that a single piece of evidence or a single voice of opinion only gives us a piece of the full picture.

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“...critical analysis of documents in terms of contexts, or context sensitive judgments of behavior — is neglected by the use of traditional reading strategies that simply emphasize literal interpretation and comprehension.”

Sam Wineberg, *Historical Thinking and Other Unnatural Acts*. (2001)

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