

Strategies to Support Student Inquiry and Engagement for 5th-8th Grade

Name of Strategy	Description	Example/Suggested Context	Skill
Circle of Viewpoints	Use sentence stems to explore perspectives of complex issues or works of art. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I am thinking of [topic] from the viewpoint of [chosen viewpoint]. • I think [take on the character of your viewpoint]. • A question I have from this viewpoint is... 	Comparing opposing perspectives. Ex) north and south in civil war, comparing empires, political philosophies, etc.	Perspective taking, Global Thinking
Socratic Seminars	In a Socratic Seminar, students help one another understand the ideas, issues, and values reflected in a text through a group discussion format. Students are responsible for facilitating their group discussion around the ideas in the text; they shouldn't use the discussion to assert their opinions or prove an argument.	Primary source documents. Ex) The Federalist Papers, Declaration of Independence, etc.	Inquiry, Student Agency, Collaboration
Jigsaw	The Jigsaw strategy asks a group of students to become "experts" on a specific text or chunk of text, and then share that material with another group of students. This strategy offers a way to help students understand and retain information while they develop their collaboration skills.	Any collection of texts or one dense, complicated text	Synthesizing Ideas/Concepts
Think Pair Share	Pose a question to students. Give students a few minutes to think . Invite students to pair with a nearby student to share their thoughts.	Reflecting on a quote, image, or political cartoon	Critical Thinking, Communication
Connect, Extend, Challenge	Consider what you have just read, seen, or heard, and then ask students: How are the ideas and information connected to what you already know? What new ideas did you get that broadened your thinking or extended it in different directions? What challenges or puzzles emerge for you?	Flexible in any context. Use as an engagement strategy for students to synthesize and/or extend their learning.	Connection and Reflection
Claim, Support, Question	Drawing on your investigation, experience, prior knowledge, or reading: Make a claim about the topic. Identify support (things you see, feel, know) for your claim. Ask a question related to your claim or the support. What isn't explained?	Preparing for argumentative essays or debates	Forming and Defending a Claim. Reasoning and Evidence

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+1 Routine	<p>After being presented with new information or ideas in some manner, students do the following: Individually, take 2-3 minutes to generate a list of key ideas that are important to hang onto. Learners do this from memory rather than reviewing notes.</p> <p>Add (+) 1: Learners pass their papers to the right. Taking 1-2 minutes, each student reads through the list in front of him/her and adds one new thing to the list. REPEAT this process at least two times.</p> <p>Act: Return the papers back to the original owner. Learners read through and review all the additions that have been made on their sheets. At the same time they may add any ideas they have picked up from reading other's sheets that they thought were worthwhile.</p>	Flexible in any context. Use as an engagement strategy for students to synthesize and/or extend their learning.	Synthesizing ideas, Metacognition, Collaboration
Headlines	Write a headline that captures the most important aspect of this topic/issue. How does your headline differ from what you would have said yesterday/another perspective?	Use as an exit ticket or mid-lesson/unit check for understanding	Synthesizing Ideas/Concepts, Metacognition
Parts, People, Interactions	Identify a system and ask the following questions. What are the parts of the system? Who are the people connected to the system? How do the people in the system interact with each other and with the parts of the system? How does a change in one element of the system affect the various parts and people connected to the system?	Examples of systems or movements to analyze: The Neolithic Revolution, 3 Branches of government, boom and bust cycles, etc.	Analyzing Complex Systems, Making Real World Connections
HIPPO	Evaluate a source's historical context , intended audience , purpose , point of view , and outside information	Use with primary and secondary sources, political cartoons, propaganda, etc.	Evaluate Sources
Thin Slides EduProtocol	Individually or in pairs, give students a key concept, theme, question, or word to explore. Then, give students 5 minutes to create a single slide with one word and one image. Compile the slides to create a larger class slide deck. Give students 30 seconds to present their slide to the class.	Flexible in any context. Use as an engagement strategy for students to synthesize and/or extend their learning.	Synthesizing Ideas/Concepts
ParaFLY EduProtocol	Give students a complex reading, source, or informational text. The teacher guides students one paragraph at a time, having them reword important components of the sentences. Challenge students to adjust the sentence structure while preserving the meaning of the text.	Any collection of texts or one dense, complicated text	Paraphrasing, Summarizing

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Reader's Theatre/Drama	Students produce skits, plays, soap operas, musicals, newscasts, commercials/infomercials, talk shows, interviews, etc. that they present to the class.	Ex) Acting out the Bill of Rights, Reporting on the fall of the River Valley Civilizations, Interviewing major political or philosophical leaders in history, etc.	Student Agency, Depth of Understanding, Teamwork
Sticking Points	Choose a significant issue and examine it using these 4 lenses... Facts: What facts do people differ on? What facts do they agree on? Values: What values do people differ on? What values do they agree on? Interests: What practical interests do people differ on? What practical interests do they share? Policies: What policies do people differ on? What policies do they agree on?	Use to understand the nuance in historical conflicts. Ex) European Wars of Religion, The Revolutionary War, etc.	Global Thinking, Perspective-Taking
Four Corners	Students are presented with a controversial statement or are asked a question. In each of the four corners of the classroom, an opinion or response is posted. Students express their opinion or response by standing in front of one of four statements, and then talking to others about why they have chosen their corner.	Use this as a warm-up activity by asking students to respond to a statement about a topic they will be studying. It can also be an effective follow-up activity by asking students to apply what they have learned when framing their arguments, or you can use it as a pre-writing activity to elicit arguments and evidence prior to essay writing.	Forming and Defending a Claim
Gallery Walk	Students explore multiple texts or images that are placed around the room. You can use this strategy when you want to have students share their work with peers, examine multiple historical documents, or respond to a collection of quotations.	Use to share a collection of historical artifacts (texts, pictures, quotes, etc) or student work	Communicating Ideas
Life Road Maps	Students draw a map of someone's life that highlights the important events and decisions that shaped that person's identity. This activity helps students better understand historical or literary figures by focusing their attention on the many factors that contributed to a figure's decision making.	You can use this strategy as part of a research project, as a way to review previously studied material, or as an assessment tool.	Connecting Events, Perspective-Taking

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Think-Pair-Square	Split the class into groups of four or five. Pose a question for students to consider. Ask students to work individually for two minutes to write all the answers they can think of. Have students pair up with someone in another group. They each take turns sharing their ideas and adding their partner's ideas to their own list. Ask students to return to their groups. Each student shares the ideas on their list.	Flexible in any context. Use as an engagement strategy for students to answer questions and engage with content in a low stakes environment.	Synthesizing/Communicating Ideas
Shadow Reading	Assign a set of readings that address two or more viewpoints of an issue. Have students read each text, then ask students to compose a dialogue between the authors or narrators of each viewpoint. Invite pairs/trios to act out their dialogue for the class.	This strategy can be helpful when there are multiple perspectives or positions within a particular conflict, issue, or time period.	Global Thinking, Perspective Taking
Graffiti Wall	Graffiti Boards are a shared writing space (e.g., a large sheet of paper or whiteboard) where students record their comments and questions about a topic.	Use it as a preview to a new topic to students to organize existing knowledge about that topic. You can also use this strategy to brainstorm for a class discussion or writing assignment.	Communicating Ideas, Synthesizing Ideas
Storyboard	Help students keep track of a narrative or time period's main ideas and supporting details by having them illustrate the important scenes.	Flexible in any context. Use as an engagement strategy for students to illustrate an individual's life, a movement, or a time period.	Chronological Thinking, Main Idea
Choice Boards	Create a grid with a variety of options that showcase student understanding of content. Students can choose one or more options from the board.	Choice boards can be used to assess student understanding, within stations, or for review/reinforcement of content.	Student Agency
RAFT Writing	Students choose a Role, Audience, Format and Topic to write about.	Flexible in many contexts. RAFT writings make great end of unit assessments.	Perspective-Taking, Forming an Opinion, Using Evidence, Defending a Claim
Cooperative Learning Roles	Assign all students in a group a role. Examples of roles could be: time keeper, manager, inquirer, scribe, speaker, etc.	Flexible in any group activity. Use to ensure all students in the group are engaged.	Engagement, Accountability, Teamwork

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Circle the Sage	<p>With students in groups, the teacher first polls the class to see which students have a special knowledge of the topic being covered. Those students with knowledge (the sages) stand and spread out in the room. The teacher then has the rest of the students each surround a sage. The sage explains what they know while the students listen, ask questions, and take notes. All students then return to their groups. Each in turn, explains what they learned from the sages. Because each one has gone to a different sage, they compare notes. If there is disagreement, they stand up as a team. Finally, the disagreements are aired and resolved as a class</p>	<p>Flexible in any context. Use as an engagement strategy to activate students' background knowledge, review a concept, and promote student leadership and collaboration</p>	<p>Student Agency, Synthesizing Ideas, Collaboration</p>
Relevant Analogies/Simulations	<p>To assist students in understanding a complex historical topic, pose a scenario in which they explore a situation that would be relevant to their own lives and/or that they are able to connect to. The same themes in the make believe scenario should also be present in the historical topic.</p>	<p>Ex) When studying the American Revolution, pass out a memo from school administration stating that due to budget issues, students will have to begin paying a locker tax of \$5 per week. As students become emotionally involved in debating this scenario and whether the tax is fair, teachers can make the connection to colonists and taxation pre-Revolution.</p>	<p>Connecting Ideas, Empathy, Perspective-Taking</p>
<p>Pick an Object</p>	<p>Stash a basket in your classroom with a random assortment of inanimate objects: a basketball, paper clip, lip gloss, sticky notes pad, measuring cup, etc. Bring it out every once in a while, and have students connect what they have learned to one of the objects.</p>	<p>This activity could be a quick end of lesson check for understanding or a more intricate end of unit written assignment.</p>	<p>Abstract Thinking, Communicating Ideas, Using Evidence</p>
Concept Sort	<p>Introduce students to new vocabulary...</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Gather objects or words - Sort objects or word cards into groups - Talk about the groupings 	<p>Use any time introducing new vocabulary.</p>	<p>Categorization, synthesizing information</p>
Facts or Fiction	<p>A routine to increase awareness of the many issues of truth and what to consider when exploring truth. Ask questions about: perceptions, decisions, interpretations, and beliefs.</p>	<p>When examining a document, event, or other artifact.</p>	<p>Perspective-taking</p>

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