**Balanced Assessment: Middle School Writing in the History Classroom**

**Comprehensive Literacy Webinar Series**

**Local Alternative Assessments and Balanced Assessment Plans**

**Institutionalize & Innovate**

“Alternative assessments are incorporated within a **balanced assessment system** at the classroom level by teachers and at the school/ division level by educational leaders; alternative assessment practices prompt innovative instruction and deeper learning.”

*Framework for Local Alternative Assessment Implementation*

**Balanced Assessment System**   
(1 of 2)

A balanced assessment system includes:

* a combination of assessments that form a comprehensive measure of student learning
* a variety of assessment types that are matched to the content being assessed and the purpose of the assessment data (including the need to meet accountability measures)

Adapted from:

VDOE assessment literacy glossary

**Balanced Assessment System**   
(2 of 2)

A balanced assessment system:

* allows opportunities to measure student achievement and growth based on content standards, specific learning goals, and the 5 C’s (critical thinking, creative thinking, collaboration, communication, and citizenship)
* provides meaningful information that supports and guides classroom instruction.

Adapted from:

VDOE assessment literacy glossary

**BOE Guidelines – Local Alternative Assessments (1 of 3)**

**2018-2019 through 2019-2020**

* School divisions are expected to continue to use the **Virginia Quality Criteria Tool** to ensure that students have access to quality tasks.
* School divisions will continue using the **common rubrics** developed by VDOE with performance assessment in classrooms where an SOL test has been replaced (Grade 3 Science, Grade 3 History, Grade 5 Writing, United States History to 1865, and United States History: 1865 to the Present).
* School divisions are expected to prepare **Balanced Assessment Plans** for each of the five replaced SOL assessments.
* These plans are expected to indicate types of assessments used to measure the content and skills addressed in the grade level/course; and may include a variety of assessment types but must include some performance assessments.

BOE Guidelines – Local Alternative Assessments (3 of 3)

Superintendent’s Memo 025-19, Attachment A

*“1. incorporate options for age-appropriate, authentic performance assessments and portfolios … 2. permit and encourage integrated assessments that include multiple subject areas*

The legislation encourages integrated assessments that include multiple subject areas. For example, a local assessment might address content from both U.S. History I and 6th Grade English.

Writing for the 5 C’s

Achieve and **apply** academic and technical **knowledge**;

Demonstrate **workplace skills**, qualities, & behaviors;

Build connections and value interactions with others as a **responsible & responsive citizen**;

and **align knowledge**, skills & personal interests with **career opportunities**.

**The best writing instruction is integrated with reading, not divorced from it**

Writing as a replacement for multiple choice assessment writing may happen in a vacuum with no links to reading. *This type of writing can often just be ASSIGNED*

Writing to generate analytical responses to reading integrates all of the English SOL strands and increases the amount of time students spend writing AND reading… research indicates that the point of diminishing returns is somewhere beyond 150 minutes per day. It is a transferrable skill that improves literacy across all content areas. *This type of writing must be TAUGHT*

**Effective writing instruction means writing is embedded across all contents as a content-specific set of skills.** Key questions: How can students learn to write like a historian… a scientist… a mathematician? How can student writing be generated as a response to the kind of information and text that students encounter in your content. *These are all skills that must be TAUGHT*

**Authentic Writing**

1. Use mentor texts and engaging sources to provide authentic stimuli for writing 2. Select documents that encourage to students to write to demonstrate historical thinking skills, assessing arguments, evaluating sources for bias, etc.

2. Incorporate daily writing: 1. A warm-up prior to beginning a unit of study 2. Ask students to evaluate news items and historic documents for bias 3. To consolidate thoughts or findings after independent reading, class discussion, or class experiment

3. Summative Assessment: Use authentic writing to assess skill development *and* content knowledge

**What are paired texts…**

1. Can include books, plays, articles, poems, functional text, graphics, maps, or digital media
2. Focus on a common theme or topic that fits history and social science content
3. Can be compared and contrasted to demonstrate deeper understanding and historical thinking
4. Are included on the 2017 6-8 Reading SOL tests

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Resources for Building Paired Passages: [Virginia Humanities’ *Encyclopedia Virginia*](http://www.encyclopediavirginia.org)

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Resources for Building Paired Passages: [New American History Project’s *Bunk History*](file:///C:\Users\aqg66223\Downloads\bunkhistory.org)

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Resources for Building Paired Passages: [*CommonLit*](file:///C:\Users\aqg66223\Downloads\commonlit.org)

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Resources for Building Paired Passages: [Library of Virginia's *Document Bank of Virginia*](https://edu.lva.virginia.gov/dbva/)

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Resources for Building Paired Passages: [Digital Library of Appalachia](https://dla.acaweb.org/)

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