

# Q & A on Inquiry Stations

## with Rhonda Lokey

### 1. What is the idea behind using stations?

- When we began having students analyze primary and secondary sources to find text evidence to answer a question, we saw that our students seemed to be overwhelmed with what they felt should be the correct answer and sometimes the complexity of the documents was daunting. It was as if they didn't know where to start. The Language Arts teacher and myself found that if we built in an extra day for them to just look at the documents (preview them) using inquiry stems or tasks and tell them there were no right or wrong answers as long as they could back up their thoughts with text evidence, they got more out of the documents. The first time we did this, they asked why we hadn't done it before. They said that having this day with inquiry stations made it easier to analyze the documents later on to get text evidence. The inquiry stations allowed for students to start gathering evidence to answer the questions as well as give them a purpose for discussing the documents, which led to collaboration.

### 2. What materials are at the stations?

- Documents – primary and secondary sources NOTE: We started “zoning” pictures with inquiry stems for each zone. This helped students “break” the picture into parts to gather evidence. This was done as a scaffolding strategy which eventually we didn’t have to use. This helped teach students how to “read” a picture, map, or political cartoon.
- Inquiry Stems or Task
- Student sheets to record their answers

### 3. How are students grouped?

- Students were grouped based on performance on previous assessments in Language Arts and Social Studies (ability to pick out text evidence to answer question.)
- Lexile Scores (we made sure each group had 2 stronger readers for the text documents.)

### 4. How does timing work? How long would this activity take?

- We allowed 15 minutes at each station. (This was only one part – the entire social studies lab would take a week.)
- Our classes were 60 minutes long.
- Recommendation: The first time you do this, walk students through a station together. For best use of time, I would do this the day before you are doing stations so when students come in the next day they can get started.

### 5. What is the culminating task they are asked to complete?

- Students were asked to write an essay: How should the Aztecs be remembered – for agriculture or human sacrifice?

## 6. How often do you do inquiry stations?

- We started doing the stations with full social studies labs and then moved the activity into other units. For language arts and social studies collaboration, we did one a quarter. For example, we did one on the Space Race during the Cold War and the final product was the creation of a political cartoon. For my social studies class, I used them when I was having students analyze several documents to complete a performance task. It was not always an essay to answer a question. Sometimes students were given a choice board for the final product.