

Content-Area Graphic Organizers

SOCIAL STUDIES

Margaret Cleveland

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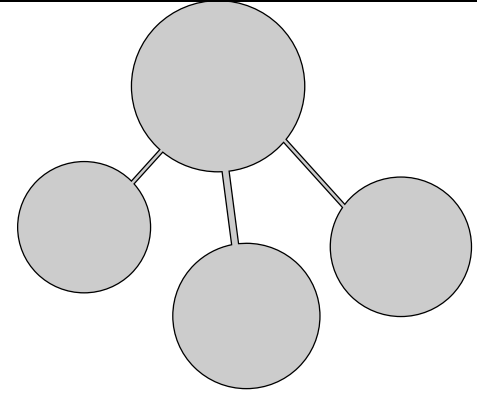
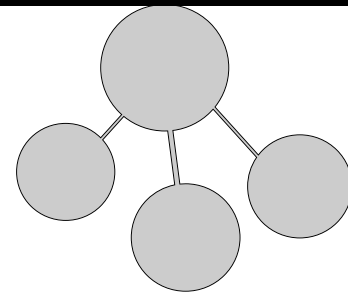


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To the Teacher

Graphic organizers can be a versatile tool in your classroom. Organizers offer an easy, straightforward way to visually present a wide range of material. Research suggests that graphic organizers support learning in the classroom for all levels of learners. Gifted students, students on grade level, and students with learning difficulties all benefit from their use. Graphic organizers reduce the cognitive demand on students by helping them access information quickly and clearly. Using graphic organizers, learners can understand content more clearly and can take clear, concise notes. Ultimately, learners find it easier to retain and apply what they've learned.

Graphic organizers help foster higher-level thinking skills. They help students identify main ideas and details in their reading. They make it easier for students to see patterns, such as cause and effect, comparing and contrasting, and chronological order. Organizers also help learners master critical-thinking skills by asking them to recall, evaluate, synthesize, analyze, and apply what they've learned. Research suggests that graphic organizers contribute to better test scores because they help students understand relationships between key ideas and enable them to be more focused as they study.

This book shows students how they can use some common graphic organizers as they read and write in social studies classes. As they become familiar with graphic organizers, they will be able to adapt them to suit their needs.

In the social studies classroom, graphic organizers help students to

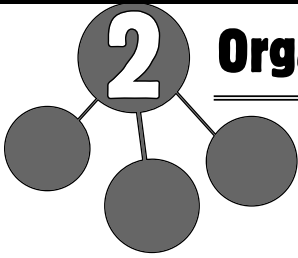
- preview new material
- make connections between new material and prior learning
- recognize patterns and main ideas in reading
- understand the relationships between key ideas
- organize information and take notes
- review material

This book offers graphic organizers suitable for social studies tasks, grouped according to big-picture skills, such as organizing and classifying information; sequencing; comparing and contrasting; showing cause and effect; and writing. Each organizer is introduced with an explanation of its primary uses and structure. Next comes a step-by-step description of how to create the organizer, with a completed example that uses text relevant to the content area. Finally, an application section asks students to use the techniques they have just learned to complete a blank organizer with information from a sample text. Throughout, learners are encouraged to customize the organizers to suit their needs. To emphasize the variety of graphic organizers available, an additional organizer suitable for each big-picture skill is introduced briefly at the end of each lesson.

Content-Area Graphic Organizers: Social Studies is easy to use. Simply photocopy and distribute the section on each graphic organizer. Blank copies of the graphic organizers are included at the back of this book so that you can copy them as often as needed. The blank organizers are also available for download at our web site, walch.com.

As learners become familiar with using graphic organizers, they will develop their own approaches and create their own organizers. Encourage them to adapt them, change them, and create their own for more complex strategies and connections.

Remember, there is no one right way to use graphic organizers; the best way is the way that works for each student.



Organizing and Classifying

Imagine that you are going to the library to select a book. When you arrive, you find that books on the shelves are all mixed up. There are novels alongside encyclopedias. Books on the geography and history of the states are next to books about mountain lions. There is no order to the books at all. How will you find what you need?

Now think about how you categorize your assignments. What if your list of homework for one week looked like this:

-
- read pages 51-78
- write essay as assigned in class
- learn vocabulary words on page 44
- do problems from class worksheet
- memorize definitions from class notebook
-

How would you remember what books to read? How would you know which class worksheet to do? When you create a list, do you organize your homework assignments into categories with assigned headings? Look at the revised list of assignments below. Does it make more sense?

-
- Social Studies: read pages 51-78
- English: write essay as assigned in class
- Spanish: learn vocabulary words on page 44
- Math: do problems from class worksheet
- Science: memorize definitions from class notebook
-

The most important part of making a list is not that you are writing things down, but that you are organizing and classifying the information in your list. We organize and classify every day. In the library, we find books shelved by category. In our own notebooks, we find our assignments arranged by subject. If not, we would spend a lot of time looking for things or trying to figure out what things mean. Organizing and classifying is a skill you use when you read social studies material. When you read, you can look for patterns or ways to organize or classify, just as you would when you write down your assignments. In this lesson, we will look at three different ways to classify or organize information.

Concept/Event Maps

Every article you read for social studies—whether it is part of a textbook or a primary source—involves a main concept or event. Usually you can figure out the main concept by looking at the title or reading the introductory paragraph. Where a lot of people run into trouble is sorting out the key points that describe the main concept or event. A concept/event map can help you sort out the key points.

Using Concept/Event Maps

A concept/event map uses the questions who, what, where, when, how, and why to identify the key points. Once you can answer these questions about the article you are reading, you will know the key points.

In a concept/event map, you write the main idea (an event or a concept) in the middle of the page. Then you write the key questions around the main idea. On lines drawn out from the center, write the key facts that explain who, what, where, when, how, and why.

Concept/Event Maps in Action

Look at the article below about the life of Thomas Jefferson. Then see how a sample concept/event map is filled out on page 9.

Architect, Thinker, President

Many historians consider Thomas Jefferson one of the most influential people in our nation's history. He was a brilliant thinker, writer, and architect. He became the third president of the United States. His actions before and after his presidency continue to influence America today.

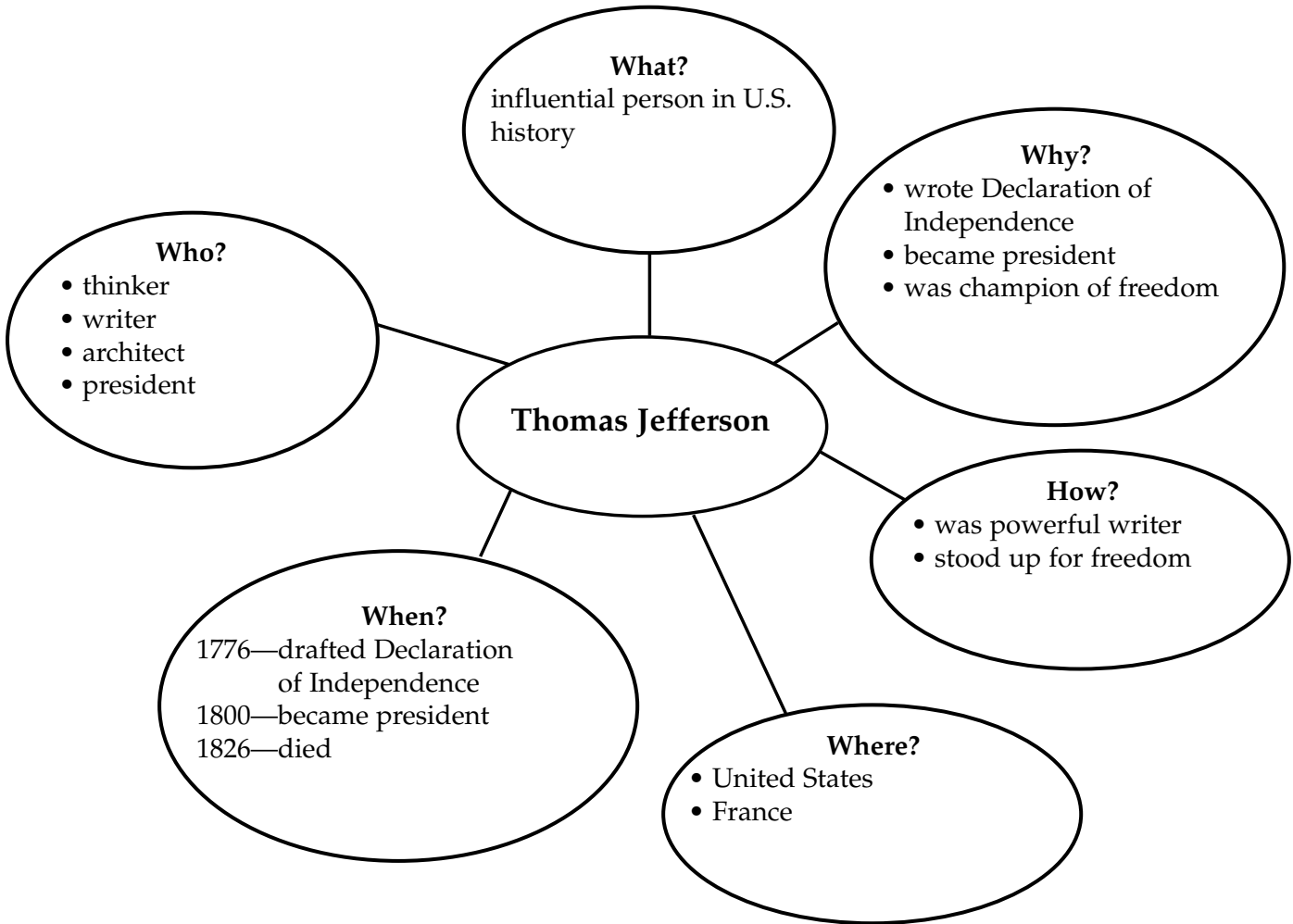
In 1776, when he was just thirty-three years old, Jefferson revised a very sketchy document for the Continental Congress. That document became the Declaration of Independence. Jefferson believed in freedom above all else. He drafted a bill that outlined religious freedom for those in his native state of Virginia. This bill became a foundation document for the later Bill of Rights.

After the American Revolution, Jefferson became minister to France. This was an important time in French history, as it was the eve of their violent revolution. The fight between nobles and peasants captured the interest of many Americans. Some sympathized with the nobles. Others, like Jefferson, sympathized with the peasants who wanted more freedom. Leaders in America were split on their sympathies. This split led to the formation of two rival political parties. The Federalists became the more conservative party in America, and the Democratic Republicans were more liberal—they sympathized with French peasants. Jefferson was the leader of the Republicans.

In 1800, Jefferson became president—reluctantly. His presidency was marked by some controversy, including his purchase of the land area known as the Louisiana Territory. However, the Louisiana Purchase turned out to be one of the most critical decisions of his presidency. This purchase doubled the size of the United States.

When his term of presidency was over, Jefferson retired to his home, known as Monticello. There he sketched the architectural plans for the

University of Virginia, which stands today as a monument to Jefferson's remarkable talents. Fittingly, Thomas Jefferson died on Independence Day—July 4, 1826.



Application Now it's your turn to create a concept/event map. Read the passage below about the Louisiana Purchase. As you read, think about who, what why, how, where, and when. Then complete the graphic organizer on page 11.

Double the Country

Historians still consider the decision to buy the Louisiana Territory an important turning point in American history. This decision doubled the size of the United States, making the United States one of the largest countries in the world.

In 1803, Thomas Jefferson was the third president of the United States. The area known as the Louisiana Territory belonged to France, under the leadership of the Emperor Napoleon. The price tag was \$15 million.

Today, \$15 million might buy one skyscraper in a mid-sized American city. East to west, the Louisiana Territory included all the land from the Mississippi River to the Rocky Mountains. It also extended north and south from Canada to the Mexican border, including most of the land that today makes up Texas and New Mexico. It included the land that is now Arkansas, Colorado, Iowa, Kansas, Louisiana, Minnesota, Missouri, Montana, Nebraska, North Dakota, Oklahoma, South Dakota, and Wyoming.

When Napoleon offered the Louisiana Territory to the United States, President Jefferson really wanted to buy it. But there was no provision in the newly written U.S. Constitution that authorized the purchase of new land. Because Jefferson wanted to abide strictly by the law of the Constitution, he was reluctant to buy the land. Yet, the consequences of not buying the land far outweighed his worries about the purchase being unconstitutional. He decided to buy the land. The Senate agreed with him, and Congress gave Jefferson the money to buy the land.

In 1803, no one knew how far-reaching the consequences of buying the land would be. Jefferson knew that he wanted the port of New Orleans because it was a destination point for farmers of the Ohio Valley to sell and trade their crops. But beyond New Orleans, the land included in the Louisiana Purchase turned out to be fertile farmland as well as a source of many natural resources. The Louisiana Purchase ended up contributing significantly to the U.S. economy, not only doubling the size of the country, but making it much richer and more powerful than it had been.

Even though the Louisiana Purchase was not officially allowed by the Constitution, Jefferson chose to interpret the law of the land in a broad sense. But to make sure that it would be possible to continue to acquire new lands, in 1828, the U.S. Supreme Court upheld the constitutionality of Jefferson's decision. Also, the Court ruled to add a clause to the Constitution about acquiring land.

Concept/Event Map Answer the who, what, why, how, where, and when questions about the passage you have just read on the Louisiana Purchase. Then complete the map below to help you remember the key points of the article. When you go back to study about this topic, or any topic for which you use a concept/event map, the main ideas will be well organized and easy to study and remember.

