**Steps for Teaching the DBQ Writing Process**

**STEP 1:** Analyze the Documents  
Teach students to ask themselves the questions below when they are examining photographs, text, maps, graphs, images, etc. Practice in and out of social studies class with advertisements, brochures, videos, news, books, etc.

* Who, what, where, when, how, why?
* Who is in the image or text?
* Who created the document?
* What biases may the author have had?
* What is the big picture?
* What is the significance of the event and the document?
* What is in the document?
* Where did the event occur?
* When did it happen?
* When and where was the document created?
* How does the creation location of the document play a role in creating bias?
* How does the historical setting play a role in the document creation?
* Why did the author create the document or participate in the event?
* Why did the event take place?
* Why was the document created?
* Why is location of the event and/or document creation important?

**STEP 2:** Historical Thinking

* For younger students, make it simple by asking, why does it matter now? For older students, push further to help them make connection to the cycle of historic events and peoples.
* Teach students to recall what they already know on the topic. Encourage them to examine what they learned in the previous lesson or last unit.
* Help students visualize history as a timeline. Create a classroom timeline as you move from unit to unit to help students create this visual representation of history.
* Teach students to ask the question, how does that time and place in history impact this topic?
* In DBQ writing, the background information, the theme, the era in history, etc. will set the premise for writing the response.

**STEP 3:** Thesis Statement Writing

* + Write a clear position. For younger students, this is usually the answer to the task question or statement.
* Teach opinion versus position. Practice writing opinion pieces to compare with a DBQ essay. In a DBQ essay, a position can be supported with the documents and with their historical thinking.
  + Layout your organization for the body paragraphs.
  + Check for historical accuracy.

**STEP 4:** Organize the Essay

* Introduction: Provide background, historical setting, or context introduction. Include an organized and clear thesis statement. Outline the body paragraphs into categories. For older students, the body paragraphs may be organized into political, economic, or social categories. For younger student, body paragraphs may follow a chronological layout, cause/effect, positive/negative, or strengths/weaknesses.
* Prepare for two-three body paragraphs that support the overall thesis statement. Include documents in each paragraph based on appropriate fit with paragraph category. Students may write*, “Document 1 supports that children were working long hours for low pay in dangerous conditions” or “Children were working long hours for low pay in dangerous conditions (Doc. 1).”*
* Add other relevant knowledge that was not in any of the documents.
* Check that bias and point of view from document analysis has been included in paragraphs.
* Write a clear conclusion that wraps up the thesis statement and a potential call to action or a potential resolution appropriate for the historical period.