

“Assisting Struggling Readers” Presentation Notes, FAQs, and Activity Directions

Make overheads of the following pages from the “Road to the Constitution” unit: 10, 11, 12, 13, 22, 27, 28, 34, 35, 36, 40, 43, 46, & 47.

Slide #	Notes
1	Distribute handouts. Note that much of what you will be discussing is based on the work of Kate Kinsella, reading expert and professor at San Francisco State University.
2	Impoverished environments typically reflect poverty, but even middle class children can come from impoverished environments, such as homes with few or no books, families that don't visit libraries or museums, etc.
3	...After all, you don't want to discourage them, or injure their self-esteem, by setting them up to fail.
4	...Students – <u>all</u> students – are expected to perform at grade level, but they can't do that unless they are <u>taught</u> at grade level.
5	There are many ways to help struggling readers; here are a few that are simple and effective...
6	Using primary sources is a good way to help students understand and appreciate history, so let's look first at how to make them more accessible to students...
7	While there is some truth to these concerns, you can...
8	
9	Use p. 22 of the “Road to the Constitution” unit to illustrate this.
10	...You can also have your students do this individually, but struggling readers especially may lack the confidence or ability to work on this task alone.
11	
12	What about the claim that primary source documents tend to be too long to use?
13	...Students go from thinking “I could <u>never</u> do all <u>that</u> ” to “I can do <u>that</u> !”
14	What's crucial here is that you have a clear sense of your objective (and if you have planned your lesson backwards, you will!). Use pp. 34-36 of the “Road to the Constitution” unit to illustrate this.
15	Again, this can also be done by individuals. The first few times, though, it should be a group exercise – allow students to gain confidence through familiarity with the technique.
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17	Students tend to just dive into textbook chapters and plow straight through them – their objective is to get to the end of the chapter in the shortest time possible.
18	
19	<p><u>Title/subtitle</u>: indicates overall topic/specific focus within chapter</p> <p><u>Focus</u>: indicates what's important; guide students' reading while they look for answers</p> <p><u>Intro/1st paragraph</u>: indicates where chapter is heading</p> <p><u>Subheadings</u>: indicate major topics within chapter</p> <p><u>Topic sentence</u>: indicates what the paragraph is about (or transition/attention-getter)</p> <p><u>Summary/last</u>: provides condensed view of chapter; helps identify important ideas</p> <p><u>Other material</u>: highlights terms or other things author views as important</p>

20	<u>Typographical</u> : e.g. italics – often signal key word, important definition <u>Visual</u> : lists, charts, graphs, tables, maps, pictures. <u>Make sure students read the captions!</u>
21	Use pp. 27-28 of the “Road to the Constitution” unit to illustrate this.
22	
23	We tend to take for granted that students know academic words and phrases. Many don’t. We therefore need to explain them carefully. Distribute and refer to “Academic Language” handout.
24	Use pp. 10-13 of the “Road to the Constitution” unit to illustrate this.
25	
26	Use pp. 46-47 of the “Road to the Constitution” unit to illustrate this. When struggling students confront a blank piece of paper and are instructed to write about something on it, they often react by thinking “There’s no way I can write all that!” But when they see a box or some other limited, enclosed space, and are told to write their answer in it, they think, “Oh, is <u>that</u> all you want? I can do <u>that</u> !”
27	Use p. 40 of the “Road to the Constitution” unit to illustrate this. Help students take notes on the most important points you mention by identifying them in advance.
28	Use p. 43 of the “Road to the Constitution” unit to illustrate this. Show them that a report consists of related, rather than random, facts.
29	

Questions

You are less likely to be asked questions about this presentation than you are to be challenged on the ideas expressed in slides 3 and 4. Some teachers feel very strongly that English Language Learners, in particular, should be protected against failure at all costs, without recognizing that refusing to assign grade level work guarantees their failure on standardized tests and other assessments keyed to grade level content.

Activities

Why re-invent the wheel? Use activities from the “Road to the Constitution” unit, unless you prefer to develop some of your own. Have teachers work in small groups to complete the vocabulary chart at the top of page 22 in the unit. Have them “translate” the *Federalist Papers* chunks on pp. 48-52.