

Strategies for Student Accessibility

This resource includes:

- [Selecting the Right Resource\(s\) for Your Students](#)
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Selecting the Right Resource(s) for Your Students

Legal Timelines is designed to be flexible for teacher and student needs. While the Inquiry Packs are structured as themed collections, you can use individual components based on your instructional goals.

For example:

- You might choose to use only the introductory reading and one primary source, rather than having students analyze all sources to answer the Inquiry Question.
- Alternatively, you could use your own introductory materials and pair them with a curated collection of sources from the Inquiry Pack.

You can also opt not to use an Inquiry Pack and instead focus on additional activities that pair with the interactive timelines like:

- [Timeline Curator](#)
- [Timeline Scavenger Hunt](#)

Key questions to consider when selecting resources might include:

- How will this fit into my instruction? What standard(s) will I address by using these resources? How much time do I have?
- Do my students need additional support with reading comprehension?
- Do my students have enough background knowledge to immediately engage with this resource? Or do I first need to provide additional instruction?
- Do my students have the necessary skills to immediately engage with this resource? Or do I first need to provide modeling and guided practice?
- Am I familiar enough with the resource to effectively guide instruction?

Access Students' Prior Knowledge

Before engaging with a resource, help students make connections to what they already know. Identify aspects of the resource that relate to their prior learning or life experiences.

For example, if analyzing an excerpt from the U.S. Constitution, ask students to recall what they already know about the document. (Some questions that might help: Who wrote the Constitution? Why was it written? How is it used today? Have you heard about the Constitution in the news recently?).

Reading Scaffolding Strategies

If your students need support comprehending the reading materials, consider using one or more of the following strategies.

- **Frontload Vocabulary:** Help students understand key terms before they read. Some resources identify important vocabulary terms in bold or underlined text, while others do not have pre-identified vocabulary.
- **Use Graphic Organizers:** Provide students with a graphic organizer to help them process information. We recommend students reading the text once without the graphic organizer and then rereading it while filling in the graphic organizer. You may need to model how to fill out the graphic organizer before students work independently. The [Iowa Reading Research Center](#) has several free graphic organizers that may assist students' reading comprehension.
- **Check for Understanding:** Use formative assessments to gauge your students' understanding. Avoid relying solely on responses from one or two students. Instead, identify key information that your students should know and use strategies that check all students' understanding. This [Edutopia article](#) offers 28 quick ways to check for understanding.
- **Chunk the Reading:** Break the reading down into "chunks" or smaller parts. This might look like assigning students to read only a few paragraphs at a time. After reading each section, check for understanding, address misconceptions, review vocabulary, and clarify as needed before continuing to the next section.
- **Read Aloud:** Reading aloud benefits students of all levels. The article "[The Hidden Power of Read Alouds](#)," provides an evidence base for reading aloud in the classroom, along with some strategies for doing it successfully.

Teacher Modeling

Demonstrating how students should approach challenging tasks in Legal Timelines provides essential guidance and support for all students. Below are two examples you may use to model the types of work students will engage in while using Legal Timelines.

Links to relevant graphic organizers in this section:

- [Source Analysis Graphic Organizer](#)
- [Source Analysis Graphic Organizer - fillable version](#)
- [Source Analysis Graphic Organizer - model version](#)

Source Analysis:

To prepare, select a source and brainstorm in advance the key elements you would like revealed in the source analysis.

Display the source for all students to view but also provide students with their own copies. Then, walk students through the process of analyzing the source. You may wish to use the *Source Analysis Graphic Organizer* for this.

Sample script for source analysis think-aloud:

1. *First, let's identify some basic information about the source: Who created it? When?*
2. *This source also has some background information, so let's read that together.*
3. *Now, let's examine the content together. (If source is a text, read it aloud and discuss. If it is an image, display it, share your observations, and invite students to contribute.)*
4. *After examining the source closely, I want to identify which parts of it seem most important. (Use Reflect questions from the Inquiry Pack and/or the Inquiry Pack's Inquiry Question.)*

Your source analysis may stop here, or you might continue with:

- Filling out a *Source Analysis Graphic Organizer* together
- Examining author/creator bias within the source
- Comparing and contrasting with another source in the Inquiry Pack
- Other critical examinations of the source

Answering the Inquiry Question in Writing:

Writing an evidence-based response to an Inquiry Question can be challenging. The *Inquiry Question Graphic Organizer* helps students identify how each source might help with their response to the Inquiry Question. The *Inquiry Essay Outline Graphic Organizer* helps students use the information they gathered from sources to write an essay answering the inquiry question. You can scaffold this process by gradually releasing responsibility to students.

Links to relevant graphic organizers in this section:

- [Inquiry Question Graphic Organizer - fillable version](#)
- [Source Analysis Graphic Organizer](#)
- [Source Analysis Graphic Organizer - fillable version](#)
- [Source Analysis Graphic Organizer - model version](#)
- [Inquiry Essay Outline Graphic Organizer](#)
- [Inquiry Essay Outline Graphic Organizer - fillable version](#)
- [Inquiry Essay Outline Graphic Organizer - model version](#)

1. Most Supportive:

- Review the *Source Analysis Graphic Organizer* for all sources and *Inquiry Question Graphic Organizer* as a class.
- Provide a thesis statement students can use to answer the Inquiry Question. Fill in the thesis statement on the *Inquiry Essay Outline Graphic Organizer* and display it to the whole class. Have students write as you write.
- Develop three supporting arguments for the thesis statement and identify sources and reasoning for each. You may do these for the class, or you might ask students to help you with this process.
- Model for students how to use the information on the graphic organizer to write an essay.

2. More Supportive:

- Review the *Source Analysis Graphic Organizer* for all sources and *Inquiry Question Graphic Organizer* as a class.
- Students generate ideas for the thesis statement as a class. Select a strong one.

- Students develop supporting arguments on their *Inquiry Essay Outline Graphic Organizer*, and then you display your own completed graphic organizer.
- Show students how to take the information from their graphic organizer and write it in essay form.
- Students proceed on their own, writing their essay with occasional check-ins from you.

3. Less Supportive:

- Students review their prepared *Source Analysis Graphic Organizer* for all sources and *Inquiry Question Graphic Organizer* to develop their thesis statement.
- Provide guidance on using the *Inquiry Essay Outline Graphic Organizer* to structure body paragraphs that support their thesis.
- Students independently complete the rest of the graphic organizer.
- Students transition the information collected in the graphic organizer to essay form, with occasional check-ins from you.

4. Least Supportive:

- Provide the Inquiry Question and writing instructions.
- Offer the *Inquiry Essay Outline Graphic Organizer* as an optional tool alongside any *Source Analysis* or *Inquiry Question Graphic Organizers* that the students have already prepared.
- Students draft their essays independently, with optional check-ins from you.