



inkwell

K-5 integrated core ELA and
core social studies curriculum

Program Overview

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For years, teachers have worked to coherently connect ELA and social studies instruction.

Inkwell makes it possible.

By bringing the two subjects together through a single, coherent instructional design, Inkwell helps students grow as readers, writers, and thinkers while building the knowledge they need to understand their world and contribute to their communities.



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INTEGRATED ELA AND SOCIAL STUDIES

Meet Inkwell, a **K–5 core curriculum** that **integrates ELA and social studies** into **one cohesive instructional block**.

8:30-9:00am

ELA



Social
Studies

9:00-10:10am

10:30-11:30am

11:30-12:00pm

- Supports **mastery of ELA and social studies standards in one block**
- Grounded in the **Science of Reading**
- Embeds **explicit writing instruction** in daily lessons
- **Builds knowledge** through content-rich social studies investigations
- Connects and deepens learning through **inquiry**

Integration at the heart of instructional design

In Inkwell, students build literacy skills and social studies knowledge together. Through integration, students understand setting more deeply as they see how geography shapes where people live, grasp history more clearly when they connect events through cause and effect, and recognize an author's purpose more accurately when they understand the civic and historical context behind a text.

With Inkwell, students:

- Build reading comprehension, writing, and speaking and listening skills within standards-aligned history, civics, geography, and economics content.
- Read and analyze a wide range of complex literary and informational texts.
- Engage with primary and secondary sources that deepen understanding of people, places, and change.

Inkwell also connects reading, writing, speaking, and language in authentic, purposeful ways.

- **Daily writing:** Students write with purpose, using reading and discussion to strengthen comprehension and composition.
- **Authentic connections:** Grammar, vocabulary, and conversation are tools for communication, not stand-alone skills.
- **Real-world literacy:** Students use reading, writing, and discussion to investigate real questions about the world.

Designed to meet the rigor of both ELA and social studies

Inkwell's integrated design ensures full coverage of ELA and social studies. To build ELA skills, Inkwell provides explicit, research-based instruction in reading, writing, language, speaking, and listening in every unit, with skills that spiral and grow more complex across the year. Through the lens of social studies, learning unfolds through investigations in history, civics, geography, and economics, as students develop disciplinary thinking and skills. Inkwell assessments measure progress across ELA and social studies, helping students apply literacy skills to make meaning from rich social studies content.

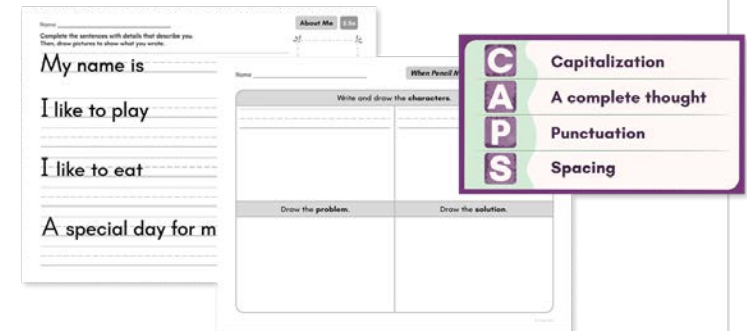
Reading and Listening Comprehension

Inkwell's approach to reading comprehension is grounded in the Science of Reading, which shows that building knowledge plays a central role in comprehension. In Inkwell, students build that knowledge by reading and discussing complex, high-quality texts across genres, supported by explicit strategy instruction and consistent routines that strengthen confidence and understanding.



Writing and Language

In the Inkwell classroom, students write to learn and learn to write about complex texts and ideas. The social studies knowledge they build through reading and discussion gives their writing purpose and authenticity, inspiring work across informational, narrative, and opinion genres. Writing instruction is explicit, systematic, and sequential: students engage in daily practice with grammar, usage, and sentence construction that builds over time and connects directly to the texts and content they study. Across each unit, students apply these foundations as they move through the full writing process, from planning and drafting to revising, editing, and publishing.



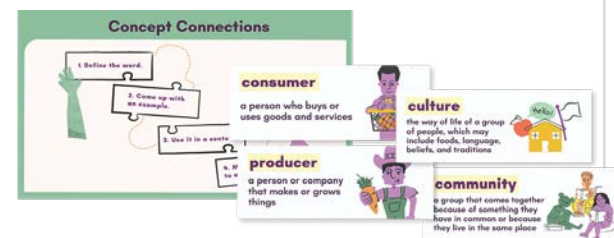
Speaking and Listening

In Inkwell, students' speaking and listening skills are developed intentionally – not left to chance. Lessons provide explicit instruction and modeling of speaking and listening skills, helping students understand what strong communication is, why it matters, and how to apply it. Embedded routines give students multiple opportunities each day to talk, listen, and collaborate about texts and ideas, along with structured opportunities to present their thinking more formally.



Vocabulary

Inkwell builds vocabulary through purposeful work with rich, complex texts and explicit instruction of high-impact words. Students learn, apply, and revisit Tier 2 (academic) and Tier 3 (social studies) vocabulary across lessons and contexts, deepening understanding through repeated, meaningful use. Instruction and modeling of word-learning strategies, such as context clues and morphological analysis, help students determine word meanings independently over time.



Social Studies

Through intentional integration, students practice literacy skills as they build meaningful, standards-aligned social studies knowledge. They think and act like historians, geographers, economists, and civic participants, developing the disciplinary habits and understandings that help them make sense of the world and their place in it.

In geography, students explore how people shape and are shaped by the places they live, using maps and other tools to understand human–environment connections. In economics, students study how people meet their needs and wants, examining trade, resources, and decisions that link communities locally and globally.

In history, students investigate how people and events change over time, analyzing sources, perspectives, and cause and effect to understand how the past shapes the present. In civics, students learn how communities and governments function and how to participate in civic life, exploring fairness, rights, and shared responsibility for change.



The right data to inform instruction

Inkwell's assessment system provides frequent, consistent evidence of learning across reading, writing, speaking, and knowledge. Each assessment aligns to ELA and social studies strands and monitors mastery over time, giving teachers a clear view of progress and the tools to adjust instruction in real time.

Assessment Types:

Pulse Checks: Brief, informal assessments in daily lessons that take the pulse of student progress in reading, writing, language, discussion, and social studies.

Checkpoints: Structured opportunities at key moments where teachers check progress and students apply their learning through short written or discussion-based tasks.

Benchmarks: Formal assessments where students demonstrate progress across strands. These include: Knowledge Benchmark, Comprehension Benchmark, Writing Benchmark, Transfer Benchmark.

Module 2 Written Checkpoint Assessment Guide

Handout 2.4a (What is Culture?)

Students draw and write to show and explain two parts of culture after reading the *What is Culture?* Sourceable, demonstrating social studies knowledge (understanding aspects of culture), reading comprehension (using evidence from the text), writing (explaining ideas through sentences and drawings), and grammar (adding a naming part and using correct capitalization).

LOOK-FORS

- ☐ Logical addition of the subject (naming part) to form a complete sentence
- ☐ Use of capitalization at the beginning of sentences
- ☐ Drawing and writing that reflect evidence about culture

SAMPLE STUDENT RESPONSES

- Food is a part of culture
- Art is a part of culture

Note: At this point in the school year, phonetic spelling is ok

What is Culture?

Draw pictures for these 2 different parts of culture. Then, complete the sentences to explain what you drew.

is

is

a part of culture. a part of culture.

NEXT STEPS FOR INSTRUCTION

Student Need	Possible Instructional Response	Available Flexible Supports
Needs support with logical addition of the subject (naming part) to form a complete sentence	Use the upcoming Handout 2.5a (About Me) to reinforce practice writing complete sentences that start with "I." Model how adding "I" makes the sentence complete (e.g., "I like music.")	Targeted Instruction Block 2.3 (Complete Sentences)
Does not consistently use capitalization at the beginning of sentences	Remind students every sentence on the upcoming Handout 2.5a (About Me) begins with a capital "I"; have them fix one together.	Targeted Instruction Block 2.4 (CAFS)
Drawing and writing does not reflect evidence about culture from the text	Revisit <i>What is Culture?</i> Sourceable and co-create a class chart of cultural examples before students revise their own drawings and sentences.	Targeted Instruction Block 2.5 (Examples and Non-Examples of Culture)
Drawing and writing accurately reflects two pieces of evidence about culture from the text	Encourage students to add a third example of culture from the text or their own lives and explain how it connects to community or traditions	



Support for all learners

Inkwell provides multiple supports within Tier 1 instruction so that every student can access and succeed with grade-level content. Grounded in the Science of Reading, WIDA, and UDL frameworks, the model integrates language development and literacy within social studies.

- **Access by design:** Every student engages with grade-level content through inclusive structures that build background knowledge, vocabulary, and conceptual understanding.
- **Language-rich learning:** Multilingual learners build confidence and academic language through purposeful reading, writing, speaking, and listening within meaningful social studies content.
- **Targeted, real-time support:** Built-in routines, scaffolds, and visuals provide real-time support so all learners can engage with complex texts, tasks, and discussions.
- **Challenge for all:** Inquiry structures engage students in applying knowledge in authentic context, thinking critically, and making real-world connections that deepen and extend learning.
- **Dynamic view of learners:** Inkwell gives teachers tools to respond to student needs and group flexibly, providing targeted support and challenge based on each text, task, and skill.

MULTILINGUAL SUPPORT

If students need support **building precision in describing what they see and hear**, provide scaffolds according to students' proficiency levels:

Beginning:

- Use gestures and visuals, such as pointing to your eye or ear, to make the abstract verbs "see" and "hear" more concrete. Accept responses in students' home languages. Prompt students with "I see..." and "I hear..." allow for wait time, and provide vocabulary support as needed. For example, a student might respond with, "I see food," "I see a mess," or "I see trash."

Intermediate:

- Encourage students to use adjectives and the word "and" to add details to their responses. Build on what they share by asking clarifying questions, such as "What kind of food fight?" and by offering vocabulary like "messy" or "loud." For example, students might say, "I see a big food fight" or "I see happy kids and a mad lunch lady."

Advanced:

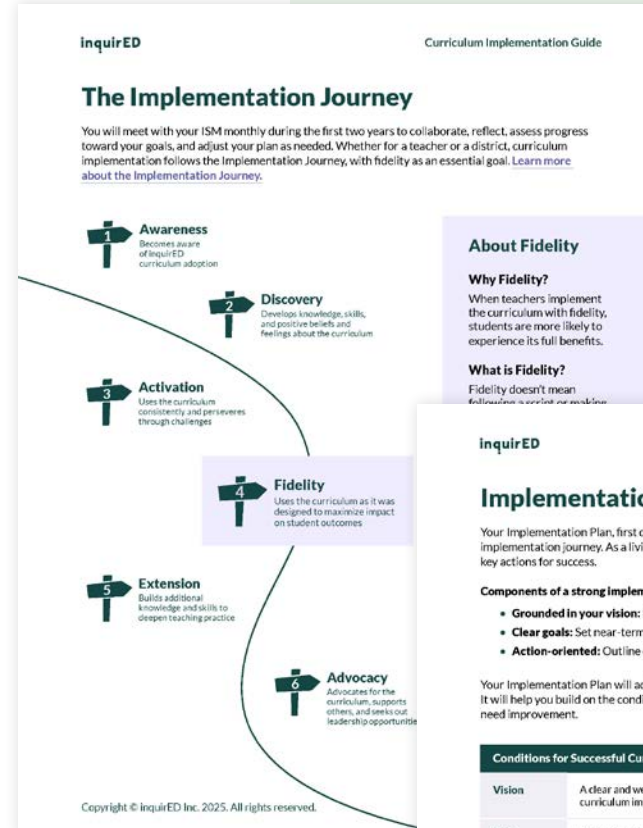
- Prompt students for elaboration and descriptive detail by asking questions, such as: "What else do you see? Could you add that to your sentence?" or "How would you describe it?" Provide vocabulary choices to help refine precision, like "sad" versus "upset." For example, a student might respond with "I see a messy food fight and an angry lunch lady!"

Especially for Beginning and Intermediate learners, prioritize meaning making and expanding language over error-free sentences.

Curriculum-based professional learning

Inkwell's professional learning reflects the same coherence and intentional design as its curriculum. Grounded in research and built for long-term sustainability, it provides comprehensive onboarding, personalized coaching for instructional leaders, and ongoing on-demand support so teachers and leaders feel confident from day one.

- **Focused on classroom practice:** Sessions mirror the instructional moves teachers use with students, modeling practices that can be used right away in the classroom.
- **Built for flexibility:** Districts can choose from multiple formats and customized pathways to build capacity in ways that fit their goals and context.
- **Connected and continuous:** Facilitation, e-learning, and implementation planning work together in one cohesive system that supports sustained professional growth.
- **Designed for long-term impact:** The professional learning equips educators with the tools, confidence, and shared language needed to strengthen instruction and sustain improvement across classrooms.



About Fidelity

Why Fidelity?

When teachers implement the curriculum with fidelity, students are more likely to experience its full benefits.

What is Fidelity?

Fidelity doesn't mean following a script or model.

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Curriculum Implementation Guide

Learning that builds within, and across, grades

Inkwell is designed so knowledge and skills grow in a connected, purposeful way across the year. ELA skills spiral and build in complexity over time, interwoven in social studies concepts that are sequenced to deepen understanding in civics, history, geography, and economics.

Because the two disciplines are deeply integrated, students use literacy to explore ideas and evidence while building the social studies knowledge that gives their reading and writing real purpose. Lessons revisit and extend learning to new contexts, strengthening comprehension, vocabulary, and writing within and across each unit.

Across the year, students return to essential skills and ideas with greater depth and independence: practicing, refining, and ultimately mastering the habits of skilled readers, writers, and thinkers.

KINDERGARTEN UNIT 1

Working Together

In the Working Together unit, students learn about roles, rules, and teamwork through stories, informational texts, and other sources that show how people help one another at home and school. They practice **informative writing** by drawing, dictating, and writing simple facts about their community. Together, students demonstrate how their classroom has become a caring community where everyone contributes. Describing Human Characteristics: What makes each person special?

Rules in Different Contexts:

Why do groups of people have rules?

Work at Home and School:

Who helps us, and how can we help too?

Teamwork and Conflict Resolution:

How can people solve problems together?

FIRST GRADE UNIT 1

Building Blocks of Society

In the Building Blocks of Society unit, students explore how communities function and grow strong. Using texts and other sources about family, school, and civic life, they investigate how individual strengths and shared values help different communities thrive. Students also practice **informative writing**, developing from sentence-level to paragraph writing with supporting details and clear conclusions. As the unit concludes, students identify opportunities to strengthen their own community through a shared project.

Similarities and Differences in Communities:

How do people show respect for differences?

Shared Traditions:

How do traditions connect people?

Goods and Services:

Why do communities need different jobs?

Civic Cooperation:

How can people work together to achieve goals?

SECOND GRADE UNIT 2

Community Needs and Wants

In the Community Needs and Wants unit, students explore how choices about resources shape communities and daily life. Using informational texts, stories, and other sources, they investigate economic concepts like saving and spending, production, trade, and entrepreneurship. Students practice **narrative writing** by recounting meaningful events with clear sequences, descriptive details, and endings that bring closure. As the unit concludes, students explore ways to use resources wisely in their own communities.

Saving and Spending Choices:

How do people make spending and saving decisions?

Production Cycle:

How do the things we use every day get made?

Specialization and Exchange:

Why do people do different kinds of work?

Entrepreneurship:

How can entrepreneurs make a difference in a community?

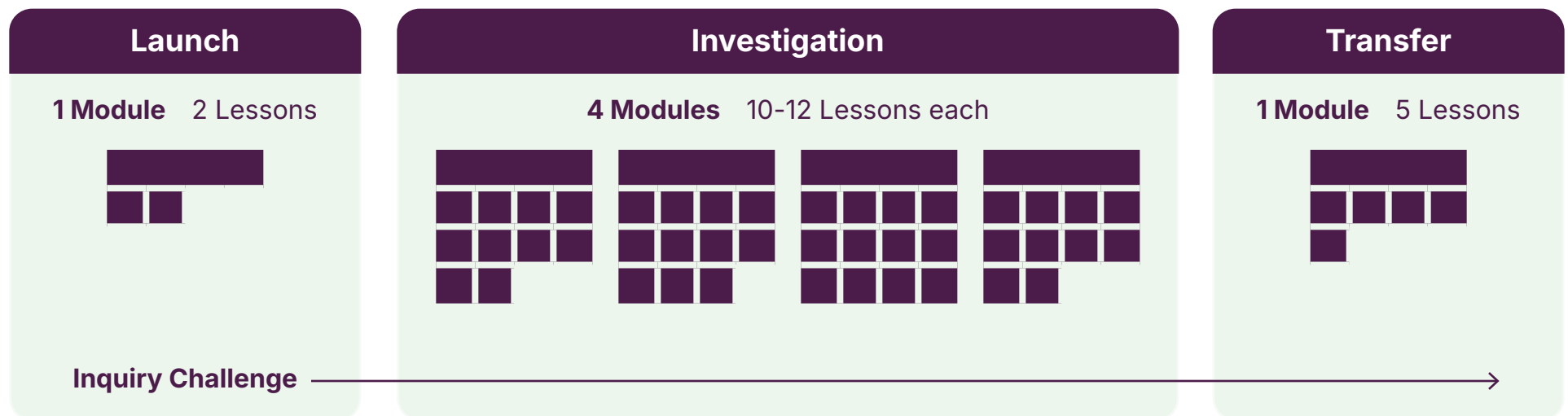
How Learning Builds Across a Unit

Inkwell units build deeper knowledge and stronger ELA skills over time. Each begins with an Inquiry Challenge that captures attention and gives purpose to learning across the unit. Students build and layer knowledge through explicit instruction and guided practice in reading, writing, and discussion, then apply and transfer their learning to new contexts, making deep connections across ELA and social studies.

Each grade level includes three units (50–52 days each). Some lessons at the end of each unit may also be stretched to allow for more hands-on time as students construct their Inquiry Products.

Types of Modules:

- **Launch Module:** A two-lesson sequence that introduces the Inquiry Challenge, sparks curiosity, and previews topics and texts.
- **Investigation Module:** A 10-to-12-lesson sequence framed by an Essential Question that builds knowledge and disciplinary thinking through anchor texts and sources.
- **Transfer Module:** A five-lesson module where students apply their learning in authentic contexts and respond to the Inquiry Challenge through the creation of an Inquiry Product.



Inquiry Challenge: A guiding statement that carries across the entire unit, helping students to connect ideas, deepen understanding, and transfer knowledge with purpose.

Engagement by design: Inkwell's lesson structure

Every Inkwell lesson is designed to bring ELA and social studies instruction together in a single lesson plan. Each lesson fits into a 70-minute window, divided into two parts (two 35-minute segments), giving teachers the flexibility to pause, regroup, or reconfigure based on student needs.

Lessons are organized into Configuration Blocks, each selected to match the purpose of the learning experience. These predictable structures help teachers manage time, transitions, and engagement with ease.



Configuration Blocks



Gather

Students meet in a shared space for whole-class experiences.



Huddle

Students collaborate in small groups of 2–4 for guided collaboration, partner talk, and shared problem-solving.



Focus

Students work independently to read, write, or practice specific skills that require sustained attention.



Flow

Students move actively around the room for interactive routines like Gallery Walks or Mingle-Pair-Share.



Grade 1 | Unit 1 | Module 2 | Lesson 3

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LESSON 3

Connected by Similarities

Children of the World

Students move from fiction to nonfiction, learning that while children around the world live differently, they share common experiences. Comparing details in reading and discussion extends earlier story work into real-life examples.

PREVIEW

PART 1

35 MIN

Flow

5 MIN

Students identify similarities and differences within their own classroom community

Gather

20 MIN

Students listen to a read-aloud and identify key details about character connections

• *Children of the World Book*

Huddle

10 MIN

Students discuss text evidence and explain how characters are connected by similarities

• *Children of the World Book*

/ Pulse Check Assessment

PART 2

35 MIN

Focus

15 MIN

Students write and illustrate sentences showing similarities with classmates

• Handout 2.3a (*Children of the World*)

/ Pulse Check Assessment

Huddle

20 MIN

Students reflect orally on how similarities strengthen relationships and communities

• *Children of the World Book*

• Module 2 Essential Findings Chart

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Grade 1 | Unit 1 | Module 2 | Lesson 3

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OBJECTIVES

- Identify the main topic of *Children of the World* and explain how key details show that children around the world are both similar and different.
- Write complete sentences about how children around the world are similar and different, using correct grammar, capitalization, and punctuation, with the support of a sentence stem.
- Apply speaking and listening norms to engage in collaborative discussions about similarities and differences among children around the world.
- Use the words similar and different to describe how children around the world play, eat, and communicate.

MATERIALS & PREP

- Lesson slide deck
- Number the pages of *Children of the World* continuously, with p. 1 beginning with "Every morning, millions of children..."
- Handout 2.3a (*Children of the World*)
- Module 2 Essential Findings Chart

NOTES

Adapting Activities for All | The goal of the if-then activity is to help students connect the concept of similar vs different to their own lives without simplifying the concept of "similar" to mean "identical." Modify the prompts or movements to suit your learners' needs, but ensure everyone participates in the final prompt.

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One Curriculum, Unified Learning Goals

ELA and social studies come together in every lesson so teachers can build knowledge, skills, and purpose.



LESSON PLAN

Intro Slide



PART 1 35 MIN


FLOW
5 min

1 Transition students to the if-then Flow activity.

Slide 1.1



- Arrange students in a circle so they can easily see each other and move between sitting and standing.

2 Highlight similarities and differences in your classroom with an if-then activity.

Slide 2.1



- Explain how students should move during the activity.
 - I'm going to say a sentence. If the sentence is true for you, stand up. If the sentence is not true for you, stay seated.
 - Then we'll take a look at everyone standing and sitting, and you'll sit back down and listen for the next sentence.

LEARNER SUPPORT

Provide alternative movement options for students with physical or health conditions that make standing a barrier (e.g., seated gesture, hand signal, or smaller motion) so they can still participate fully.

Support That's Already Here

Embedded Learner Supports help teachers differentiate on the spot, scaffolding, extending, and adapting instruction while keeping every student connected to the learning goals.

physical or health conditions that make standing a barrier (e.g., seated gesture, hand signal, or smaller motion) so they can still participate fully.

Slide 2.2

If-Then | Practice

I am wearing sneakers.



- Read the practice sentence aloud, then give students a moment to stand or stay seated.
- Guide students to notice the similarities and differences throughout the class, and reinforce understanding of the activity.
 - Everyone who is standing is similar because they are all wearing sneakers. Everyone who is sitting is different because they're wearing something else.
 - If you are standing, show me the hand motion for "similar." If you are sitting, show me the hand signal for "different."

Slide 2.3

If-Then

I have a pet.



- Read the sentence aloud, then give students a few moments to stand or remain seated. Between each movement, encourage students to briefly look around the room, but keep the activity moving.

Slide 2.4

If-Then

I play sports.



- Facilitate Round 2.

Slide 2.5

If-Then

My favorite season is summer.



- Facilitate Round 3.

Slide 2.6

If-Then

I am in first grade.



- Facilitate Round 4.

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Movement That Sparks Engagement

Lessons feature interactive protocols that get students moving, introducing key vocabulary, inviting them to make connections, and activating both energy and thinking.

Whole-Group Instruction That Sets the Stage

Lessons include explicit instruction with slides and detailed notes for the teacher to introduce and revisit vocabulary and concepts, setting the stage for reading that builds background and sharpens comprehension skills.

Real Books, Real Sources, Real Thinking

Students read deeply and think critically, engaging with authentic texts and sources that build both content knowledge and literacy every step of the way.

Multilingual Learner Support That Builds Meaning

Supports provide WIDA-aligned scaffolds that help students access grade-level tasks, build English proficiency, and use their full linguistic resources.

Slide 2.7



- Invite students to share what similarities and differences they notice.
- Emphasize that no two people are exactly the same.

- 3 Ground students in the lesson goal: Today we will explore how similar and different.

Slide 3.1



- Share the lesson goal.



GATHER
20 min

- 4 Transition students to their Gather spots.

Slide 4.1



Transition slide

- 5 Preview *Children of the World* by sharing its genre and making predictions.

Slide 5.1



- Remind students of what a genre is and why categorizing texts into genres can be useful for readers.

- A genre is a group of stories that are alike. Books in the same genre are similar.
- Recognizing genres can help us predict and prepare for what we're about to read.
- Today, we will read a nonfiction text. Nonfiction texts give

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us information and facts.

- Use the morphology of the word to further explain how nonfiction texts are different from fiction texts.
 - The prefix "non" means "not." A prefix is a group of letters added to the beginning of a word that change what the word means.
 - Nonfiction is different from fiction because it is not made up. Nonfiction tells us facts and shares information about real people and places.
- Show the cover of the text, and share the title and authors.
 - This nonfiction text is written like a story, but it is still teaching us facts.
- Model making a prediction, and prompt students to support that prediction with details from the cover.
 - I predict that this text will share information about different children who live all around the world. Which details in the title or cover support my prediction?
 - I see a place that looks hot and a place that looks cold and snowy
 - There are kids with different skin tones

- 6 Lead a first read-aloud of *Children of the World* to foster a basic understanding of the text.

Slide 6.1



- Read pp. 1–45 (up to the book's appendix) fluently and with expression as students listen, pausing occasionally to invite students to answer a few select questions posed by the text.
- After reading, invite students to share emerging ideas based on key details in the text.
 - What is this text mostly about?
- Emphasize that the text is about different children around the world, and confirm students' earlier predictions.
 - What did you learn about children around the world?
 - They play games and eat food
 - They can be similar and different

MULTILINGUAL SUPPORT

To help 1st grade students describe what they learned, provide oral and visual scaffolds according to students' proficiency levels:

Beginning

- Restate the question: "What did you learn about children around the world?" Use gestures, pictures, and actions for key verbs (eat, play, smile). Accept one- or two-word responses and model full sentences. For example, if the student responds "Eat," reply, "Yes, children eat food around the world."

Intermediate

- Prompt with simple frames to describe new

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Build Speaking, Listening, and Writing Skills Together

In Huddle blocks, discussion protocols facilitate experiences that build skills and promote writing through the oral construction of words, sentences, and paragraphs. Core literacy skills are strengthened through collaborative practice.

learning, such as "Children ____ Children around the world ____" (Children play games. Children eat different foods.)

Advanced

- Encourage students to connect ideas using complete sentences and conjunctions. Provide frames such as "I learned that children around the world ____ and ____" (I learned that children around the world play games and help their families.)

- Reinforce that each child is unique and special, but they also share similarities.
- Invite students to share any additional questions or observations about the text.



HUDDLE
10 min

7 Transition students to partner Huddle spots.

Slide 7.1



Transition slide

8 Support students in constructing complete sentences about *Children of the World*.

Slide 8.1



- Display pp. 20–21 of the book, and explain that students will create sentences based on the illustrations.
- Model how to use what you see to orally construct a sentence about the illustration of children flying kites (top row, left).
First, I'll start with the naming part, or who my sentence is about: The children...
Then, I'll add a telling part that explains what the children do: ...fly kites
- Write the sentence on the board. (ex. The children fly kites.) As you write, think aloud about each letter in CAPS.
- Students turn-and-talk to orally construct their own sentences based on the illustration of jumping rope (middle row, right).
- Invite a student to share their sentence with the class and write

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it on the board. As you write, think aloud about CAPS.

- Repeat this process with the illustration of children playing hide-and-seek (middle row, center).

PULSE CHECK

As students turn-and-talk to orally construct their sentences, look for:

- Recognition of the elements of a complete sentence (capital first letter, subject and predicate, end punctuation)
- Creation of complete sentences (subject and predicate) that accurately describe an illustration in the text

Support: If pairs are using incomplete sentences, join them with another pair to form a group of four. Invite one student to model a complete sentence, then prompt others to share, reflect, and revise. Prompt: "I heard your classmate say a naming part and a telling part. Can you try it too?"

Extend: If you hear multiple pairs of students using complete sentences, invite them to form a group of four and add detail to their sentences. (Ex. "The children play hide-and-seek outside")

– End of Part 1 –

Know Where Students Are Every Day

Daily and weekly opportunities for assessment are built into instruction so teachers can track progress, adjust in real time, and keep learning on course.

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The “both, and” approach

Inkwell weaves literacy and social studies into one clear, connected design that strengthens teaching and deepens learning. Each lesson brings reading, writing, language, speaking, and listening together around meaningful social studies content, helping teachers meet multiple goals within a single block of instruction.



For students

Students are more engaged with reading and writing when it feels connected to their lives. As they explore social studies content through authentic texts, discussion, and writing, they build the background knowledge that strengthens their literacy skills. At the same time, those literacy skills help them analyze sources, express ideas clearly, and think critically about history, civics, geography, and economics.



For teachers

Teaching with Inkwell feels different. Instead of dividing time between subjects, teachers see and experience how literacy and social studies instruction can strengthen each other. With clear routines and ready-to-use lessons, planning takes less time and learning flows more naturally. Each unit weaves skills and knowledge together, so teaching feels more connected, purposeful, and rewarding.



For leaders

Inkwell creates a unified, coherent approach to teaching and learning across classrooms and grade levels. Inkwell’s curriculum-based professional learning helps districts build capacity and support teachers as they reach their literacy goals alongside meaningful social studies learning.



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inquirED supports teachers with high-quality instructional materials that make joyful, rigorous, and transferable learning possible for every student. Our social studies curricula – Inquiry Journeys (K-5) and Middle School World History – are used across the country to help students build deep content knowledge and develop inquiry skills essential for a thriving democracy.