

LEARN ABOUT NUCLEAR WEAPONS

Perception-Reflection: Directions for Document Based Inquiry

Document Based Inquiries allow students to reflect on historical or contemporary documents to help develop critical thinking. For an in-class discussion, teachers will hand out the documents, and ask students to think about and answer the questions that follow. As students read the selected excerpts, they should be encouraged to think critically about each document, and take into consideration both the point of view and the source of information.

In order to do this successfully, begin by reflecting back on the “Classroom Ethics” that they students have established.

Once students have recommitted to a safe classroom environment, hand out a document from a newspaper, an excerpt from a book, a magazine article, or other print media. Each document should support a particular point of view, e.g. for and against nuclear weapon proliferation, for and against uranium mining, etc. Give students time to read in class. To set up an in-class discussion, use an interactive format such as the Microlab. Ask students to express their viewpoint for or against specific arguments in the text, citing those arguments as they express their own opinion. Make a list of questions that all students can see, and reflect upon, such as:

- *What is the main point of this article?*
- *Do you agree or disagree? Why?*
- *If you could write a different conclusion, what would it be?*

Document Based Inquiries can also be conducted as a written exercise, where students work alone to express their viewpoints to practice writing and critical thinking skills.

The ‘documents’ used can extend to visual media such as photographs and artwork. Some questions an educator might ask include:

For photographs

- *If the photograph were a still from a film, what do think happened before and what happened after the photograph was taken?*
- *What might do you think is beyond the frame of the photograph?*

For artwork

- *What do you think compelled the artist to make this work?*
- *Where do you think this work might have been displayed, and what impact might it have had on the viewers?*

For both photographs and artwork

- *What is this image saying to you?*
- *Who/what is the main subject/idea?*