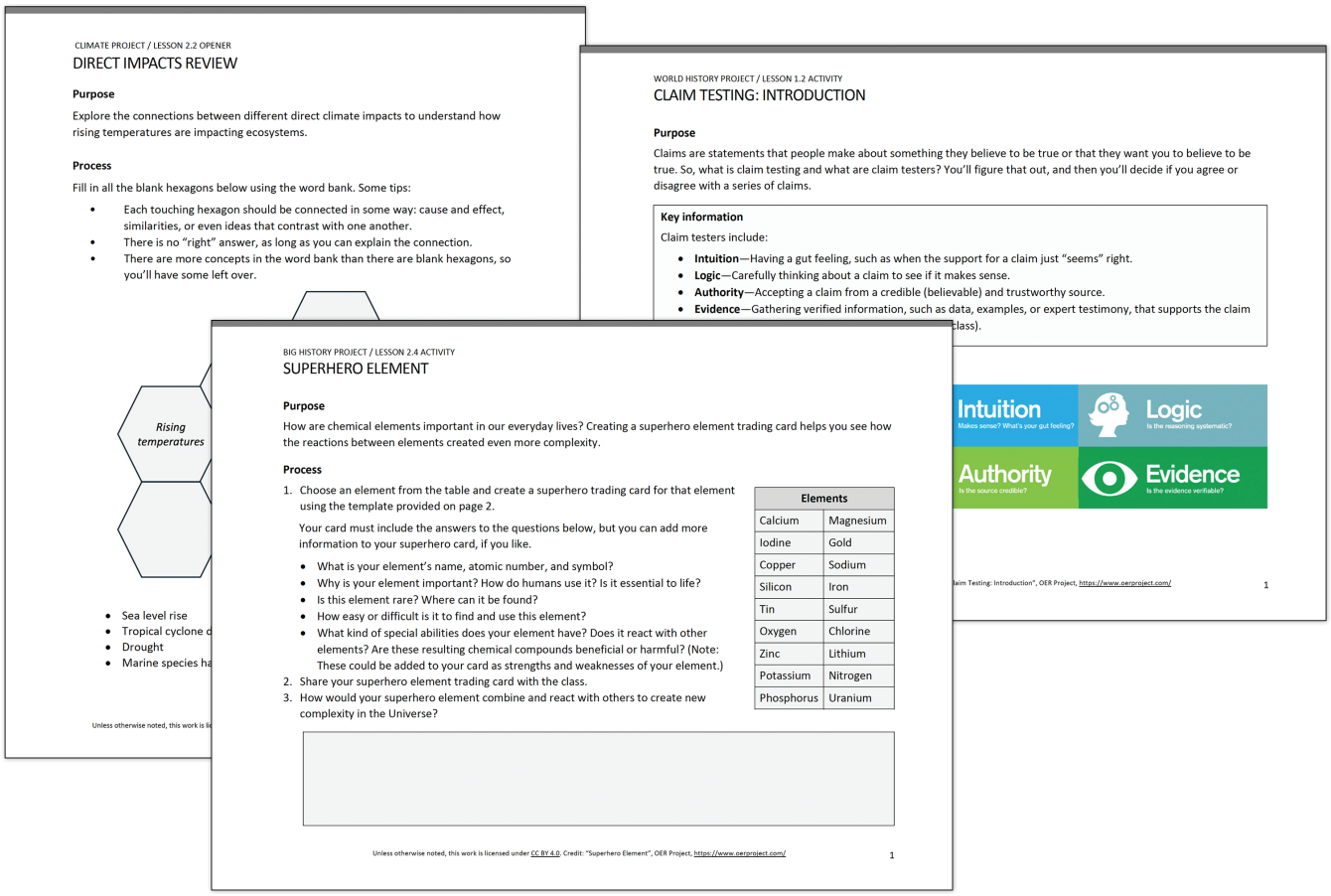
OER PROJECT

OER PROJECT ACTIVITIES GUIDE



Activities are an important part of OER Project lessons and serve to build student understanding. While articles and videos help students learn key content objectives, activities provide opportunities for them to show their understanding in a variety of ways, often through informal writing. Additionally, activities are integral to building historical thinking skills while giving students a space in which to think more critically about the content they're learning. Finally, activities provide opportunities for student collaboration through group work and presentations, and deeper engagement through activities like simulations and debates, which get students moving and "doing" history.

For all activities in OER Project—except for openers and closers—teachers can find sample answers in the accompanying lesson guides. Below, you'll find a little more detail on the kinds of activities you'll find in OER Project courses.

Teaching Tools Looking for more Teacher Resources? Click the hammer symbol on oerproject.com to find more guides, strategies, and instructional resources!

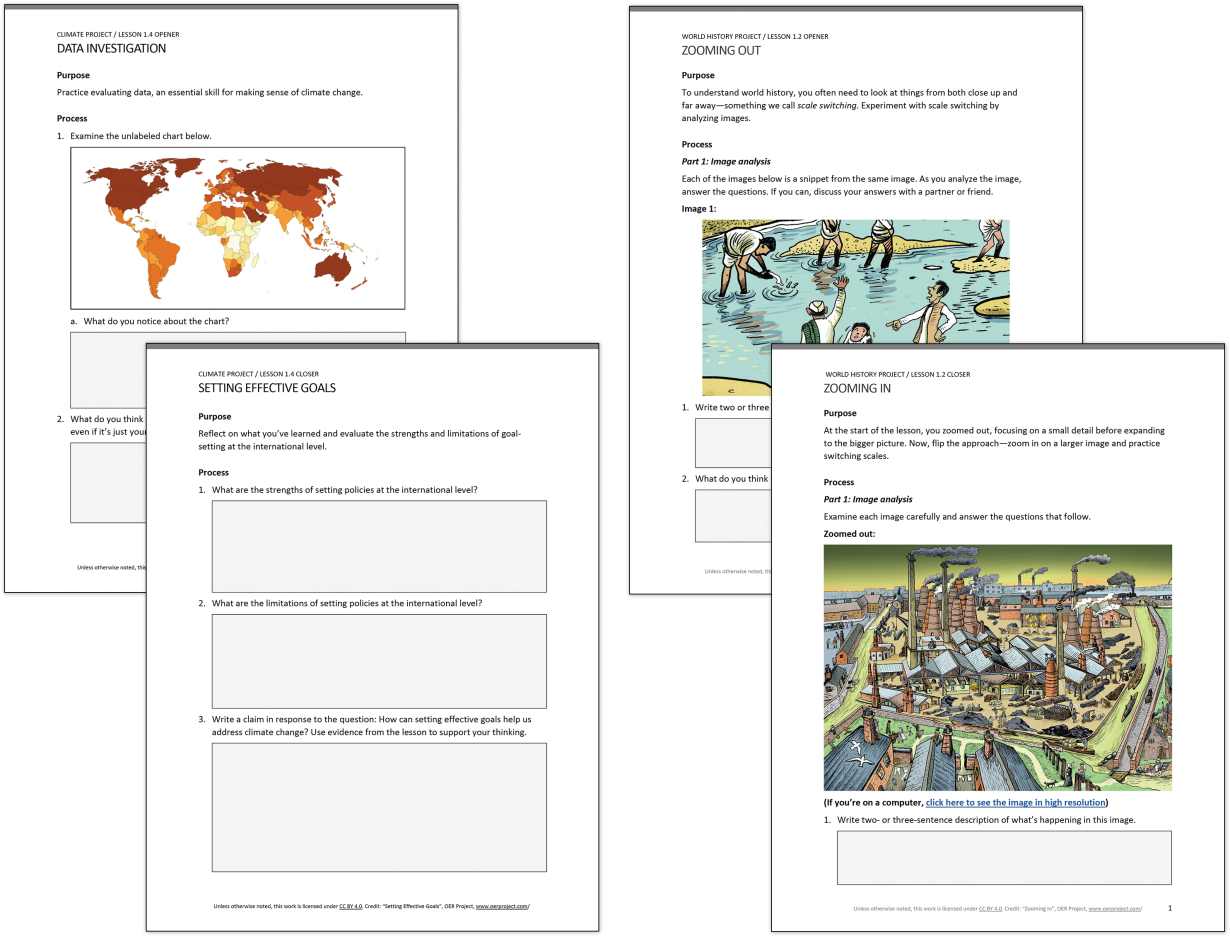
Openers and Closers

Openers and closers should be quick, taking approximately 5 to 15 minutes. These activity types are quite standard in lesson design—you may already know openers by names such as *do-nows*, *bell-ringers*, or *entry tickets*, and you might recognize closers as *exit tickets*, slips, or *cards*. Naming conventions aside, these serve two important purposes: they signal a clear entry to and exit from the learning that is done in the lesson, and they also help students connect to prior learning and make conjectures about future learning.

In OER Project, opener and closers act as bookends for each lesson. They're designed specifically for that lesson, and are directly connected to that lesson's content. To help build routines, you'll see some types of openers and closers repeated throughout the course. You can always modify and reuse these to support different content. Many openers and closers offer opportunities for informal writing, and they're also great ways to inject fun into the lesson!

Openers: These are quick, fun ways to activate prior knowledge, reveal student misconceptions, and prepare students for what's coming in that lesson. Openers are meant to hook student interest and provide opportunities for informal writing.

Closers: These provide teachers with excellent opportunities to quickly check for understanding and should be used for formative assessment throughout the course. Like openers, closers will often prompt students to engage in informal writing. Closers can be used to preview content for upcoming lessons.

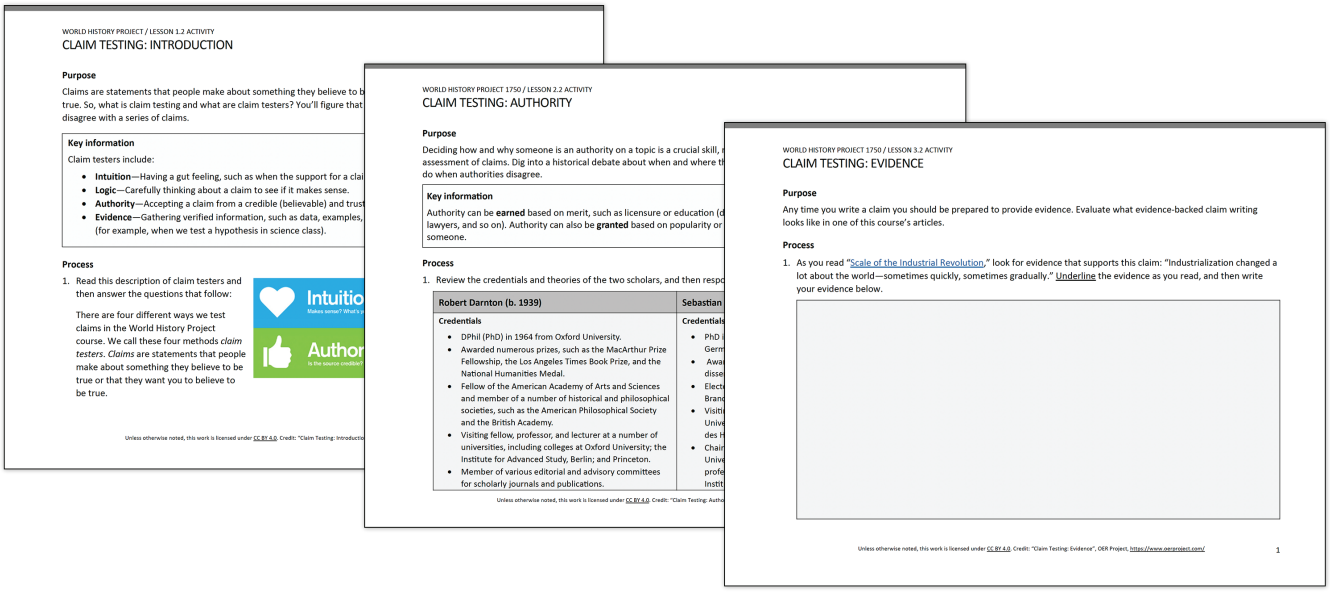


Examples of Openers and Closers

Practice-Progression Activities

These are activities that have been intentionally designed to increase in complexity as students move through the course, to progressively build important historical thinking practices. At the same time, they're designed so that they'll make sense even if you don't teach them all, or you choose to teach only one. Practice progressions are designed around the following historical thinking skills: claim testing, causation, comparison, contextualization, continuity and change over time (CCOT), and sourcing. The naming convention we use puts the historical thinking skill being covered front and center (for example: Comparison: Belief Systems; and Claim Testing: Imperialism).

For more detail on these activities and our practice progressions, check out the Historical Thinking Skills Guide.


WORLD HISTORY PROJECT / LESSON 1.2 ACTIVITY
CLAIM TESTING: INTRODUCTION

Purpose

Key information

Process

WORLD HISTORY PROJECT 1750 / LESSON 2.2 ACTIVITY
CLAIM TESTING: AUTHORITY

Purpose

Key information

Process

Robert Darnton (b. 1939)

Credentials

WORLD HISTORY PROJECT 1750 / LESSON 3.2 ACTIVITY
CLAIM TESTING: EVIDENCE

Purpose

Any time you write a claim you should be prepared to provide evidence. Evaluate what evidence-backed claim writing looks like in one of this course's articles.

Process

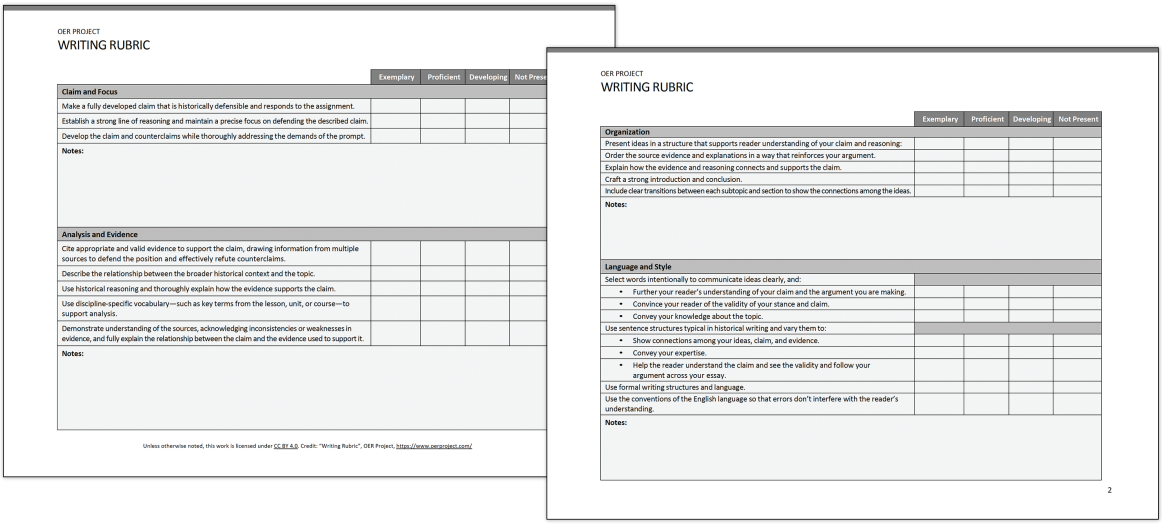
1. As you read "Scale of the Industrial Revolution," look for evidence that supports this claim: "Industrialization changed a lot about the world—sometimes quickly, sometimes gradually." Underline the evidence as you read, and then write your evidence below.

Examples of claim testing progression

Writing Progression

The bulk of the writing students do in the course is in the form of informal writing that has been incorporated into activities and article/video Guiding Questions. However, we do offer writing-focused activities designed to help students understand integral elements of historical writing.

The writing activities in the course are based on the OER Project Writing Rubric. Each activity focuses on two sections of the rubric. Throughout the course, students will evaluate and revise sample essays, and then plan and revise their own essays, all using the rubric. Finally, they'll put it all together toward the end of the course when they practice editing both a peer's writing and their own. While all these activities correspond to specific writing prompts, note that any of the activities can easily be modified to support any kind of writing, whether OER Project-related or not. For more detail on the OER Project approach to writing and for specifics on writing in the courses, please see the Writing Guide.



OER PROJECT
WRITING RUBRIC

	Exemplary	Proficient	Developing	Not Present
Claim and Focus				
Make a fully developed claim that is historically defensible and responds to the assignment.				
Establish a strong line of reasoning and maintain a precise focus on defending the described claim.				
Develop the claim and counterclaims while thoroughly addressing the demands of the prompt.				
Notes:				
Analysis and Evidence				
Cite appropriate and valid evidence to support the claim, drawing information from multiple sources to defend the position and effectively refute counterclaims.				
Describe the relationship between the broader historical context and the topic.				
Use historical reasoning and thoroughly explain how the evidence supports the claim.				
Use discipline-specific vocabulary—such as key terms from the lesson, unit, or course—to support analysis.				
Demonstrate understanding of the sources, acknowledging inconsistencies or weaknesses in evidence, and fully explain the relationship between the claim and the evidence used to support it.				
Notes:				

Unless otherwise noted, this work is licensed under CC BY 4.0. Credit: "Writing Rubric", OER Project, https://www.oerproject.com/

OER PROJECT
WRITING RUBRIC

	Exemplary	Proficient	Developing	Not Present
Organization				
Present ideas in a structure that supports reader understanding of your claim and reasoning:				
Order the source evidence and explanations in a way that reinforces your argument.				
Explain how the evidence and reasoning connects and supports the claim.				
Craft a strong introduction and conclusion.				
Include clear transitions between each subtopic and section to show the connections among the ideas.				
Notes:				
Language and Style				
Select words intentionally to communicate ideas clearly, and:				
• Further your reader's understanding of your claim and the argument you are making.				
• Convince your reader of the validity of your stance and claim.				
• Convey your knowledge about the topic.				
Use sentence structures typical in historical writing and vary them to:				
• Show connections among your ideas, claim, and evidence.				
• Convey your expertise.				
• Help the reader understand the claim and see the validity and follow your argument across your essay.				
Use formal writing structures and language.				
Use the conventions of the English language so that errors don't interfere with the reader's understanding.				
Notes:				

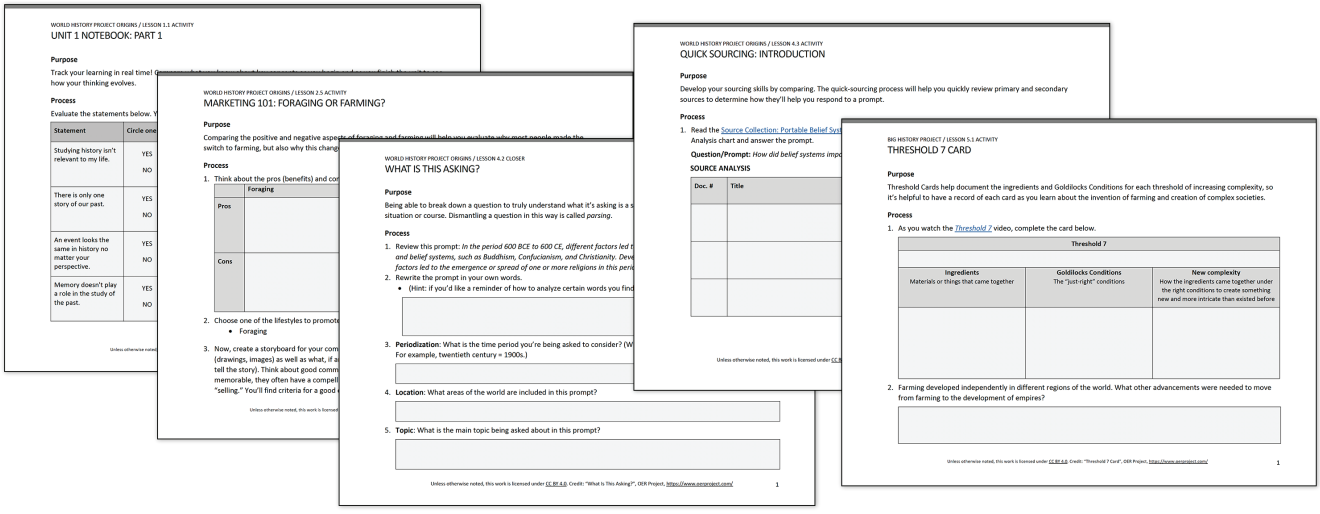
2

OER Project Writing Rubric

Additional Activity Types

Interactive activities: These activities use a variety of methods to engage students, such as student voice and choice; simulations; debates; and other projects that often present learning in nontraditional ways. For example, in one activity we ask students to toss yarn to simulate networks of exchange. In others, we have them create influencer campaigns, draw anti-imperialist cartoons, create recipes for revolutions, invent a species, and present information on different climate careers.

Classroom routines: These are usually repeated activities that help form classroom routines, which is a great way for students to get to learning faster since they aren't required to learn new processes. These activities support skills-building, and they're a great way for both you and your students to measure progress over time. Examples of classroom routines include Unit Notebooks, WH AP® Themes Notebooks, Making Claims, What Is This Asking?, Quick Sourcing, Frames Timelines, Pick a Frame, and Redraw the Frames.



WORLD HISTORY PROJECT ORIGINS / LESSON 1.1 ACTIVITY
UNIT 1 NOTEBOOK: PART 1

WORLD HISTORY PROJECT ORIGINS / LESSON 2.5 ACTIVITY
MARKETING 101: FORAGING OR FARMING?

WORLD HISTORY PROJECT ORIGINS / LESSON 4.2 CLOSER
WHAT IS THIS ASKING?

WORLD HISTORY PROJECT ORIGINS / LESSON 4.3 ACTIVITY
QUICK SOURCING: INTRODUCTION

BIG HISTORY PROJECT / LESSON 5.1 ACTIVITY
THRESHOLD 7 CARD

A selection of classroom routines activities

Course culminating activities: These activities vary by course, but all provide students with ways to show their learning at the end of the course.

In OER Project: Big History, the culminating activity is The Next Threshold Podcast, which asks students to use their Big History knowledge of the past and present to make some predictions about the future. There is also an extension activity, From the Past to the Future, which is designed to challenge students to use Big History's essential skills and core concepts to take a deep dive into one of three topics from a Big History perspective.

OER Project: World History has two culminating activities in the final unit of each course (Origins, 1200, and 1750), both of which focus on making history usable. The World in 2050 activity asks students to use what they've learned in the course to make predictions about what will be happening in the world in 2050 using the three course frames (communities, networks, and production and distribution). In the Build Your Own Frame activity, students tell the history of the world from a frame of their choosing, which reinforces the concept that all historical narratives are presented through a particular lens, and gives students an opportunity to think about the history of the world from the perspective or topic that is most interesting to them.

In OER Project: Climate, we offer a choice of four culminating activities: exploring climate-related careers, presenting climate solutions, advocating for policy through a letter to a policymaker, or leading a civic engagement project to drive local climate action.

Teaching Tools Don't forget to check out the hammer symbol on oerproject.com for more teacher resources.