



# Thinking Nation

## Inquiry Journal

Thinking Nation takes pride in championing an inquiry-based approach to social studies education. This approach encourages students to actively ask questions, explore diverse resources, and develop evidence-based conclusions. By shifting students from passive absorption of information to active engagement, the inquiry-based model cultivates critical thinking and fosters a deeper understanding of complex historical and societal topics.

In the units of study offered by Thinking Nation, inquiry journals play a central role in every unit. These journals accompany each lesson and prompt students to reflect on what they already know about a topic and articulate what they wonder or want to learn. At the conclusion of the unit, students are tasked with answering a central question using the CER method: Claim, Evidence, and Reasoning. This structured approach empowers students to articulate their understanding effectively and support their conclusions with well-researched evidence.

### **Benefits of Inquiry in Social Studies:**

- **Develops Critical Thinking:** Students learn to evaluate evidence, recognize bias, and think analytically.
- **Encourages Engagement:** Open-ended questions make learning more relevant, meaningful, and interactive.
- **Promotes Civic Awareness:** Inquiry fosters an understanding of how historical events shape current societal structures and challenges.
- **Builds Research Skills:** Students practice locating, analyzing, and synthesizing diverse types of information.

Through the inquiry-based model, the social studies classroom transforms into a dynamic space where learners explore the world around them and their roles within it. This approach prepares students to navigate and contribute thoughtfully to an ever-evolving global community.