Do you wish:

• your students couldn’t wait to complete journal entries or write content summaries?
• you could tailor assignments to your student’s specific needs without creating a new lesson plan for each student?
• every student, from exceptional to skills-challenged, achieved higher levels of participation in class?
• those great ideas on the Internet came with complete lesson plans?

Are you tired of:

• creating so many different lesson plans and homework tasks to account for the diversity of skills in your classroom?
• coping with bored exceptional students, non-participating weaker students, and uninspiring results from everyone?

Are you:

• excited by group work, multi-disciplined thematic teaching, or any teaching methods that create a fun and rewarding experience for students?
• interested in a new way of showing parents just how well children in your class are doing?
• ready to explore history, civics, social justice, and other issues in a way that allows children to discover new ways of viewing the world in which they live?

If you answered yes to any of these questions, the Grist Mill Gazette is the right choice for you!

What Is It?

The Grist Mill Gazette is an online newspaper written by your class, based on a particular date, era or social issue. There are a wide variety of ways each student, pair, or group of students can contribute, allowing everyone to participate. Diversity of perspectives, talents, and skill-levels make the Gazette a rich and engaging newspaper! When your students have submitted their work, your class gets a complete newspaper which can be printed and brought home.
How Does It Work?

Generating your own Grist Mill Gazette is as easy as this five-step process:

1. Register for an era, date, geography or social issue and pay the $300 fee.
2. Print out your complete set of student / teacher handouts.
3. Use the Gazette activity suggestion list to help students select activities based on their unique capabilities.
4. Upload completed activities directly into the Gazette through a simple-to-use web page, or e-mail them to the Gazette and our editors will insert them for you.
5. View and print your completed newspaper.

How Does the Gazette Map Into Educational Curriculum Guidelines?

The Gazette is merely the vehicle through which your students participate in educational activities mapped into your own local, state or national guidelines. Participation can also improve student performance on standardized tests covering social studies, reading comprehension and math. The Gazette is also a perfect supplement to your textbooks or other primary educational source materials, and these activities are designed to be part of your normal teaching plan, not extra work!

What Kinds of Activities Are Available?

Each student is different, and the Gazette provides bountiful activities so that everyone has an opportunity to contribute. Our educational advisory team has carefully analyzed each activity, and designed an activity suggestion list to help you select the right activity for your students, based on their skills, talents and needs. The Gazette is already designed, with placeholders, suggested word counts, sample text, and other guidelines for all of the contents your students will provide. Activity sheets for each project make it easy for your students to succeed.
Activities

• News Stories – Your students write news stories telling the who, what, when, where and why for each headline.
• Interviews – Students read an essay or letter by a history-maker. Then, the students write interview-style questions and answers.
• News in Brief – Students summarize a series of longer stories, turning several paragraphs into a single paragraph summary (précis writing).
• Time Capsule – Students write a story about a time capsule created by children from the historical date in time or the geography, listing what was included and why.
• Timeline – Students research when events happened and create a timeline.
• Editorials – Students read about an issue and must write an editorial in favor of or against a particular proposition.
• Letters to the Editor – Students read editorials or essays and write comments to the editor, paraphrasing a part of the editorial and expressing their own (brief) opinion.
• Political Cartoons – Students read about an issue or event and create political cartoons about it.
• Crossword Puzzle – Students create the puzzle and write the clues for each word, phrase, and name in a crossword puzzle. Word searches are also great activities.
• Poll Chart – Students poll their classmates about an issue of the day that links to an article that talks about what the predominant opinion was on the date and includes quotes from today’s students about that issue.
• Historic Photograph Reproduction – Students get to see themselves as actors in history! Using a photograph or illustration of an historic event and the students reproduce that image by replacing the people in the original image with their classmates and teacher.
• The Arts – Students submit the lyrics for a song, poem, or create a poster for a play, movie, or TV show that relates to the historic date.
• Food / Recipe Story – Students write recipe(s) of food(s) from a particular time or geography. (Optionally, students can actually prepare the dish on the day the newspaper is completed.)
• Predictions for the Future – Based on the date of the Gazette, students “predict” a future event.
Can Students Employ Humor / Satire?

Absolutely! In fact, some of the activities are specifically designed to allow students to exercise their farcical view of the world. With so many teenagers enjoying satirical publications like the Onion, and getting their primary news each evening through the Comedy Central Daily Show or late-night talk shows, the Gazette has plenty of space for a child’s unique senses of humor!

What Materials Do I Need?

The Gazette is a complete, turn-key package. Everything you need is included. Downloadable teacher’s guides, including student worksheets are provided. Your class may optionally select your own title for your newspaper and design artwork for the newspaper banner. For example, the students at the Nueva School called their newspaper about the Silk Road the “Spitting Camel” with the motto “All the News That’s Fit To Spit.”

Do I Need To Be A PC Guru?

No. Although you or your students must have access to the Internet to submit content to the Gazette, it requires only minimal computer skills. Plus, the Reach And Teach staff is available to help. Just call or e-mail us when you need a hand!
What Are the Benefits for Teachers?

Most teachers are blessed with classrooms full of children with wildly diverse abilities. Teachers often spend many hours creating different activities to reach each child. With the Gazette, that work has already been done. Just use our activity suggestion list to assign the right tasks. When the children in your classroom are working together, actively engaged in learning and building a project where the results of each child’s hands, hearts, and minds can be seen, they are going to learn more and the experience for everyone will be a lot more fun.

- Every student can be challenged with no one left out.
- Every student contributes in his or her own unique way.
- Every student can increase proficiency in weak areas and capitalize on strengths.
- Your prep time is minimal.
- You can still add your own unique touch and account for your unique students.
- Using the Grist Mill Gazette can be even less work for you than sticking with the standard writing assignments, but the learning results will be much higher.
- Plus, each student can go home and show parents what’s going on in your classroom right over the web! (All work can also be printed.)

What Do Teachers Say About the Gazette

“Students from our sixth through eighth grades each made three submissions during the term in the form of everything from straight ‘news’ articles to editorials to crossword puzzles to recipes, well over 250 submissions. Seeing their work brought so handsomely alive on the Internet made each student glow with pride. Our experience with the Grist Mill Gazette surpassed our expectations.”

Andrew Salverda, the Nueva School of Hillsborough California (January 2005)
Who Is the Grist Mill Gazette

The Gazette was created by the team at Reach And Teach. At Reach And Teach, we believe that connecting people in creative ways to issues of social justice supports development of a more just and peaceful world. We create and distribute social justice themed learning products focused on civil rights, economic justice, global issues, and non-violence.

We develop products and programs for people of all ages who are curious about the world around them and have a passion to make a difference. Many of the products you'll find at Reach And Teach are the direct result of our partnerships with environmental, peace, social and economic justice organizations. Our products include workshops, kits, games, puzzles, books and on-line media.

Across America, children are being left behind by a system that claims to be seeking excellence in all, but provides vastly different experiences to students depending on their status. Reach And Teach activities are designed to enhance all children’s learning experiences, and improve their achievement, no matter where they start.

The Grist Mill Gazette was designed by an advisory board, including Reach And Teach staff, public and private school teachers, historians, and experts from non-profit organizations and foundations.

Reach And Teach is a social enterprise, donating a portion of every dollar earned to organizations working for a more peaceful and just planet. Recognizing that not all schools can afford to participate in the Gazette, Reach And Teach can work with local organizations and corporations, arranging for scholarships. Please let us know if you need scholarship assistance to pay for your class to participate in the Gazette.