COMMON CORE ACTIVITY: A Close Reading of the Historymaker
*Símon Bolívar: The Liberator*

Global History Data Analysis Committee

Marc Fleming
Olympia High School Assistant Principal

Lauri Secker  Carl Stresing
Olympia High School  Athena High School
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Activity Summary

This activity has been developed to guide students and instructors in a close reading of a non-fiction text on Símon Bolívar. The activities and actions described below follow a carefully developed set of steps to assist students in increasing their familiarity and understanding of the history of Símon Bolívar through a series of text dependent tasks and questions that ultimately develop college and career ready skills identified in the Common Core Standards and the Global History and Geography Priority Power Standards.

Reading Tasks: Students will silently read the passage, and then following along with the text as the teacher and/or students read aloud. The teacher will then lead students through a set of concise, text-dependent questions that compel students to reread specific passages and discover the structure and meaning of the brief biography of Símon Bolívar.

Vocabulary Tasks: Most of the meanings of words in this selection can be discovered from careful reading of the context in which they appear. This practice is both called for by the standards and is vital. Teachers must be prepared to reinforce it constantly by modeling and holding students accountable for looking in the context for meaning as well.

Discussion Tasks: Students will discuss the passage in depth with their teacher and their classmates, performing activities that result in a close reading of non-fiction text. The goal is to foster student confidence when encountering complex text and to reinforce the skills they have acquired regarding how to build and extend their understanding of a text.

Writing Tasks: Students will write an analytical essay on the independence movement in Latin America, led by Símon Bolívar.

Text Selection: Símon Bolívar was one of South America's greatest generals. His victories over the Spaniards won independence for Bolivia, Panama, Colombia, Ecuador, Peru, and Venezuela. He is called El Liberator (The Liberator) and the "George Washington of South America."
Outline of Activity

Section 1
1. Student silently reads Simon Bolivar: The Liberator, while circling unfamiliar words.
2. Then teacher reads the non-fiction text out loud to the class while students follow along in the text and highlight/underline important ideas or sentences.
3. Student responds to guided questions and tasks independently about the first three paragraphs, focusing on the following CCS standards: RI.9-10.1; RI.9-10.2, 4 & 5; W.9-10.9; SL.9-10.1; and L.9-10.4-6.
4. Teacher will facilitate a class discussion on the guided questions and the identified vocabulary.

Section 2
1. Student re-reads paragraphs four through eight and respond to guided questions and tasks independently, focusing on the following CCS standards: RI.9-10.1; RI.9-10.2, 4 & 5; W.9-10.9; SL.9-10.1; and L.9-10.4-6.
2. Teacher will facilitate a class discussion on the guided questions and the identified vocabulary.
3. Student summarizes Simon Bolivar’s role in the independence movement from 1810 to 1825. Student should have a minimum of ten actions taken by Simon Bolivar during these years.

Section 3
1. Student re-reads the last paragraph and respond to guided questions and tasks independently, focusing on the following CCS standards: RI.9-10.1; RI.9-10.2, 4 & 5; W.9-10.9; SL.9-10.1; and L.9-10.4-6.
2. Teacher will facilitate a class discussion on the guided questions and the identified vocabulary.
3. Student will write a well-organized essay that includes an introduction, several body paragraphs addressing the task, and a conclusion.
Simón Bolívar: The Liberator

Simón Bolívar led his people’s fight for independence from Spain. He envisioned the formation of a single country extending from present-day Venezuela to modern Bolivia. However, his plans clashed with those of his followers, and the grand nation he dreamed of creating fell apart.

Bolívar was born in 1783 to a wealthy family from the colony of Venezuela. His education included several years of study in Europe. While there, he married, but soon after the couple reached South America his wife died of yellow fever.

Bolívar then returned to Europe and met with several important thinkers and politicians. One of them told Bolívar that the Spanish-American colonies had vast resources that could make them powerful—if only they could become free of Spanish control. Bolívar returned to South America and joined the movement for independence.

In 1810, a group of rebels in Venezuela removed the Spanish governor from office and took control. The next year Venezuela declared itself independent. By 1813, Bolívar commanded the army. In 1814, however, the Spanish fought back and defeated his troops, forcing him to flee the country.

During Bolívar’s exile, he called for all Spanish colonies to rise against European rule to “avenge three centuries of shame.” In 1814, he wrote a famous call to arms, The Letter from Jamaica, which outlined a plan to create republics reaching from Mexico to Argentina and Chile. Unable to win British or American support, he turned to Haiti. With money and guns from this newly independent republic, he returned to Venezuela to face the largest army Spain had ever sent across the Atlantic.

From 1815 to 1817, neither side won any decisive battles. However, Bolívar began to build the foundation of victory. He declared the end of slavery to be one of his goals, thus winning wider support. He made alliances with two groups of guerrilla soldiers, who harassed the Spanish army. He also hired veteran European troops. Then in 1819, he devised a daring plan to cross the Andes Mountains and supply lines.
and surprise the Spanish. His army of 2,000 first had to cross the hot jungles of the Orinoco River and then the freezing mountain passes. Many died, but Bolívar’s army was strong enough to defeat the Spanish in four different battles.

Bolívar returned to the city of Angostura, Venezuela, and joined a congress working on forming the new government. With his urging, members voted to create the republic of Gran Colombia, which would include modern Colombia, Ecuador, and Venezuela. “The lessons of experience should not be lost on us,” he said. Europe had too many countries that constantly fought each other. “A single government,” he argued, “may use its great resources [to] lift us to the summit of power and prosperity.” Bolívar was named president and military dictator of the new republic.

Bolívar won independence for Venezuela in 1821 and Ecuador in 1822. He freed Peru from Spain in 1824 and Upper Peru in 1825, which renamed itself Bolivia. He was president of Gran Colombia, Peru, and Bolivia. Bolívar hoped that these nations would unite and thus become stronger.

Others did not share this vision. Even Bolívar’s closest allies in the fight for independence believed that there should be several countries, not one large one. By 1826, civil war had broken out. Two years later, Bolívar reacted to the crisis by declaring himself military dictator. Opponents attacked his palace and tried to assassinate him. The Liberator was now seen as an enemy of the state. Venezuela withdrew from Gran Colombia, and Ecuador followed. Finally, with his body wracked by tuberculosis and his heart sick over the conflict, Bolívar retired in 1830. He died later that year.
A Close Reading of a Brief Biography of Simón Bolívar

Directions
All answers to the close reading questions must be in sentences and be explained in detail using information from the primary source.

Paragraph 1

1. Which empire did Simón Bolívar lead a revolution against to achieve independence?
   _____________________________________________________________
   _____________________________________________________________
   _____________________________________________________________

2. What was Simón Bolívar’s post-independence vision for Latin America?
   _____________________________________________________________
   _____________________________________________________________
   _____________________________________________________________
   _____________________________________________________________

3. How did people within Latin America react to the vision of Simón Bolívar?
   _____________________________________________________________
   _____________________________________________________________
   _____________________________________________________________
   _____________________________________________________________

Paragraph 2

4. Summarize the second paragraph on the historical background of Simón Bolívar.
   _____________________________________________________________
   _____________________________________________________________
   _____________________________________________________________
   _____________________________________________________________
   _____________________________________________________________
   _____________________________________________________________

Paragraph 3

5. What was the major idea Símon Bolívar learned from his trip to Europe, which made him returned to South America and join the movement for independence?

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___________________________________________________________________________

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___________________________________________________________________________

Paragraph 4

6. Describe the historical events during the years 1810, 1811, 1813, 1814 in Latin America’s fight for independence.

1810 - ________________________________________________________________

_____________________________________________________________________

1811 - ________________________________________________________________

_____________________________________________________________________

1813 - ________________________________________________________________

_____________________________________________________________________

1814 - ________________________________________________________________

_____________________________________________________________________
Paragraph 5

7. Describe three actions of Símon Bolívar, which continued to contribute to the independence movement for Latin America?

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___________________________________________________________________________
___________________________________________________________________________
___________________________________________________________________________
___________________________________________________________________________

Paragraph 6

8. How did Simon Bolívar expand his base of support in Latin America?

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___________________________________________________________________________
___________________________________________________________________________

9. What were two ways Símon Bolívar improved the performance of his national army?

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___________________________________________________________________________
___________________________________________________________________________

10. Summarize the events that led to the defeat of the Spanish in four different battles.

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___________________________________________________________________________
___________________________________________________________________________

___________________________________________________________________________
Paragraph 7

11. What modern countries made up the republic of Gran Columbia in the early nineteenth century?

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___________________________________________________________________________
___________________________________________________________________________

12. In regards to government, what lesson did Símon Bolívar believe should be learned from Europe?

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___________________________________________________________________________
___________________________________________________________________________
___________________________________________________________________________

13. What was the political position of Símon Bolívar in the new formed government?

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___________________________________________________________________________
___________________________________________________________________________

Paragraph 8

14. Describe the historical events which happened in the following years in Latin America.

1821 - _____________________________________________________________________
___________________________________________________________________________

1822 - _____________________________________________________________________
___________________________________________________________________________

1824 - _____________________________________________________________________
___________________________________________________________________________
15. As president of Gran Columbia, Peru, and Bolivia, what was Simon Bolívar’s hope for the future of these independent Latin America nations?

___________________________________________________________________________

___________________________________________________________________________

___________________________________________________________________________

Paragraph 9

16. How did Simon Bolívar’s closest allies differ in their vision for these independent Latin American nations?

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___________________________________________________________________________

17. How did Simon Bolívar react to the civil war of 1826?

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___________________________________________________________________________

18. What were the actions taken by the opponents of Simón Bolívar during the civil war of 1826?

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___________________________________________________________________________
19. What happened to Gran Columbia after the civil war of 1826?

___________________________________________________________________________
___________________________________________________________________________
___________________________________________________________________________
THEMATIC ESSAY QUESTION

Directions: Write a well-organized essay that includes an introduction, several paragraphs addressing the task below, and a conclusion.

Theme: Individuals

Throughout history, the actions of leaders have changed the society in which they lived.

Task:

- Describe one situation Símon Bolívar attempted to change
- Describe one action Símon Bolívar took to change the situation
- Describe the impact of that action on the region in which Símon Bolívar lived

Guidelines:

In your essay, be sure to:

- Develop all aspects of the Task
- Support the theme with relevant facts, examples, and details
- Use a logical and clear plan of organization, including an introduction and a conclusion that are beyond a restatement of the theme