

## Classroom KWL Activity

Helping Students to Connect, Think and Reflect as they Acquire New Knowledge

### Why This Activity

Using KWL charts when introducing a new topic can help students effectively organize their thoughts, set learning goals, plan and reflect on their personal learning journey. These graphic organizers are valuable tools for promoting higher order thinking and metacognition in the classroom. KWL Charts also help in the following ways:

- **Activates Prior Knowledge:** The **K column** serves to activate students' prior knowledge before introducing new content. The brain can learn more easily when connected to information we may already know.
- **Encourages Higher-Order Questioning:** The **W column** stimulates a student's curiosity by using higher-order questioning strategies. It encourages them to wonder beyond simple recall and recognize, prompting them to identify gaps in their knowledge and make interesting connections.
- **Promotes Metacognition:** The **L column** engages metacognition, which means *thinking about their thinking*. It leads to improved self-regulated learning outcomes and helps students become more aware of their learning process.

### Suggested Use

Below are suggested instructions for how the KWL Chart can be used as a classroom activity. Teachers should feel free to customize the activity to align with their lesson plans.

**Directions:** Share with students that in today's lesson they will be using a graphic organizer, also called a KWL chart, to track and process their thoughts and any new information they learn about the lesson topic. Students may already be familiar with KWL Charts. If not, explain that the charts are tools commonly used to activate prior knowledge, set goals, and monitor the learning progress. Distribute the blank KWL Charts and review the instructions.

#### **Column 1 - K – Activate Knowledge** *What I Know.*

In the first column, write down what you already know about our topic before we dive deeper into it.

#### **Column 2 - W – Investigate New Information** *What I Want to Learn.*

In the second column, list any questions or topics you are curious about or want to explore further.

#### **Column 3 - L – Review and Reflect on New Knowledge** *What I Learned.*

At the conclusion of the lesson, fill in the third column with what you learned.

On the next page, find an example you can use to demonstrate what sorts of things students might include for a KWL on the 1906 Race Massacre.

## MY KWL CHART: TEACHER RESOURCE

WHAT I KNOW	WHAT I WANT TO KNOW	WHAT I LEARNED
<p>The event is called the 1906 Atlanta Race Massacre.</p>	<p>What were the causes of the massacre?</p>	<p>The massacre occurred in September 1906.</p>
<p>It happened in Atlanta, Georgia.</p>	<p>How did the media contribute to the violence?</p>	<p>Newspapers reported alleged attacks by Black men on white women.</p>
<p>There was violence and loss of life.</p>	<p>What was the impact on African American communities?</p>	<p>Approximately 25 African Americans died.</p>
<p>The massacre involved racial tensions.</p>	<p>How did the city respond after the violence?</p>	<p>Over 1,000 homes and businesses were destroyed.</p>
<p>The event is significant in Atlanta's history.</p>	<p>Were there any legal consequences for those involved?</p>	<p>The massacre left lasting scars and sparked conversations about race.</p>