Directions for Writing Your Context for Learning  Limit your writing to three pages, single spaced. Begin your writing in the spaces below the prompts. Start with general information about the school, and progress to detail about individuals. Show that you know your students well enough to plan effective lessons for them. To do this, gather information from various sources, including your mentor teacher, school demographics, test data, and the like. Keep in mind that the Context can be written well in advance of actually deploying the lessons, so do this work early.

The School Where You Are Teaching

1. Type of school?
   - Middle: [ X ]
   - High: [ ]
   - Other: [ ]

   City: [ X - The school where I teach contains 985 students. There are 45 teachers; half of these have master’s degrees. The average amount of teaching experience is 11 years.]

2. List some of the other special features, particularly those that impact student learning. For example, whether the school has remedial or honors classes, etc.

   [The school where I teach is an urban school with 985 students; 40% of students receive free and/or reduced price meals. Approximately 15% receive special education services. More than half of the student population is White, at 60%. Twenty percent of the students are Hispanic, and 7% are Asian, with 5% Black. Seven percent of the students are transitional/bilingual. Although the student population is mostly White, it is a diverse school. There are students from different social-economic backgrounds and ethnicities. As I began my internship, I attended closely to students’ backgrounds, interests, etc. and learned about them. I also attended to their different social and economic experiences. I use this information to inform the way that I plan lessons. For example, there is a popular park near my school. I know that several of my students visit the park after school. There is a basketball court at the park, and I used this information to introduce a real-world problem involving the economics concepts.]

3. Describe any school, and district requirements that have an effect on your teaching. Also, describe how your mentor teacher effects planning and delivery of instruction, etc.

   [The district at the school where I teach adopted a new teacher evaluation system, called the Danielson Model. The evaluation model is rigorous, with many parts and it emphasizes instruction. My mentor teacher examines the evaluation model frequently, and we have talked about its implications. My mentor teacher has suggested that I incorporate as many of the suggested instructional practices as possible. In addition, the school has been on academic probation for failing to meet adequate yearly progress during the 2010 and 2011 school years. One particular area of difficulty has been assisting 7th grade students in performing at standard in math. As a result, the principal has required that teachers in all subjects integrate elements of mathematics learning. Math teachers send out weekly calendars showing which procedures and concepts students are learning. Teachers, especially social studies and science teachers, integrate mathematics learning into their lessons.

   My mentor teacher has taught mathematics, so integrating math into social studies lessons comes easy. I have more concerns about this, but my mentor is extremely supportive and I expect that he will provide sufficient direction on integration requirements.]

Comment [D1]: This kind of data can be found at your district or state website, which summarizes demographic information for the school.

Comment [D2]: Begin with general information...

Comment [D3]: And after providing a general description, include some specific examples and possible implications, keeping in mind that your goal is to show you know your students well and that you use this information to plan effective lessons.

Comment [D4]: You can learn about “requirements and expectations” by talking with your mentor teacher, principal, and other support staff.

Comment [D5]: edTPA does not include rubrics for evaluating the quality of your writing. However, the quality of your writing clearly influences your score. As such, proof read and eliminate errors.
Write About the Specific Class Featured

1. Course title?
   [The title of the course is Grade 7 Social Studies.]
2. Course length?
   One year: [X – The course is part of students’ core subject offering, and it is one year long.]
3. Class schedule (e.g., 50 minutes, 90 minute block scheduling, etc.)?
   [The course meets for 50 minutes, four days per week. On Wednesdays, the class is 35 minutes so that teachers can meet in their professional learning communities, while student release early. Shortened classes on Wednesdays require modified lessons. [The modification I most often make is to simplify the learning target so that activities and assessments are not rushed, and so that I can provide adequate support to students.]
4. Are students grouped by ability in anyway? If so, describe how this grouping affects your planning and instruction.
   [There is no official tracking in the school where I teach. However, since students are grouped together to receive special services, such as remedial math and reading, students do group together according to their academic abilities. This has caused wide variation in the abilities of students in class. For example, there are several high-achieving students and several students receiving special assistance. This dynamic requires strategic planning in the way I organize activities, assessments (whether formal or informal) and support activities, such as practice.]
5. What textbooks and instructional materials are available?
   [There is a textbook for this class. The title is Herodotus and Thucydides - Explorer Series (HATES). It was published in 1987 by Pearsons Inc. The district requires this text for 7th grade social studies, but the book is outdated, many of the curricular materials are missing, and students dislike it. As a result, my mentor teacher has created curricula, or in other cases, supplements to HATES. I use my mentor teacher’s curricula, since they are much more engaging, and I have begun making and modifying my own curricula to supplement HATES.]
6. What other resources are available, such as electronic whiteboard, laptops, library time, etc.
   [The classroom contains conventional equipment, including a projector, two computers for teacher use (front and back of the room) and also a smart board. Computers are available for student use, in a computer lab and a lab on wheels. My mentor teacher does not use technology often, but I have integrated several activities using technology, such as elaborate presentations with animations and webquests. The school also requires that teachers post lessons to class websites, and so there are a number of resources students can access outside of class, online. However, only 70% of students have access to the Internet/computer at home, so the availability of this resource for all students is inconsistent.]

Tell About the Students in the Class Featured

1. Grade level or levels (e.g. fifth grade; 2 freshman and 30 seniors)
   [The composition of this class is diverse. There are 4 students with IEPs, 2 with 504s, 4 transactional bilingual, and 3 talented-gifted. Nearly half the class has some special learning designation. There is one para-educator, and he is responsible for helping students designated transitional/bilingual, although he does work with other students on occasion. As a result, significant effort is placed on planning and formative assessment. Most lesson plans include specific modifications, such as additional supports or enrichment opportunities. One student has...]

Comment [D6]: Again, show that your knowledge of circumstances informs how you plan and implement instruction. Also, use edTPA vocabulary such as “modification, learning target, and support” whenever possible.

Comment [D7]: Again, show the reader that you know some particular students in the class, their backgrounds, and particular needs.
been designated emotionally disturbed and I have made special effort to build rapport with this student and she has responded positively.]

2. Number of

   \[32\] = males \[17\] females \[15\]

3. Complete the chart below to summarize support, accommodations, and the like.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Learning Needs Category</th>
<th>number</th>
<th>Support, Aids, Ways for Differentiating Instruction, Accommodations, and Other Relevant IEP or 504 Goals.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Learning disabled</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>One student is has autism, although she is high functioning. She excels at mathematics but struggles at oral and written communication. Multiple accommodations are made for this student, including reductions in amount of writing and speaking and modified assessments. Two other students receive special education services in reading. The first student reads at a 4th grade level and is extremely motivated. The second student reads at a 3rd grade level and shows little interest in reading. Accommodations for these students include prewritten notes, reminders, and frequent formative assessment. One student is designated emotionally disturbed and receives special education services for this disability, but functions at grade level in math, reading, and other academic abilities. This student is accommodated through multiple behavior interventions, including planned ignoring and time out with a designated adult.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Designated 504</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Two students have 504s. The first for poor eyesight. This student sits at the front of the room and is given copies with enlarged print. The second student has to make frequent trips to the restroom due to a physical disability.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Designated transitional bilingual</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>Four students are designated transitional bilingual. These students receive assistance from a para-educator. All of the students can read English fluently, but they struggle with comprehension. Accommodations include additional practice and extended time.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Talented and gifted</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>Three students have been designated talented and gifted. Accommodations for these students include enrichment activities, along with extensions. For example, I provide these students with additional discussion questions and opportunities to research, along with regular class activities.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Comment [D8]: The directions say not to modify prompts, but I chose to adjust the column width of the table to fit more information. You can make minor formatting adjustments to add text, but do not modify margins or font size.

Comment [D9]: Be sure to describe student abilities or disabilities and accommodations, especially those that affect how you plan instruction.

Comment [D10]: It is not necessary to have students with IEPs or 504s for your edTPA portfolio. Your class may not have any students with special entitlements, but you should be able to identify a handful of students with particular learning needs.