

SOCIAL STUDIES CURRICULUM

SIXTH GRADE

Introduction

The primary focus for the sixth grade social studies program is world history. The study of early civilizations and their impact on modern cultures will emphasize how people have adapted to environmental changes and have emerged into a global society. Students will continue to learn fundamental concepts in civics, economics and geography.

History

- 1. The student will describe what is known of the of the early development of humankind (Paleolithic Era).**
 - a. Describe characteristics of the hunter-gatherer societies, including the development of tools and the use of fire.
 - b. Identify the locations of communities that populated the major regions of the world.
 - c. Describe how humans adapted to a variety of climates and environments. Explain how human modifications to the physical environment led to the domestication of plants and animals as well as new types of clothing and shelter.

- 2. The student will demonstrate knowledge of the early civilizations of Mesopotamia and Egypt.**
 - a. Explain the rise of early civilizations in the river valleys of the Tigris and Euphrates in Mesopotamia and along the Nile in Northeastern Africa, including Egypt and Kush.
 - b. Explain the relationships between religion and the social and political order of Mesopotamia and Egypt.
 - c. Describe ancient Egypt (e.g. pyramids, hieroglyphics, pharaohs).
 - d. Explain the development of language and writing.

- 3. The student will demonstrate knowledge of the civilizations of Persia, India, and China.**
 - a. Describe the development of Persia's imperial bureaucracy.
 - b. Explain the caste system of India.
 - c. Describe the development of the China Empire in the Huang-He Valley during the Shang Dynasty. Explain the construction of the Great Wall.
 - d. Explain the origins, beliefs, customs, and spread of Hinduism, and Buddhism.
 - e. Describe the impact of Confucianism, Taoism, and Buddhism.

- 4. The student will demonstrate knowledge of ancient Greece and its impact on Western civilization.**
 - a. Analyze the influence of geography on Greek economic development.
 - b. Explain the significance of Greek mythology and religion.
 - c. Explain the key differences between direct democracy (Athenian) and representative democracy.
 - d. Describe the Persian Empire.
 - e. Compare and contrast the characteristics of life in Athens and Sparta. Evaluate the significance of the Persian and Peloponnesian Wars.
 - f. Describe the rise of Alexander the Great and the spread of Greek culture.
 - g. Describe the enduring contributions of important Greek figures in the arts and sciences (e.g. Socrates, Plato, Aristotle, Euclid).

- 5. The student will demonstrate knowledge of ancient Rome.**
 - a. Describe the government of the Roman Republic and its significance. Explain reasons for the growth of Roman Territories and the expansion of the empire.
 - b. Discuss the influence of Julius Caesar and Augustus in Rome's transition from republic to empire.
 - c. Explain the migration of Jews and the effects of their conflict with the Romans.
 - d. Describe the circumstances that led to the spread of Christianity in Europe and other Roman territories.
 - e. Analyze the reasons for the rise and fall of the Roman Empire.
 - f. Describe the Roman contributions in art and architecture, technology and science, medicine, literature and history, language, religion, and law.

- 6. The student will demonstrate knowledge of the Byzantine Empire and Russia.**
 - a. Explain the continuation and contributions of the eastern Roman Empire, referred to as the Byzantine Empire, after the fall of Rome.
 - b. Explain that Russia became the successor to Byzantine Empire and culture.
 - c. Describe the spread of Christianity in Russia and Eastern Europe. Explain the disputes that led to the split between the Roman Catholic Church and the Greek Orthodox Church.
 - d. Assess how Byzantine art and architecture contributed to the preservation of Greek and Roman traditions.

- 7. The student will demonstrate knowledge of the Islamic civilization.**
 - a. Trace the origins of Islam and the life and teachings of Muhammad, including Islamic teachings in connection with Judaism and Christianity.
 - b. Identify significant events that led to the spread and influence of Islamic civilization (e.g. Sunni-Shi'a division, Battle of Tours).
 - c. Describe cultural and scientific contributions of the Islamic civilization.

8. The student will demonstrate knowledge of Western Europe during the Middle Ages.

- a. Describe the medieval society. Explain the political, social, and economic organization provided by the feudal system.
- b. Analyze events related to the spread and influence of Christianity and the Catholic Church throughout Europe.
- c. Demonstrate an understanding of the conflict and cooperation between the Papacy and European monarchs (e.g. Charlemagne, Gregory VII, Emperor Henry IV).
- d. Describe the importance of the Catholic Church as a political, intellectual, and aesthetic institution (e.g. founding of universities, creation of religious orders, preservation of Latin language and religious texts).

9. The student will demonstrate knowledge of civilizations of the Eastern Hemisphere.

- a. Describe Japan. Explain the impact of Shinto and Buddhist traditions and the influence of Chinese culture.
- b. Describe the Japanese values, social customs, and traditions prescribed by the lord-vassal system consisting of shogun, daimyo, and samurai.
- c. Describe early African kingdoms (e.g. Kush, Axum).
- d. Discuss the medieval kingdoms of the Sudan (e.g. Ghana, Mali, Songhai).
- e. Analyze the importance of family, labor specialization, and regional commerce in the development of states and cities in West Africa.

10. The student will demonstrate knowledge of major civilizations of the Western Hemisphere.

- a. Describe the development of Meso-American civilizations, such as the Mayas, Toltecs, and Aztecs in Mexico and the Incas in South America, prior to contact with the Europeans.
- b. Study the roles of people in Meso-American societies, including class structures, family life, warfare, religious beliefs, and slavery.
- c. Examine the causes and outcomes of the defeat of the Aztec and Incan empires by the Spanish.

11. The student will demonstrate knowledge of the medieval period.

- a. Describe the emergence of nation-states (e.g. England, France, Spain, Russia).
- b. Explain conflicts among Eurasian powers (e.g. the Crusades, the Mongol Conquest, the fall of Constantinople).
- c. Discuss the causes and course of the religious crusades and their effects on the Christian, Muslim, and Jewish populations in Europe, with emphasis on the increasing contact by Europeans with cultures of the Eastern Mediterranean world.
- d. Describe the effects of the Black Death (Bubonic Plague).
- e. Explain the economic, environmental, and social factors that led to the decline of medieval monarchies.

12. The student will demonstrate knowledge of developments leading to the Renaissance in Europe.

- a. Recognize that a revival of classical learning and the arts created a new interest in humanism (a balance between intellect and religious faith).
- b. Explain the importance of Florence in the early stages of the Renaissance and the growth of independent trading cities (e.g. Venice).
- c. Describe the effects of new ways of disseminating information (e.g. ability to manufacture paper, translation of the Bible into the vernacular, printing).
- d. Describe the contributions in literature, the arts, science, mathematics, cartography, engineering, heightened understanding of human anatomy and astronomy (e.g. Dante Alighieri, Leonardo da Vinci, Michelangelo di Buonarroti Simani, Johann Gutenberg, William Shakespeare).

13. The student will analyze the historical developments of the Reformation.

- a. List the causes for the internal turmoil in the Catholic Church (e.g. tax policies, selling of indulgences).
- b. Explain Protestants' new practices of church self-government and the influence of those practices on the development of democratic processes and ideas of federalism.
- c. Identify and locate the European regions that remained Catholic and those that became Protestant. Explain how the division affected the distribution of religions of the New World.
- d. Analyze how the Counter-Reformation revitalized the Catholic Church and the forces that fostered the movement (e.g. St. Ignatius of Loyola and the Jesuits, the Council of Trent).
- e. Understand the impact of missionaries on Christianity and the diffusion of Christianity from Europe to other parts of the world in the medieval and early modern periods.
- f. Describe the Golden Age of cooperation between Jews and Muslims in medieval Spain that promoted creativity in art, literature, and science, including how that cooperation was terminated by the religious persecution of individuals and groups (e.g. the Spanish Inquisition and the expulsion of Jews and Muslims from Spain in 1492).

14. The student will analyze the historical developments of the Scientific Revolution, the Age of Exploration, the Enlightenment, and the Age of Reason.

- a. Determine the significance of the new scientific theories (e.g. those of Copernicus, Galileo, Kepler, Newton) and the significance of new inventions (e.g. the telescope, microscope, thermometer, barometer).
- b. Discuss the exchanges of plants, animals, technology, culture, and ideas among Europe, Africa, Asia, and the Americas in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries and the major economic and social effects on each continent.

- c. Describe how democratic thoughts and institutions were influenced by Enlightenment thinkers (e.g. John Locke, Charles-Louis Montesquieu, American founders).

Geography

- 1. The student will describe the role of geography in the rise of ancient world civilizations.**
 - a. Describe the physical and cultural characteristics that influenced the development of the major civilizations (e.g. land and water forms, climate, natural vegetation, natural resources, population, communication, transportation).
 - b. Compare/contrast cultures of past civilizations with modern day cultures. Identify their geographic settings, including major land and water forms.
 - c. Define the concept of a region. Explain how common characteristics can link and divide regions.
 - d. Explain how and why regions change over time.

- 2. The student will use maps and globes to analyze geographical changes.**
 - a. Compare old and new maps. Analyze changes.
 - b. Explain the changing nature of the earth's structure (e.g. earthquakes, volcanoes).
 - c. Locate natural barriers that influenced exploration and the movement of people and settlements.
 - d. Draw conclusions about the effects of geography on transportation, culture, economic activities, and population density and distribution.
 - e. Evaluate the effects of human modification of and adaptation to the natural environment (e.g. housing, flood prevention, strip mining, greenhouse effect, desertification, clear cutting forest, air and water pollution, use of pesticides, herbicides).
 - f. Explain the influence of geographic features on the development of historic events.

- 3. The student will develop map skills through the use of maps, globes, charts, and other geographic tools.**
 - a. Explain the components of most maps (e.g. title, scale, legend, grid, projection).
 - b. Compare different map types (e.g. topographic, thematic) and different map projections. Explain the appropriate use for each.
 - c. Use grid systems and cardinal and intermediate directions to determine specific locations.
 - d. Review parallels and meridians on globes and on flat maps.
 - e. Locate the seven continents, four oceans, four hemispheres, and the equator.
 - f. Locate and identify major world rivers, climate areas, and rain forests.

Civics

- 1. The student will compare the characteristics of different types of government developed by ancient civilizations.**
 - a. Examine the development of government in early civilizations (e.g. Ancient Greece, Rome, Egypt, Middle Ages).
 - b. Describe the roots of democracy in ancient forms of government (e.g. Hammurabi's Code, Greek Democracy). Analyze how principles from ancient governments are reflected in the U.S. Constitution.

- 2. The student will identify and give examples of different forms of government.**
 - a. Compare the different systems of government existing in various parts of the world (e.g. democracy, theocracy, monarchy, dictatorship, republic, communism, oligarchy).
 - b. Differentiate between the rights and privileges of citizens of different countries.

Economics

- 1. The student will distinguish elements of basic economic systems commonly found in selected regions.**
 - a. Recognize how the development of agriculture, cities, nations, and governments influenced trade.
 - b. Explain the barter system and identify trade routes.
 - c. Identify the major factors contributing to industrial societies, including major natural resources, improved production and transportation, and technological advances.
 - d. Describe the development of economic structures regarding trade, import and export (e.g. production, consumption, scarcity, abundance, food production, and geographical movement of products).
 - e. Compare/contrast differing economic systems (e.g. market economies, socialist models). Compare production and consumption of goods and services in different countries.
 - f. Explain how the expansion of trade has affected a global economy.
 - g. Explain why international trade requires a system for exchanging currency between nations. Give examples of the types of currency used.