

Englewood on the Palisades Charter School
Sixth Grade Social Studies Curriculum
Aligned With the 2020 New Jersey Student Learning
Standards

The Vision for Social Studies Education in New Jersey

Introduction

Social Studies

The ever-changing landscape of information and communication technologies have transformed the roles and responsibilities of the next generation of learners. Inquiry-based learning in social studies prepares students to produce and critically consume information in our global society. This document outlines social studies practices, disciplinary concepts, core ideas, and related performance expectations in a manner that promotes learning experiences in which students actively explore the past, present, and future of the world through the study of history, economics, civics, and geography.

Mission

Social studies education provides learners with the knowledge, skills, attitudes, and perspectives needed to become active, informed, and contributing members of local, state, national, and global communities.

Vision

An education in social studies fosters a population that:

- Is civic-minded, globally aware, and socially responsible;
- Exemplifies fundamental values of democracy and human rights through active participation in local, state, national, and global communities;
- Makes informed decisions about local, state, national, and global events based on inquiry and analysis;
- Considers multiple perspectives, values diversity, and promotes cultural understanding;
- Recognizes the relationships between people, places, and resources as well as the implications of an interconnected global economy;
- Applies an understanding of critical media literacy skills when utilizing technology to learn, communicate, and collaborate with diverse people
- around the world; and
- Discerns fact from falsehood and critically analyzes information for validity and relevance.

Social Studies Practices

The practices are the skills that individuals who work in the field of social sciences use on a regular basis. Because the purpose of social studies is to provide students with the knowledge, skills and attitudes they need to be active, informed, responsible individuals and contributing members of their communities, many of the practices can be applied to daily life. Curriculum writers and educators will want to consider how they can design learning experiences that will enable their students to develop these skills in conjunction with the content knowledge reflected in the core ideas and performance expectations (Citizens, 2008). Each disciplinary practice below is accompanied by sample performance expectations that illustrate each of the practices.

Developing Questions and Planning Inquiry

Developing insightful questions and planning effective inquiry involves identifying the purposes of different questions to understand the human experience, which requires addressing real world issues. Inquiries incorporating questions from various social science disciplines build understanding of the past, present and future; these inquiries investigate the complexity and diversity of individuals, groups, and societies.

- 6.1.2.HistorySE.3: Use historical data from a variety of sources to *investigate the development of a local community* (e.g., origins of its name, originating members, important historical events and places).
- 6.1.5.GeoPP.5: Describe *how the migration and settlement patterns of Native American groups impacted different regions* of the Western Hemisphere.

Gathering and Evaluating Sources

Finding, evaluating and organizing information and evidence from multiple sources and perspectives are the core of inquiry. Effective practice requires evaluating the credibility of primary and secondary sources, assessing the reliability of information, analyzing the context of information, and corroborating evidence across sources. Discerning opinion from fact and interpreting the significance of information requires thinking critically about ourselves and the world.

- 6.1.2.HistoryCC.1: *Use multiple sources* to create a chronological sequence of events that describes how and why your community has changed over time.
- 6.1.5.GeoGI.1: *Use multiple sources* to evaluate the impact of the movement of people from place to place on individuals, communities, and regions.

Seeking Diverse Perspectives

Making sense of research findings requires thinking about what information is included, whether the information answers the question, and what may be missing, often resulting in the need to complete additional research. Developing an understanding of our own and others' perspectives builds understanding about the complexity of each person and the diversity in the world. Exploring diverse perspectives assists students in empathizing with other individuals and groups of people; quantitative and qualitative information provides insights into specific people, places, and events, as well as national, regional, and global trends.

- 6.1.2.HistoryUP.1: Use primary sources *representing multiple perspectives* to compare and make inferences about why there are different accounts of the same event.
- 6.1.5.HistorySE.1: Examine *multiple accounts* of early European explorations of North America including major land and water routes, reasons for exploration, and the impact the exploration had.

Developing Claims and Using Evidence

Developing claims requires careful consideration of evidence, logical organization of information, self-awareness about biases, application of analysis skills, and a willingness to revise conclusions based

on the strength of evidence. Using evidence responsibly means developing claims based on factual evidence, valid reasoning, and a respect for human rights.

- 6.1.2.CivicsPR.2: *Cite evidence* that explains why rules and laws in school and communities are needed.
- 6.1.5.GeoHE.2: *Cite examples* of how technological advances have changed the environment in New Jersey and the United States (e.g., energy, transportation, communications).

Presenting Arguments and Explanations

Using a variety of formats designed for a purpose and an authentic audience forms the basis for clear communication. Strong arguments contain claims with organized evidence and valid reasoning that respects the diversity of the world and the dignity of each person. Writing findings and engaging in civil discussion with an audience provides a key step in the process of thinking critically about conclusions and continued inquiry.

- 6.1.2.HistoryCA.1: *Make an evidence-based argument* about how and why communities change over time (e.g., locally, nationally, globally).
- 6.1.5.HistoryCA.1: *Craft an argument*, supported with historical evidence, for how demographics (i.e., race, gender, and economic status) affected social, economic, and political opportunities during the Colonial era.

Engaging in Civil Discourse and Critiquing Conclusions

Assessing and refining conclusions through metacognition, further research, and deliberative discussions with diverse perspectives sharpens the conclusions and improves thinking as a vital part of the process of sensemaking. Responsible citizenship requires respectfully listening to and critiquing claims by analyzing the evidence and reasoning supporting them. Listening to and understanding contrary views can deepen learning and lay the groundwork for seeking consensus.

- 6.1.2.CivicsPD.1: *Engage in discussions* effectively by asking questions, considering facts, listening to the ideas of others, and sharing opinions.
- 6.3.5.GeoGI.1: Use technology to *collaborate with others who have different perspectives* to examine global issues, including climate change and propose possible solutions.

Taking Informed Action

After thoroughly investigating questions, taking informed action means building consensus about possible actions and planning strategically to implement change. Democracy requires citizens to practice discussion, negotiation, coalition-seeking, and peaceful conflict resolution. When appropriate, taking informed action involves creating and/or implementing action plans designed to solve problems and create positive change.

- 6.3.2.CivicsPD.1: With adult guidance and support, *bring awareness of a local issue to school and/or community members* and make recommendations for change.

- 6.3.5.CivicsPD.3: *Propose a solution* to a local issue after considering evidence and the perspectives of different groups, including community members and local officials.

In addition to the NJ Student Learning Standards, the following shall be integrated into K–12 Social Studies curricula:

- Interdisciplinary connections (N.J.A.C. 6A:8-1.1)
- 21st century themes and skills (N.J.A.C. 6A:8-1.1)*
- Holocaust and genocides (N.J.S.A. 18A:35-28)*
- History and contributions of African-Americans (Amistad Law) (N.J.S.A. 18A:35-4.43)*
- Highlight and promote diversity and inclusion (Diversity & Inclusion Law) (N.J.S.A. 18A:35-4.36a)
- Asian American, Pacific Islander history and contributions (N.J.S.A. 18A:35-4.44)

Elementary Social Studies Requirements

- Course of study in civics, geography and history of New Jersey* (N.J.S.A. 18A:35-3)

Middle School Requirements

- Course of study in U.S. Constitution* (N.J.S.A. 18A: 6-3)
- Two quarters or equivalent Civics course (N.J.S.A. 18A:35-41)
- Political, economic, and social contributions of persons with disabilities and lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender people (N.J.S.A. 18A:35-4.35)

High School Requirements

- At least 15 credits in social studies (N.J.A.C. 6A:8-5.1)
- Integration of civics, economics, geography and global content in all course offerings* (N.J.A.C. 6A:8-5.1)
- Course of study in U.S. Constitution* (N.J.S.A. 18A: 6-3)
- Two years of US History in high schools including history of New Jersey and of African-Americans (N.J.S.A. 18A:35-1)
- Political, economic, and social contributions of persons with disabilities and lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender people (N.J.S.A. 18A:35-4.35)

*Already integrated into existing New Jersey Student Learning Standards

Social Studies Curriculum Sixth Grade

Unit	Range of Days
Unit 1: The Dawn of Civilization: From Stone Tools to Early Cities	8 - 10 Days
Unit 2: Rivers of Power: The Rise of Ancient Civilizations (4000–1000 BCE)	18 - 20 Days

Unit 3: Classical Civilizations: Foundations of Modern Society (1000 BCE – 600 CE)	38 - 40 Days
Unit 4: Expanding Exchanges and Encounters (500 - 1450 CE)	18 - 20 Days
Unit 5: Holocaust Study	5 - 7 Days

Unit 1: The Dawn of Civilization: From Stone Tools to Early Cities
Duration: 8 - 10 Days
Unit Overview: In this unit, students will explore the beginnings of human society, focusing on the migration and adaptation of early humans. They will analyze how early civilizations developed in the Fertile Crescent, making important contributions in the fields of agriculture, trade, religion, and the arts. This unit will highlight the role of geography in shaping early human settlement patterns and the innovations that allowed these societies to thrive. Emphasis will be placed on the lasting contributions these early civilizations have made to our modern way of life. The journey through early history will cover the transition from the Paleolithic to the Neolithic era, touching on how human behavior, technological advancements, and social organization evolved over time. Students will examine archaeological discoveries, learn about the early development of writing systems, and explore how civilizations like Mesopotamia, Egypt, and the Indus Valley shaped the modern world. This unit encourages students to think critically about the ways these early peoples adapted to their environments and how their innovations impacted future generations. This creative and engaging unit allows students to actively explore the fascinating beginnings of human civilization, encouraging them to connect the innovations of the past to the world they live in today.
Enduring Understandings: • Early humans adapted to their environment through innovations like tool-making, fire use, and the development of language. • The shift from hunting and gathering to agriculture led to the growth of early civilizations. • Geography played a pivotal role in the development of ancient civilizations by influencing settlement patterns and trade. • The development of writing systems and religious structures marked significant changes in early civilizations. • Early societies made lasting contributions in government, law, art, religion, and technology that influence modern societies.
Essential Questions: • How did early humans adapt to their environment, and what impact did this have on the development of civilizations? • How did the geography and climate of the Fertile Crescent and other river valleys influence the rise of early civilizations? • What role did agriculture play in the transition from nomadic lifestyles to settled civilizations?

- How did early civilizations communicate, and what lasting impacts did their inventions have on modern society?
- How did the development of written language, art, and religion shape the social structures and daily life of ancient civilizations?

Student Learning Outcomes:

By the end of this unit, students will be able to:

- Analyze the role of early human migration and adaptation in the formation of civilizations.
- Explain how the development of agriculture revolutionized human society and led to the rise of cities.
- Compare and contrast early river valley civilizations such as Mesopotamia, Egypt, and the Indus Valley.
- Identify the contributions of early civilizations in the areas of writing, law, and culture.
- Investigate how geographical factors influenced the settlement patterns and economic activities of early civilizations.

New Jersey Student Learning Standards (NJSLs)

Social Studies

- **6.2.8.GeoPP.1.a** Compare and contrast the social organization, natural resources, and land use of early hunters/gatherers and those who lived in early agrarian societies.
- **6.2.8.GeoPP.1.b** Use maps to examine the impact of the various migratory patterns of hunters/gatherers that moved from Africa to Eurasia, Australia, and the Americas.
- **6.2.8.HistoryCC.1.a** Describe the influence of the agricultural revolution on population growth and the subsequent development of civilizations (e.g., the impact of food surplus from farming).
- **6.2.8.HistoryCC.1.b** Determine the impact of technological advancements on hunter/gatherer and agrarian societies
- **6.2.8.HistoryCC.1.c:** Describe how the development of both written and unwritten languages impacted human understanding, development of culture, and social structure.
- **6.2.8.HistoryCC.1.d** Demonstrate an understanding of pre-agricultural and post-agricultural periods in terms of relative length of time.
- **6.2.8.HistorySE.1.a** Explain how archaeological discoveries are used to develop and enhance understanding of life prior to written records.
- **6.2.8.CivicsPI.2.a** Explain how/why different early river valley civilizations developed similar forms of government and legal structures.
- **6.2.CivicsHR.2.a** Determine the role of slavery in the economic and social structures of early river valley civilizations
- **6.2.8.GeoHE.2.a** Determine the extent to which geography influenced settlement, the development of trade networks, technological innovations, and the sustainability of early river valley civilizations.
- **6.2.8.GeoSV.2.a** Compare and contrast physical and political maps of early river valley civilizations and their modern counterparts and determine the geopolitical impact of these civilizations then and now. (i.e. Mesopotamia and Iraq; ancient Egypt and modern Egypt; Indus River Valley and modern Pakistan/India; ancient China and modern China)

- **6.2.8.GeoGE.2.a** Explain how technological advancements led to greater economic specialization, improved weaponry, trade, and the development of a class system in early river valley civilizations
- **6.2.8.HistoryCC.2.b** Analyze the impact of religion on daily life, government, and culture in various early river valley civilizations
- **6.2.8.HistoryCC.2.c** Explain how the development of written language transformed all aspects of life in early river valley civilizations.
- **6.2.8.GeoHE.4.b:** Use geographic models to determine the impact of environmental modifications made by earlier civilizations on the current day environmental challenges.vc fdsf

Interdisciplinary Standards

English Language Arts:

- **RI.CR.6.1.** Cite textual evidence and make relevant connections to support analysis of what an informational text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text.
- **RI.CI.6.2.** Determine the central idea of an informational text and explain how it is supported by key details; provide a summary of the text distinct from personal opinions or judgments.
- **RI.IT.6.3.** Analyze how a particular text's (e.g., article, brochure, technical manual, procedural text) structure unfolds by using textual evidence to describe how a key individual, event, or idea is introduced, illustrated, and elaborated in a text.
- **RI.TS.6.4.** Use text structures (e.g., cause-effect, problem-solution), search tools, and genre features (e.g., graphics, captions, indexes) to locate and integrate information.
- **RL.PP.6.5.** Determine how an author conveys or develops perspective in a text (through the narrator or speaker when appropriate).
- **RI.PP.6.5.** Identify the author's purpose, perspective or potential bias in a text and explain the impact on the reader's interpretation.
- **RL.MF.6.6.** Compare and contrast information or texts to develop a coherent understanding of a theme, topic, or issue when reading a story, drama, or poem to listening to or viewing an audio, video, or live version of the text.
- **RI.MF.6.6.** Integrate information when presented in different media or formats (e.g., visually, quantitatively) to develop a coherent understanding of a topic or issue.
- **RI.AA.6.7.** Trace the development of and evaluate the argument and specific claims in a text, distinguishing claims that are supported by reasons and evidence from claims that are not.
- **RL.CT.6.8.** Compare and contrast literary texts in different forms, by different authors, or from different genres (e.g., stories and poems; historical novels and primary source documents, scientific journals and fantasy stories) in terms of their approaches to similar themes and topics.
- **W.IW.6.2.** Write informative/explanatory texts (including the narration of historical events, scientific procedures/ experiments, or technical processes) to examine a topic and convey ideas, concepts, and information through the selection, organization, and analysis of relevant content.
 - **A.** Introduce a topic and organize ideas, concepts, and information, using text structures (e.g., definition, classification, comparison/contrast, cause/effect, etc.) and text features (e.g., headings, graphics, and multimedia) when useful to aid in comprehension.
 - **B.** Develop the topic with relevant facts, definitions, concrete details, quotations, or other information and examples.
 - **C.** Use appropriate transitions to clarify the relationships among ideas and concepts.
 - **D.** Use precise language and domain-specific vocabulary to inform about or explain the topic.
 - **E.** Acknowledge and attempt a formal/academic style, approach, and form.
 - **F.** Provide a concluding statement or section (e.g., sentence, part of a paragraph, paragraph, or multiple paragraphs) that follows from and supports the information or explanation presented.

21st Century Themes and Skills

8.2 Computer Science and Design Thinking

- **8.2.5.ETW.1:** Describe how resources such as material, energy, information, time, tools, people, and capital are used in products or systems.
- **8.2.5.ETW.2:** Describe ways that various technologies are used to reduce improper use of resources.
- **8.2.5.ETW.3:** Explain why human-designed systems, products, and environments need to be constantly monitored, maintained, and improved.
- **8.2.5.ETW.4:** Explain the impact that resources, such as energy and materials used to develop technology, have on the environment.
- **8.2.5.ETW.5:** Identify the impact of a specific technology on the environment and determine what can be done to increase positive effects and to reduce any negative effects, such as climate change.

9.4 Life Literacies and Key Skills

- **9.4.8.CI.3** Examine challenges that may exist in the adoption of new ideas
- **9.4.8.DC.7** Collaborate within a digital community to create a digital artifact using strategies such as crowdsourcing or digital surveys.
- **9.4.8.GCA.1** Model how to navigate cultural differences with sensitivity and respect
- **9.4.8.GCA.2** Demonstrate openness to diverse ideas and perspectives through active discussions to achieve a group goal.
- **9.4.8.IML.1** Critically curate multiple resources to assess the credibility of sources when searching for information.
- **9.4.8.IML.7** Use information from a variety of sources, contexts, disciplines, and cultures for a specific purpose
- **9.4.8.IML.12** Use relevant tools to produce, publish, and deliver information supported with evidence for an authentic audience.
- **9.4.8.IML.13** Identify the impact of the creator on the content, production, and delivery of information
- **9.4.8.TL.3** Select appropriate tools to organize and present information digitally
- **9.4.8.TL.5** Compare the process and effectiveness of synchronous collaboration and asynchronous collaboration.

Targets	Focus Lessons	Resources
Understand the migration of early humans and how geography influenced their movement	Map skills: tracing migration routes from Africa to Eurasia, Australia, and the Americas using primary sources and interactive maps	World map handouts, digital migration simulations, National Geographic human migration video, guided inquiry worksheet
Identify the differences between Paleolithic and Neolithic life	Compare and contrast hunter-gatherers with early agrarian societies	Artifact sorting activity, T-chart worksheet, interactive digital museum tour
Analyze the impact of agriculture on human society	Explore the Agricultural Revolution and how food surplus led to population growth and permanent settlements	Article: “How Farming Changed the World,” timeline organizer, short documentary
Understand how archaeological discoveries shape our understanding of early humans	Inquiry into archaeological sites (e.g., Lascaux Caves, Catalhoyuk) and what artifacts reveal	Virtual dig activity, “Ask an Archaeologist” video, graphic organizer

Examine how geography affected the rise of early river valley civilizations	Use physical and political maps to explore the Fertile Crescent, Egypt, the Indus Valley, and China	Interactive online map tool, student atlas, map comparison worksheet
Explore early technological innovations (tools, irrigation, the wheel)	Identify and analyze how early inventions improved life and expanded societies	Tool timeline, invention analysis cards, build-a-tool STEM challenge
Understand the development and significance of written language	Learn about cuneiform, hieroglyphics, and the Phoenician alphabet	Writing on clay tablets, decoding ancient scripts, video on the Rosetta Stone
Examine the political and legal systems of early civilizations	Study Hammurabi's Code and early laws; discuss fairness and order in ancient societies	Excerpts from Hammurabi's Code, "You Be the Judge" role-play, discussion guide
Analyze how religion shaped early societies	Compare creation myths, religious structures, and burial customs	Venn diagram activity, creation myth reading set, virtual temple tours
Understand the impact of trade in early civilizations	Explore trade routes and the exchange of goods, ideas, and culture	Ancient trade simulation game, Phoenician trade map, resource cards
Connect early artistic achievements to their cultural significance	Explore early art, music, and architecture (e.g., ziggurats, pyramids, statues)	Art gallery walk, cave painting recreation, video tour of ancient wonders
Compare and contrast major early civilizations	Use a matrix or Venn diagram to organize similarities and differences in geography, government, economy, and culture	Civilization comparison chart, group presentation rubric, guided notes

Assessments

Formative Assessment

- Class discussions and exit slips
- Written and digital responses to key questions
- Google Forms and surveys for informal assessments
- Teacher observations and quizzes on key concepts
- Graphic organizers and Venn diagrams to compare early civilizations

Summative Assessment

- Ancient Civilizations Unit Assessment
- DBQs with Scoring Rubrics
- Projects and Presentations (with scoring rubrics)

- Cumulative Unit Assessment on Early Civilizations

Alternate Assessment

- Differentiated instruction based on student needs
- Visual aids and multimedia resources for diverse learning styles
- Extended time and additional support for assessments
- **Performance Task:** Create a museum exhibit on one early civilization, including artifacts, maps, writing, and a presentation to peers
- **Essay:** Explain how geography and innovation contributed to the rise of early civilizations (using text evidence and maps)
- **Comparative Project:** Group comparison poster or slide deck of Mesopotamia, Egypt, and the Indus Valley
- **Written Assessment:** Multiple-choice and short-answer quiz on unit vocabulary, concepts, and civilizations

Modifications/Accommodations

Support/Accommodations for Students with IEPs

- Follow all IEP modifications
- Work in a small group
- Solidify and refine concepts through repetition
- Allow answers to be given orally or dictated
- Use multi-sensory teaching approaches
- Utilize assistive technology and materials
- Use large print books, Braille, or books on CD (digital text)
- Guided notes and/or scaffold outline for written assignments
- Introduce key vocabulary before lesson
- Work in a small group
- Lesson taught again using a differentiated approach
- Allow answers to be given orally or dictated
- Use visuals / Anchor Charts
- Leveled texts according to ability

Support/Accommodations for Students with 504 Plans

- Follow all the 504 plan modifications
- Text to speech/audio recorded selections
- Amplification system as needed
- Leveled texts according to ability
- Fine motor skill stations embedded in rotation as needed
- Modified or constrained spelling word lists
- Provide anchor charts with high frequency words and phonemic patterns
- Create an enhanced set of introductory activities (e.g. advance organizers, concept maps, concept puzzles)

Support/Accommodations for Multilingual Learners

- Work toward longer passages as skills in English increase
- Use visuals
- Introduce/highlight key vocabulary before lesson
- Teacher models reading aloud daily
- Provide peer tutoring
- Utilize translation supports including bilingual dictionary, translation device, assistive technology, and peers
- Guided notes and/or scaffold outline for written assignments
- Provide students with English Learner leveled readers

Support/Accommodations for Gifted Students

- Provide options, alternatives and choices to differentiate and broaden the curriculum
- Organize and offer flexible small group learning activities
- Provide whole group enrichment explorations
- Teach cognitive and methodological skills
- Use center, stations, or contracts
- Organize integrated problem-solving simulations
- Propose interest-based extension activities
- Expose students to beyond level texts

- Support recommended by the grade specific “can do” list outlined by WIDA, including Key Uses Edition and
- Descriptor Name Charts
- Allow extra time to complete assignments or tests
- Guided notes and/or scaffold outline for written assignments

Unit 2: Rivers of Power: The Rise of Ancient Civilizations (4000–1000 BCE)

Duration:

18 - 20 days

Unit Overview:

This unit explores the formation and development of ancient civilizations that flourished between 4000 BCE and 1000 BCE, with a primary focus on Mesopotamia and Egypt. Students will study the Tigris and Euphrates Rivers as the cradle of the first civilizations, including the rise of Sumerians and the formation of the Persian Empire. Additionally, students will investigate the impact of the Nile River on Egypt's development and explore the connections between geography, climate, and civilization. Throughout the unit, students will also look into the governmental and religious structures of these ancient societies, including the role of monarchs, priests, and military leaders in shaping early empires.

This unit will give students a deep dive into the early civilizations that laid the foundation for modern society, with a focus on hands-on, creative learning that brings ancient history to life.

Enduring Understandings:

- The valleys of the Tigris and Euphrates River were the site of the world’s first civilizations, including Sumer.
- The ancient Egyptians harnessed the power of the Nile to develop one of the earliest and most influential civilizations.
- The Persian Empire grew to control much of Southwest Asia, significantly influencing the region's political and cultural landscape.
- Over time, various empires and kingdoms such as Kush and Aksum grew through military expansion and trade, contributing to the cultural diversity of early civilizations.

Essential Questions:

- How did geography and climate contribute to the rise of ancient civilizations?
- What role did religion and government play in shaping early societies?
- How did the Egyptian and Mesopotamian societies interact with and influence neighboring regions?
- What were the technological advancements that allowed early civilizations to thrive and expand?

Student Learning Outcomes:

By the end of this unit, students will be able to:

- Explain the significance of the Tigris and Euphrates rivers in the development of Mesopotamian civilization.
- Analyze how the geography of the Nile River Valley helped Egypt develop into a powerful civilization.

- Understand the role of government, religion, and social structure in early Egyptian and Mesopotamian societies.
- Compare and contrast the development of early empires such as the Persian Empire, Egypt, and the Kingdom of Kush.
- Identify and evaluate the lasting cultural and technological legacies of these ancient civilizations.

New Jersey Student Learning Standards (NJSLS)

Social Studies

- **6.2.8.GeoGE.2.a** Explain how technological advancements led to greater economic specialization, improved weaponry, trade, and the development of a class system in early river valley civilizations
- **6.2.8.GeoSV.2.a** Compare and contrast physical and political maps of early river valley civilizations and their modern counterparts and determine the geopolitical impact of these civilizations then and now. (i.e. Mesopotamia and Iraq; ancient Egypt and modern Egypt; Indus River Valley and modern Pakistan/India; ancient China and modern China)
- **6.2.8.GeoPP.1.b** Use maps to examine the impact of the various migratory patterns of hunters/gatherers that moved from Africa to Eurasia, Australia, and the Americas.
- **6.2.8.GeoGE.2.a** Explain how technological advancements led to greater economic specialization, improved weaponry, trade, and the development of a class system in early river valley civilizations
- **6.2.8.History.CC.2.a** Evaluate the importance and enduring legacy of the major achievements of the early river valley civilizations over time.
- **6.2.8.CivicsPI.2.a** Explain how/why different early river valley civilizations developed similar forms of government and legal structures
- **6.2.8.HistoryCA.2.a** Analyze the factors that led to the rise and fall of various early river valley civilizations and determine whether there was a common pattern of growth and decline.

Interdisciplinary Standards

English Language Arts:

- **L.CR.6.1.** Cite textual evidence and make relevant connections to support analysis of what an informational text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text.
- **RI.CI.6.2.** Determine the central idea of an informational text and explain how it is supported by key details; provide a summary of the text distinct from personal opinions or judgments.
- **RI.IT.6.3.** Analyze how a particular text's (e.g., article, brochure, technical manual, procedural text) structure unfolds by using textual evidence to describe how a key individual, event, or idea is introduced, illustrated, and elaborated in a text.
- **RI.TS.6.4.** Use text structures (e.g., cause-effect, problem-solution), search tools, and genre features (e.g., graphics, captions, indexes) to locate and integrate information.
- **RL.MF.6.6.** Compare and contrast information or texts to develop a coherent understanding of a theme, topic, or issue when reading a story, drama, or poem to listening to or viewing an audio, video, or live version of the text.
- **RI.MF.6.6.** Integrate information when presented in different media or formats (e.g., visually, quantitatively) to develop a coherent understanding of a topic or issue.
- **RI.AA.6.7.** Trace the development of and evaluate the argument and specific claims in a text, distinguishing claims that are supported by reasons and evidence from claims that are not.

- **RL.CT.6.8.** Compare and contrast literary texts in different forms, by different authors, or from different genres (e.g., stories and poems; historical novels and primary source documents, scientific journals and fantasy stories) in terms of their approaches to similar themes and topics.
- **W.IW.6.2.** Write informative/explanatory texts (including the narration of historical events, scientific procedures/ experiments, or technical processes) to examine a topic and convey ideas, concepts, and information through the selection, organization, and analysis of relevant content.
 - **A.**Introduce a topic and organize ideas, concepts, and information, using text structures (e.g., definition, classification, comparison/contrast, cause/effect, etc.) and text features (e.g., headings, graphics, and multimedia) when useful to aid in comprehension.
 - **B.**Develop the topic with relevant facts, definitions, concrete details, quotations, or other information and examples.
 - **C.**Use appropriate transitions to clarify the relationships among ideas and concepts.
 - **D.**Use precise language and domain-specific vocabulary to inform about or explain the topic.
 - **E.**Acknowledge and attempt a formal/academic style, approach, and form.
 - **F.**Provide a concluding statement or section (e.g., sentence, part of a paragraph, paragraph, or multiple paragraphs) that follows from and supports the information or explanation presented.

21st Century Themes and Skills

8.2 Computer Science and Design Thinking

- **8.2.5.ETW.1:** Describe how resources such as material, energy, information, time, tools, people, and capital are used in products or systems.
- **8.2.5.ETW.2:** Describe ways that various technologies are used to reduce improper use of resources.
- **8.2.5.ETW.3:** Explain why human-designed systems, products, and environments need to be constantly monitored, maintained, and improved.
- **8.2.5.ETW.4:** Explain the impact that resources, such as energy and materials used to develop technology, have on the environment.
- **8.2.5.ETW.5:** Identify the impact of a specific technology on the environment and determine what can be done to increase positive effects and to reduce any negative effects, such as climate change.

9.4 Life Literacies and Key Skills

- **9.4.8.CI.3** Examine challenges that may exist in the adoption of new ideas
- **9.4.8.DC.7** Collaborate within a digital community to create a digital artifact using strategies such as crowdsourcing or digital surveys.
- **9.4.8.GCA.1** Model how to navigate cultural differences with sensitivity and respect
- **9.4.8.GCA.2** Demonstrate openness to diverse ideas and perspectives through active discussions to achieve a group goal.
- **9.4.8.IML.1** Critically curate multiple resources to assess the credibility of sources when searching for information.
- **9.4.8.IML.7** Use information from a variety of sources, contexts, disciplines, and cultures for a specific purpose
- **9.4.8.IML.12** Use relevant tools to produce, publish, and deliver information supported with evidence for an authentic audience.
- **9.4.8.IML.13** Identify the impact of the creator on the content, production, and delivery of information
- **9.4.8.TL.3** Select appropriate tools to organize and present information digitally
- **9.4.8.TL.5** Compare the process and effectiveness of synchronous collaboration and asynchronous collaboration.

Targets	Focus Lessons	Resources
Understand how geography and climate contributed to early	Map Study & Geographic Comparison: Students analyze	Ancient World Maps (print & digital), Google Earth, Interactive Map

civilizations	physical and political maps of ancient Mesopotamia and Egypt.	Stations, TCI History Alive! Geography Tools
Explain the role of the Tigris & Euphrates Rivers in the development of Sumer	Interactive Timeline Creation: Students build timelines tracing Mesopotamian development, including irrigation, ziggurats, and cuneiform.	Timeline software (e.g., Sutori or Canva), Mesopotamia video clips (PBS/NOVA), Primary source excerpts
Analyze how the Nile influenced Egyptian civilization	Group Project: Nile River Survival Challenge – students work in teams to plan how to settle along the Nile, including farming and trade.	Nile River simulation guide, planning template, trade cards, Egypt map poster
Understand the development and role of government and religion in early societies	Station Rotation: Examine Sumerian kingship, Hammurabi's Code, Pharaoh's role, and polytheistic belief systems.	Artifact images, translated excerpts of Hammurabi's Code, Egyptian myth cards, role cards
Compare early empires and civilizations	Comparative Foldable: Students create a foldable to contrast Egypt, Mesopotamia, Persia, and Kush using key traits (govt, trade, tech).	Foldable templates, T-chart worksheets, guided readings (McGraw-Hill or National Geographic)
Identify technological and cultural legacies	Inquiry WebQuest: "Ancient Tech That Changed the World"—Students explore ancient tools and inventions like the wheel, plow, and sailboat.	Digital WebQuest on Google Slides, curated source links, tech analysis worksheet
Understand the rise and fall of ancient civilizations	Graphic Novel Storyboard: Create a visual narrative of a civilization's rise and fall based on historical factors.	Storyboard templates (digital/paper), drawing tools, example models, guided notes
Analyze migration patterns and cultural diffusion	Simulation & Discussion: Ancient Trade Routes simulation with roleplay of merchants, scribes, and kings.	Role badges, trade route maps, goods cards, trade logs, discussion questions
Develop and support claims using informational texts	Close Reading Circles: Analyze primary sources and make claims supported by text evidence (e.g., laws, religious texts, treaties).	Primary source packets, highlighters, annotation guides, group discussion roles
Integrate media and text to understand history	Media Literacy Project: Compare text and video accounts of Egyptian pyramids and Mesopotamian ziggurats.	Clips from History Channel/NOVA, reading excerpts, Venn diagram organizer

Assessments

Formative Assessment

- In-class discussions and group work
- Exit slips and reflection journals
- Quizzes on key concepts (e.g., geography, government, religion)
- Peer-reviewed trade simulation logs

- Graphic organizer checks (foldables, T-charts)
- Class discussions with turn-and-talks and fishbowl observations

Summative Assessment

- Unit test covering the major civilizations, geography, key figures, and events
- Final project (Museum Exhibit or 3D Map of Egypt) with rubric-based evaluation
- **Unit Performance Task** – Digital Museum Exhibit: Students curate a virtual museum on one ancient civilization, including artifacts, informational placards, video explanations, and source citations.
- **Comparative Essay** – How did geography shape the development of Egypt and Mesopotamia? Include at least three specific examples supported by textual evidence.
- **Common Assessment Quiz** – Vocabulary, map skills, matching monarchs to civilizations, timeline events, and document-based questions.
- **Group Presentation** – Ancient Inventions Showcase: Students present on one innovation, its origin, use, and modern-day legacy, with a visual aid.

Alternate Assessment / Benchmark Assessment:

- Digital presentations or videos about ancient civilizations
- Creative writing assignments (e.g., write a letter from the perspective of an Egyptian scribe or a Sumerian king)
- HMH Ancient Civilizations Online Unit Assessment
- DBQ assessments with rubrics
- End-of-unit project presentations and written reflections

Modifications/Accommodations

Support/Accommodations for Students with IEPs

- Follow all IEP modifications
- Work in a small group
- Solidify and refine concepts through repetition
- Allow answers to be given orally or dictated
- Use multi-sensory teaching approaches
- Utilize assistive technology and materials
- Use large print books, Braille, or books on CD (digital text)
- Guided notes and/or scaffold outline for written assignments
- Introduce key vocabulary before lesson
- Work in a small group

Support/Accommodations for Students with 504 Plans

- Follow all the 504 plan modifications
- Text to speech/audio recorded selections
- Amplification system as needed
- Leveled texts according to ability
- Fine motor skill stations embedded in rotation as needed
- Modified or constrained spelling word lists
- Provide anchor charts with high frequency words and phonemic patterns
- Create an enhanced set of introductory activities (e.g. advance organizers, concept maps, concept puzzles)

● Lesson taught again using a differentiated approach ● Allow answers to be given orally or dictated ● Use visuals / Anchor Charts ● Leveled texts according to ability	
Support/Accommodations for Multilingual Learners ● Work toward longer passages as skills in English increase ● Use visuals ● Introduce/highlight key vocabulary before lesson ● Teacher models reading aloud daily ● Provide peer tutoring ● Utilize translation supports including bilingual dictionary, translation device, assistive technology, and peers ● Guided notes and/or scaffold outline for written assignments ● Provide students with English Learner leveled readers ● Support recommended by the grade specific “can do” list outlined by WIDA, including Key Uses Edition and ● Descriptor Name Charts ● Allow extra time to complete assignments or tests ● Guided notes and/or scaffold outline for written assignments	Support/Accommodations for Gifted Students ● Provide options, alternatives and choices to differentiate and broaden the curriculum ● Organize and offer flexible small group learning activities ● Provide whole group enrichment explorations ● Teach cognitive and methodological skills ● Use center, stations, or contracts ● Organize integrated problem-solving simulations ● Propose interest-based extension activities ● Expose students to beyond level texts

Unit 3: Classical Civilizations: Foundations of Modern Society (1000 BCE – 600 CE)

Duration:

38 - 40 Days

Unit Overview:

The Classical Civilizations of the Mediterranean World, India, and China (1000 BCE – 600 CE) marks an era of profound cultural, political, and technological transformation that shaped the trajectory of human history. From the expansion of empires to advancements in philosophy, religion, science, and governance, this unit explores the rise and fall of major civilizations that laid the foundation for much of today’s world.

During this period, civilizations in the Mediterranean, India, and China not only grew in size and power but also in sophistication. The development of complex societies, including the Roman Empire, the Maurya and Gupta Empires in India, and the various dynasties of China, introduced new systems of governance, technological innovations, and cultural ideas that continue to influence the modern world. Students will engage with key concepts such as the political structures of Rome and China, the cultural and scientific contributions of ancient India, the philosophical ideas of Confucianism and Buddhism, and the impact of trade and conflict across empires.

This unit will help students explore essential questions about human nature, governance, technological progress, and the enduring legacies of the classical world.

Enduring Understandings:

- Classical civilizations built upon the foundations of earlier societies but advanced in complexity through political systems, cultural achievements, and organized philosophies and religions.
- Religious beliefs and philosophical ideas helped shape social structures, moral codes, and political systems in classical societies, leaving a lasting legacy on future civilizations.
- Geography played a critical role in the expansion, unity, and defense of classical empires, shaping their economies, trade routes, and cultural interactions.
- Classical civilizations made significant technological, artistic, and intellectual contributions that influenced both their contemporary societies and modern cultures.
- The rise and fall of classical civilizations were influenced by recurring patterns such as leadership strength, military power, economic stability, and external pressures.

Essential Questions:

- What made the Classical Civilizations stand out from earlier civilizations?
- What impact did religion and philosophy have on the development of these societies?
- How did geography influence the development of empires in Rome, India, and China?
- What were the technological and cultural achievements of these empires?
- What were the common factors contributing to the rise and fall of these civilizations?

Student Learning Outcomes:

By the end of this unit, students will be able to:

- Explore the development of Hinduism and Buddhism, and the cultural contributions of the Maurya and Gupta Empires.
- Understand the major Chinese dynasties and their influence on governance, technology, and trade.
- Understand the political, cultural, and philosophical contributions of ancient Greece.
- Analyze the influence of Alexander's conquests and the resulting spread of Greek culture.
- Understand Roman government, military strategies, and their cultural influence on the modern world.

New Jersey Student Learning Standards (NJSLS)

Social Studies

- **6.2.8.GeoGE.2.a** Explain how technological advancements led to greater economic specialization, improved weaponry, trade, and the development of a class system in early river valley civilizations
- **6.2.8.GeoSV.2.a** Compare and contrast physical and political maps of early river valley civilizations and their modern counterparts and determine the geopolitical impact of these civilizations then and now. (i.e. Mesopotamia and Iraq; ancient Egypt and modern Egypt; Indus River Valley and modern Pakistan/India; ancient China and modern China)

- **6.2.8.GeoPP.1.b** Use maps to examine the impact of the various migratory patterns of hunters/gatherers that moved from Africa to Eurasia, Australia, and the Americas.
- **6.2.8.GeoPP.3.a** Use geographic models to describe how the availability of natural resources influenced the development of the political, economic and cultural systems of each of the classical civilizations and provided motivation for expansion.
- **6.2.8.CivicsPI.3.a** Compare and contrast the methods (i.e., autocratic rule, philosophies, and bureaucratic structures) used by the rulers of Rome, China, and India to control and unify their expanding empires.
- **6.2.8.CivicsDP.3.b** Use evidence to describe the impact of Athenian democracy and the Roman Republic on the development of the United States Constitution
- **6.2.8.CivicsDP.3.a** Compare and contrast the American legal system with the legal systems of classical civilizations and determine the extent to which these early systems influenced our current legal system (e.g., Babylonian Code of Hammurabi, Roman Justinian Code, Israelite Jewish Law)
- **6.2.8.CivicsHR.3.a** Compare and contrast the rights and responsibilities of free men, women, slaves and foreigners in the political, economic and social structures of classical civilizations.
- **6.2.8.HistoryUP.3.b** Compare the status of groups in the Ancient World to those of people today and evaluate how individuals perceived the principles of liberty and equality then and now (i.e., political, economic and social).
- **6.2.8.History.CC.2.a** Evaluate the importance and enduring legacy of the major achievements of the early river valley civilizations over time.
- **6.2.8.CivicsPI.2.a** Explain how/why different early river valley civilizations developed similar forms of government and legal structures
- **6.2.8.HistoryCA.2.a** Analyze the factors that led to the rise and fall of various early river valley civilizations and determine whether there was a common pattern of growth and decline.
- **6.2.8.HistoryCA.3.a** Evaluate the importance and enduring legacy of the major achievements of Greece, Rome, India, and China over time.
- **6.2.8.HistoryCA.3.b** Determine common factors that contributed to the decline and fall of the Roman Empire, Gupta India, and Han China.
- **6.2.8.HistoryUP.3.c** Compare and contrast the tenets of various world religions that developed in or around this time period (i.e. Buddhism, Christianity, Confucianism, Hinduism, Islam, Judaism, Sikhism, and Taoism), their patterns of expansion, and their responses to the current challenges of globalization.
- **6.2.8.HistoryCC.3.a** Determine the extent to which religion, economic issues, and conflict shaped the values and decisions of the classical civilizations.
- **6.2.8.HistoryUP.3.b** Compare the status of groups in the Ancient World to those of people today and evaluate how individuals perceived the principles of liberty and equality then and now (i.e., political, economic and social).
- **6.2.8.EconEM.2.a.** Analyze the impact of expanding land and sea trade routes as well as a uniform system of exchange in the Mediterranean world and Asia.
- **6.2.8.EconGE.3.a** Explain how classical civilizations used technology and innovation to enhance agricultural and manufacturing output and commerce, to expand military capabilities, to improve life in urban areas, and to allow for greater division of labor.

Interdisciplinary Standards

English Language Arts:

- **RI.CR.6.1.** Cite textual evidence and make relevant connections to support analysis of what an informational text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text.

- **RI.CI.6.2.** Determine the central idea of an informational text and explain how it is supported by key details; provide a summary of the text distinct from personal opinions or judgments.
- **RI.IT.6.3.** Analyze how a particular text's (e.g., article, brochure, technical manual, procedural text) structure unfolds by using textual evidence to describe how a key individual, event, or idea is introduced, illustrated, and elaborated in a text.
- **RI.TS.6.4.** Use text structures (e.g., cause-effect, problem-solution), search tools, and genre features (e.g., graphics, captions, indexes) to locate and integrate information.
- **RL.PP.6.5.** Determine how an author conveys or develops perspective in a text (through the narrator or speaker when appropriate).
- **RI.PP.6.5.** Identify the author's purpose, perspective or potential bias in a text and explain the impact on the reader's interpretation.
- **RL.MF.6.6.** Compare and contrast information or texts to develop a coherent understanding of a theme, topic, or issue when reading a story, drama, or poem to listening to or viewing an audio, video, or live version of the text.
- **RI.MF.6.6.** Integrate information when presented in different media or formats (e.g., visually, quantitatively) to develop a coherent understanding of a topic or issue.
- **RI.AA.6.7.** Trace the development of and evaluate the argument and specific claims in a text, distinguishing claims that are supported by reasons and evidence from claims that are not.
- **RL.CT.6.8.** Compare and contrast literary texts in different forms, by different authors, or from different genres (e.g., stories and poems; historical novels and primary source documents, scientific journals and fantasy stories) in terms of their approaches to similar themes and topics.
- **W.IW.6.2.** Write informative/explanatory texts (including the narration of historical events, scientific procedures/ experiments, or technical processes) to examine a topic and convey ideas, concepts, and information through the selection, organization, and analysis of relevant content.
 - **A.** Introduce a topic and organize ideas, concepts, and information, using text structures (e.g., definition, classification, comparison/contrast, cause/effect, etc.) and text features (e.g., headings, graphics, and multimedia) when useful to aid in comprehension.
 - **B.** Develop the topic with relevant facts, definitions, concrete details, quotations, or other information and examples.
 - **C.** Use appropriate transitions to clarify the relationships among ideas and concepts.
 - **D.** Use precise language and domain-specific vocabulary to inform about or explain the topic.
 - **E.** Acknowledge and attempt a formal/academic style, approach, and form.
 - **F.** Provide a concluding statement or section (e.g., sentence, part of a paragraph, paragraph, or multiple paragraphs) that follows from and supports the information or explanation presented.

21st Century Themes and Skills

8.2 Design

- **8.2.5.ETW.1:** Describe how resources such as material, energy, information, time, tools, people, and capital are used in products or systems.
- **8.2.5.ETW.2:** Describe ways that various technologies are used to reduce improper use of resources.
- **8.2.5.ETW.3:** Explain why human-designed systems, products, and environments need to be constantly monitored, maintained, and improved.
- **8.2.5.ETW.4:** Explain the impact that resources, such as energy and materials used to develop technology, have on the environment.
- **8.2.5.ETW.5:** Identify the impact of a specific technology on the environment and determine what can be done to increase positive effects and to reduce any negative effects, such as climate change.

9.4 Life Literacies and Key Skills

- **9.4.8.CI.3** Examine challenges that may exist in the adoption of new ideas
- **9.4.8.DC.7** Collaborate within a digital community to create a digital artifact using strategies such as crowdsourcing or digital surveys.

- **9.4.8.GCA.1** Model how to navigate cultural differences with sensitivity and respect
- **9.4.8.GCA.2** Demonstrate openness to diverse ideas and perspectives through active discussions to achieve a group goal.
- **9.4.8.IML.1** Critically curate multiple resources to assess the credibility of sources when searching for information.
- **9.4.8.IML.7** Use information from a variety of sources, contexts, disciplines, and cultures for a specific purpose
- **9.4.8.IML.12** Use relevant tools to produce, publish, and deliver information supported with evidence for an authentic audience.
- **9.4.8.IML.13** Identify the impact of the creator on the content, production, and delivery of information
- **9.4.8.TL.3** Select appropriate tools to organize and present information digitally
- **9.4.8.TL.5** Compare the process and effectiveness of synchronous collaboration and asynchronous collaboration.

Targets	Focus Lessons	Resources
Identify and explain the rise of classical civilizations and how they built on earlier societies	Intro to Classical Civilizations: Geography and Origins	- Classroom atlas - Google Earth - BrainPOP: Ancient Civilizations
Compare the political systems of Rome, India, and China	Governments of Rome, Han China, and Maurya/Gupta India	- Primary source excerpts (e.g., Roman Republic, Arthashastra, Han records) - DBQ practice sets
Analyze the impact of Hinduism, Buddhism, Confucianism, and Greek philosophy	Religion and Philosophy in Classical Societies	- Readings from Bhagavad Gita, Confucius' Analects, Buddhist texts - Discovery Ed videos
Describe achievements in science, technology, art, and architecture	Contributions of Greece, Rome, India, and China	- Virtual museum tours (Louvre, British Museum) - Interactive timeline tools - CrashCourse: History of Science
Explain the significance of trade routes and geographic location	Silk Road, Mediterranean Trade, Indian Ocean Trade	- Silk Road simulation game - Map analysis activities - National Geographic “Ancient Trade Routes”
Identify factors that led to the fall of classical civilizations	The Fall of Rome, Gupta, and Han Empires	- Cause-and-effect graphic organizers - Scholarly articles for middle school (e.g., Newsela) - Timeline creator tools
Connect classical legacies to modern governance, culture, and law	Legacies: Democracy, Law, Architecture, Philosophy	- Comparative chart activity (Rome vs. US Constitution)

		- Interactive civics platform (iCivics) - Excerpts from the Justinian Code and US Constitution
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Assessments
Formative Assessment • Class discussions and exit slips • Google Forms quizzes and surveys • Written responses to DBQs and lesson activities • Teacher observations during group work and presentations
Summative Assessment • Unit Assessments: End-of-unit tests and DBQ essays with rubrics • Project & Presentation: Students will create a final project that synthesizes information from multiple civilizations and presents their findings on a chosen topic related to the classical world (e.g., a documentary on the Silk Road or a debate on the impact of Greek philosophy).
Alternate Assessment • Creative digital projects (e.g., an interactive map or timeline) • Collaborative group projects on comparing ancient civilizations • Self-assessments or peer assessments based on project work

Modifications/Accommodations	
Support/Accommodations for Students with IEPs • Follow all IEP modifications • Work in a small group • Solidify and refine concepts through repetition • Allow answers to be given orally or dictated • Use multi-sensory teaching approaches • Utilize assistive technology and materials • Use large print books, Braille, or books on CD (digital text) • Guided notes and/or scaffold outline for written assignments • Introduce key vocabulary before lesson • Work in a small group • Lesson taught again using a differentiated approach • Allow answers to be given orally or dictated • Use visuals / Anchor Charts • Leveled texts according to ability	Support/Accommodations for Students with 504 Plans • Follow all the 504 plan modifications • Text to speech/audio recorded selections • Amplification system as needed • Leveled texts according to ability • Fine motor skill stations embedded in rotation as needed • Modified or constrained spelling word lists • Provide anchor charts with high frequency words and phonemic patterns • Create an enhanced set of introductory activities (e.g. advance organizers, concept maps, concept puzzles)
Support/Accommodations for Multilingual Learners	Support/Accommodations for Gifted Students

● Work toward longer passages as skills in English increase ● Use visuals ● Introduce/highlight key vocabulary before lesson ● Teacher models reading aloud daily ● Provide peer tutoring ● Utilize translation supports including bilingual dictionary, translation device, assistive technology, and peers ● Guided notes and/or scaffold outline for written assignments ● Provide students with English Learner leveled readers ● Support recommended by the grade specific “can do” list outlined by WIDA, including Key Uses Edition and ● Descriptor Name Charts ● Allow extra time to complete assignments or tests ● Guided notes and/or scaffold outline for written assignments	● Provide options, alternatives and choices to differentiate and broaden the curriculum ● Organize and offer flexible small group learning activities ● Provide whole group enrichment explorations ● Teach cognitive and methodological skills ● Use center, stations, or contracts ● Organize integrated problem-solving simulations ● Propose interest-based extension activities ● Expose students to beyond level texts
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Unit 4: Empires Unbound: The Age of Expanding Exchanges and Encounters (500–1450 CE)

Duration:

18 - 20 Days

Unit Overview:

In this unit, students will explore the pivotal period between 500 and 1450 CE, a time when empires were rising across the globe, driving trade, cultural exchange, and religious growth. The interactions between civilizations in Europe, Asia, Africa, and the Americas transformed societies, from the development of feudalism in Europe to the spread of Islam across continents. This era also saw the major influence of the Church and the ongoing conflicts that arose from the Crusades, as well as the economic and agricultural innovations that supported the rise of powerful kingdoms.

Students will investigate how trade routes such as the Silk Road and the Trans-Saharan routes facilitated the movement of goods, people, ideas, and belief systems, leading to the development of new technologies, urbanization, and more complex political systems. The rise of new belief systems like Christianity and Islam had unifying effects, but also sowed the seeds of conflict as they spread across borders. Through the study of these complex interactions, students will gain a deeper understanding of the connections that shaped the medieval world and laid the groundwork for the modern era.

By exploring the expansion of empires and the connections between cultures, students will gain insights into how history has shaped the modern world, both in terms of conflict and cooperation. This unit fosters a deeper appreciation for the historical roots of today’s global interconnectedness.

Enduring Understandings:

- The spread of empires in Europe, Asia, Africa, and the Americas was driven by trade, religion, and centralized political systems.

- The Church played a dominant role in both political and religious life, influencing key events like the Crusades and societal norms.
- Feudalism was a defining social structure in medieval Europe, shaping relationships between lords, vassals, and serfs.
- Conflicts and cooperation between different cultures and belief systems led to both unity and division across the world.

Essential Questions:

- What was feudalism, and how did it influence political and social structures?
- How did the Church influence medieval European society and politics?
- What were the causes and consequences of the Crusades for different groups?
- How did the political and social systems of Europe change during the Middle Ages?
- In what ways did the expansion of trade and the spread of religions shape the development of civilizations?

Student Learning Outcomes:

By the end of this unit, students will be able to:

- Define feudalism and describe its role in medieval Europe.
- Discuss the outcomes of the Crusades from various perspectives.
- Explain the political and social impact of the Church on medieval life.
- Understand the significance of the Magna Carta and its influence on modern legal and political systems.
- Describe the role of trade and technological innovations in shaping the growth of empires.

New Jersey Student Learning Standards (NJSLS)

Social Studies

- **6.2.8.HistoryCC.4.e** Determine the extent to which the Byzantine Empire influenced the Islamic world and western Europe.
- **6.2.8.EconNE.4.a** Compare and contrast the Japanese and European systems of feudalism and the effectiveness of each in promoting social, economic, and political order.
- **6.2.8.GeoHP.4.b** Assess how maritime and overland trade routes impacted urbanization, transportation, communication, and the development of international trade centers (i.e., the African caravan and Silk Road).
- **6.2.8.GeoHE.4.c** Explain how the geographies and climates of Asia, Africa, Europe, and the Americas influenced their economic development and interaction or isolation with other societies.
- **6.2.8.HistoryCC.4.g** Evaluate the importance and enduring legacy of the major achievements of the people living Asia, Africa (Islam), Europe and the Americas over time.
- **6.2.8.GeoSV.4.a** Analyze the immediate and long-term impact on China and Europe of the open exchange between Europe and the Yuan (Mongol) Dynasty.
- **6.2.8.GeoHE.4.a** Explain how geography influenced the development of the political, economic, and cultural centers of each empire as well as the empires' relationships with other parts of the world.
- **6.2.8.GeoGI.4.a** Determine how Africa's physical geography and natural resources presented challenges and opportunities for trade, development, and the spread of religion.
- **6.2.8.CivicsPI.4.a** Analyze the role of religion and other means rulers used to unify and centrally govern expanding territories with diverse populations.

- **6.2.8.HistoryCC.4.d** Analyze the causes and outcomes of the Crusades from different perspectives, including the perspectives of European political and religious leaders, the crusaders, Jews, Muslims, and traders.
- **6.2.8.HistoryCC.4.a** Determine which events led to the rise and eventual decline of European feudalism.
- **6.2.8.HistoryCC.4.b** Explain how and why the interrelationships among improved agricultural production, population growth, urbanization, and commercialization led to the rise of powerful states and kingdoms (i.e., Europe, Asia, Americas).
- **6.2.8.GeoHP.4.a** Explain why the Arabian Peninsula's physical features and location made it the epicenter of Afro-Eurasian trade and fostered the spread of Islam into Africa, Europe, and Asia.
- **6.2.8.HistoryCC.4.f** Analyze the role of religion and economics in shaping each empire's social hierarchy and evaluate the impact these hierarchical structures had on the lives of various groups of people.
- **6.2.8.CivicsDP.4.a** Cite evidence of the influence of medieval English legal and constitutional practices on modern democratic thought and institutions (i.e., the Magna Carta, parliament, the development of habeas corpus, and an independent judiciary).
- **6.2.8.GeoHE.4.b** Use geographic models to determine the impact of environmental modifications made by earlier civilizations on the current day environmental challenges.
- **6.2.8.GeoHP.4.c** Use maps to show how the interaction between the Islamic world and medieval Europe increased trade, enhanced technology innovation and impacted science, thought, and the arts.
- **6.2.8.HistoryCC.4.c** Assess the demographic, economic, and religious impact of the plague on Europe.

Interdisciplinary Standards

English Language Arts:

- **RI.CR.6.1.** Cite textual evidence and make relevant connections to support analysis of what an informational text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text.
- **RI.CI.6.2.** Determine the central idea of an informational text and explain how it is supported by key details; provide a summary of the text distinct from personal opinions or judgments.
- **RI.IT.6.3.** Analyze how a particular text's (e.g., article, brochure, technical manual, procedural text) structure unfolds by using textual evidence to describe how a key individual, event, or idea is introduced, illustrated, and elaborated in a text.
- **RI.TS.6.4.** Use text structures (e.g., cause-effect, problem-solution), search tools, and genre features (e.g., graphics, captions, indexes) to locate and integrate information.
- **RL.PP.6.5.** Determine how an author conveys or develops perspective in a text (through the narrator or speaker when appropriate).
- **RI.PP.6.5.** Identify the author's purpose, perspective or potential bias in a text and explain the impact on the reader's interpretation.
- **RL.MF.6.6.** Compare and contrast information or texts to develop a coherent understanding of a theme, topic, or issue when reading a story, drama, or poem to listening to or viewing an audio, video, or live version of the text.
- **RI.MF.6.6.** Integrate information when presented in different media or formats (e.g., visually, quantitatively) to develop a coherent understanding of a topic or issue.
- **RI.AA.6.7.** Trace the development of and evaluate the argument and specific claims in a text, distinguishing claims that are supported by reasons and evidence from claims that are not.
- **RL.CT.6.8.** Compare and contrast literary texts in different forms, by different authors, or from different genres (e.g., stories and poems; historical novels and primary source documents, scientific journals and fantasy stories) in terms of their approaches to similar themes and topics.
- **W.IW.6.2.** Write informative/explanatory texts (including the narration of historical events, scientific procedures/ experiments, or technical processes) to examine a topic and convey ideas, concepts, and information through the selection, organization, and analysis of relevant content.
 - **A.** Introduce a topic and organize ideas, concepts, and information, using text structures (e.g., definition, classification, comparison/contrast, cause/effect, etc.) and text features (e.g., headings, graphics, and multimedia) when useful to aid in comprehension.

- **B.** Develop the topic with relevant facts, definitions, concrete details, quotations, or other information and examples.
- **C.** Use appropriate transitions to clarify the relationships among ideas and concepts.
- **D.** Use precise language and domain-specific vocabulary to inform about or explain the topic.
- **E.** Acknowledge and attempt a formal/academic style, approach, and form.
- **F.** Provide a concluding statement or section (e.g., sentence, part of a paragraph, paragraph, or multiple paragraphs) that follows from and supports the information or explanation presented.

21st Century Themes and Skills

8.2 Computer Science and Design Thinking

- **8.2.5.ETW.1:** Describe how resources such as material, energy, information, time, tools, people, and capital are used in products or systems.
- **8.2.5.ETW.2:** Describe ways that various technologies are used to reduce improper use of resources.
- **8.2.5.ETW.3:** Explain why human-designed systems, products, and environments need to be constantly monitored, maintained, and improved.
- **8.2.5.ETW.4:** Explain the impact that resources, such as energy and materials used to develop technology, have on the environment.
- **8.2.5.ETW.5:** Identify the impact of a specific technology on the environment and determine what can be done to increase positive effects and to reduce any negative effects, such as climate change.

8.2 Design

- **8.2.5.ETW.1:** Describe how resources such as material, energy, information, time, tools, people, and capital are used in products or systems.
- **8.2.5.ETW.2:** Describe ways that various technologies are used to reduce improper use of resources.
- **8.2.5.ETW.3:** Explain why human-designed systems, products, and environments need to be constantly monitored, maintained, and improved.
- **8.2.5.ETW.4:** Explain the impact that resources, such as energy and materials used to develop technology, have on the environment.
- **8.2.5.ETW.5:** Identify the impact of a specific technology on the environment and determine what can be done to increase positive effects and to reduce any negative effects, such as climate change.

9.4 Life Literacies and Key Skills

- **9.4.8.CI.3** Examine challenges that may exist in the adoption of new ideas
- **9.4.8.DC.7** Collaborate within a digital community to create a digital artifact using strategies such as crowdsourcing or digital surveys.
- **9.4.8.GCA.1** Model how to navigate cultural differences with sensitivity and respect
- **9.4.8.GCA.2** Demonstrate openness to diverse ideas and perspectives through active discussions to achieve a group goal.
- **9.4.8.IML.1** Critically curate multiple resources to assess the credibility of sources when searching for information.
- **9.4.8.IML.7** Use information from a variety of sources, contexts, disciplines, and cultures for a specific purpose
- **9.4.8.IML.12** Use relevant tools to produce, publish, and deliver information supported with evidence for an authentic audience.
- **9.4.8.IML.13** Identify the impact of the creator on the content, production, and delivery of information
- **9.4.8.TL.3** Select appropriate tools to organize and present information digitally
- **9.4.8.TL.5** Compare the process and effectiveness of synchronous collaboration and asynchronous collaboration.

Targets	Focus Lessons	Resources
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Define feudalism and describe its role in medieval Europe.	- Introduction to feudalism in Europe and Japan. - Comparison of European and Japanese feudal systems.	- Textbook chapters on feudalism. - Maps of Europe and Japan showing feudal structures.
Discuss the outcomes of the Crusades from various perspectives.	- The causes of the Crusades and the key players involved. - The impact of the Crusades on Europe, the Middle East, and beyond.	- Documentaries on the Crusades. - Primary source readings: letters from the Crusaders, reports from Muslim leaders.
Explain the political and social impact of the Church on medieval life.	- The role of the Church in European politics. - The relationship between the Church, kings, and the population.	- Readings about the rise of the Church and its influence on monarchs. - Analysis of papal decrees, the Magna Carta, and the influence of the Pope.
Understand the significance of the Magna Carta and its influence on modern legal and political systems.	- Magna Carta as a foundation of constitutional law. - The Magna Carta's effect on English kings and the future of law.	- Copy of the Magna Carta. - Lesson on the Bill of Rights and its connection to the Magna Carta.
Describe the role of trade and technological innovations in shaping the growth of empires.	- The Silk Road and its role in trade between Europe, Asia, and Africa. - Technological innovations like gunpowder, the printing press, and navigational tools.	- Interactive maps of major trade routes. - Resources on the technological advances in the medieval world.

Assessments

Formative Assessment

- Exit slips
- Group discussions and observations
- Digital responses to DBQs and timeline activities

Summative Assessment

- Unit assessment via HMH Ancient Civilizations Online Unit Assessment
- Project-based presentations on the Crusades and Medieval Society

Alternative:

- Cumulative unit test covering the rise of empires, feudalism, the Crusades, and the role of religion.
- Use of rubrics for evaluating group projects and presentations on medieval careers, trade, and the Magna Carta.
- **Feudalism Comparison Project:** Students will research and create a Venn diagram comparing feudalism in Europe and Japan, highlighting social, political, and economic structures.

- **Crusades Debate:** A debate on the causes, outcomes, and perspectives of the Crusades, where students will take on the roles of different groups involved (Crusaders, Muslim leaders, European peasants, etc.).
- **Magna Carta Analysis:** Students will write a short essay analyzing the significance of the Magna Carta and its impact on the development of democratic principles.
- **Map Interpretation:** A quiz on trade routes and their impact on medieval empires, including the Silk Road, Trans-Saharan routes, and maritime trade routes.
- **Religion and Empire Presentation:** Students will create a presentation or poster illustrating how religion influenced the expansion of empires, with a focus on Christianity, Islam, and their societal impacts.
- **Reflection Journal:** After completing the unit, students will write a reflection on how the expansion of trade, the spread of religion, and technological advancements shaped the medieval world and its connection to modern society.

Modifications/Accommodations

Support/Accommodations for Students with IEPs

- Follow all IEP modifications
- Work in a small group
- Solidify and refine concepts through repetition
- Allow answers to be given orally or dictated
- Use multi-sensory teaching approaches
- Utilize assistive technology and materials
- Use large print books, Braille, or books on CD (digital text)
- Guided notes and/or scaffold outline for written assignments
- Introduce key vocabulary before lesson
- Work in a small group
- Lesson taught again using a differentiated approach
- Allow answers to be given orally or dictated
- Use visuals / Anchor Charts
- Leveled texts according to ability

Support/Accommodations for Students with 504 Plans

- Follow all the 504 plan modifications
- Text to speech/audio recorded selections
- Amplification system as needed
- Leveled texts according to ability
- Fine motor skill stations embedded in rotation as needed
- Modified or constrained spelling word lists
- Provide anchor charts with high frequency words and phonemic patterns
- Create an enhanced set of introductory activities (e.g. advance organizers, concept maps, concept puzzles)

Support/Accommodations for Multilingual Learners

- Work toward longer passages as skills in English increase
- Use visuals
- Introduce/highlight key vocabulary before lesson
- Teacher models reading aloud daily
- Provide peer tutoring
- Utilize translation supports including bilingual dictionary, translation device, assistive technology, and peers
- Guided notes and/or scaffold outline for written assignments
- Provide students with English Learner leveled readers

Support/Accommodations for Gifted Students

- Provide options, alternatives and choices to differentiate and broaden the curriculum
- Organize and offer flexible small group learning activities
- Provide whole group enrichment explorations
- Teach cognitive and methodological skills
- Use center, stations, or contracts
- Organize integrated problem-solving simulations
- Propose interest-based extension activities
- Expose students to beyond level texts

- Support recommended by the grade specific “can do” list outlined by WIDA, including Key Uses Edition and
- Descriptor Name Charts
- Allow extra time to complete assignments or tests
- Guided notes and/or scaffold outline for written assignments

Unit 5: The Power of Prejudice: Understanding the Holocaust and Its Impact

Duration:

5 - 7 Days

Unit Overview:

In this unit, students will examine the pervasive nature of prejudice, discrimination, and intolerance, with a focus on the Holocaust. By exploring the history and consequences of such actions, students will develop a deeper understanding of the human cost of prejudice and discrimination in the past, present, and future. They will study key events, individuals, and texts related to the Holocaust, such as personal diaries, memoirs, and photographs, while exploring terms like racism, antisemitism, bigotry, and stereotyping. This unit will foster empathy, critical thinking, and personal reflection, as students explore how values and beliefs shape society and history.

This unit will engage students in learning not only about the Holocaust but also about the broader issues of prejudice, discrimination, and human rights. The lessons are designed to develop empathy, encourage self-reflection, and help students understand the relevance of these issues today.

Enduring Understandings:

- Prejudice and discrimination have deep roots in human history and continue to affect individuals and societies.
- The Holocaust serves as a devastating example of how hatred, racism, and intolerance can manifest when allowed to grow unchecked.
- Understanding the Holocaust is not just about studying the past but about recognizing the potential consequences of prejudice and discrimination in today's world.

Essential Questions:

- How do individuals develop values and beliefs, and how do these influence behavior?
- What happens when belief systems of societies and individuals come into conflict?
- How do values, beliefs, and prejudices shape the actions of individuals and societies?
- What is the impact of prejudice, discrimination, and bigotry on individuals and groups throughout history?
- Why is it important to study multicultural texts, and how do they help us understand prejudice and discrimination?
- How do historical events, like the Holocaust, shape our views on human rights and dignity today?

Student Learning Outcomes:

By the end of this unit, students will be able to:

- Define key terms such as prejudice, discrimination, racism, antisemitism, and stereotyping, and analyze how these contribute to societal problems.
- Understand the impact of prejudice and discrimination through the study of the Holocaust and other historical events.
- Identify how personal values and beliefs influence behaviors and choices, both individually and within a societal context.
- Reflect on the role of empathy, understanding, and tolerance in preventing harmful behaviors and promoting respect for human dignity.
- Use various resources (primary and secondary sources, memoirs, photographs) to better understand the human cost of discrimination and intolerance.

New Jersey Student Learning Standards (NJSLS)

Social Studies

- **6.1.5.CivicsCM.1:** Use evidence from multiple sources to describe behaviors that contribute to the well-being of communities.
- **6.1.5.CivicsHR.3:** Describe how national and international leaders promote human rights and aid individuals and nations in need.
- **6.1.5.CivicsDP.2:** Compare and contrast responses to violations of fundamental rights.

Interdisciplinary Standards

English Language Arts:

- **RH.6-8.1:** Cite specific textual evidence to support analysis of primary and secondary sources.
- **RH.6-8.2:** Determine the central ideas or information of a primary or secondary source; provide an accurate summary of the source.
- **RH.6-8.5:** Describe how a text presents information.
- **RH.6-8.6:** Identify aspects of a text that reveal an author's point of view or purpose.

21st Century Themes and Skills

Career Readiness:

- **9.4.5.GCA.1:** Analyze how culture shapes individual and community perspectives.

Comprehensive Health & Physical Education:

- **2.1.5.SSH.3:** Demonstrate ways to promote dignity and respect for all people.
- **2.1.5.SSH.7:** Define harassment and bullying and provide examples of harmful behaviors.

Targets

Focus Lessons

Resources

Define key terms such as prejudice, discrimination, racism, antisemitism, and stereotyping.	- Introduce key concepts of prejudice, racism, antisemitism, and stereotyping. - Discuss how these concepts have appeared throughout history and impact societies today.	- Glossary of key terms related to prejudice and discrimination. - Multimedia presentations on prejudice, including news stories and historical examples.
Understand the impact of prejudice and discrimination through the study of the Holocaust.	- Overview of the Holocaust and its historical context. - Analyze the human cost of discrimination and prejudice during the Holocaust.	- Documentary films (e.g., <i>The Holocaust</i> or <i>Shoah</i>) and survivor testimonies. - Memoirs and diaries from Holocaust survivors (e.g., <i>Night</i> by Elie Wiesel).
Identify how personal values and beliefs influence behaviors and choices, both individually and in society.	- Exploration of how values, beliefs, and behaviors shape actions and decisions. - The role of empathy, understanding, and tolerance in preventing discrimination.	- Case studies of individuals who resisted or supported prejudice. - Class discussions and activities about personal experiences and values.
Reflect on the role of empathy, understanding, and tolerance in preventing harmful behaviors.	- The importance of empathy and tolerance in creating inclusive communities. - Analyzing the role of empathy in combating bigotry and prejudice.	- Short stories and literature that demonstrate empathy and tolerance, such as <i>The Diary of Anne Frank</i>. - Interactive activities that promote empathy (e.g., role-playing, perspective-taking).
Use various resources (primary and secondary sources, memoirs, photographs) to better understand the human cost of discrimination and intolerance.	- Analysis of primary and secondary sources about the Holocaust, including photographs and survivor accounts. - Examine the impact of Holocaust education on current human rights issues.	- Primary source documents (e.g., photographs from Holocaust archives, survivor testimonies). - Websites dedicated to Holocaust education (e.g., United States Holocaust Memorial Museum).

Assessments

Formative Assessment

- Written and digital responses to readings and activities
- Group discussions and reflections
- Exit slips and Google Forms to check for understanding

Summative Assessment

- Holocaust research project and presentation, with a rubric for grading

- Individual reflective essays on the personal impact of the unit

Alternative Assessment:

- Teacher observations during discussions and activities
- Quizzes to test understanding of key terms and concepts
- **Vocabulary Quiz:** Students will define key terms (prejudice, discrimination, racism, antisemitism, stereotyping) and give real-world examples.
- **Holocaust Research Project:** Students will choose a topic related to the Holocaust (e.g., concentration camps, resistance movements, or key figures) and create a presentation using primary sources.
- **Empathy Reflection Journal:** After learning about Holocaust survivors and other case studies, students will write a journal entry reflecting on how empathy could have prevented harmful behaviors.
- **Group Debate:** Students will engage in a structured debate on the importance of tolerance and understanding in preventing prejudice, citing historical examples such as the Holocaust.
- **Diary Analysis:** Students will read a selected diary or memoir excerpt (e.g., *The Diary of Anne Frank*) and answer questions about the author's experience and the role of prejudice in shaping their life.
- **Human Rights Poster:** Students will design a poster promoting human rights and tolerance, highlighting the lessons learned from studying the Holocaust and other instances of discrimination.
- **Class Discussion & Self-Reflection:** Students will participate in a class discussion on how the lessons of the Holocaust can be applied today and write a personal reflection on their own values regarding tolerance and respect.

Modifications/Accommodations

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