

Reading Public Schools

Instilling a joy of learning and inspiring the innovative leaders of tomorrow



Curriculum Guide Social Studies

Grade 6

Priority Areas

Grades 6 : World Geography and Ancient Civilizations I

Sixth grade students examine how the perspectives of political science, economics, geography, history, and archaeology apply to the study of regions and countries. They study the development of prehistoric societies and then focus on area studies of Western Asia, the Middle East, North Africa, Europe, which includes a study of government in Greece and Rome, and Central America, the Caribbean Islands, and South America.

Practice Standards

- Demonstrate civic knowledge, skills, and dispositions.
- Develop focused questions or problem statements and conduct inquiries.
- Organize information and data from multiple primary and secondary sources.
- Analyze the purpose and point of view of each source; distinguish opinion from fact.
- Evaluate the credibility, accuracy, and relevance of each source.
- Argue or explain conclusions, using valid reasoning and evidence.

Literacy Standards

- Cite specific textual evidence to support analysis of primary and secondary sources, quoting or paraphrasing as appropriate
- Identify aspects of a text that reveal an author's point of view or purpose (e.g., loaded language, inclusion or avoidance of particular facts).
- Distinguish among fact, opinion, and reasoned judgement in a text.
- Read and comprehend history/social studies texts exhibiting complexity appropriate for

Grade 6 History and Social Science Topics

- Studying complex societies past and present
- Human origins, the Neolithic and Paleolithic Eras
- The Middle East and North Africa
- Sub-Saharan Africa



Units of Study	Essential Questions	Key Activities
Studying complex societies, past and present	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What do the social sciences contribute to our understanding of the world? 	
Human origins, the Neolithic and Paleolithic Eras	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How did life on Earth begin and why did humans form complex societies? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Analysis of primary source documents, scholarly sources, & connections between history and current events
Physical and political geography of each region listed below: Western Asia, the Middle East and North Africa: Mesopotamia, c. 3500–1200 BCE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What are the best explanations for why writing developed in Mesopotamia? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop active reading strategies such as annotating, sourcing, contextualizing, corroborating, and close reading
Ancient Egypt, c. 3000–1200 BCE [6.T3c]	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Supporting Question: How did Ancient Egypt’s rigid class structure affect its social and cultural development? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Variety of writing assignments
Ancient Phoenicia, c. 1000–300 BCE [<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Why were traders and merchants important in ancient societies? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Class debates and seminar style discussions
Ancient Israel, Palestine, c. 2000 BCE–70 CE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What were the consequences of the unification of tribes for ancient Israel? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tests & quizzes
Interactions among ancient societies in Western Asia, North Africa, and the Middle East	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How did ideas spread across ancient societies in this region? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conduct short as well as more sustained research projects
Major ancient societies in Central America and South America, c. 1400 BCE–1600 CE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What are the most important contributions of ancient societies in the Americas to the modern world? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Engage with and create a variety of media such as political cartoons, photographs, documentary films, song lyrics
Ancient and Classical Greece, c. 1200–300 BCE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How does the democracy of Athens compare to the democracies of today? 	
Ancient and Classical Rome, the Roman Republic, and the Roman Empire, c. 500 BCE–500 CE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What was the influence and legacy of the Roman Empire on the conquered peoples in the territory it controlled? 	

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Curriculum Guide Overview

Curriculum Guide

Curriculum guides are public documents aligned with the Massachusetts Department of Education Curriculum Frameworks. They focus on the set of standards that students will learn within certain disciplines at appropriate grade levels. Each area of the curriculum is divided into general strands (broad categories) under which the standards fall. When we discuss “standards-based education” we mean that students are measured against their proficiency and growth towards meeting these standards. Curriculum Guides are intended for teachers, parents, and the wider school community as an overview document of the course of study for the year.

Curriculum Map

Curriculum maps are internal documents utilized as planning tools for teachers. Curriculum maps keep a focus on the end-of-year standards and chart a course for the teaching and learning over the year. They are typically organized in a grade-level overview organized by month or marking period. Curriculum maps typically include; standards and expectations for the grade/content, essential skills/concepts, methods of assessment, and major content resources. Maps are never “done” as ongoing work of educators include revisions, additions, and revisits to the maps. They provide an overview for the year while also allowing educators to see a vertical picture of how the content develops as students progress through each grade.

Practice Standards

Students practice the skills used by historians, political scientists, economists, geographers, and ordinary citizens. Students practice research and inquiry skills and processes necessary for a thorough curriculum and to better prepare for citizenship.

Priority Areas

Priority areas are defined by the state of Massachusetts as the most critical areas in each grade level on which instructional time should focus.

Literacy Standards

When learning civics, geography, history, and economics, students will practice strong literacy skills. The Literacy Standards for History and Social Science are directly linked to the Massachusetts English Language Arts and Literacy Curriculum Framework.

Essential Questions

Essential questions are questions that are not answerable with an easy answer or a simple instruction. The purpose of essential questions is to provide opportunities for inquiry into the learning and act as an umbrella to anchor the unit/lesson.

Key Activities

Key Activities are not final. The activities are examples of what typically may occur throughout the curriculum as students learn and experience the content.