



## **Social Studies Course Descriptions K-8<sup>th</sup> Grade**

### **Kindergarten - Myself and Others**

The kindergarten social studies curriculum is designed to help students gain an increased awareness of themselves and the world around them. Using the framework of “Myself and Others,” students learn about the social studies disciplines of history, geography, civics and government, and economics. Using events from their own lives they begin to explore and learn the basic historical concept of time and to distinguish past, present, and future. They develop the geographic concept of space by learning positional words and recognizing that maps and globes represent places in the world. To lay the foundation for the study of civics and government, students identify the flag as an important symbol of the United States. They also act as classroom citizens by following appropriate rules for individual and group activities and decision making. An awareness of economics is developed as students connect familiar economic wants to how those wants are met. Throughout the year students are introduced to simple core values of democracy as they learn to respond appropriately to classroom issues and individual responses.

### **1<sup>st</sup> Grade-Families and Schools**

The first grade social studies curriculum uses the context of “Families and Schools” to guide students in the study of history, geography, civics and government, and economics. Using family histories, students develop historical thinking skills as they explore how life today (present) is like or different from family life in the past. As they use ideas of time and chronology, students also learn about the people and events that are celebrated as part of the national holidays of the United States. Students address geographic concepts and develop spatial skills through map construction and visual representations. In addition, students begin to develop an understanding of how humans interact with their environments and some of the consequences of those interactions. In civics and government, school is used as a context for learning about why people create rules, what is authority in a school setting, and the characteristics of citizenship. Economic principles are explored using the context of family. Students investigate ways in which families consume goods and services, how people make a living, and how scarcity and choice affect economic decisions. Students continue to develop an understanding of public issues, the importance of citizen action, and begin to communicate their positions on public issues.

### **2<sup>nd</sup> Grade-The Local Community**

The second grade social studies curriculum addresses concepts in geography, history, government, and economy through the lens of the local community. Students examine what is a community, how citizens live and work together in community, how communities change over time, and the role of citizens in a community. Using historical thinking, students create timelines of key events from their community’s past, explore changes over time, and investigate how descriptions of common events can differ. Students draw upon prior knowledge of spatial awareness, physical and human systems, and human-environment interaction from earlier grades to create more complex understandings and apply these concepts to the local community. They begin to understand how people, goods, and services move within the community. Students are also introduced to local government and its functions. By exploring the role local businesses in the community, students learn how people can not produce everything they want and depend on trade to meet those wants. Through an examination of local public issues, students practice public discourse and decision making around community issues.

### **3<sup>rd</sup> Grade-Michigan Studies**

The third grade social studies curriculum introduces the history, geography, government, and economy of Michigan. Students learn about people and events from the past that have influenced the state in which

they live. They study the geography of Michigan including the physical and cultural characteristics of different areas of the state. Using the context of their state, students explore human-environment interactions and their consequences. Using a geographic lens, students also examine the movement of people, products, and ideas across the state, and investigate how Michigan can be divided into distinct regions. Economic concepts are applied to the context of Michigan as students explore how Michiganders support themselves through the production, consumption, and distribution of goods and services. By studying economic ties between Michigan and other places, students discover how their state is an interdependent part of both the national and global economies. The purposes, structure, and functions of state government are introduced. Students explore the relationship between rights and responsibilities of citizens. They examine current issues facing Michigan residents and practice making and expressing informed decisions as citizens. Throughout the year, students locate, analyze, and present data pertaining to the state of Michigan.

#### **4<sup>th</sup> Grade-United States Studies**

The fourth grade social studies curriculum introduces students to geographic, economic, governmental concepts through the lens of the United States. They study the physical geography of the United States as well as the cultural characteristics of regions of the country. Students analyze human systems in the United States by exploring the interaction between the people and their natural environments, the movement of people, products, and ideas, and the distinguishing features of various regions within the country. By focusing on the characteristics of the U.S. economy, students learn fundamental economic concepts and apply these to their own lives. They study economic ties between the United States and other places, and discover how their country is an interdependent part of the global economy. Students are introduced to the purposes, structure, and function of our federal government. They also examine the relationship between the rights and responsibilities of citizens in a democratic republic. Students examine current issues facing the United States and practice making and expressing informed decisions as citizens.

#### **5<sup>th</sup> Grade-Early American History**

The fifth grade social studies curriculum is a chronological study of early American history through the adoption of the United States' Bill of Rights. By applying the tools of historians, including the use of primary and secondary sources, students explore how significant events shaped the nation. They begin with an introduction to the United States Constitution which, as the first unit of study, retrospectively frames their study of the early history of the nation. As they study the meeting of "Three Worlds" they explore interactions among American Indians, Africans, and Europeans in North America. Students also examine how these interactions affected colonization and settlement. They explore how geography of North America influenced daily life and economic activities as the three distinct English colonial regions developed. Throughout the course, students learn how ideas about government, colonial experiences with self-government, and interactions with Great Britain influenced the decision to declare independence. Within the historical study emphasis is placed on ideas about government as reflected in the Declaration of Independence, Articles of Confederation, the U.S. Constitution, and the Bill of Rights. Students examine how and why the Founders gave and limited the power of government through the principles of separation of powers, checks and balances, federalism, protection of individual rights, popular sovereignty, and the rule of law (core democratic values). Throughout the course students develop capacity for responsible citizenship as they apply the values and principles of constitutional democracy in the United States to contemporary issues facing the nation.

#### **6<sup>th</sup> Grade-Sixth Grade Social Studies**

The sixth grade social studies curriculum introduces students to cultures of the Western World. Emphasis is placed on the contemporary geography of North America, South America, and Europe and Russia, with a look at Oceania at the end of the year. Students study the geography of each of these world regions; explore cultural and natural features that characterize each region; trace the movement of people, ideas, and products within the regions; and discover ways that each can be divided into sub-regions. Historical background is provided to enable students to understand how these regions developed from the past to

the present. Differences in governments and economies are examined. The economy of each region and its role in the global economy is explored. Special attention is paid to economic ties with the United States. Using a variety of media, students compile, analyze, and present geographic and economic data pertaining to the regions. Throughout the course, students study public issues of global significance in the Western World. Through analysis, discussion, and writing, students consider what actions, if any, they and their country should pursue to promote the well-being of people who live in these regions.

### **7<sup>th</sup> Grade-Eastern Civilization**

Students begin the year with an introduction to Social Studies concepts with an emphasis on map skills, followed by the study of the beginning of Human society. Next, students will study Early Civilizations and the emergence of Pastoral Societies, followed by Classical Traditions and Major Empires. Students will also study the major world religions throughout the course and the expansion of hemispheric interactions through 1500 CE. Students will interpret events in World history by using technology, completing writing assignments, reading expository texts, discussing cause and effect, and interpreting timelines, maps, charts, tables, and graphs.

### **8<sup>th</sup> Grade-U.S. History**

Students will learn about events in American history that took place between the mid-1700s and the late-1800s. Students will study the American Revolution, the United States Constitution and the Bill of Rights, challenges to the new nation, the Industrial Revolution, westward expansion, the antebellum reform era, the Civil War, and Reconstruction. Students will interpret events in U.S. history by using technology, completing writing assignments, reading expository text, analyzing cause and effect, and constructing and/or interpreting timelines, maps, charts, tables, and graphs.