

Social Sciences Grade 6

(course currently under revision by MSDE)

The HCPS Office of Social Sciences will build empowered and informed citizens who think critically, advocate locally, impact globally, and innovate by examining the lessons of the past and applying them to today.

Course Overview

The Social Studies Curriculum for Sixth Grade will focus on building students' capacity as geographers in a global society. Students will study global issues in Europe, the Middle East, Americas, Japan, and Africa through the lens of physical and human geography, including culture, social institutions, economic and political systems, conflict resolution, and globalization. Students will engage historical and inquiry-based thinking, discussion, and critical thinking as the foundation for all learning.

Physical Geography

This unit introduces students to the study of geography and the tools that are most commonly used to study places and people on Earth. Students will gain an understanding of how to use each of these tools (maps, globes, and atlases) and will learn what makes each tool different from the others. Unit one will introduce students to the concept of map distortion and students will analyze why distortion creates inaccuracies in maps. Students will learn about the different types of maps and what type(s) of data can be studied from these different types of maps. To conclude the unit, students will practice analyzing and interpreting data from a variety of different maps to study and solve real-world problems.

Human Geography

Unit two builds upon the knowledge and skills learned during unit one to explore the topic of human settlement and migration. Students will apply their map interpretation skills to learn about the places that people settle and why they have chosen to settle in these locations. Students will gain an understanding of how the features of Earth impact humans and human settlement. Unit two will also introduce students to the factors that contribute to past and current migration patterns as well as examples of where people settle (both past and present). The unit will conclude with an examination of the history of settlement and the human made features that have been constructed as a result of human settlement patterns. Students will explore this topic by examining population density maps and they will learn about the Conowingo Dam as a local example of a human made feature.

Culture

Unit three focuses on the topic of culture and the elements/traits that work together to contribute to a person's culture. Throughout the unit students will examine cultures from various regions of the world to learn and explore the elements that make up each region's unique culture. Students will be introduced to the concepts of cultural diffusion and cultural exchange and they will explore ways that both concepts have and continue to contribute to cultural diversity in world religions. During this unit, students will identify examples of cultural change and what pieces of technology have contributed to these changes. The unit concludes with a focus on the difference between acculturation and assimilation and how these impact cultural diversity in countries like the United States.

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Political Systems

Unit four focuses on the topic of government and the impact it has on the lives of citizens. The unit opens with an exploration of the difference between rules and laws as well as what it means to be a sovereign nation. Students will learn the main purposes of government (maintain order, national security, economic decisions, and public services) and identify jobs/services that governments around the world provide to their citizens. Students will apply their knowledge of these purposes when learning about the different types of governments found around the world in the second half of the unit. Students will explore the characteristics of constitutional monarchy, absolute monarchy, dictatorship, and democracy. During this exploration students will be presented with countries (past and present) that have or currently use each of these types of government. The unit will conclude with a focus on ways that a government can permit, prohibit, and promote different ways of life within their country. Students will explore the concepts of civil liberties, political rights, and human rights as they research access to rights and freedoms in world countries. Finally, students will examine methods of protest that citizens can use to attempt to influence their government.

Economic Systems

Unit five expands on the knowledge that students gained during unit four and introduces the concept of economics. Students will explore the economic way of thinking and learn basic economic concepts including the difference between wants/needs, goods/services, and the types of resources. During this unit students will examine the saying "there is no such thing as a free lunch" and they will apply it to real world situations and examples. After developing an understanding of these basic economic concepts students will learn about the three basic economic questions and how they impact producers and consumers. Students will research the economic systems of capitalism, communism, socialism, market, command, traditional, and mixed. Students will explore past and current examples of where in the world these economic systems can be found and what unique characteristics each economic system has. The unit will conclude with activities focusing on the topic of economic interdependence. Students will identify factors that contribute to the interconnectedness of world countries and world regions and they will explore the economic difference between developed and developing countries.

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Social Institutions

Unit six focuses on the five social institutions (PREEF) and how they impact the lives of people around the world. Specifically, students will explore the social institution of religion and how it is practiced in various world regions. Students will develop an understanding of the purposes of religion and differentiate between monotheistic and polytheistic religions. To gain a better understanding of the religious social institution students will research the characteristics of nine major world religions: Judaism, Islam, Christianity, Hinduism, Buddhism, Sikhism, Shintoism, Taoism, and Confucianism. Students will compare and contrast the characteristics of these religions in order to identify similarities and differences between them. The unit concludes with an examination of why it is important to understand and respect the customs and traditions of people and cultures from around the world.

Conflict & Cooperation

Unit seven focuses on the topic of conflict and conflict resolution. Students will begin the unit by examining the concepts of conflict and consequences. Using this knowledge, students will differentiate between the four levels (individual, local, national, international) and three types (social, political, economic) of conflict. Students will use their knowledge of the types and levels of conflict to examine current events associated with conflict. Once students have a solid understanding of conflict they will begin to learn about the methods of conflict resolution. Students will explore past and current world conflict to determine which method of conflict resolution is most applicable. The unit concludes with a look at the forces of cooperation and how these forces help to unite people from countries around the world.

Globalization

Unit eight focuses on the topic of globalization and the world events that contribute to globalization. During this unit students will explore the connection between globalization, economic interdependence, and developed/developing countries. Students will be able to identify and explain the various causes of globalization and their impact on regions around the world. As they develop an understanding of globalization students will identify world problems and how they help to encourage globalization. Students will develop an opinion on whether or not they feel globalization is positive, negative, or both. The unit concludes with an examination of citizenship and what qualities are found in positive world citizens.

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