

GRADES 5-6

Overview

Students in the fifth and sixth grades are interested in the ways different groups of people have developed and in the cultures represented in American society. These students begin to examine and question the nature of culture and its influence on human belief systems. While they are not yet skilled at abstract reasoning, fifth and sixth graders are beginning to formulate more focused questions about the emerging American society. This curiosity can be channeled to help students compare how different groups have addressed human needs and concerns and how they have interacted over the course of history in the United States. Fifth and sixth graders are interested in human behavior and historical change and their effects on the environment.

Effective instruction capitalizes upon these natural propensities to help students build on previous understandings of rights and responsibilities and apply them in more complex contexts as they expand their knowledge of economic concepts, patterns of historical change and continuity, and the uses of land. Fifth- and sixth-grade content standards require students to examine and explain the interactions between states and nations and their cultural complexities. These learners are able to think about themselves as persons in civic roles as they grow in the recognition of their rights and responsibilities as citizens.

The main focus of social studies in these grades is a study of the chronological development of the United States through a two-year sequence, as recommended by the National Council for the Social Studies. Through an integrated approach that includes economic, geographic, historic, political, social, and cultural perspectives, these courses emphasize the roles various groups played in the development of American society. The key concepts of chronology, change, conflict, and complexity are addressed, showing connections among the strands of economics, geography, history, and political science.

The effective teacher utilizes a variety of instructional strategies and assessment tools to address various learning styles. Rather than providing all the answers, teachers help students to reason through questions and issues and encourage students to understand and evaluate their own opinions as well as those of others. A strong need for a sense of belonging indicates that students in these two grades benefit from cooperative learning that enables them to develop a deeper sense of identity and to share responsibility with others.

FIFTH GRADE

United States Studies: Beginnings to 1877

Fifth-grade content standards focus on the United States from the prehistoric period to 1877. The emphasis is on the geography and history of the United States from the earliest times through the formation and growth of a nation to the latter part of the nineteenth century. Special emphasis is placed on the study of the founding documents and the development of the American republic. Students also become familiar with major events in the periods of the American Revolution, the Westward Expansion, and the Civil War.

The emotional and social development of students increases in Grade 5. They become more aware of their immediate surroundings as well as their expanded environment. They benefit from and enjoy discussions involving the thoughts, viewpoints, and opinions of others. As students begin to explore multiple ideas and thoughts, they also become more respectful of other viewpoints and opinions.

Fifth-grade students benefit from a positive learning environment that challenges and encourages their efforts and progress. This includes hands-on activities, projects, and cooperative group assignments. They learn from map and globe activities, brainstorming sessions, inquiry-based instruction, student-generated questions followed by research, cooperative learning groups, and art projects as well as the more traditional teaching methods.

FIFTH GRADE

United States Studies: Beginnings to 1877


Students will:

E	G	H	PS
	✓	✓	

1. Locate physical features that impacted the exploration and settlement of the Americas.

Examples: ocean currents, prevailing winds, large forests, major rivers, significant mountain ranges

- Locating states, capitals, and important geographic features east of the Mississippi River
- Identifying major ports in the United States

Examples: Mobile, Boston, New York, New Orleans, Savannah 

E	G	H	PS
	✓	✓	

2. Identify causes and effects of prehistoric migration and settlement in North America.

E	G	H	PS
✓	✓	✓	✓

3. Compare major Native American cultures in respect to geographic region, natural resources, government, economy, and religion.

Examples: Southeast, Northeast, Southwest, Pacific Northwest, Plains

- Locating Native American groups by geographic region

E	G	H	PS
✓	✓	✓	✓

4. Explain effects of European exploration during the Age of Discovery upon European society and Native Americans, including the economic and cultural impact.

- Identifying significant early European patrons and explorers and early settlements

Examples: patrons—King Ferdinand and Queen Isabella, Prince Henry the Navigator;

explorers—Ferdinand Magellan, Christopher Columbus, Hernán Cortés, Francisco Vázquez de Coronado, Juan Ponce de León, Hernando de Soto, Francisco Pizarro;

early settlements—Roanoke (the Lost Colony), Jamestown, Plymouth

- Locating the countries of origin of early European patrons and explorers including Prince Henry the Navigator, Ferdinand Magellan, Christopher Columbus, Hernán Cortés, Juan Ponce de León, Hernando de Soto, and Francisco Pizarro

E	G	H	PS
✓	✓	✓	✓

5. Describe the early colonization of North America and reasons for settlement in the Northern, Middle, and Southern colonies.

Examples: colonization of Pennsylvania and Rhode Island for religious freedom, establishment of Georgia as a prison colony, immigration of Europeans in pursuit of greater civil rights and wealth

- Identifying major leaders, economic impact, and social changes in colonial society
Examples: major leaders—John Winthrop, Roger Williams, John Smith, James Oglethorpe, William Penn, Anne Hutchinson, John Rolfe;
economic impact—tobacco and cotton crops as mainstays of economy;
social changes—effects of establishment of House of Burgesses on colonial society
- Identifying reasons for the French and Indian War
- Describing the impact of the French and Indian War on the settlement of the colonies
- Identifying geographic features, landforms, and differences in climates among the colonies
- Describing emerging colonial governments
Examples: representative government, town meetings, role of laws
- Describing the development of the emerging labor force in the colonies
Examples: slaves, indentured servants
- Identifying on a map changes in North American boundaries as a result of the French and Indian War

E	G	H	PS
✓	✓	✓	

6. Identify the impact of trade routes on emerging colonies in the Americas.

Examples: spread of Christianity, increase in trading of cotton and indigo

- Tracing the result of slave trading in the Americas
Example: establishment of the Triangular Trade Route
- Locating centers of slave trade in the Western Hemisphere

E	G	H	PS
✓		✓	✓

7. Identify events leading to the American Revolution, including the French and Indian War, the Stamp Act, the Intolerable Acts, the Boston Massacre, and the Boston Tea Party.

E	G	H	PS
✓	✓	✓	✓

8. Identify major events of the American Revolution, including the Battles of Lexington and Concord, the Battle of Bunker Hill, the Battle of Saratoga, and the Battle of Yorktown.

- Describing the social and political impact of the Declaration of Independence
- Explaining contributions of Thomas Jefferson, Samuel Adams, Paul Revere, Patrick Henry, Thomas Paine, George Washington, and ordinary citizens
- Describing efforts to mobilize support for the American Revolution by the Minutemen, Committees of Correspondence, First Continental Congress, Sons of Liberty, boycotts, and the Second Continental Congress
- Locating on a map major battle sites of the American Revolution

E	G	H	PS
		✓	✓

9. List steps involved in the development of the Constitution of the United States, including inadequacies of the Articles of Confederation and struggles over the ratification of the Constitution.

- Listing powers granted to Congress, the President, and those reserved for states or for the people
- Discussing major ideas and concepts of the Constitution of the United States, including duties and powers of the three branches of government
- Identifying main principles in the Bill of Rights
- Describing the process by which territories achieve statehood under the Constitution

E	G	H	PS
✓	✓	✓	✓


10. Describe political, social, and economic events between 1803 and 1860 that led to the expansion of the territory of the United States.

Examples: Louisiana Purchase, Indian Removal Act, Texas-Mexican Wars, Mexican-American War, Gold Rush of 1849

- Tracing expeditions of Meriwether Lewis and William Clark in the American West, including the role of Sacagawea
- Identifying the purpose of the Monroe Doctrine

E	G	H	PS
	✓	✓	✓

11. Explain causes of and major events occurring during the War of 1812.

Examples: causes—impressment, territorial disputes;
events—burning of Washington, D.C.; creation of War Hawks; composition of “Star-Spangled Banner”; Battle of Horseshoe Bend; Battle of New Orleans 

- Locating on a map major areas of conflict in the War of 1812, including Washington, D.C.

E	G	H	PS
✓	✓	✓	✓

12. Identify causes of the Civil War from the northern and southern viewpoints.

Examples: states' rights, slave versus free states

- Describing the importance of the Missouri Compromise, the Compromise of 1850, John Brown's Rebellion, and the Emancipation Proclamation
- Describing the impact of the Civil War on the social, economic, and political life of the United States
- Identifying on a map locations important to the Civil War

Examples: Mason-Dixon Line, Fort Sumter, Appomattox, Confederate states, Union states, Confederate capitals

E	G	H	PS
✓		✓	✓

13. Identify social, political, and economic changes that occurred during Reconstruction.

- Describing the effects of Reconstruction on women and African Americans
Examples: voting rights for African-American males, women as heads of households, stabilization of the African-American family, role of self-help and mutual aid
- Identifying the impact of Reconstruction on education in the United States
Example: education of African-American children

SIXTH GRADE

United States Studies: 1877 to the Present

Sixth-grade content standards focus on the United States from 1877 to the present. Historical events studied by sixth graders include the Spanish-American War, World War I, the Great Depression, World War II, and major events of the latter part of the twentieth century. Emphasis is placed on economic, geographic, social, and political changes that impacted every aspect of life during these time periods, including communication and technological advances, changes in national boundaries, and the movement of the United States into the role of world leader.

Sixth-grade students are interested in acquiring a deeper understanding of those whose cultures and political opinions are different from their own. As they begin a transitional stage characterized by physical, cognitive, and social changes, they begin to analyze and evaluate relationships between ideals and practices. Therefore, sixth-grade instruction provides constant opportunities for students to explore their prior knowledge and opinions and to maximize and expand their knowledge through the use of cooperative learning, large- and small-group discussions, hands-on activities, and technology.

SIXTH GRADE

United States Studies: 1877 to the Present

Students will:

E	G	H	PS
✓	✓	✓	

1. Describe the Westward Expansion and its technological, economic, and social influence on the people of the United States prior to World War I.

Examples: development of railroads, conflicts with Native Americans, location of reservations, end of frontier, Manifest Destiny

- Locating states, capitals, and important geographic features west of the Mississippi River
- Identifying major groups and individuals involved with the Westward Expansion
- Identifying groups of western settlers engaged in areas of conflict and cooperation and trading practices, including farmers, ranchers, Mormons, and Hispanics
- Analyzing the impact of closing the frontier on Native Americans
- Locating areas settled in the United States between 1877 and 1900

E	G	H	PS
✓	✓	✓	✓

2. Describe the impact of industrialization, free markets, urbanization, communication, and cultural changes in the United States prior to World War I.

- Discussing the construction of the Panama Canal
- Explaining how the United States acquired Alaska and Hawaii

E	G	H	PS
	✓	✓	✓

3. Identify causes and consequences of the Spanish-American War.

- Identifying major people involved in the Spanish-American War
Examples: Teddy Roosevelt and the Rough Riders, William Gorgas
- Locating major territories that were part of the treaty ending the Spanish-American War

E	G	H	PS
✓	✓	✓	✓

4. Describe changing social conditions during the Progressive Period.

Examples: eight-hour work day, child labor laws, workmen's compensation laws

- Describing countries of origin and experiences of new immigrants to the United States
Example: Ellis Island experience
- Identifying political and social leaders of the Progressive Movement
Examples: Theodore Roosevelt, William Howard Taft, Woodrow Wilson, Robert LaFollette, Jane Addams, Mary Harris "Mother" Jones, Clara Barton, Grover Cleveland
- Analyzing the impact of early civil rights movements on the lives of Americans
- Identifying cultural changes from 1900-1920 resulting from religious beliefs, industrialization, urbanization, and changes in communication and technology

E	G	H	PS
✓	✓	✓	✓


5. Identify causes of World War I and reasons for entry into the war by the United States.

- Describing the role of the United States in World War I both militarily and on the home front
- Identifying important people involved in World War I
Examples: Sergeant Alvin York, President Woodrow Wilson, Baron von Richthofen (Red Baron), Archduke Franz Ferdinand, Kaiser Wilhelm II, Prime Minister David Lloyd George, French statesman Georges Clemenceau
- Discussing technological advances and their impact on the economy of the United States
Examples: machine gun, tank, submarine, airplane, poisonous gas, gas mask, and industrial support necessary for their manufacture
- Locating on a map or globe major countries involved in World War I and boundary changes after the war
- Explaining rejection of world leadership by the United States after World War I
Example: reaction of Congress to Treaty of Versailles and League of Nations

E	G	H	PS
✓		✓	



6. Identify cultural and economic developments in the society of the United States from 1877 through the 1930s.

Examples: impact of Harlem Renaissance, Jazz Age, radio, movies, automobiles, flappers, household appliances, and speakeasies; Prohibition; leadership of the United States in international trade

- Discussing contributions of inventors from 1877 to World War I
Examples: George Washington Carver, Henry Ford, Thomas Edison, Wilbur and Orville Wright
- Describing development of the modern woman
Examples: Amelia Earhart, Zelda Fitzgerald 
- Identifying notable people of the 1920s
Examples: Babe Ruth, Charles Lindbergh, Ernest Hemingway, F. Scott Fitzgerald, Andrew Wyeth, Frederic Remington, Langston Hughes, Louis Armstrong, Henry Ford
- Describing results of the economic policies of the Harding, Coolidge, and Hoover Administrations
Examples: higher wages, more consumer goods, collapse of the farm economy, extension of personal credit, stock market crash

E	G	H	PS
✓	✓	✓	✓

7. Identify causes of the Great Depression.

- Describing the effect of the Great Depression on the people of the United States
Examples: closing of farms, rising unemployment, building of Hoovervilles, migration of Okies
- Locating on a map the area of the United States known as the Dust Bowl
- Describing the importance of the election of Franklin D. Roosevelt as President of the United States
Examples: Hundred Days, New Deal, National Recovery Administration, Civilian Conservation Corps, Social Security Act, Agricultural Adjustment Act, Works Progress Administration
- Describing the impact of the Tennessee Valley Authority (TVA) on the life of Alabamians 
- Locating river systems utilized by TVA 

E	G	H	PS
	✓	✓	✓

8. List key figures, significant events, and reasons for the involvement of the United States in World War II.

Examples: key figures—Franklin D. Roosevelt, Winston Churchill, Harry S. Truman, Joseph Stalin, Adolph Hitler, Benito Mussolini, Michinomiya Hirohito, Hideki Tojo; significant events—Battles of Normandy, Stalingrad, and Midway; Battle of the Bulge; reasons—Pearl Harbor, threat by Axis powers to Europe and Asia

- Locating on a map or globe countries controlled by the Axis powers from 1939-1942
 - Locating on a map or globe Allied countries and key battles in World War II
 - Describing the development and use of the atomic bomb
 - Describing social costs associated with World War II
- Examples: Holocaust, civilian and military casualties
- Explaining the importance of treaties ending World War II

E	G	H	PS
✓		✓	✓

9. Identify changes in the American home front during World War II.

Examples: rationing, retooling of factories to change from production of consumer items to production of military equipment

- Describing the changing role of women in the society of the United States during World War II
- Example: members of workforce, Women's Army Corps (WAC), Women Accepted for Volunteer Emergency Service (WAVES), and United Service Organization (USO)
- Describing the changing role of African Americans and Japanese Americans in the society of the United States during World War II
- Examples: Tuskegee Airmen as a segregated military unit, separation of Japanese Americans into internment camps


E	G	H	PS
		✓	

10. Identify major social and cultural changes in the United States from 1945 to 1960.

Examples: movement to suburbs, introduction of television and rock and roll, increased birth rate during baby boom, changes in transportation due to the Federal Highway Act

E	G	H	PS
	✓	✓	✓

11. Identify critical events occurring in the United States and throughout the world from the Truman through the Johnson Administrations, including the Cold War, Berlin Airlift, Korean Conflict, space race, construction of Berlin Wall, Bay of Pigs invasion, Cuban Missile Crisis, and Vietnam War.

- Identifying Alabama's role in the Cold War 
Examples: rocket production at Redstone Arsenal, helicopter training at Fort Rucker
- Locating on a map areas of international conflict from 1945-1969


E	G	H	PS
✓		✓	✓

12. Identify components of John F. Kennedy's New Frontier and Lyndon B. Johnson's Great Society.

Examples: New Frontier—Peace Corps, tax cuts, space program;
Great Society—Medicare, Medicaid, War on Poverty, Job Corps, Head Start program, federal funding for education

E	G	H	PS
		✓	✓

13. Describe the role of major civil rights leaders and significant events occurring during the modern Civil Rights Movement.

Examples: civil rights leaders—Rosa Parks; Martin Luther King, Jr.; events—*Brown versus Board of Education*; Montgomery bus boycott; student sit-ins; march on Washington, D.C.; Freedom Rides; Civil Rights Act of 1964; Malcolm X; voter registration efforts; Selma-to-Montgomery march 

E	G	H	PS
✓		✓	

14. Identify cultural and economic changes throughout the United States from 1960 to the present.

Examples: cultural—rock and roll, antiwar protests, counter-culture, hippies, fashion, cellular telephones, rise in single-parent families;
economic—War on Poverty, Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA), inflation, budget deficits

- Describing the impact of technological and social changes on the society of the United States from 1970 to the present

E	G	H	PS
	✓	✓	✓

15. Explain major political events from the Nixon Administration to the present, including the Vietnam War; Watergate; the collapse of the Soviet Union; the Gulf War; the September 11, 2001, terrorist attacks; and the War on Terrorism.

- Identifying important legislation created from the Nixon Administration to the present
Examples: Clean Air Act, Environmental Protection Act, Endangered Species Act, Patriot Act, Americans with Disabilities Act
- Describing the changing role of women and minorities in society from 1970 to the present
- Locating on a map sites of significant historical events occurring between 1970 and the present