

6 | SIXTH GRADE SOCIAL STUDIES

World History and Geography: Early Civilizations Through the Fall of the Western Roman Empire

Course Description: Sixth grade students will study the beginnings of early civilizations through the fall of the Western Roman Empire. Students will analyze the cultural, economic, geographical, historical, and political foundations for early civilizations, including Mesopotamia, Egypt, Israel, India, China, Greece, and Rome. The sixth grade will conclude with the decline and fall of the Western Roman Empire. This course will also teach students about the historical context of ancient and major world religions and will follow a common template for major world religions so as to not promote any religion. Major world religions are introduced in either 6th or 7th grade.

This course will be the students' first concentrated survey of world history and geography and is designed to help students think like historians, focusing on historical concepts in order to build a foundational understanding of the world. Appropriate primary sources have been embedded in the standards in order to deepen the understanding of world history and geography. Special emphasis will be placed on the development of government, including the beginning of democratic practices.

Grades 6-8

Social Studies Practices

Overview: Students will apply these skills to create and address questions that will guide inquiry and critical thinking. These practices should be regularly applied throughout the year. Students will progress through the inquiry cycle (SSP.01-SSP.04) by analyzing primary and secondary sources to construct and communicate their conceptual understanding of the content standards and to develop historical and geographic awareness (SSP.05- SSP.06).

Practice Number	Social Studies Practice
SSP.01	Collect data and information from a variety of primary and secondary sources, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Printed materials (e.g., literary texts, newspapers, political cartoons, autobiographies, speeches, letters, personal journals) ● Graphic representations (e.g., maps, timelines, charts, photographs, artwork) ● Artifacts ● Media and technology sources
SSP.02	Critically examine a primary or secondary source in order to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Extract and paraphrase significant ideas and relevant information ● Distinguish the difference between fact and opinion ● Draw inferences and conclusions ● Recognize author’s purpose, point of view, and bias ● Assess the strengths and limitations of arguments
SSP.03	Synthesize data from multiple sources in order to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Recognize differences among multiple accounts ● Establish validity by comparing and contrasting multiple sources ● Frame appropriate questions for further investigation

Practice Number	Social Studies Practice
SSP.04	Construct and communicate arguments citing supporting evidence to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Demonstrate and defend an understanding of ideas ● Compare and contrast viewpoints ● Illustrate cause and effect ● Predict likely outcomes ● Devise new outcomes or solutions
SSP.05	Develop historical awareness by: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Recognizing how and why historical accounts change over time ● Perceiving and presenting past events and issues as they might have been experienced by the people of the time, with historical empathy rather than present-mindedness ● Evaluating how unique circumstances of time and place create context and contribute to action and reaction ● Identifying patterns of continuity and change over time, making connections to the present
SSP.06	Develop a geographic awareness by: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Using the geographic perspective to determine relationships, patterns, and diffusion across space at multiple scales (e.g., local, national, global). ● Determining the use of diverse types of maps based on their origin, structure, context, and validity ● Analyzing locations, conditions, and connections of places and using maps to investigate spatial relationships ● Analyzing interaction between humans and the physical environment ● Examining how geographic regions and perceptions of regions are fluid across time and space

Foundations of Human Civilization: c. 10,000-3500 BCE

Overview: Students will learn proper time designations and analyze the development and characteristics of civilizations, including the effects of the Agricultural Revolution.

Standard Number	Content Standard	Content Strand		
6.01	Identify the meaning of time designations and abbreviations used by historians, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • BC / BCE • AD / CE • Circa (c. or ca), decades, centuries 	H		
6.02	Describe the characteristics of the nomadic hunter-gatherer societies, including their use of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Basic hunting weapons • Fire • Shelter • Tools 	C, H		
6.03	Explain the impact of the Agricultural Revolution, including: <table border="0" style="width: 100%;"> <tr> <td style="vertical-align: top;"> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Barter economy • Domestication of plants and animals • Emergence of permanent settlements </td> <td style="vertical-align: top;"> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Food surpluses • Labor specialization • New sources of clothing and shelter </td> </tr> </table>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Barter economy • Domestication of plants and animals • Emergence of permanent settlements 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Food surpluses • Labor specialization • New sources of clothing and shelter 	C, E, G, H
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6.04	Identify and explain the importance of the following key characteristics of civilizations: <table border="0" style="width: 100%;"> <tr> <td style="vertical-align: top;"> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Culture • Government • Religion • Social structure </td> <td style="vertical-align: top;"> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stable food supply • Technology • Writing </td> </tr> </table>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Culture • Government • Religion • Social structure 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stable food supply • Technology • Writing 	C, E, G, H, P
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C—Culture, E—Economics, G—Geography, H—History, P—Politics/Government, T—Tennessee
 TCA—Tennessee Code Annotated: These standards are legally required to be taught.

Ancient Mesopotamia: c. 3500-1700 BCE

Overview: Students will analyze the geographic, political, economic, and cultural structures of the civilization of ancient Mesopotamia.

Standard Number	Content Standard	Content Strand
6.05	Identify and locate geographical features of ancient Mesopotamia, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Black Sea • Euphrates River • Mediterranean Sea • Persian Gulf • Tigris River • Zagros Mountains 	G
6.06	Explain how geographic and climatic features led to the region being known as the Fertile Crescent.	G, H
6.07	Explain how irrigation, silt, metallurgy, production of tools, use of animals, slave labor, and inventions such as the wheel, sail, and plow led to advancements in agriculture.	C, E, H
6.08	Analyze how advancements in agriculture in Sumer led to economic growth, expansion of trade and transportation, and the emergence of independent city-states.	C, E, G, H, P
6.09	Explain the basic concepts of monarchy and empire, and identify Mesopotamia as the regional location of the world's first empire.	G, H, P
6.10	Explain the concept of polytheism and its presence in Mesopotamia, with respect to beliefs about the relationship of deities to the natural world and their importance in everyday life.	C, H
6.11	Identify important achievements of the Mesopotamian civilization, including cuneiform, clay tablets, and ziggurats, and identify the <i>Epic of Gilgamesh</i> as the oldest written epic.	C, E, H
6.12	Analyze the impact of the introduction of written law in the Code of Hammurabi, and explain its basic principles of justice.	C, E, H, P

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Ancient Egypt: c. 3000-700 BCE

Overview: Students will analyze the geographic, political, economic, and cultural structures of ancient Egypt.

Standard Number	Content Standard	Content Strand
6.13	Identify and locate geographical features of ancient Egypt, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mediterranean Sea • Nile Delta • Nile River • Red Sea • The regions of Upper and Lower Egypt • The Sahara 	G, H
6.14	Explain how agricultural practices impacted life and economic growth in ancient Egypt, including the use of irrigation and development of a calendar.	C, E, G, H
6.15	Explain the structure of ancient Egyptian society, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Relationships between groups of people • How social classes were organized by occupation • Positions of pharaohs as god/kings • Role of slaves 	C, E, H, P
6.16	Explain the polytheistic religion of ancient Egypt, with respect to beliefs about the afterlife, the reasons for mummification, and the use of pyramids.	C, H
6.17	Analyze the impact of key figures from ancient Egypt, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Growth under the leadership of Queen Hatshepsut and her economic policies • Ramses the Great's military conquests leading to growth of the kingdom • Significance of the discovery of Tutankhamun's tomb on the understanding of ancient Egypt 	C, E, G, H, P
6.18	Analyze the achievements of ancient Egyptian civilization, including: hieroglyphics, papyrus, and the pyramids and Sphinx at Giza.	C, E, G, H
6.19	Examine the cultural diffusion of ancient Egypt with surrounding civilizations through trade and conflict, including its relationship with Nubia.	C, E, G, H, P

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Ancient Israel: c. 2000-500 BCE

Overview: Students will analyze the geographic, political, economic, and cultural structures of ancient Israel.

Standard Number	Content Standard	Content Strand
6.20	Identify and locate geographical features of ancient Israel, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li style="display: inline-block; width: 45%;">• Dead Sea <li style="display: inline-block; width: 45%;">• Mediterranean Sea <li style="display: inline-block; width: 45%;">• Jerusalem <li style="display: inline-block; width: 45%;">• Red Sea <li style="display: inline-block; width: 45%;">• Jordan River <li style="display: inline-block; width: 45%;">• Sinai Peninsula 	G
6.21	Describe the development of the ancient Israelites, and explain the reasons for their movements from Mesopotamia to Canaan (later called Israel), from Canaan to Egypt, and from Egypt back to Canaan.	C, G, H, P
6.22	Describe the origins and central features of Judaism: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Key Person(s): Abraham, Moses • Sacred Texts: The Tanakh (i.e., Hebrew Bible) • Basic Beliefs: monotheism, Ten Commandments, emphasis on individual worth and personal responsibility 	C, G, H, P
6.23	Identify the importance of Saul as the first king of Israel, David as the second king who founded Jerusalem as the capital, and Solomon as the third king who built the first temple.	C, G, H, P
6.24	Summarize the breakup of the Kingdom of Israel, Babylonian captivity, and the return of the Jews to their homeland under the Persian Empire.	C, E, G, H, P

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Ancient India: c. 2500-400 BCE

Overview: Students will analyze the geographic, political, economic, and cultural structures of ancient India.

Standard Number	Content Standard	Content Strand
6.25	Identify and locate geographical features of ancient India, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ganges River • Himalayan Mountains • Indian Ocean • Indus River • Monsoon winds • Subcontinent of India 	G
6.26	Explain the emergence of the Harappan civilization in the Indus River Valley as an early agricultural civilization, and describe its achievements, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Architecture built with bricks • Arranging roads into a series of grid-systems • Sanitation and sewer systems 	E, G, H, P
6.27	Describe the social structure of the caste system, and explain its effect on everyday life in ancient India.	C, E, H, P
6.28	Describe the origins and central features of Hinduism: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Key Person(s): origins in Aryan traditions • Sacred Texts: The Vedas • Basic Beliefs: dharma, karma, reincarnation, and moksha 	C, G, H, P
6.29	Describe the origins and central features of Buddhism: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Key Person(s): Siddhartha Gautama (Buddha) • Sacred Texts: Tripitaka • Basic Beliefs: Four Noble Truths, Eightfold Path, Nirvana 	C, G, H, P
6.30	Identify the long-lasting intellectual traditions that emerged during the late empire of ancient India, including: medical education, medical techniques, and mathematics (e.g., Hindu-Arabic numerals).	C, E, H

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Ancient China: c. 2500 BCE-200 CE

Overview: Students will analyze the geographic, political, economic, and cultural structures of ancient China.

Standard Number	Content Standard	Content Strand
6.31	Identify and locate geographical features of ancient China, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gobi Desert • Himalayan Mountains • Pacific Ocean • Plateau of Tibet • Yangtze River • Yellow River 	G
6.32	Analyze the influence of geographic features on the origins of ancient Chinese civilization in the Yellow River Valley, and explain how China's geography helped create a unique yet diverse cultural identity that was isolated from the rest of the world.	C, G, H
6.33	Describe how the size of ancient China made governing difficult and how the concepts of the mandate of heaven and Legalism emerged as solutions to this problem.	C, G, H, P
6.34	Identify the political and cultural problems prevalent in the time of Confucius and how the philosophy of Confucianism and <i>The Analects</i> emphasized the concepts of kinship, order, and hierarchy to address these problems.	C, H, P
6.35	Explain the significance of the unification of ancient China into the first Chinese empire by Qin Shi Huangdi, beginning the Qin Dynasty.	C, E, G, H, P
6.36	Explain how the implementation of the philosophy of Confucianism led to the political success and longevity of the Han Dynasty.	C, E, H, P
6.37	Explain the major accomplishments of the Han Dynasty, including: the magnetic compass, paper making, porcelain, silk, and woodblock printing.	C, E, G, H
6.38	Describe how the desire for Chinese goods influenced the creation of The Silk Road and initiated cultural diffusion throughout Eurasia, including the introduction of Buddhism into ancient China.	C, E, G, H, P

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Ancient Greece: c. 800-300 BCE

Overview: Students will analyze the geographic, political, economic, and cultural structures of ancient Greece.

Standard Number	Content Standard	Content Strand
6.39	Identify and locate geographical features of ancient Greece, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Asia Minor • Athens • Macedonia • Mediterranean Sea • Peloponnesian peninsula • Sparta 	G
6.40	Analyze how the geographical features of ancient Greece, including its mountainous terrain and access to the Mediterranean Sea, contributed to its organization into city-states, role in maritime trade, and colonies in the Mediterranean.	C, E, G, H, P
6.41	Examine the concept of the polis in Greek city-states, including the ideas of: citizenship, civic participation, and the rule of law.	C, H, P
6.42	Explain the basic concepts of direct democracy and oligarchy.	C, H, P
6.43	Explain the characteristics of the major Greek city-states of Athens and Sparta, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Advantages of each geographic location • Approaches to education • Practice of slavery • Status of women • Styles of government 	C, E, G, H, P
6.44	Analyze the causes and consequences of the Persian Wars, including the role of Athens and its cooperation with Sparta to defend the Greek city-states.	C, G, H, P
6.45	Analyze the causes and consequences of the Peloponnesian Wars, including how the growing political conflict between Athens and Sparta led to war and left the city-states open to conquest by the Macedonians.	C, G, H, P

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Standard Number	Content Standard	Content Strand
6.46	Explain the polytheistic religion of ancient Greece, with respect to beliefs about the humanlike qualities of the deities, their importance in everyday life, and the emergence of the Olympic Games to honor Zeus.	C, H
6.47	Explain the historical significance of ancient Greek literature, including how the <i>Iliad</i> and the <i>Odyssey</i> provide insight into the life of the ancient Greeks.	C, H
6.48	Examine the influence of ancient Greek philosophers (e.g., Aristotle, Plato, and Socrates) and their impact on education and society in Greece.	C, H, P
6.49	Describe the purposes of major Greek architecture, including the Parthenon and the Acropolis.	C, G, H, P
6.50	Explain the unification of the Greek city-states by Macedonia, and analyze the impact of Alexander the Great and the diffusion of Hellenistic culture.	C, E, G, H, P

Ancient Rome: c. 500 BCE-500 CE

Overview: Students will analyze the geographic, political, economic, and cultural structures of ancient Rome.

Standard Number	Content Standard	Content Strand
6.51	Identify and locate the geographical features of ancient Rome, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Constantinople • Italian Alps • Italian Peninsula • Mediterranean Sea • Rome • Tiber River 	G
6.52	Analyze how the geographical location of ancient Rome contributed to its political and economic growth in the Mediterranean region and beyond.	E, G, H, P
6.53	Describe the government of the Roman Republic, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Branches of government • Checks and balances • Civic participation • Representative democracy • The rule of law and the Twelve Tables 	C, H, P
6.54	Describe the class system of ancient Rome, including the role of patricians, plebeians, and slaves in Roman society.	C, E, H, P
6.55	Describe the characteristics of Julius Caesar's rule, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Leadership in the military • Popularity amongst plebeians • Role as dictator for life • Assassination 	C, E, G, H, P
6.56	Analyze the influence of Augustus Caesar, including the establishment of the Roman Empire and its political, geographic, and economic expansion during the Pax Romana.	C, E, G, H, P

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Standard Number	Content Standard	Content Strand
6.57	Analyze how innovations in engineering and architecture contributed to Roman expansion, including the role of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Aqueducts • Arches • Bridges • The Colosseum • Domes • Roads • Sanitation 	C, G, H, P
6.58	Explain the polytheistic religion of ancient Rome, with respect to beliefs about the humanlike qualities of the deities and their importance in everyday life.	C, H, P
6.59	Describe the origins and central features of Christianity: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Key Person(s) Jesus, Paul • Sacred Texts: The Bible • Basic Beliefs: monotheism, sin and forgiveness, eternal life, Jesus as the Messiah 	C, G, H, P
6.60	Explain the expulsion of the Jews from their homeland by the Romans, which began the Jewish diaspora.	C, G, H, P
6.61	Explain the division of the Roman Empire into East and West, and identify the later establishment of Constantinople as the capital by Constantine.	C, G, H, P
6.62	Analyze the fall of the Western Roman Empire, including difficulty governing its large territory, political corruption, economic instability, and attacks by Germanic tribes, and identify the continuation of the Eastern Roman Empire as the Byzantine Empire.	C, E, G, H, P