

7 | SEVENTH GRADE SOCIAL STUDIES

World History and Geography: The Middle Ages to the Exploration of the Americas

Course Description: Seventh grade students will explore the cultural, economic, geographical, historical, and political changes of Western Civilization in Europe as well as the geographic regions of East Asia, West Africa, and Southwest Asia and Northern Africa. Students will compare and contrast the history and geography of civilizations that were developing concurrently throughout Africa, Europe, the Americas, and Asia during the 15th to 18th centuries. Students will examine the growth in economic interactions among civilizations as well as the exchange of ideas, beliefs, technologies, and commodities. Students will describe the indigenous populations of the Americas and the long-term impact of European exploration in the New World. Finally, students will analyze the influence of geography on the development of civilizations as they continue their study of world history and geography. 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 is a continuation of the 6th grade 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

East Asia: 400-1500s CE

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

Standard Number	Content Standard	Content Strand
7.01	Identify and locate the geographical features of East Asia, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • China • Gobi Desert • Himalayan Mountains • Japan • Korean Peninsula • Pacific Ocean • Plateau of Tibet • Sea of Japan (East Sea) • Yangtze River • Yellow River 	G
7.02	Describe how the reunification of China prior to the Tang Dynasty helped spread Buddhist beliefs.	C, G, H, P
7.03	Summarize agricultural, commercial, and technological developments during the Song Dynasties, and describe the role of Confucianism during the Song.	C, E, G, H, P
7.04	Examine the rise of the Mongol Empire, including the conquests of Genghis Khan.	C, G, H, P
7.05	Describe Kublai Khan's conquest of China, and explain how he was able to maintain control of the Yuan Empire.	C, G, H, P
7.06	Summarize the effects of the Mongolian empires on the Silk Roads, including the importance of Marco Polo's travels on the spread of Chinese technology and Eurasian trade.	C, E, G, H
7.07	Analyze the achievements of the Ming Dynasty and reasons for its isolationism, including building projects (e.g., the Forbidden City and reconstruction of the Great Wall) and Zheng He's sea voyages.	C, E, G, H, P

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Standard Number	Content Standard	Content Strand
7.08	Describe the origins and central features of Shintoism: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Key Person(s): None • Sacred Texts: No sacred text • Basic Beliefs: localized tradition that focuses on ritual practices that are carried out with discipline to maintain connections with ancient past; animism and Kami 	C, G, H, P
7.09	Explain how Japanese culture changed through Chinese and Korean influences (including Buddhism and Confucianism) as shown in the <i>Constitution of Prince Shotoku</i> and the adoption of the Chinese writing system.	C, G, H
7.10	Describe how the Heian aristocracy contributed to the development of a Japanese national culture.	C, H, P
7.11	Analyze the rise of a military society in the late 12th century and the role of the shogun and samurai in Japanese society.	C, E, H, P

Byzantine Empire: 400-1500s CE

Overview: Students will analyze the geographic, political, economic, and cultural structures of the Byzantine Empire.

Standard Number	Content Standard	Content Strand
7.12	Identify the continuation of the Eastern Roman Empire as the Byzantine Empire, and describe the diffusion of Christianity and the Latin language.	C, G, H, P
7.13	Explain the importance of Justinian’s political, social, and architectural achievements.	C, G, H, P
7.14	Analyze the importance of regional geography and the location of Constantinople in maintaining European culture.	C, G, H

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Southwest Asia and North Africa: 400-1500s CE

Overview: Students will analyze the geographic, political, economic, and cultural structures of Southwest Asia and North Africa.

Standard Number	Content Standard	Content Strand
7.15	Identify and locate the geographical features of Southwest Asia and North Africa, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Arabian Peninsula • Arabian Sea • Black Sea • Caspian Sea • Euphrates River • Mecca • Mediterranean Sea • Persian Gulf • Red Sea • Tigris River 	G
7.16	Describe the origins and central features of Islam: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Key Person(s): Mohammad • Sacred Texts: The Quran and The Sunnah • Basic Beliefs: monotheism, Five Pillars 	C, G, H, P
7.17	Describe the diffusion of Islam, its culture, and the Arabic language.	C, G, H
7.18	Summarize the contributions of the region’s scholars in the areas of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Art • Geography • Literature • Mathematics • Medicine • Philosophy • Science 	C, G, H
7.19	Explain the importance of Mehmed II the Conqueror, the fall of Constantinople, and the establishment of the Ottoman Empire.	C, E, G, H, P
7.20	Analyze the development of trade routes throughout Asia, Africa, and Europe and the expanding role of merchants.	C, E, G, H

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West Africa: 400-1500s CE

Overview: Students will analyze the geographic, political, economic, and cultural structures of West Africa.

Standard Number	Content Standard	Content Strand
7.21	Identify and locate the geographical features of West Africa, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Atlantic Ocean • Djenne • Gulf of Guinea • Niger River • The Sahara • Timbuktu 	G
7.22	Explain indigenous African spiritual traditions, including: ancestor worship, animism, and the relationship between humans and deities.	C, H
7.23	Analyze the growth of the kingdoms of Ghana, Mali, and Songhai, including cities such as Djenne and Timbuktu as centers of trade, culture, and learning.	C, E, G, H, P
7.24	Describe the role of the Trans-Saharan caravan trade in the changing religious and cultural characteristics of West Africa and in the exchange of salt, gold, and slaves.	C, E, G, H, P
7.25	Explain the importance of griots in the transmission of West African history and culture.	C, G, H
7.26	Explain the importance of the Malian king Mansa Musa and his pilgrimage to Mecca in 1324.	C, E, G, H, P

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Middle Ages in Western Europe: 400-1500s CE

Overview: Students will analyze the geographic, political, economic, and cultural structures of Europe during the Middle Ages.

Standard Number	Content Standard	Content Strand
7.27	Identify and locate geographical features of Europe, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Alps • Atlantic Ocean • English Channel • Mediterranean Sea • Influence of the North Atlantic Drift • North European Plain • Ural Mountains 	G
7.28	Describe the role of monasteries in the preservation of knowledge and spread of the Catholic Church beyond the Alps.	C, G, H, P
7.29	Explain how Charlemagne shaped and defined medieval Europe, including: his impact on feudalism, the creation of the Holy Roman Empire, and the establishment of Christianity as the religion of the Empire.	C, E, G, H, P
7.30	Describe the development of feudalism and manorialism, their role in the medieval European economy, and the way in which they were influenced by physical geography (i.e., the role of the manor and the growth of towns).	C, E, G, H, P
7.31	Analyze the Battle of Hastings and the long-term historical impact of William the Conqueror on England and Northern France.	C, E, G, H, P
7.32	Describe how political relationships both fostered cooperation and led to conflict between the Papacy and European monarchs.	C, G, H, P
7.33	Analyze the impact of the Magna Carta, including: limiting the power of the monarch, the rule of law, and the right to trial by jury.	G, H, P

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Standard Number	Content Standard	Content Strand
7.34	Analyze the causes, effects, and key people of the 1st, 2nd, and 3rd Crusades, including: Pope Urban II, Saladin, and Richard I.	C, G, H, P
7.35	Explain how the Crusades impacted Christian, Muslim, and Jewish populations in Europe, with emphasis on the increasing contact with cultures outside Europe.	C, G, H
7.36	Describe the economic and social effects of the spread of the Black Death (i.e., Bubonic Plague) from Central Asia to China, the Middle East, and Europe, and its impact on the global population.	C, E, G, H
7.37	Analyze the importance of the Black Death on the emergence of a modern economy, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Agricultural improvements • Commerce • Growth of banking • A merchant class • Technological improvements • Towns 	C, E, H
7.38	Describe the significance of the Hundred Years War, including the roles of Henry V in shaping English culture and language and Joan of Arc in promoting a peaceful end to the war.	C, G, H, P
7.39	Explain the significance of the Reconquista, Inquisition, and the rise of Spanish and Portuguese kingdoms in the Iberian Peninsula.	C, G, H, P

Early Modern Europe: 1400-1700s CE

Overview: Students will analyze the origins, accomplishments, and geographic diffusion of the Renaissance as well as the historical developments of the Protestant Reformation and Scientific Revolution.

The Renaissance

Standard Number	Content Standard	Content Strand
7.40	Explain how the location of the Italian Peninsula impacted the movement of resources, knowledge, and culture throughout Italy's independent trade cities.	C, E, G, H, P
7.41	Identify the importance of Florence, Italy and the Medici Family in the early stages of the Renaissance.	C, E, G, H, P
7.42	Explain humanism, and describe how Thomas Aquinas's writings influenced humanistic thought and fostered a balance between reason and faith.	C, H
7.43	Explain the development of Renaissance art, including the significance of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Leonardo da Vinci • Michelangelo • William Shakespeare • Systems of patronage 	C, E, G, H

The Protestant Reformation

Standard Number	Content Standard	Content Strand
7.44	Analyze Johannes Gutenberg's printing press and William Tyndale's translation of the Bible into the English language as vehicles for the spread of books, growth of literacy, and dissemination of knowledge.	C, G, H
7.45	Explain the significant causes of the Protestant Reformation, including: the Catholic Church's taxation policies, the selling of indulgences, and Martin Luther's <i>95 Theses</i> .	C, H, P
7.46	Analyze the development of the Protestant Reformation and the split with the Catholic Church, including: the emphasis on scripture alone, salvation by faith, and predestination.	C, H, P
7.47	Explain the political and religious roles of Henry VIII and Mary I in England's transition between Catholicism and Protestantism.	C, G, H, P
7.48	Analyze how the Catholic Counter-Reformation emerged as a response to Protestantism and revitalized the Catholic Church, including the significance of: St. Ignatius of Loyola, the Jesuits, and the Council of Trent.	C, H
7.49	Examine the Golden Age of the Tudor dynasty (i.e., Queen Elizabeth I), including the defeat of the Spanish Armada and the rise of English power in Europe.	C, H, P

The Scientific Revolution

Standard Number	Content Standard	Content Strand
7.50	Compare and contrast heliocentric and geocentric theories of the Greeks (geocentric), Copernicus (heliocentric), and Kepler (elliptical orbits).	C, G
7.51	Examine Galileo Galilei's theories and improvement of scientific tools, including the telescope and microscope.	C, G, H
7.52	Explain the significance of the following in regards to the Scientific Revolution: Sir Francis Bacon in establishing the scientific method and Sir Isaac Newton's three Laws of Motion.	C, G, H

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Indigenous Civilizations of the Americas: 400-1500s CE

Overview: Students will analyze the geographic, political, economic, and cultural structures of indigenous civilizations of the Americas.

Standard Number	Content Standard	Content Strand
7.53	Identify and locate the geographical features of the Americas, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Andes Mountains • Appalachian Mountains • Atlantic Ocean • Caribbean Sea • Central Mexican Plateau • Great Plains • Gulf of Mexico • Mississippi River • North America • Pacific Ocean • Rocky Mountains • South America • Yucatan Peninsula 	G, T
7.54	Explain the impact of geographic features on North American Indian cultures (i.e., Northeast, Southeast, and Plains), including: clothing, housing, and agriculture.	C, G, H, T
7.55	Describe the existence of diverse networks of North American Indian cultures (within present-day United States) including: varied languages, customs, and economic and political structures.	C, E, G, H, P, T
7.56	Explain the impact of geographic features and climate on the agricultural practices and settlement of the Maya, Aztec, and Incan civilizations.	C, E, G, H, P
7.57	Describe the social, economic, and political characteristics of the Maya, Aztec, and Incan civilizations, including: oral traditions, class structures, religious beliefs, slavery, and advancements (e.g., astronomy, mathematics, and calendar).	C, E, G, H, P

The Age of Exploration: 1400-1700s CE

Overview: Students will analyze the motivations for the movement of people from Europe to the Americas and the impact of exploration by Europeans.

Standard Number	Content Standard	Content Strand
7.58	Analyze why European countries were motivated to explore the world, including: religion, political rivalry, and economic gain (i.e., mercantilism).	C, E, G, H, P
7.59	Identify the significance of the voyages and routes of discovery of the following explorers by their sponsoring country: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • England: Henry Hudson • France: Jacques Cartier • Portugal: Vasco da Gama, Bartolomeu Dias • Spain: Christopher Columbus, Hernando de Soto, Ferdinand Magellan, Amerigo Vespucci 	C, E, G, H, P, T
7.60	Describe Prince Henry the Navigator’s influence on exploration, voyages, cartographic improvements, and tools related to exploration (i.e., compass, caravel, astrolabe, and Harrison’s chronometer) during the Age of Discovery.	C, E, G, H, P
7.61	Locate and identify French, Spanish, English, Portuguese, and Dutch colonies in the Americas, and explain how religion impacted the location of settlement by each country.	C, E, G, H, P
7.62	Describe how the Aztec and Inca empires were eventually defeated by Spanish Conquistadors (i.e., Hernan Cortes and Francisco Pizarro).	C, E, G, H, P
7.63	Locate and identify the European regions that remained Catholic and those that became Protestant and how that division affected the distribution of religions in the New World.	C, E, G, H, P
7.64	Explain the impact of the Columbian Exchange on people, plants, animals, technology, culture, ideas, and diseases among Europe, Africa, Asia, and the Americas in the 15th and 16th centuries, and examine the major economic and social effects on each continent.	C, E, G, H, P
7.65	Explain how Spanish colonization introduced Christianity, the mission system, and the encomienda system to the Americas as well as Bartolome de la Casa’s role in the transition to African slavery.	C, E, G, H, P

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