

SEVENTH – EIGHTH GRADE OVERVIEW

In seventh grade, geography and civics are each taught as a one-semester course. In the one-semester seventh-grade geography course, students study world geography using a thematic approach. They focus on Earth as the subject matter that involves people, places, and environments and learn that geography seeks meaning in spatial patterns and processes that involve asking questions regarding where and why. Teachers select particular continents, countries, and regions to provide the geographic framework for classroom instruction and investigation.

The one-semester seventh-grade civics course addresses content regarding democracy; liberty; law; personal economics; and local, state, and national civic responsibility. This course provides students with information about how society works, including the role students play in the community and in the world.

The geographic knowledge of the world gained in Grade 7 benefits eighth-grade students as they begin their study of world history. Students benefit by knowing where things are, how they got that way, and how the study of history benefits from knowledge of how geography affected historical events. Course content incorporates the strands of economics, geography, history, and civics and government with an emphasis on the history and geography strands. These courses emphasize the knowledge and skills necessary for developing a geographic perspective of the world and its people and events. Geography is a strong component of the content for these grades, as students are required to become knowledgeable about the spatial aspects of human existence. Students use geographic knowledge, tools, and technologies to pose and answer questions about spatial processes and to compare human and physical patterns on Earth. Real maps and mental maps are also utilized by students to answer geographic questions.

Effective teachers utilize a variety of classroom instructional techniques and assessment strategies. The classroom environment, activities, assignments, and assessments foster the skills of acquiring information and manipulating data; developing and presenting policies, arguments, and stories; constructing new knowledge; and participating in groups. Technology, including Internet access, computer software, videos, and television programs, is used not only to provide opportunities for students to explore historical as well as geographic concepts, but also to enable students to compete in a rapidly changing world. Because understanding contemporary events and relating them to the past are essential to any social studies course, current events is a vital component of the social studies content for Grades 7 and 8.