



The 6th grade course in the Social Studies Recommended Curriculum has a broad chronological scope. Since civics, geography, and economics instruction is expected during this grade, the historical timeframe in which instruction takes place must have a wide range. Students will develop skills of historical inquiry, such as reconciling conflicting claims and evaluating the reliability of narrative accounts.

A student should know historical chronology in such a way as to be able to situate people, laws, and events in appropriate timeframes.

For example, from the beginning of human civilization to 1500 A.D., there was the formation of different cultures, governments and religions, agricultural revolution, increasing trade and exploration, migration, cultural diffusion, colonization of the Americas, increasing technological change. Without knowing the exact years for an event, a student should still be able to place all these events in their approximate place. In other words, students should know the major trends and their approximate time. An organized mental framework of events, people, trends, and other historical phenomena is essential to understanding, evaluating, and constructing historical interpretations.

Social Studies Standards measured in Grade 6	
Civics 1a	Geography 1a
Economics 3a	Geography 2a
History 1a	Geography 3a
	Geography 4a

Instructor Notes

- * The syllabus calls for 32 weeks of instruction to allow time for pacing changes.



Weeks 1-5

How do personal mental maps effectively change and develop?

Benchmark

Geography 1a

Content

Relative location and characteristics (e.g., political, physical, human settlements) of world regions and sub-regions

Model Unit

[Geography 1a - Building Global Mental Maps](#)

Weeks 6-10

Under what conditions do cultures spread?

Benchmarks

Geography 3a, Geography 4a

Content

Cultural Hearths, Cultural Diffusion, Core, Periphery, Agricultural Revolution, Silk Road, Renaissance, Columbian Exchange

Model Unit

[Cultural Patterns and Diffusion](#)

- [Transfer Task](#)
- [CPD Lesson 1](#)
- [CPD Lesson 2](#)
- [CPD Lesson 3](#)

Weeks 11-15

Why does a government have certain powers?

Benchmarks

Civics 1a, History 1a

Content

Different powers of government(s) over time: monarchy, democracy, federalism



Weeks 16-20

How do cultural values, availability and quality of resources, and the extent and use of technology influence the way societies make economic decisions?

Benchmarks

Economics 3a

Content

Transition to market system, changing cultural values and technologies

Model Unit

[Economics 3a - Economic Systems](#)

Weeks 21-28

How can thinking like a historian help us draw credible conclusions?

Benchmarks

History 1a, History 2a

Content

legacies of Greece and Rome, Causes and effects of the exploration and, colonization of the Americas, the rise of civilizations, legacies of Greece and Rome, development of South American cultures, the rise and spread of Islam

Instructional Resources (see important note on pp. 4-5)

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- [The Dark Ages](#)
- [First Crusade](#)
- [The Black Death](#)
- [Martin Luther](#)
- [Atahualpa and the Bible](#)

Weeks 29-32

How have humans altered and been affected by the physical environment?

Benchmark

Geography 2a

Content

Basic physical processes that shape the Earth and strategies humans use to interact with the natural environment

Model Unit

[Geography 2a – Humans Interact with the Environment](#)



Important note for Instructional Resources in Weeks 21-28

These instructional resources are lessons from the Stanford University History Education Group's [Reading Like a Historian curriculum](#) which engages students in historical inquiry. Each lesson revolves around a central historical question and features sets of primary documents modified for groups of students with diverse reading skills and abilities.

Students learn to investigate historical questions employing reading strategies such as sourcing, contextualizing, corroborating, and close reading. Instead of memorizing historical facts, students evaluate the trustworthiness of multiple perspectives on issues, and make historical claims backed by documentary evidence.

Lessons from the [Reading Like a Historian curriculum](#) generally follow a three-part structure:

1. Establish or review relevant historical background knowledge and pose the central historical question. Each lesson approaches background knowledge differently. While establishing background knowledge is important, it's only a first step in the inquiry process, and shouldn't extend beyond opening the lesson. This content introduces and frames the central historical question, motivating students to investigate the documents for that lesson.

2. Students read documents, then answer guiding questions or complete a graphic organizer. Documents address the central historical question; most lessons use two or more documents with conflicting perspectives or accounts. The curriculum offers four basic lesson structures:

- *Opening up the Textbook (OUT):* In these lessons, students examine two documents: the textbook and a historical document that challenges or expands the textbook's account.
- *Cognitive Apprenticeship:* These lessons are based on a theory that cognitive skills must be visible in order for students to learn how to practice them. Here, a teacher explicitly models historical reading skills (sourcing, contextualization, corroboration, close reading). The full sequence begins with cognitive modeling, followed by teacher-led guided practice, and ultimately independent student practice.
- *Inquiry:* Students investigate historical questions, evaluate evidence, construct historical claims, and develop hypotheses through analyzing sets of documents.
- *Structured Academic Controversy (SAC):* For these lessons, students work in pairs and then teams as they explore a historical question. After taking opposing



positions on a question, they try to arrive at a consensus or at least clarify their differences.

3. Whole-class discussion about a central historical question using documentary evidence to support claims. Students practice historical thinking skills, articulate claims and defend them with evidence from the documents. Students see that history is open to multiple interpretations, and that the same piece of evidence can support conflicting claims.

These videos linked below demonstrate the use of the instructional resources in classrooms.

- [Reading Like a Historian: Overview](#)

- [Reading Like a Historian: Sourcing](#)

Follow along as students study original documents to determine whether the source is believable.

- [Reading Like a Historian: Contextualization](#)

See how the teacher scaffolds learning as students develop their understanding of context.

- [Reading Like a Historian: Corroboration](#)

Students use books, documents, and images to determine reliability and bias.