

Social Studies Curriculum Overview 2014

Elementary K-5

Kindergarten- The primary focus is for children to explore their understanding of their world through an examination of leaders- at home, in school, today and in the past; geographic concepts such as weather and features of land and water; economic concepts such as needs, wants, work, and savings; change over time including communication and transportation; and heroes and symbols of our country.

First- As children's literacy skills and experience in the world expands, so does their ability to apply social studies concepts: children consider the cultures of their community and its laws; they categorize communities into cities, suburbs, and towns and notes geographic features of the land; they learn the concept of country, our own and our neighbors; they consider resources and the world of work; they begin to learn about the history of our nation, its heroes, symbols, and leaders and how people and places change.

Second- Children continue to think about their families, neighborhoods, and communities as they apply their growing knowledge of the world: geographic concepts expand to include cities, suburbs, and rural communities; climate as well as weather, regions, and types of natural resources; a deeper understanding of cultural diversity, holidays, and symbols; economic concepts such as money and savings, producers and consumers, markets and trade; the early history of the United States as well as its laws, leaders, and levels of government.

Third- Social Studies Alive! Our Community and Beyond broadens students' awareness about the local and global communities in which they live. Students learn the basics of geography in order to locate communities on a globe. They learn about different cultures as well as public service roles. Through activities such as forming human monuments to commemorate contributions of community members, students solidify their grasp of the responsibilities within communities. Students will also explore Native American communities as well.

Fourth- The primary focus of the fourth grade social studies program will be the study of the geography of the United States. Students examine the four census regions of the country from an economic and cultural perspective, both in early times and in the present day. They use the skills and tools they have acquired to focus on specific sub-regions and states (especially Pennsylvania), landforms and climates, and to look in-depth to the national government and culture that binds this diverse country together.

Fifth- This course for grade five presents the story of the development of the American nation, from the pre-Columbian period to the post-Revolutionary period. This course will be the first step in a comprehensive, chronological development of American history in the Pennsbury School District which will continue at the eighth, ninth, and eleventh grade levels. The fifth grade course will develop the foundation on which the story of America will be built and which will be carried on by each grade level in turn.

This course focuses on one of the most remarkable stories in history: the creation of a new nation, peopled by immigrants from all parts of the globe and governed by institutions founded on the Judeo-Christian heritage, the ideals of the enlightenment, and English traditions of self government.

In addition to the historical aspects, the course will give some basic information related to the geography of the United States. This geography section does not have to stand as a separate unit but can be integrated into the historical narrative. Whenever possible, historical events should be seen through the eyes of participants such as explorers, American Indians, colonists, free blacks and slaves, children, or pioneers. The course must reflect the experiences of different racial, religious, and ethnic groups. History should be a "story well told", it should and can be a stimulating, interesting, and exciting story. Whenever possible it is hoped that social studies material and activities can be integrated into the language arts and reading program. In addition the teacher should attempt to relate historical topics to modern American society.

It is hoped that by limiting the scope of the fifth grade social studies program, teachers will have the time to give proper emphasis to this important period in American history and to develop the activities and assignments that will make the study of American history more meaningful to our students.