

# Grade 6 Social Studies Course Overview

Content Area: **Social Studies**  
Course(s): **Social Studies 6, Social Studies 7**  
Time Period:  
Length: **Full Year**  
Status: **Published**

## Course Overview

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Grade 6 Social Studies is a skill-based course where students ask questions, read non-fiction texts, investigate sources, and evaluate evidence to learn ancient history and how it connects to our world today. Topics include examining prehistoric peoples and events from the very earliest periods of human history to the creation of civilized societies. Students will apply the six themes of social studies (geography, religion, achievements, politics, economy, and social structure) as they explore the ancient civilizations of Mesopotamia, Egypt, India, China, Greece, and Rome.

### Unit 0: How We Learn About the Past

**Essential Theme:** In this unit, students analyze images of various events in the ancient world in order to hone in on the themes of world history. Students will identify ways to learn about the past. They will also make connections between experts who study the past and the evidence that they use.

**Essential Questions:** What are the themes of world history? What is the difference between history and prehistory? Who are the experts that study the past? What is the evidence they use? How are these sources used to interpret the past?

### Unit 1: Early Humans and the Rise of Civilization

**Essential Themes:** In this unit, students will explore how early humans developed from Paleolithic hunter-gatherers through Neolithic early farmers. Students will reconstruct the lives of prehistoric humans by examining images of cave paintings and other artifacts. Students will analyze images of various hominin groups and explore how physical and cultural adaptations gave later hominin groups advantages over earlier groups. Students will learn how the Neolithic development of agriculture led to a complex society through a stable food supply, permanent shelters, larger communities, specialized jobs, and trade.

**Essential Questions:** How do social scientists interpret the past? What capabilities helped hominins survive? How did the development of agriculture change daily life in the Neolithic Age?

### Unit 2: Mesopotamia

**Essential Theme:** In this unit, students will explain the relationship the land of Mesopotamia and the ways of life that developed there. Students learn how responses to geographic challenges resulted in the formation of complex Sumerian city-states. Students will learn about the characteristics of civilization and analyze artifacts to determine how each characteristic was exhibited in ancient Sumer. Students will create "mechanical dioramas" that illustrate major achievements of the Akkadian, Babylonian, Assyrian, and Neo-Babylonian empires that ruled Mesopotamia from approximately 2300 to 539 B.C.E.

**Essential Questions:** How did geographic challenges lead to the rise of city-states in Mesopotamia? Why do historians classify ancient Sumer as a civilization? What were the most important achievements of the Mesopotamian empires?

### **Unit 3: Ancient Egypt and the Middle East**

**Essential Themes:** In this unit, students will learn about ancient Egypt and the Middle East. Students will understand the importance of the Nile River and the surrounding deserts to Egypt's longevity as a civilization.

**Essential Questions:** How did geography affect early settlement in Egypt, Kush, and Canaan? What did the pharaohs of ancient Egypt accomplish, and how did they do it? How did social class affect daily life in ancient Egypt? In what ways did location influence the history of Kush? How did Judaism originate and develop? What are the central teachings of Judaism, and why did they survive to modern day?

### **Unit 4: Ancient India**

**Essential Theme:** In this unit, students will learn about ancient India's people, cultures, and ideas.

**Essential Questions:** How did geography affect early settlement in India? What can artifacts tell us about daily life in Mohenjodaro? What are the origins and beliefs of Hinduism? What Are Different Ways Buddhist Principles Were Passed Down? How did Ashoka unify the Mauryan Empire and spread Buddhist values? Why is the period during the Gupta Empire known as a "golden age"?

### **Unit 5: Ancient China**

**Essential Theme:** In this unit, students will learn about ancient China's people, cultures, and ideas.

**Essential Questions:** How did geography affect life in ancient China? What do Shang artifacts reveal about this civilization? How did Confucianism, Daoism, and Legalism influence political rule in ancient China? Was the Emperor of Qin an effective leader? In what ways did the Han dynasty improve government and daily life in China? How did the Silk Road promote an exchange of goods and ideas?

## **Unit 6: Ancient Greece**

**Essential Themes:** In this unit, students will be able to apply the six themes of social studies to our study of ancient Greece. Students will outline the development of government beginning with monarchy, oligarchy, tyranny, and democracy. Also, how the physical features affect the development of independent city-states and a dependence on trade.

**Essential Questions:** Explain how the physical features affected the development of the civilization including the formation of individual city-states. What are the key features of each form of government? What led to the development and downfall of each form of government? How did the polytheistic beliefs impact the daily lives of ancient Greeks? How did surplus aid the development of their sea trade? How do the technologies/inventions connect to our world today?

## **Unit 7: Ancient Rome**

**Essential Themes:** In this unit, students will learn about ancient Rome's people, cultures, and ideas.

**Essential Questions:** How did the Etruscans and Greeks influence the development of Rome? What were the characteristics of the Roman Republic and how did they change over time? Did the benefits of Roman expansion outweigh the costs? How did wealth affect daily life in the Roman Empire? How did Christianity originate and spread? How are Christians' lives shaped by the beliefs and practices of Christianity? To what extent does ancient Rome influence us today?

## **Unit 8. Research**

**Essential Theme:** Research is more than simply “looking things up.” Quality research begins with the development

of worthwhile questions and a plan to investigate possible answers.

Essential Questions: How do writers use technology to effectively conduct research? How does quality research

add weight to a paper or project?

## Standards

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LA.RI.6.1	Cite textual evidence and make relevant connections to support analysis of what the text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text.
LA.RI.6.2	Determine a central idea of a text and how it is conveyed through particular details; provide a summary of the text distinct from personal opinions or judgments.
LA.RI.6.3	Analyze in detail how a key individual, event, or idea is introduced, illustrated, and elaborated in a text (e.g., through examples or anecdotes).
LA.RI.6.4	Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in a text, including figurative, connotative, and technical meanings.
LA.RI.6.5	Analyze how a particular sentence, paragraph, chapter, or section fits into the overall structure of a text and contributes to the development of the ideas.
LA.RI.6.6	Determine an author's point of view or purpose in a text and explain how it is conveyed in the text.
LA.RI.6.7	Integrate information presented in different media or formats (e.g., visually, quantitatively) as well as in words to develop a coherent understanding of a topic or issue.
LA.RI.6.8	Trace and evaluate the argument and specific claims in a text, distinguishing claims that are supported by reasons and evidence from claims that are not.
LA.RI.6.10	By the end of the year read and comprehend literary nonfiction at grade level text-complexity or above, with scaffolding as needed.
LA.W.6.1	Write arguments to support claims with clear reasons and relevant evidence.
LA.W.6.1.A	Introduce claim(s) and organize the reasons and evidence clearly.
LA.W.6.1.B	Support claim(s) with clear reasons and relevant evidence, using credible sources and demonstrating an understanding of the topic or text.
LA.W.6.1.C	Use words, phrases, and clauses to clarify the relationships among claim(s) and reasons.
LA.W.6.1.D	Establish and maintain a formal/academic style, approach, and form.
LA.W.6.1.E	Provide a concluding statement or section that follows from the argument presented.
LA.W.6.2	Write informative/explanatory texts to examine a topic and convey ideas, concepts, and information through the selection, organization, and analysis of relevant content.
LA.W.6.2.A	Introduce a topic and organize ideas, concepts, and information, using text structures (e.g., definition, classification, comparison/contrast, cause/effect, etc.) and text features

	(e.g., headings, graphics, and multimedia) when useful to aiding comprehension.
LA.W.6.2.B	Develop the topic with relevant facts, definitions, concrete details, quotations, or other information and examples.
LA.W.6.2.C	Use appropriate transitions to clarify the relationships among ideas and concepts.
LA.W.6.2.D	Use precise language and domain-specific vocabulary to inform about or explain the topic.
LA.W.6.2.E	Establish and maintain a formal/academic style, approach, and form.
LA.W.6.2.F	Provide a concluding statement or section that follows from the information or explanation presented.
LA.W.6.4	Produce clear and coherent writing in which the development, organization, voice and style are appropriate to task, purpose, and audience. (Grade-specific expectations for writing types are defined in standards 1–3 above.)
LA.W.6.7	Conduct short research projects to answer a question, drawing on several sources and refocusing the inquiry when appropriate.
LA.W.6.8	Gather relevant information from multiple print and digital sources; assess the credibility of each source; and quote or paraphrase the data and conclusions of others while avoiding plagiarism and providing basic bibliographic information for sources.
LA.W.6.9	Draw evidence from literary or informational texts to support analysis, reflection, and research.
LA.W.6.10	Write routinely over extended time frames (time for research, reflection, metacognition/self correction, and revision) and shorter time frames (a single sitting or a day or two) for a range of discipline-specific tasks, purposes, and audiences.
LA.SL.6.1	Engage effectively in a range of collaborative discussions (one-on-one, in groups, and teacher-led) with diverse partners on grade 6 topics, texts, and issues, building on others' ideas and expressing their own clearly.
LA.SL.6.1.A	Come to discussions prepared, having read or studied required material; explicitly draw on that preparation by referring to evidence on the topic, text, or issue to probe and reflect on ideas under discussion.
LA.SL.6.1.B	Follow rules for collegial discussions, set specific goals and deadlines, and define individual roles as needed.
LA.SL.6.2	Interpret information presented in diverse media and formats (e.g., visually, quantitatively, orally) and explain how it contributes to a topic, text, or issue under study.
LA.SL.6.3	Deconstruct a speaker's argument and specific claims, distinguishing claims that are supported by reasons and evidence from claims that are not.
LA.SL.6.4	Present claims and findings, sequencing ideas logically and using pertinent descriptions, facts, and details to accentuate main ideas or themes; use appropriate speaking behaviors (e.g., eye contact, adequate volume, and clear pronunciation).
LA.SL.6.5	Include multimedia components (e.g., graphics, images, music, sound) and visual displays in presentations to clarify information.
LA.SL.6.6	Adapt speech to a variety of contexts and tasks, demonstrating command of formal English when indicated or appropriate.
LA.L.6.1	Demonstrate command of the conventions of standard English grammar and usage when writing or speaking.
SOC.6.2.8.A.1.a	Compare and contrast the social organization, natural resources, and land use of early hunters/gatherers and those who lived in early agrarian societies.
SOC.6.2.8.A.2.a	Explain how/why different early river valley civilizations developed similar forms of government and legal structures.
SOC.6.2.8.A.2.b	Determine the role of slavery in the economic and social structures of early river valley civilizations.

SOC.6.2.8.A.3.a	Compare and contrast the methods (i.e., autocratic rule, philosophies, and bureaucratic structures) used by the rulers of Rome, China, and India to control and unify their expanding empires.
SOC.6.2.8.A.3.b	Compare and contrast the rights and responsibilities of free men, women, slaves, and foreigners in the political, economic, and social structures of classical civilizations.
SOC.6.2.8.A.3.c	Determine the foundational concepts and principles of Athenian democracy and the Roman Republic that later influenced the development of the United States Constitution.
SOC.6.2.8.A.3.d	Compare the status (i.e., political, economic, and social) of groups in the Ancient World to those of people today and evaluate how individuals perceived the principles of liberty and equality then and now.
SOC.6.2.8.A.3.e	Compare and contrast the American legal system with the legal systems of classical civilizations, and determine the extent to which these early systems influenced our current legal system.
SOC.6.2.8.B.1.a	Explain the various migratory patterns of hunters/gatherers that moved from Africa to Eurasia, Australia, and the Americas, and describe the impact of migration on their lives and on the shaping of societies.
SOC.6.2.8.B.2.a	Determine the extent to which geography influenced settlement, the development of trade networks, technological innovations, and the sustainability of early river valley civilizations.
SOC.6.2.8.B.2.b	Compare and contrast physical and political maps of early river valley civilizations and their modern counterparts (i.e., Mesopotamia and Iraq; Ancient Egypt and Modern Egypt; Indus River Valley and Modern Pakistan/India; Ancient China and Modern China), and determine the geopolitical impact of these civilizations, then and now.
SOC.6.2.8.B.3.a	Determine how geography and the availability of natural resources influenced the development of the political, economic, and cultural systems of each of the classical civilizations and provided motivation for expansion.
SOC.6.2.8.B.3.b	Explain how geography and the availability of natural resources led to both the development of Greek city-states and to their decline.
SOC.6.2.8.C.1.a	Describe the influence of the agricultural revolution (e.g., the impact of food surplus from farming) on population growth and the subsequent development of civilizations.
SOC.6.2.8.C.1.b	Determine the impact of technological advancements on hunter/gatherer and agrarian societies.
SOC.6.2.8.C.2.a	Explain how technological advancements led to greater economic specialization, improved weaponry, trade, and the development of a class system in early river valley civilizations.
SOC.6.2.8.C.3.b	Explain how classical civilizations used technology and innovation to enhance agricultural/manufacturing output and commerce, to expand military capabilities, to improve life in urban areas, and to allow for greater division of labor.
SOC.6.2.8.D.1.a	Demonstrate an understanding of pre-agricultural and post-agricultural periods in terms of relative length of time.
SOC.6.2.8.D.1.c	Explain how archaeological discoveries are used to develop and enhance understanding of life prior to written records.
SOC.6.2.8.D.2.a	Analyze the impact of religion on daily life, government, and culture in various early river valley civilizations.
SOC.6.2.8.D.2.b	Explain how the development of written language transformed all aspects of life in early river valley civilizations.
SOC.6.2.8.D.2.c	Analyze the factors that led to the rise and fall of various early river valley civilizations and determine whether there was a common pattern of growth and decline.
SOC.6.2.8.D.2.d	Evaluate the importance and enduring legacy of the major achievements of the early river valley civilizations over time.

SOC.6.2.8.D.3.a	Compare and contrast social hierarchies in classical civilizations as they relate to power, wealth, and equality.
SOC.6.2.8.D.3.b	Determine common factors that contributed to the decline and fall of the Roman Empire, Gupta India, and Han China.
SOC.6.2.8.D.3.c	Evaluate the importance and enduring legacy of the major achievements of Greece, Rome, India, and China over time.
SOC.6.2.8.D.3.e	Determine the extent to which religion, economic issues, and conflict shaped the values and decisions of the classical civilizations.
TECH.8.1.5.A.2	Format a document using a word processing application to enhance text and include graphics, symbols and/or pictures.
TECH.8.1.5.A.3	Use a graphic organizer to organize information about problem or issue.
TECH.8.1.5.B.CS2	Create original works as a means of personal or group expression.
TECH.8.1.5.C.CS2	Communicate information and ideas to multiple audiences using a variety of media and formats.
TECH.8.1.5.D.1	Understand the need for and use of copyrights.
TECH.8.1.5.E.CS2	Locate, organize, analyze, evaluate, synthesize, and ethically use information from a variety of sources and media.
TECH.8.1.5.E.CS3	Evaluate and select information sources and digital tools based on the appropriateness for specific tasks.

## Materials

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- Textbook: TCI Publishing, *History Alive: The Ancient World*
- Supplemental Readings: Macaulay, *Pyramid*; Gombrich, *A Little History of the World*; *National Geographic Student Guide to Egypt*

## COVER

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#### Social Studies

#### Grade 6

Course Number: 3060

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