

# Grade 7 Social Studies: Course Overview

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

## **COVER**

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### **EAST BRUNSWICK PUBLIC SCHOOLS**

**East Brunswick New Jersey**

#### **Superintendent of Schools**

Dr. Victor P. Valeski

#### **Social Studies**

#### **Grade 7**

Course Number: 3070

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## **Course Overview**

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Grade 7 Social Studies is a skill-based course that teaches historical thinking primarily through the practices of reading historical texts and responding to them in writing, discussion, and formal speaking. Students learn and routinely practice the skills needed to weigh evidence and make assertions in the context of historical topics and current events; they also learn how the posing of good questions leads to deeper understanding.

Units of Study:

### **0. Skills and Themes**

Essential Theme: Students and historians must be insightful readers, know how to approach and analyze a text, speak about their thoughts clearly and convincingly, question primary and secondary sources, and write clearly.

Essential Question: What skills are needed to be successful in seventh-grade social studies? What skills must historians use in their work?

### **1. Europe in Medieval Times**

Essential Themes: Students will learn about life in medieval Europe, including the legacy of the Roman Empire, the growth and spread of Christianity, the impact of feudalism, and the development of the Byzantine Empire.

Essential Questions: To what extent have the contributions of ancient Rome influenced modern society? How well did feudalism establish order in Europe in the Middle Ages? How influential was the Roman Catholic Church in medieval Europe? What was life like in medieval European towns?

### **2. Islam in Medieval Times**

Essential Theme: Students will learn about the spread and impact of Islam on the medieval world, including the origins of Islam and role of the Qur'an, the different beliefs that Muslims hold, the spread of Islam and the formation of Muslim Empires, and how new technologies impacted medieval Muslims.

Essential Questions: How did Islam originate and spread? How do the beliefs and practices of Islam shape Muslims' lives? What important innovations and adaptations did medieval Muslims make? How did the Crusades affect the lives of Christians, Muslims, and Jews?

### **3. The Culture and Kingdoms of West Africa**

Essential Themes: Students will learn about West Africa, including how the environment affected West African societies and kingdoms, how gold trade across the Sahara increased prosperity for West Africa, the rise and decline of the kingdom of Ghana, and how Mali became a powerful empire, center of Islam, and site of encounter.

Essential Questions: What was the most significant factor in the development of early societies in West Africa? To what extent did trans-Saharan trade lead to Ghana's wealth and success? In what ways did Islam influence West African society? In what ways do the cultural achievements of West Africa influence our culture today?

### **4. Imperial China**

Essential Theme: Students will learn about Imperial China's political developments, economic growth, and technological innovations, including : the reunification of China by the Tang and Song dynasties, the economic revolution in China and its effects, the emergence of new technologies such as gunpowder and printing, changes in policy regarding China's interaction with the outside world.

Essential Questions: Which method of selecting officials led to the best leaders for China? How did the Chinese improve their economy during the Tang and Song dynasties? How have medieval Chinese discoveries and inventions influenced the modern world? How did the foreign- contact policies of three medieval Chinese dynasties affect China?

### **5. Medieval Japan**

Essential Themes: Students will learn how different cultures influenced Japan and its people, what role the samurai had in shaping Chinese culture, and what life was like during Japan's golden age.

Essential Questions: In what ways did neighboring cultures influence Japan? What was life like for

aristocrats during the Heian period? What was the role of the samurai in the military society of medieval Japan?

## **6. Civilizations of the Americas**

**Essential Themes:** In this unit, students will learn about the civilizations of the Americas, including: how environmental factors impacted their development, how their diverse cultures and lifestyles differed from Afro- Eurasian civilizations, the rise and decline of the Maya, Aztecs, and Incas, how and why Tenochtitlán was a site of encounter, how the Maya, Aztecs, and Incas were similar and different.

**Essential Questions:** What led to the rise, flourishing, and fall of the Maya civilization? How did the Aztecs rise to power? What was daily life like for the Aztecs in Tenochtitlan? How did the Incas manage their large and remote empire? What were the significant achievements of the Maya, Aztecs, and Incas?

## **7. Europe's Renaissance and Reformation**

**Essential Themes:** Students will learn about the Renaissance and Reformation periods, including how Martin Luther and Calvinism influenced Christianity, the impact of the Spanish Inquisition on other religions, the development of Sikhism, how the Reformation and Counter-Reformation divided the medieval world, its people, and the Christian church, how religions developed and spread throughout the early modern period, the role of women within these developing religions, and the lasting effects of the Reformation and the Renaissance periods.

**Essential Question:** What changes in Europe led to the Renaissance? What advances were made during the Renaissance? In what ways have various leading figures of the Renaissance affected modern society? What factors led to the weakening of the Catholic Church and the beginning of the Reformation? What were the effects of the Reformation?

## **8. Europe Enters the Modern Age**

**Essential Theme:** Students will learn about Europe during the modern age, including the global impact of the Scientific Revolution and Enlightenment. Students will examine the effects of discovering the Americas and how that impacted the world's interconnection.

Colonization, slavery, and the effects of gunpowder are discussed through the lens of global relations and the

economy.

Essential Questions: How did the Age of Exploration change the way Europeans viewed the world? How did the Scientific Revolution change the way people understood the world? How have the ideas of the Enlightenment influenced modern government?

## Textbooks and Other Resources

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Textbook: TCI Publishing, *History Alive: The Medieval World and Beyond*

Supplimental readings: E. H. Gombrich: *A Little History of the World*

Donna Jo Napoli, *Bound*

David Macaulay: *Cathedral: The Story of Its Construction*

Diane Wilson, *I Rode a Horse of Milk White Jade*

Elizabeth Gray Vining, *Adam of the Road*

## Standards

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LA.RH.6-8.1	Cite specific textual evidence to support analysis of primary and secondary sources.
LA.RH.6-8.2	Determine the central ideas or information of a primary or secondary source; provide an accurate summary of the source distinct from prior knowledge or opinions.
LA.RH.6-8.3	Identify key steps in a text's description of a process related to history/social studies (e.g., how a bill becomes law, how interest rates are raised or lowered).
LA.RH.6-8.4	Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in a text, including vocabulary specific to domains related to history/social studies.
LA.RH.6-8.5	Describe how a text presents information (e.g., sequentially, comparatively, causally).
LA.RH.6-8.6	Identify aspects of a text that reveal an author's point of view or purpose (e.g., loaded language, inclusion or avoidance of particular facts).
LA.RH.6-8.7	Integrate visual information (e.g., in charts, graphs, photographs, videos, or maps) with other information in print and digital texts.
LA.RH.6-8.8	Distinguish among fact, opinion, and reasoned judgment in a text.

LA.RH.6-8.9	Analyze the relationship between a primary and secondary source on the same topic.
LA.WHST.6-8.1	Write arguments focused on discipline-specific content.
LA.WHST.6-8.1.A	Introduce claim(s) about a topic or issue, acknowledge and distinguish the claim(s) from alternate or opposing claims, and organize the reasons and evidence logically.
LA.WHST.6-8.1.B	Support claim(s) with logical reasoning and relevant, accurate data and evidence that demonstrate an understanding of the topic or text, using credible sources.
LA.WHST.6-8.1.C	Use words, phrases, and clauses to create cohesion and clarify the relationships among claim(s), counterclaims, reasons, and evidence.
LA.WHST.6-8.1.D	Establish and maintain a formal/academic style, approach, and form.
LA.WHST.6-8.1.E	Provide a concluding statement or section that follows from and supports the argument presented.
LA.WHST.6-8.2	Write informative/explanatory texts, including the narration of historical events, scientific procedures/experiments, or technical processes.
LA.WHST.6-8.2.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.WHST.6-8.2.B	Develop the topic with relevant, well-chosen facts, definitions, concrete details, quotations, or other information and examples.
LA.WHST.6-8.2.C	Use appropriate and varied transitions to create cohesion and clarify the relationships among ideas and concepts.
LA.WHST.6-8.2.D	Use precise language and domain-specific vocabulary to inform about or explain the topic.
LA.WHST.6-8.2.E	Establish and maintain a formal/academic style, approach, and form.
LA.WHST.6-8.2.F	Provide a concluding statement or section that follows from and supports the information or explanation presented.
LA.WHST.6-8.4	Produce clear and coherent writing in which the development, organization, voice, and style are appropriate to task, purpose, and audience.
LA.WHST.6-8.5	With some guidance and support from peers and adults, develop and strengthen writing as needed by planning, revising, editing, rewriting, or trying a new approach, focusing on how well purpose and audience have been addressed.
LA.WHST.6-8.6	Use technology, including the Internet, to produce and publish writing and present the relationships between information and ideas clearly and efficiently.
LA.WHST.6-8.7	Conduct short research projects to answer a question (including a self-generated question), drawing on several sources and generating additional related, focused questions that allow for multiple avenues of exploration.
LA.WHST.6-8.8	Gather relevant information from multiple print and digital sources, using search terms effectively; assess the credibility and accuracy of each source; and quote or paraphrase the data and conclusions of others while avoiding plagiarism and following a standard format for citation.
LA.WHST.6-8.9	Draw evidence from informational texts to support analysis, reflection, and research.
LA.SL.6	Speaking and Listening
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.6.1.C	Pose and respond to specific questions with elaboration and detail by making comments that contribute to the topic, text, or issue under discussion.
LA.SL.6.1.D	Review the key ideas expressed and demonstrate understanding of multiple perspectives through reflection and paraphrasing.
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.
SOC.6.1.8.A.1.a	Compare and contrast forms of governance, belief systems, and family structures among African, European, and Native American groups.
SOC.6.1.8.B.1.b	Analyze the world in spatial terms (e.g., longitude, latitude) using historical maps to determine what led to the exploration of new water and land routes.
SOC.6.1.8.C.1.a	Evaluate the impact of science, religion, and technology innovations on European exploration.
SOC.6.1.8.D.2.b	Compare and contrast the voluntary and involuntary migratory experiences of different groups of people, and explain why their experiences differed.
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.4.a	Analyze the role of religion and other means rulers used to unify and centrally govern expanding territories with diverse populations.
SOC.6.2.8.A.4.b	Compare and contrast the Japanese and European systems of feudalism and the effectiveness of each in promoting social, economic, and political order.
SOC.6.2.8.A.4.c	Determine the influence of medieval English legal and constitutional practices (i.e., the Magna Carta, parliament, the development of habeas corpus, and an independent judiciary) on modern democratic thought and institutions.
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.4.a	Explain how geography influenced the development of the political, economic, and cultural centers of each empire as well as the empires' relationships with other parts of the world.
SOC.6.2.8.B.4.c	Determine how Africa's physical geography and natural resources presented challenges and opportunities for trade, development, and the spread of religion.
SOC.6.2.8.B.4.d	Explain why the Arabian Peninsula's physical features and location made it the epicenter of Afro-Eurasian trade and fostered the spread of Islam into Africa, Europe, and Asia.
SOC.6.2.8.B.4.e	Analyze the motivations for civilizations to modify the environment, determine the positive and negative consequences of environmental changes made during this time period, and relate these changes to current environmental challenges.
SOC.6.2.8.B.4.f	Explain how the geographies and climates of Asia, Africa, Europe, and the Americas influenced their economic development and interaction or isolation with other societies.
SOC.6.2.8.C.3.a	Analyze the impact of expanding land and sea trade routes as well as a uniform system of exchange in the Mediterranean World and Asia.
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.C.4.b	Determine the extent to which interaction between the Islamic world and medieval Europe increased trade, enhanced technology innovation, and impacted scientific thought and the arts.
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.d	Compare and contrast the tenets of various world religions that developed in or around this time period (i.e., Buddhism, Christianity, Confucianism, Islam, Judaism, Sikhism, and Taoism), their patterns of expansion, and their responses to the current challenges of globalization.
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.
SOC.6.2.8.D.4.a	Analyze the role of religion and economics in shaping each empire's social hierarchy, and evaluate the impact these hierarchical structures had on the lives of various groups of people.
SOC.6.2.8.D.4.b	Analyze the causes and outcomes of the Crusades from different perspectives, including the perspectives of European political and religious leaders, the crusaders, Jews, Muslims, and traders.
SOC.6.2.8.D.4.c	Assess the demographic, economic, and religious impact of the plague on Europe.
SOC.6.2.8.D.4.d	Determine which events led to the rise and eventual decline of European feudalism.
SOC.6.2.8.D.4.e	Analyze the immediate and long-term impact on China and Europe of the open exchange between Europe and the Yuan (Mongol) Dynasty.
SOC.6.2.8.D.4.f	Determine the extent to which the Byzantine Empire influenced the Islamic world and western Europe.
SOC.6.2.8.D.4.g	Evaluate the importance and enduring legacy of the major achievements of the people living Asia, Africa (Islam), Europe and the Americas over time.
SOC.6.2.12.A.1.a	Compare and contrast the motivations for and methods by which various empires (e.g., Ming, Qing, Spanish, Mughal, Ottoman) expanded, and assess why some were more effective than others in maintaining control of their empires.
SOC.6.2.12.B.1.a	Explain major changes in world political boundaries between 1450 and 1770, and assess the extent of European political and military control in Africa, Asia, and the Americas by the mid-18th century.
SOC.6.2.12.C.1.b	Trace the movement of essential commodities (e.g., sugar, cotton) from Asia to Europe to America, and determine the impact trade on the New World's economy and society.
SOC.6.2.12.C.1.c	Assess the role of mercantilism in stimulating European expansion through trade, conquest, and colonization.
SOC.6.2.12.C.1.d	Determine the effects of increased global trade and the importation of gold and silver from the New World on inflation in Europe, Southwest Asia, and Africa.
SOC.6.2.12.C.1.e	Determine the extent to which various technologies, (e.g., printing, the marine compass, cannonry, Arabic numerals) derived from Europe's interactions with Islam and Asia provided the necessary tools for European exploration and conquest.
SOC.6.2.12.D.1.a	Assess the political, social, and economic impact of the Columbian Exchange (e.g., plants, animals, ideas, pathogens) on Europeans and Native Americans.
SOC.6.2.12.D.1.b	Compare slavery practices and other forms of coerced labor or social bondage common in East Africa, West Africa, Southwest Asia, Europe, and the Americas.



SOC.6.2.12.D.1.c	Analyze various motivations for the Atlantic slave trade and the impact on Europeans, Africans, and Americans.
SOC.6.2.12.D.1.d	Explain how the new social stratification created by voluntary and coerced interactions among Native Americans, Africans, and Europeans in Spanish colonies laid the foundation for conflict.
SOC.6.2.12.D.1.e	Assess the impact of economic, political, and social policies and practices regarding African slaves, indigenous peoples, and Europeans in the Spanish and Portuguese colonies.
SOC.6.2.12.D.1.f	Analyze the political, cultural, and moral role of Catholic and Protestant Christianity in the European colonies.
SOC.6.2.12.D.2.a	Determine the factors that led to the Renaissance, the significance of the location of the Italian city-states as the center of the Renaissance, and the impact on the arts.
SOC.6.2.12.D.2.b	Determine the factors that led to the Reformation and the impact on European politics.
SOC.6.2.12.D.2.c	Justify how innovations from Asian and Islamic civilizations, as well as from ancient Greek and Roman culture, laid the foundation for the Renaissance.
SOC.6.2.12.D.2.e	Assess the impact of the printing press and other technologies developed on the dissemination of ideas.
TECH.8.1.8.A.2	Create a document (e.g., newsletter, reports, personalized learning plan, business letters or flyers) using one or more digital applications to be critiqued by professionals for usability.
TECH.8.1.8.D.2	Demonstrate the application of appropriate citations to digital content.

## **Grading and Evaluation Guidelines**

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Grades are determined by a variety of assessments, including classwork, homework, reading quizzes, writing assignments, and larger projects. All students complete common assessments for each unit.

## **Other Details**

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Course number: 3070