

# Grade 3 Unit 1: Geography, People, and the Environment

Content Area: **Social Studies**  
Course(s): **Social Studies Grade 3**  
Time Period: **MP1**  
Length: **45 days**  
Status: **Published**

## NJSLS - Social Studies

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SOC.6.1.5.CivicsPI.2	Investigate different ways individuals participate in government (e.g., voters, jurors, taxpayers).
SOC.6.1.5.CivicsPI.4	Describe the services our government provides the people in the community, state and across the United States.
SOC.6.1.5.CivicsPD.2	Explain how individuals can initiate and/or influence local, state, or national public policymaking (e.g., petitions, proposing laws, contacting elected officials).
SOC.6.1.5.CivicsPD.3	Explain how and why it is important that people from diverse cultures collaborate to find solutions to community, state, national, and global challenges.
SOC.6.1.5.CivicsDP.2	Compare and contrast responses of individuals and groups, past and present, to violations of fundamental rights (e.g., fairness, civil rights, human rights).
SOC.6.1.5.CivicsPR.1	Compare procedures for making decisions in a variety of settings including classroom, school, government, and /or society.
SOC.6.1.5.CivicsPR.3	Evaluate school and community rules, laws and/or policies and determine if they meet their intended purpose.
SOC.6.1.5.CivicsPR.4	Explain how policies are developed to address public problems.
SOC.6.1.5.CivicsCM.3	Identify the types of behaviors that promote collaboration and problem solving with others who have different perspectives.
SOC.6.1.5.HistoryCC.2	Use a variety of sources to illustrate how the American identity has evolved over time.

## Rationale & Transfer Goals

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Students are learning about the world around them and how they fit into it. They will get to have a better understanding about life in communities outside theirs, particularly the United States, and how it differs or is the same as where they are from. Students will also gain more knowledge and skills in reading maps and locating needed information from various forms of maps, both digital and print.

## Enduring Understandings

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- Regions form and change as a result of unique physical conditions, economies, and cultures.
- Patterns of settlement differ markedly from region to region, place to place, and time to time.
- The experiences people have when they migrate to new places differs for many reasons, including whether it is by choice or condition.
- Maps and other geographic representations, geospatial technologies, and spatial thinking can be used to

understand and communicate information.

- Human activities affect environmental characteristics of places or regions resulting in positive and negative impacts.

## **Essential Questions**

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- How do we use maps to learn about the world around us?
- What factors shape and make communities different?
- How does geography help us understand the earth and where we live?
- How does our environment affect the way we live?

## **Important Vocabulary**

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### **Mapping Our World**

location: where something is

globe: a model of Earth

sphere: a round, solid figure

hemisphere: half of the Earth

intermediate location: Northeast, Southeast, Northwest, Southwest

latitude: imaginary lines running East and West around the globe

longitude: imaginary lines running up and down - or North and South - on the globe

equator: imaginary line drawn around the middle of the Earth

prime meridian: imaginary line dividing the globe from North to South that is the starting line for longitude

coordinates: absolute location that tells the latitude and longitude of a place

absolute location: exactly where something is

relative location: where something is in relation to something else

projection: Way to display the world on a flat map

population density: number of people living in a given amount of space

topography: surface of land that includes natural and human-made features

atlas: book of maps that gives important information about a particular place

## **Communities**

community: a group of people who live and work in one place

population: the number of people living in a place

urban: having to do with a city

rural: having to do with countryside, farms, and small towns

suburb: a smaller city or town near a larger city

transportation: the movement of people and goods from place to place

climate: the weather a place has over a long period of time

desert: an area with dry, often hot, climate

landforms: natural features on Earth's surface, such as hills, plains, and coasts

natural resources: things found in nature that people can use, such as trees, water, soil, and minerals

culture: a way of life shared by members of a group

## **U.S. Geography**

geography: the study of Earth's surface and the way people use it

physical feature: a feature of a place's land, water, climate, or plant life

mountain: a raised area of land that is higher than the land around it

valley: a lowland that lies between hills and mountains

plain: a broad area of flat land

plateau: a landform with steep sides and a flat top

desert: a place with a hot, dry climate

erosion: the slow wearing away of something as the result of exposure to wind and water

delta: the area where a river flows into a sea or ocean

estuary: the area where saltwater meets, or flows into, freshwater

tributary: a small river or stream that flows into a larger river

region: a large area with at least one feature that makes it different than others areas

weather: the conditions outside, such as how hot, cold, rainy, snowy, or windy it is on a given day

climate: weather that a place has over a long period of time

ecosystem: an area in which plants, animals, and nonliving things exist together

natural resources: things found in nature that people can use, such as trees, water, soil, and minerals

## **People and the Environment**

environment: the physical and human features that make up a place

urban: having to do with a city

rural: having to do with countryside, farms, and small towns

suburban: having to do with smaller communities around cities

navigable: wide and deep enough to let ships go through

agriculture: the growing up crops and raising of farm animals for sale

energy: the ability to do work

resource: something people can use

adapt: to change in response to something else

scarce: not enough

modify: to make changes to something

irrigation: the moving of water to dry areas

reservoir: a human-made lake used for collecting and storing water

aqueduct: a structure to carry water

pollution: anything that makes a natural resource dirty or unsafe to use

conserve: to save resources to make them last longer

- Maps can help you find places
- Maps can help you know more about Earth, its land and its features
- What factors shape a community
- How communities accessed and used natural and human-made resources in the past and the present
- How environment affects how people live
- People make and spend money

### **Skills - What students will be able to do**

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- Use intermediate directions on a compass rose
- Use a map grid
- Find points of latitude and longitude on a map
- Interpret a road map
- Categorize and classify what makes communities different
- Compare and contrast different regions, landforms, and climates
- Read a landform map
- Read resource maps
- Read population maps
- Compare human-made and natural resources from the past and present that affects how a community lives

### **Instructional Activities - How we teach content and skills**

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The following S.S. magazines will be used as a guide to teaching these standards:

- Mapping our World
- Communities

- US Geography
- People and the Environment

This [document](#) has a list of suggested resources and activities for each magazine.

### **Evidence/Assessment - How we know students have learned**

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- Teacher observation of oral discussions
- Successful completion of performance tasks
- Magazine assessments
- Use of vocabulary learned throughout the unit
- Completion of exit tickets and classwork assignments
- [Assessments](#)

### **Spiraling for Mastery**

<b>Content or Skill for this Unit</b>	<b>Spiral Focus from Previous Unit</b>	<b>Instructional Activity</b>
1. Reading maps  2. Understanding that the United States has various regions	1. These skills were introduced in the 2nd grade location magazine  2. The different land features of North America was introduced in the 2nd grade North America magazine	1. Students will have to continue practicing reading a grid map and using a map legend to find information on a map  2. Students will build on the general knowledge of landforms to understand how various regions have similar landforms and it affects how communities live

### **Key Resources**

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Each magazine has online resources that can be printed from the digital teacher’s manual. The resources are

located and directly linked on the table of contents page for each magazine. These resources include an anticipatory set to test student’s prior knowledge on the topic, a reading skills sheet to foster interdisciplinary connections, various social studies skills pages (ex. maps and globes), vocabulary activities, magazine assessments, and performance tasks that correlate with skills developed in the unit.

## 21st Century Life & Careers

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WRK.9.2.5.CAP.4	Explain the reasons why some jobs and careers require specific training, skills, and certification (e.g., life guards, child care, medicine, education) and examples of these requirements.
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## Career Readiness, Life Literacies, & Key Skills

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TECH.9.4.5.CI.2	Investigate a persistent local or global issue, such as climate change, and collaborate with individuals with diverse perspectives to improve upon current actions designed to address the issue (e.g., 6.3.5.CivicsPD.3, W.5.7).
TECH.9.4.5.CI.3	Participate in a brainstorming session with individuals with diverse perspectives to expand one’s thinking about a topic of curiosity (e.g., 8.2.5.ED.2, 1.5.5.CR1a).
TECH.9.4.5.CT.2	Identify a problem and list the types of individuals and resources (e.g., school, community agencies, governmental, online) that can aid in solving the problem (e.g., 2.1.5.CHSS.1, 4-ESS3-1).
TECH.9.4.5.CT.4	Apply critical thinking and problem-solving strategies to different types of problems such as personal, academic, community and global (e.g., 6.1.5.CivicsCM.3).
TECH.9.4.5.GCA.1	Analyze how culture shapes individual and community perspectives and points of view (e.g., 1.1.5.C2a, RL.5.9, 6.1.5.HistoryCC.8).
TECH.9.4.5.IML.6	Use appropriate sources of information from diverse sources, contexts, disciplines, and cultures to answer questions (e.g., RI.5.7, 6.1.5.HistoryCC.7, 7.1.NM. IPRET.5).
TECH.9.4.5.IML.7	Evaluate the degree to which information meets a need including social emotional learning, academic, and social (e.g., 2.2.5. PF.5).

## Interdisciplinary Connections

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LA.RI.3.1	Ask and answer questions, and make relevant connections to demonstrate understanding of a text, referring explicitly to the text as the basis for the answers.
MA.3.NBT.A	Use place value understanding and properties of operations to perform multi-digit arithmetic.

## Intersections of History

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**Black:** When students develop a more global view and awareness of the world around them, they begin to understand various perspectives on events from history and current events. This unit also shows how history has shaped geography over time and why people have migrated either voluntarily or involuntarily to various regions in the United States. This will set up a basis of understanding when we dig deeper into the history of

the early colonies in later units.

**Hispanic:** The discussion of various regions and geographical features highlights various jobs that are more needed in different areas. Many Hispanic workers rely on farming jobs and understanding the geographical connection shows why Hispanic families may move to different regions.

**Women:** The discussion of communities reflects how women are an integral part to the well being of a well-functioning community.

**LGBTQ:** When students develop a more global view and awareness of the world around them, they begin to understand various perspectives on events from history and current events.