



Greenwich Public Schools Curriculum Overview

Ancient Civilizations

Personalized learning is achieved through standards-based, rigorous and relevant curriculum that is aligned to digital tools and resources.

Note: Teachers retain professional discretion in how the learning is presented based on the needs and interests of their students.

Course Description

The Ancient Civilizations course examines critical turning points in Egypt, Mesopotamia, Greece, and Rome that shaped early humans. These dynamic societies and their crucial contributions to humanity are brought to life through archeology, architecture, primary sources, and projects.

Unit Pacing Guide

- Unit One: Prehistory: Paleolithic and Neolithic Cultures (3-4 weeks)
- Unit Two: River Civilizations of Mesopotamia and Egypt (4-5 weeks)
- Unit Three: Ancient Greece (4-5 weeks)
- Unit Four: Ancient Rome (4-5 weeks)

Enduring Understanding for the course:

Ancient Civilizations and their inhabitants laid the foundation for the modern world with their contributions to architecture, religion, art, and political philosophy. Their conflicts shaped the course of world history, and their societal struggles with rule of law, inequality, city planning, and global relations mirror contemporary issues. Students of this course must consider the foundational questions of what it means to be human, what it means to be a part of a larger civilization, and how we make meaning of our lives.

Unit One Desired Understanding:

- There is an interaction between people, their tools, and their environments.
- Homo sapiens were the result of hundreds of thousands of years of evolution; hominid species competed with and replaced one another.
- Early humans domesticated plants and animals and, in a way, this development domesticated human societies.

Unit Two Desired Understanding:

- The transition to urban life was a process that incorporated geographical, technological, and agricultural factors.
- Students will understand that cities in Mesopotamia and Egypt differ from small village communities. They are more populous, more stratified, and require more specialization than smaller settlements.

- Resource management leads to the development of systems writing and record-keeping that then go on to find other societal purposes.
- States require the manifestation of political power. Written law codes and religious ideology serve to support established state power.
- State power can be expressed by large architectural projects that include ziggurats, pyramids, and obelisks.

Unit Three Desired Understanding:

- Greek city-states were shaped by their mountainous geography and, as such, developed distinct cultures and political systems.
- Greek city-states engaged in both cooperation (against Persia) and conflict (against one another); these same states were later both defeated by Alexander and incorporated into his empire.
- Greek theater entertained but also offered social and civic instruction through stories; these works established themes with which we still engage in our modern era.
- Greek Architecture and city planning influenced our own building styles.
- Greek philosophy is still featured heavily in our own educational system. Why? What is so instructive and important about the Greek ideas and theory that we continue to examine the texts of Plato and Aristotle today?
- Ancient Greece is credited with the foundation of democracy as a political system and citizenship as a responsibility. This system was unique for its age but was far from democratic by modern standards. It was not inclusive of women and slavery was common. Still, Athenian democracy struggled with questions of citizenship, elections, and public policy in similar ways to our own society.
- Greek with Persia had long-ranging consequences; Alexander extended the war against Persia and created a massive empire that spread Hellenistic culture to faraway lands.

Unit Four Desired Understanding:

- What does it mean to be Roman?
 - Students may debate the factors that distinguished Rome -- is this language, tribe, participation in institutions, military prowess, city infrastructure, something else?
- What were the primary causes of the Republic's demise? What lessons do these issues pose for our society?
 - Students may consider personality politics, weakening of institutions, excessive expansion, questions of citizenship and representation, inequality, or some other factor!
- To what extent do Ancient Roman cultural and social institutions form a basis for modern western civilization?
 - Students may consider government, art/theater, architecture, or another idea.
- Why did the Roman Empire collapse and how did this collapse set the stage for the cultures that would follow Rome?

Alignment with C3 Standards:

- **Dimension 1: Developing Questions and Planning Inquiries**

- D1.1.9-12. Explain how a question reflects an enduring issue in the field.
- D1.2.9-12. Explain points of agreement and disagreement experts have about interpretations and applications of disciplinary concepts and ideas associated with a compelling question.
- D1.5.9-12. Determine the kinds of sources that will be helpful in answering compelling and supporting questions, taking into consideration multiple points of view represented in the sources, the types of sources available, and the potential uses of the sources

- **Dimension 2: Applying Disciplinary Tools and Concepts**

- D2.Civ.8.9-12. Evaluate social and political systems in different contexts, times, and places, that promote civic virtues and enact democratic principles.
- D2.Civ.14.9-12. Analyze historical, contemporary, and emerging means of changing societies, promoting the common good, and protecting rights.
- D2.Eco.9.9-12. Describe the roles of institutions such as clearly defined property rights and the rule of law in a market economy.
- D2.Geo.1.9-12. Use geospatial and related technologies to create maps to display and explain the spatial patterns of cultural and environmental characteristics.
- D2.Geo.2.9-12. Use maps, satellite images, photographs, and other representations to explain relationships between the locations of places and regions and their political, cultural, and economic dynamics.
- D2.Geo.3.9-12. Use geographic data to analyze variations in the spatial patterns of cultural and environmental characteristics at multiple scales.
- D2.Geo.4.9-12. Analyze relationships and interactions within and between human and physical systems to explain reciprocal influences that occur among them.
- D2.Geo.5.9-12. Evaluate how political and economic decisions throughout time have influenced cultural and environmental characteristics of various places and regions.
- D2.Geo.6.9-12. Evaluate the impact of human settlement activities on the environmental and cultural characteristics of specific places and regions.
- D2.Geo.7.9-12. Analyze the reciprocal nature of how historical events and the spatial diffusion of ideas, technologies, and cultural practices have influenced migration patterns and the distribution of human population.
- D2.Geo.8.9-12. Evaluate the impact of economic activities and political decisions on spatial patterns within and among urban, suburban, and rural regions.
- D2.Geo.9.9-12. Evaluate the influence of long-term climate variability on human migration and settlement patterns, resource use, and land uses at local-to-global scales.
- D2.Geo.10.9-12. Evaluate how changes in the environmental and cultural characteristics of a place or region influence spatial patterns of trade and land use.
- D2.Geo.11.9-12. Evaluate how economic globalization and the expanding use of scarce resources contribute to conflict and cooperation within and among countries
- D2.Geo.12.9-12. Evaluate the consequences of human-made and natural catastrophes on global trade, politics, and human migration.
- D2.His.1.9-12. Evaluate how historical events and developments were shaped by unique circumstances of time and place as well as broader historical contexts
- D2.His.2.9-12. Analyze change and continuity in historical eras.
- D2.His.4.9-12. Analyze complex and interacting factors that influenced the perspectives of people during different historical eras.
- D2.His.8.9-12. Analyze how current interpretations of the past are limited by the extent to which available historical sources represent perspectives of people at the time.

- D2.His.9.9-12. Analyze the relationship between historical sources and the secondary interpretations made from them.
 - D2.His.10.9-12. Detect possible limitations in various kinds of historical evidence and differing secondary interpretations.
 - D2.His.11.9-12. Critique the usefulness of historical sources for a specific historical inquiry based on their maker, date, place of origin, intended audience, and purpose.
 - D2.His.12.9-12. Use questions generated about multiple historical sources to pursue further inquiry and investigate additional sources.
 - D2.His.14.9-12. Analyze multiple and complex causes and effects of events in the past.
 - D2.His.15.9-12. Distinguish between long-term causes and triggering events in developing a historical argument.
 - D2.His.16.9-12. Integrate evidence from multiple relevant historical sources and interpretations into a reasoned argument about the past.
- **Dimension 3: Evaluating Sources and Using Evidence**
 - D3.1.9-12. Gather relevant information from multiple sources representing a wide range of views while using the origin, authority, structure, context, and corroborative value of the sources to guide the selection.
 - D3.2.9-12. Evaluate the credibility of a source by examining how experts value the source.
- **Dimension 4: Communicating Conclusions and Taking Informed Action**
 - D4.1.9-12. Construct arguments using precise and knowledgeable claims, with evidence from multiple sources, while acknowledging counterclaims and evidentiary weaknesses.
 - D4.2.9-12. Construct explanations using sound reasoning, correct sequence (linear or nonlinear), examples, and details with significant and pertinent information and data, while acknowledging the strengths and weaknesses of the explanation given its purpose (e.g., cause and effect, chronological, procedural, technical).
 - D4.3.9-12. Present adaptations of arguments and explanations that feature evocative ideas and perspectives on issues and topics to reach a range of audiences and venues outside the classroom using print and oral technologies (e.g., posters, essays, letters, debates, speeches, reports, and maps) and digital technologies (e.g., Internet, social media, and digital documentary).
 - D4.6.9-12. Use disciplinary and interdisciplinary lenses to understand the characteristics and causes of local, regional, and global problems; instances of such problems in multiple contexts; and challenges and opportunities faced by those trying to address these problems over time and place.

Potential Assessments

- Course Essential Questions assessed in summative and formative assessments:
 - How do scholars interpret written sources and physical artifacts to understand the past?
 - How does geography influence human settlement, movement, and trade?
 - How do belief systems define and explain the world?
 - Why do humans innovate and how do these creations change society?
 - How do societies use and distribute resources?
 - Why do social hierarchies form and what are the implications?
 - How and why do people form political institutions?
 - What do art, literature, and architecture tell us about civilizations?

- What are the causes and consequences of conflict?

Resources

- Suggested Readings
 - *Sapiens: A Brief History of Humankind* by Yuval Noah Harari
 - *An Edible History of Humanity* by Tom Standage
 - *A History of the World in 6 Glasses* by Tom Standage
 - *Guns, Germs and Steel* by Jared Diamond
 - *Worlds Together, Worlds Apart: A History of the World from the Beginnings of Humankind to the Present*. W.W. Norton & Company

Greenwich Public Schools Vision of the Graduate

- Pose and pursue substantive questions
 - Students will develop and explore their own research questions during a variety of research assignments
- Critically interpret, evaluate, and synthesize information
 - Students will critically interpret, evaluate and synthesize information by analyzing a variety of primary and secondary sources and by conducting research. This source evaluation and research will allow students to gain a variety of perspectives.
- Explore, define, and solve complex problems
 - Students will apply historical knowledge to critically analyze current problems and issues.
- Communicate effectively for a given purpose
 - Students will be evaluated on their ability to communicate effectively through a variety of methods. Through persuasive writing assignments, class discussions and presentations, students will continue to develop and improve their communication skills.
- Advocate for ideas, causes and actions
 - Students will evaluate past advocacy successes and failures and determine when others have chosen to fight for causes and taken action.
- Generate innovative, creative ideas and products
 - Students will demonstrate their mastery of curriculum objectives with innovative projects. Students will explore answers to essential questions through creative and varied assignments with research structured by the use of GPS research process.
- Collaborate with others to produce a unified work and/or heightened understanding
 - Students will learn to collaborate with one another while working in structured groups in a variety of cooperative learning activities in order to create a final product.
- Contribute to community through dialogue, service, and/or leadership
 - Through the study of community outreach, students gain the skills they need to become active citizens. The community service project will give students the opportunity to contribute to the community.
- Conduct themselves in an ethical and responsible manner

- Current and historical situations will be analyzed so students gain perspective and information in order to conduct themselves in a responsible manner.
- Recognize and respect other cultural contexts and points of view
 - Through teaching about others' political ideologies, students will recognize and respect other cultural contexts and points of view. By developing an understanding of and empathy for others, students will appreciate differences and similarities between themselves and others.
- Pursue their unique interests, passions and curiosities
 - Students will have choice in many assignments and will be able to pursue their interests, specifically through the Capstone Community Service Project.
- Respond to failures and successes with reflection and resilience
 - Students will reflect on their writing and group work, in order to analyze what they did well and where they can improve. Frequent and constructive feedback by teachers will be used to ensure continuous reflection and refinement.
- Be responsible for their own mental and physical health
 - Social studies classes will help students develop study skills, and reduce stress through organization and planning.