

## Grade 6: The Eastern Hemisphere

Grade 6 Social Studies is based on the geography and history of the Eastern Hemisphere, including the development of cultures, civilizations, and empires; interactions between societies; and the comparison of trends in government and economics. It also incorporates some elements of other social sciences.

The course begins with an examination of the Eastern Hemisphere today, using geographic skills. This provides the foundation for making connections between the past and the present throughout the course. The remainder of the course is divided into seven Key Ideas that cover a time span from pre-history into the 1300s. Students are provided the opportunity to explore belief systems across time and to examine the foundations of democracy.

Teachers should note that some Key Ideas and Concepts may require extra time or attention. These include Key Ideas 6.3 Early River Valley Civilizations in the Eastern Hemisphere; 6.6 Mediterranean World: Feudal Western Europe, the Byzantine Empire, and the Islamic Caliphates; and 6.7 Interactions Across the Eastern Hemisphere.

**6.1 PRESENT-DAY EASTERN HEMISPHERE GEOGRAPHY: The diverse geography of the Eastern Hemisphere has influenced human culture and settlement patterns in distinct ways. Human communities in the Eastern Hemisphere have adapted to or modified the physical environment.**  
(Standard: 3: Theme: GEO)

6.1a Maps can be used to represent varied climate zones, landforms, bodies of water, and resources of the Eastern Hemisphere.

6.1b The Eastern Hemisphere can be divided into regions. Regions are areas that share common identifiable characteristics, such as physical, political, economic, or cultural features. Regions within the Eastern Hemisphere include:

- Middle East (North Africa and Southwest Asia)
- Sub-Saharan Africa
- Europe (West, North, South, Central, and Southeast)
- Russia and the Independent States (Russia, Caucasia, Central Asia, the region of Belarus, Moldova, and Ukraine)
- East Asia (People’s Republic of China, North Korea, South Korea, Japan, and Taiwan)
- Southeast Asia (Vietnam, Cambodia, Laos, Thailand, Myanmar [Burma], Malaysia, Singapore, Indonesia, Brunei, Philippines)
- South Asia (Afghanistan, Pakistan, India, Bangladesh, Nepal, Bhutan)
- Oceania (Australia, New Zealand, the Pacific)

6.1c The physical environment influences human population distribution, land use, economic activities, and political connections.

- Students will use physical, climate, and vegetation maps in combination with population density, land use, and resource distribution maps in order to discern patterns in human settlement, economic activity, and the relationship to scarcity of resources in the present-day Eastern Hemisphere.
- To understand scale, students will work with maps at a variety of scales so they can compare patterns in population density and land use, economic activity, and political connections across the present-day Eastern Hemisphere, within a region of the Eastern Hemisphere, and in a specific country. In doing so, students will examine maps of the hemisphere, three regions within the present-day Eastern Hemisphere, and one specific country within each region.

6.1d Issues and problems experienced in the regions of the Eastern Hemisphere have roots in the past.

- Students will examine current political and environmental issues in a region or country of the Eastern Hemisphere being studied.

**6.2 THE FIRST HUMANS THROUGH THE NEOLITHIC REVOLUTION IN THE EASTERN HEMISPHERE: The first humans modified their physical environment as well as adapted to their environment. (Standards: 2, 3; Themes: MOV, TCC, GEO, ECO, TECH)**

6.2a Human populations that settled along rivers, in rainforests, along coastlines, in deserts, and in mountains made use of the resources and the environment around them in developing distinct ways of life.

6.2b Early peoples in the Eastern Hemisphere are often studied by analyzing artifacts and archaeological features. Archaeologists engage in digs and study artifacts and features in a particular location to gather evidence about a group of people and how they lived at a particular time.

6.2c The Neolithic Revolution was marked by technological advances in agriculture and domestication of animals that allowed people to form semi-sedentary and sedentary settlements.

- Students will explore early human migration patterns and settlements through the use of multiple maps and the examination of various forms of archaeological evidence.
- Students will be introduced to pastoral nomadic peoples as a culture type that existed throughout history.
- Students will compare the use of tools and animals, types of dwellings, art, and social organizations of early peoples, and distinguish between the Paleolithic Age and Neolithic Age.

6.2d Historians use archaeological and other types of evidence to investigate patterns in history and identify turning points. A turning point can be an event, era, and/or development in history that has brought about significant social, cultural, ecological, political, or economic change.

- Students will determine if the Neolithic Revolution is a turning point in world history, using various forms of evidence.

**6.3 EARLY RIVER VALLEY CIVILIZATIONS IN THE EASTERN HEMISPHERE (ca. 3500 B.C.E. – ca. 500 B.C.E.): Complex societies and civilizations developed in the Eastern Hemisphere. Although these complex societies and civilizations have certain defining characteristics in common, each is also known for unique cultural achievements and contributions. Early human communities in the Eastern Hemisphere adapted to and modified the physical environment. (Standards: 2, 3; Themes: ID, TCC, GEO, SOC)**

6.3a Humans living together in settlements develop shared customs, beliefs, ideas, and languages that give identity to the group.

6.3b Complex societies and civilizations share the common characteristics of religion, job specialization, cities, government, language/record keeping system, technology, and social hierarchy. People in Mesopotamia, the Yellow River valley, the Indus River valley, and the Nile River valley developed complex societies and civilizations.

- Students will explore at least two river valley societies and civilizations: one in the Middle East (Mesopotamia or Nile river valley), one in South Asia (Indus River valley), or one in East Asia (Yellow River valley) by examining archaeological and historical evidence to compare and contrast characteristics of these complex societies and civilizations.

6.3c Mesopotamia, Yellow River valley, Indus River valley, and Nile River valley complex societies and civilizations adapted to and modified their environment to meet the needs of their population.

- Students will explore how the selected complex societies and civilizations adapted to and modified their environment to meet their basic needs of food, clothing, and shelter.

6.3d Political and social hierarchies influenced the access that groups and individuals had to power, wealth, and jobs and influenced their roles within a society.

- Students will compare and contrast the gender roles, access to wealth and power, and division of labor within the political and social structures of the selected river valley societies and civilizations.
- Students will examine the unique achievements of each of the selected complex societies and civilizations that served as lasting contributions.

**6.4 COMPARATIVE WORLD RELIGIONS (ca. 2000 B.C.E – ca. 630 C.E): Major religions and belief systems developed in the Eastern Hemisphere. There were important similarities and differences between these belief systems.**

**(Standard: 2; Themes: ID, SOC)**

6.4a Civilizations and complex societies developed belief systems and religions that have similar, as well as different, characteristics.

6.4b Belief systems and religions are based on sets of mutually held values.

- Students will study the belief systems of Judaism, Christianity, Islam, Buddhism, Hinduism, and Confucianism by looking at where the belief system originated, when it originated, founder(s) if any, and the major tenets, practices, and sacred writings or holy texts for each. (Note: Although not within this historic period, students may also study Sikhism and other major belief systems at this point.)

6.4c Belief systems and religions often are used to unify groups of people, and may affect social order and gender roles.

- Students will be able to identify similarities and differences across belief systems, including their effect on social order and gender roles.
- Students will explore the influence of various belief systems on contemporary cultures and events.

**6.5 COMPARATIVE CLASSICAL CIVILIZATIONS IN THE EASTERN HEMISPHERE (ca. 600 B.C.E. – ca. 500 C.E.): As complex societies and civilizations change over time, their political and economic structures evolve. A golden age may be indicated when there is an extended period of time that is peaceful, prosperous, and demonstrates great cultural achievements.**

**(Standards: 2, 3, 5; Themes: ID, TCC, GEO, SOC, GOV, CIV)**

6.5a Geographic factors influence the development of classical civilizations and their political structures.

- Students will locate the classical civilizations on a map and identify geographic factors that influenced the extent of their boundaries, locate their cities on a map, and identify their political structures.
- Students will compare and contrast the similarities and differences between the Chinese (Qin, Han) and Greco-Roman classical civilizations by examining religion, job specialization, cities, government, language/record keeping system, technology, and social hierarchy.

6.5b Political structures were developed to establish order, to create and enforce laws, and to enable decision making.

- Students will examine the similarities and differences between the political systems of Chinese (Qin, Han) and Greco-Roman (Athens, Sparta, Roman Republic, Roman Empire) classical civilizations.

6.5c A period of peace, prosperity, and cultural achievements may be indicative of a golden age.

- Students will examine evidence related to the Qin, Han, and Greco-Roman (Athens and Roman Empire) civilizations and determine if these civilizations have experienced a golden age.

- Students will examine how cultural achievements of these civilizations have influenced contemporary societies.

**6.6 MEDITERRANEAN WORLD: FEUDAL WESTERN EUROPE, THE BYZANTINE EMPIRE, AND THE ISLAMIC CALIPHATES (ca. 600 C.E. – ca. 1450): The Mediterranean world was reshaped with the fall of the Roman Empire. Three distinct cultural regions developed: feudal Western Europe, the Byzantine Empire, and the Islamic caliphates. These regions interacted with each other and clashed over control of holy lands. (Standards: 2, 3, 4, 5; MOV, TCC, GOV, CIV, EXCH)**

6.6a Overexpansion, corruption, invasions, civil wars, and discord led to the fall of Rome. Feudalism developed in Western Europe in reaction to a need for order and to meet basic needs.

- Students will examine reasons for the fall of the Roman Empire and the development of feudalism in Western Europe, including efforts to restore the empire, the decentralization of political authority, and the role of the Christian Church in providing some measure of central authority.

6.6b The Byzantine Empire preserved elements of the Roman Empire, controlled lands within the Mediterranean basin, and began to develop Orthodox Christianity.

- Students will examine how the Byzantine Empire preserved elements of the Roman Empire by blending Roman traditions with Greek culture, and developed a Christian faith, known as Orthodox Christianity, which united Church and state authority in the person of the emperor.

6.6c Islam spread within the Mediterranean region from southwest Asia to northern Africa and the Iberian Peninsula.

- Students will examine the Umayyad and Abbasid caliphates, noting how the introduction of Islam changed the societies and cultures each conquered, blending with those societies and cultures and creating dynamic new Islamic societies and cultures.

6.6d Competition and rivalry over religious, economic, and political control over holy lands led to conflict such as the Crusades.

- Students will examine the three distinct cultural regions of the Mediterranean world in terms of their location, the extent of each region at the height of its power, and the political, economic, and social interactions between these regions.
- Students will examine the conflict of the Crusades from three different perspectives: feudal Europe, Byzantine, and Islamic.

**6.7 INTERACTIONS ACROSS THE EASTERN HEMISPHERE (ca. 600 C.E. – ca. 1450): Trade networks promoted the exchange and diffusion of language, belief systems, tools, intellectual ideas, inventions, and diseases. (Standards: 2, 3, 4; Themes: MOV, TCC, GEO, ECO, TECH, EXCH)**

6.7a The Silk Roads, the Indian Ocean, and the Trans-Saharan routes formed the major Afro-Eurasian trade networks connecting the East and the West. Ideas, people, technologies, products, and diseases moved along these routes.

- Students will create maps that illustrate items exchanged and ideas spread along the Silk Roads, across the Indian Ocean, and on the Trans-Saharan trade routes.
- Students will examine how the location of resources helped determine the location of trade routes and the economic impact of the exchange of resources.
- Students will study interregional travelers such as Marco Polo, Ibn Battuta, Mansa Musa, and Zheng He and examine why they traveled, the places visited, what was learned, and what was exchanged as a result of their travel.

6.7b The Mongol conquests in Eurasia fostered connections between the East and the West, and the Mongols served as important agents of change and cultural diffusion.

- Students will map the extent of the Mongol Empire at the height of its power.
- Students will examine the methods used by the Mongols to enable them to rule over a diverse population, noting how Mongol rule expanded trade.
- Students will examine the spread of the Black Death (Bubonic Plague) as a result of interregional exchange and its effects on various regions within Afro-Eurasia, using a variety of sources, such as maps, poetry, and other primary source documents.

6.7c Complex societies and civilizations adapted and designed technologies for transportation that allowed them to cross challenging landscapes and move people and goods efficiently.

- Students will examine how various technologies affected trade and exchanges. Some examples are types of ships, including junks and caravels; improvements to ships, such as sails and rudders; navigation tools, such as the compass and astrolabe; and gunpowder.