

Grade Six Social Studies Curriculum Overview Document

AASD Instructional Framework for Social Studies

The answers to tomorrow’s problems cannot be found in the back of a textbook. The skills needed in the modern workplace are not practiced on a worksheet. In the Appleton Area School District, inquiry-based social studies is a student-centered learning process that differentiates learning and assessment while promoting a growth mindset through self and peer reflection. Inquiry starts with a compelling question, moves through a rigorous investigation and culminates in an argument or action. The inquiry-based curriculum develops the skills and builds content knowledge students need to succeed in the present and the future. An inquiry classroom supports teachers to regularly scaffold students, therefore students are engaged and gain greater independence in the use of these skills. Student voice and choice is honored and fosters a culture of equity and collaboration.

The intentionally-designed curriculum contains rigorous standards-based content in an authentic context that is interesting to students, elevates student work by ensuring a public platform for presentation and encourages lifelong learning. (for example: students are encouraged to think as; economists, historians, political scientists etc...). Teachers are empowered to implement a scope and sequence aligned to the Wisconsin State Social Studies Standards that is integrated with Wisconsin English Language Arts Standards and the Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning Competencies. The curriculum promotes: the reading of complex texts (primary and secondary), building academic vocabulary, evaluating sources and using evidence when writing from sources.

The social studies curriculum is comprehensive and is built in a model of change that includes; practice-based professional learning, blended curriculum and assessment, instructional leadership, and professional learning communities which helps teachers develop their practice of inquiry. Each unit of inquiry targets 21st century skills, which are designed to ensure students are prepared to thrive in college, career, and civic life.

Board Approved

May, 2007

Revised

June, 2020

Required Assessments

Social Studies Balanced Assessment System

Pre-Assessment	The inquiry units contain pre-assessment tasks that provide teachers the opportunity to gauge the prior knowledge and skills of students. These pre-assessments occur in the Launch of every unit.
Formative Assessments	The inquiry units include formative assessment tools in every lesson, from teacher checklists to student-created responses. Assessment tools contain or connect to specific look-fors that align to lesson objectives and build toward the objectives of the Essential Question. These tools assess understanding and skills across a diverse set of tasks, including written claims, creative responses, and others.
Checkpoint Assessments	Checkpoint Assessments are aligned to the objectives of the Inquiry Question and are designed to check understanding of concepts and development of skills throughout that set of lessons. These tools prompt students to draw conclusions and demonstrate understanding in diverse ways, often through formal performance tasks.
Summative Assessments	The product rubric serves as the summative assessment tool for an Inquiry unit. This rubric is co-created with students at the beginning of Taking Informed Action according to a specific process described in a detailed lesson plan. As part of this process, teachers should incorporate into the success criteria, key social studies concepts or content that align with school, district or state expectations.

Resources

[Wisconsin Standards for Social Studies](#)

[Grade 6 AASD Essential Social Studies Standards](#)

[inquirED Inquiry Journeys Scope and Sequence](#)

inquirED Platform- Lesson materials and resources for each social studies unit

inquirED Embedded Learning- Research-based strategies and support for teachers inside every lesson.

AASD Guiding Principles for Teaching and learning K-6 Social Studies

- Inquiry is at the heart of social studies and surrounds the content
- Social studies prepares our students for work, life, and citizenship
- Creativity, collaboration, communication, critical thinking, problem solving are valued
- Social studies should be intra and interdisciplinary with explicit integration with ELA, complimenting each other
- Social studies must regain a more balanced and elevated role in K-12 curriculum

AASD Foundations for K-6 Social Studies

Inquiry- Teaching social studies content incorporating the inquiry arc offers students the opportunity to investigate questions in a deep and engaging manner, and offers our students the opportunity to work collaboratively, as well as individually, on significant questions within the social studies disciplines. Inquiry can and should be used within all social studies disciplines and, as such, is an “umbrella strand” covering all content strands. The proper use of the inquiry arc within our classrooms, along with other thoughtful social studies strategies, will help our students build the intellectual habits of mind that will be with them long after the content is forgotten. It can create in our students the confidence in their own skills to make sense of an increasingly complex world.

Behavior Sciences- Learning about the behavioral sciences helps students understand people in various times and places. By examining cultures, students are able to compare our ways of life and those of other groups of people in the past and present. As citizens, students need to know how institutions are maintained or changed and how they influence individuals, cultures, and societies. Knowledge of the factors that contribute to an individual's uniqueness is essential to understanding the influence on self and on others.

Economics- Individuals, families, businesses, and governments must make complex economic choices as they decide what goods and services to provide and how to allocate limited resources for distribution and consumption. In a global economy marked by rapid technological change, students must learn how to be better producers, consumers, and economic citizens.

Geography- Students gain geographical perspectives of the world by studying the earth and the interactions of people with places where they live, work, and play. Knowledge of geography helps students to address the various cultural, economic, social, and civic implications of life in earth's many environments.

History- Students need to understand their historical roots and those of others, and how past events have shaped their world. In developing these insights, students must know what life was like in the past and how things change and develop over time. Reconstructing and interpreting historical events provides a needed perspective in addressing the past, the present, and the future.

Political Science- Knowledge about the structures of power, authority, and governance and their evolving functions in contemporary society is essential if young citizens are to develop civic responsibility. Young people become more effective citizens and problem solvers when they know how local, state, and national governments and international organizations function and interact.

Social Studies Inquiry Overview

Grade 6 Theme: Society - Students explore the rich histories of Ancient Mesopotamia, Ancient Egypt, Ancient Indian Subcontinent, and Ancient China.

Unit 1: Ancient Mesopotamia

Students learn about Mesopotamia, the first civilization, as a case study, through which they can better understand their own civilization. They consider what it means to be civilized, grappling with these definitions and their nuances during this unit. Ultimately, students take action in order to make their world more humane, ethical, and reasonable.

Inquiry Question: How can we make our society more humane, ethical, and reasonable?

Investigation Modules:

What conditions are necessary for settled society?

Students investigate the geography of Mesopotamia and the connection between geographic features and the development of agriculture, which is considered a key contributing factor to the development of civilization itself. They are introduced to drawing evidence-based conclusions and practice this skill with structure and support from the teacher.

How does innovation drive civilization?

Students learn how agriculture was a key factor to the development of civilization. They explore a variety of sources to investigate characteristics of Mesopotamian civilization and continue to draw evidence-based conclusions, now with more independence.

Is social structure necessary?

Students take a deeper dive into one of the defining characteristics of civilization: social structures. They learn about the social hierarchy of Mesopotamia and the rights, responsibilities, and ways of life associated with various social roles. Students examine argumentative writing mentor texts and continue to draw evidence-based conclusions.

What is the power of the written word?

The first-known system for writing, a hallmark of civilization, developed in Mesopotamia. Students explore why writing developed in Mesopotamia as well as the purpose and impact of various types of writing. Students take one step further in drawing evidence-based conclusions, constructing a claim supported by evidence and reasoning. Students conclude this module by reviewing the key learning from the unit to help them prepare to take action. They work together to develop an Inquiry Challenge Statement that describes the action they will take, the product they will create, the people they will affect, and the goals they will work toward in the Action Module.

Social Studies Performance Indicators

Inquiry: Inq1.a.m, Inq1.b.m, Inq2.a.m, Inq2.b.m, Inq3.a.m, Inq3.b.m, Inq3.c.m, Inq4.a.m, Inq4.b.m, Inq5.a.m

Behavioral Science: BH1.a.m, BH1.b.m, BH2.a.m, BH3.a.m, BH4.a.m

Economics: Econ1.a.m, Econ1.b.m, Econ2.c.m

Geography: Geog1.a.m, Geog1.b.m, Geog2.a.m, Geog2.b.m, Geog2.c.m, Geog2.d.m, Geog3.a.m, Geog4.a.m, Geog5.a.m

History: Hist1.a.m, Hist1.b.m, Hist2.a.m, Hist2.b.m, Hist2.c.m, Hist3.a.m, Hist3.b.m, Hist3.c.m, Hist4.a.m, Hist4.b.m, Hist4.c.m, Hist4.d.m

Political Science: PS1.a.m, PS2.a.m, PS2.c.m, PS3.a.m, PS3.b.m, PS3.c.m

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Unit 2: Ancient Egypt

The legacy of ancient Egypt is a source of curiosity and wonder for many. How and why did the ancient Egyptians construct those massive pyramids? Why were people mummified, and what can we learn about those individuals? What was life like for everyday Egyptians so long ago? This unit supports students as they dig into these and other intriguing questions about ancient Egypt while prompting them to consider what kind of legacy they would like to create in their school, community, or world.

Inquiry Question: How can we create a legacy that has a positive impact?

Investigation Modules:

How are legacies created?

While our legacies may outlast us, it's what we achieve during our lifetime that creates them. Students consider the legacy of ancient Egypt and how it was shaped by the well-known accomplishments of the Egyptian people. They think about what these accomplishments meant to Egyptians at the time (immediate impact) as well as the legacy these accomplishments have left for the world (lasting impact). Finally, they each identify an accomplishment they would like to achieve and apply their understanding of immediate and lasting impacts to predict how it might shape their own legacy.

How do our surroundings impact our legacies?

In our everyday lives, we are constantly interacting with our physical surroundings. The same was true for ancient Egyptians. Students investigate the impact that natural surroundings had on ancient Egyptians and their legacy.

Who is reflected in a legacy?

Students explore the social hierarchy of ancient Egypt and the immediate and lasting impacts those in various roles had. They explore the idea that behind the celebrated accomplishments of individuals, both ancient and contemporary, there are often many others who have worked "behind the scenes" to contribute to success.

How do beliefs shape legacies?

Our beliefs – the things we hold true – can shape our actions, words, and the objects we leave behind, and, in turn, have lasting impacts. Students investigate how the beliefs of ancient Egyptians, especially relating to life and the afterlife, greatly influenced the legacy they created.

Social Studies Performance Indicators

Inquiry: Inq1.a.m, Inq1.b.m, Inq2.a.m, Inq2.b.m, Inq3.a.m, Inq3.b.m, Inq3.c.m, Inq4.a.m, Inq4.b.m, Inq5.a.m

Behavioral Science: BH1.a.m, BH1.b.m, BH2.a.m, BH2.b.m, BH3.a.m, BH4.a.m

Economics: Econ1.a.m, Econ1.b.m, Econ2.b.m, Econ4.e.m

Geography: Geog1.b.m, Geog2.a.m, Geog2.b.m, Geog2.c.m, Geog2.d.m, Geog3.a.m, Geog3.b.m, Geog4.a.m, Geog5.a.m, Geog5.b.m

History: Hist1.a.m, Hist1.b.m, Hist2.a.m, Hist2.b.m, Hist2.c.m, Hist3.a.m, Hist3.b.m, Hist3.c.m, Hist4.b.m, Hist4.c.m, Hist4.d.m

Political Science: PS3.a.m, PS3.b.m, PS4.a.m

Grade 6 Theme: Ancient Civilizations - Students explore the rich histories of Ancient Mesopotamia, Egypt, the Indian Subcontinent, and Ancient China.

Unit 3: Ancient Indian Subcontinent

Is it possible for young people to be change agents to help shape the society they want? Absolutely! During this unit, students explore the Vedic Age, the Mauryan Empire, and the Gupta Period. They analyze how different ideas and cultural aspects during these periods developed, spread, and evolved. Throughout their learning, students reflect upon their own skills, passions, and opportunities to discover how they, themselves, can be a change-maker in society.

Inquiry Question: How can we shape the society we want?

Investigation Modules:**What can an ancient civilization teach us about how communities might work together?**

The language of the Indus Valley people remains unknown, and we are left with more questions than answers about this remarkable civilization. Students “dig” deep into the past to investigate how evidence is used to create theories about the Indus Valley civilization, and explore the role of the archaeologist in uncovering and understanding the past.

How can aspects of culture within a society emerge, evolve, or last?

Students learn about the Vedic Age and what happened when the Indo-Europeans migrated to the Indian subcontinent. They investigate the various aspects of culture that emerged or evolved during the Vedic Age, which include the Vedas, Hinduism, the caste system, and languages such as Sanskrit. They evaluate which of these aspects have lasted through time, and make a personal connection to understand how their own language, belief systems, and traditions can influence society.

How can a leader influence society?

Students investigate how leaders can influence society. They evaluate various leaders, including the leaders of the Mauryan Empire, and describe the characteristics that make them influential. They learn about the birth of two key religions that still exist today, Jainism and Buddhism, and the teachers and leaders that spread these ideas around the region.

How can we help new ideas flourish?

Students determine what defines a “golden age” by studying various golden ages throughout history. They investigate the Gupta Period and the great literature, art, architecture, and advancements in math and science that came out of this era. Students conclude this module by reviewing the key learning from the unit to help them prepare to take action. They work together to develop an Inquiry Challenge Statement that describes the action they will take, the product they will create, the people they will affect, and the goals they will work toward in the Action Module.

Social Studies Performance Indicators

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Behavioral Science: BH1.a.m, BH1.b.m, BH3.a.m, BH4.a.m

Economics: Econ2.a.m, Econ3.b.m, Econ4.a.m

Geography: Geog1.a.m, Geog1.b.m, Geog1.c.m, Geog2.a.m, Geog2.b.m, Geog2.d.m, Geog3.b.m, Geog4.a.m, Geog5.a.m, Geog5.b.m

History: Hist1.a.m, Hist1.b.m, Hist2.a.m, Hist2.b.m, Hist2.c.m, Hist3.a.m, Hist3.b.m, Hist3.c.m, Hist4.a.m, Hist4.b.m, Hist4.c.m, Hist4.d.m

Political Science: PS3.b.m, PS3.c.m, PS4.a.m

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Unit 4: Ancient China

In a world that is constantly changing, are there aspects that will remain the same? In this unit, students explore the concepts of continuity and change through the lens of ancient China and their own lives. They also explore the themes of chaos, barriers, and connections, and how these contribute to changes within society, as well as within ourselves. Finally, students reflect on how they are able to preserve what’s most important while also exploring new ideas.

Inquiry Question: How can we preserve what’s most important when making positive changes?

Investigation Modules:**How can things change while staying the same?**

Students are introduced to the dynastic cycle and the Mandate of Heaven as they embark on an overview of Chinese history and the various dynasties. They explore what changed and stayed the same in Chinese society and culture by examining the Shang and Zhou dynasties. They also analyze the geography of ancient China and the impact it had on developing society, as well as its impacts today.

How does chaos lead to continuity and change?

Students learn about the Warring States Period and the major philosophies that emerged during it: Legalism, Daoism, and Confucianism. Over the course of this module, they use what they learn about these philosophies and analyze contemporary situations to respond to the following claim prompt: To have an orderly society, should we have strict rules, or should we be trusted to act responsibly?

How do barriers lead to continuity and change?

Students learn about the Qin dynasty and examine the role of barriers in the development of a society. From the Great Wall of China to personal boundaries in their own lives, they learn how barriers can protect or isolate.

How do connections lead to continuity and change?

Students learn about the Han dynasty, examining the contrast from the Qin dynasty. Building off the previous learning about barriers, they examine how new connections, such as the Silk Road, brought many new opportunities, including economic, cultural, and societal advancements. Students conclude this module by reviewing the key learning from the unit to help them prepare to take action. They work together to develop an Inquiry Challenge Statement that describes the action they will take, the product they will create, the people they will affect, and the goals they will work toward in the Action Module.

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Behavioral Science: BH1.a.m, BH1.b.m, BH2.a.m, BH3.a.m, BH4.a.m

Economics: Econ2.b.m, Econ4.a.m, Econ4.e.m

Geography: Geog1.b.m, Geog1.c.m, Geog2.c.m, Geog2.b.m, Geog2.d.m, Geog4.a.m, Geog5.a.m

History: Hist2.a.m, Hist2.b.m, Hist2.c.m, Hist3.a.m, Hist3.b.m, Hist3.c.m, Hist4.a.m, Hist4.d.m

Political Science: PS2.c.m, PS3.b.m, PS3.d.m,

