



# Grade 4 Social Studies - Unit 1 - Geography Foundations

## Unit Focus

In this introductory geography unit, Grade 4 students build the foundational knowledge and skills needed to understand their place in the world. Through hands-on mapping activities and interactive lessons, students explore the five themes of geography, develop essential map skills, and learn how the world is organized into continents, countries, states, and regions. In a culminating performance-based assessment, they apply this knowledge to create a “My Place in the World” flipbook, illustrating their location from the broadest scale (planet) to the most personal (home).

## Stage 1: Desired Results - Key Understandings

Standard(s)	Transfer	
<p><b>Connecticut Elementary and Secondary Social Studies Standards (2023)</b> Grade 4 - United States Geography</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Explain why compelling questions about a United States region are important to others (e.g., peers, adults). (4.Inq.1.a)</li> <li>Explain how supporting questions help answer compelling questions in an inquiry about a United States region. (4.Inq.1.b)</li> <li>Apply disciplinary knowledge and practices to demonstrate an understanding of United States geography content. (4.Inq.2.a)</li> <li>Construct explanations using reasoning, correct sequence, examples, and details with relevant information and data. (4.Inq. 4.b)</li> <li>Present a summary of arguments and explanations with relevant information about a person, event, or issue in a United States region using print, oral, and digital technologies (e.g., reasoning, correct sequence, examples, data, details). (4.Inq. 4.d)</li> <li>Demonstrate spatial awareness by creating maps to illustrate regions within or extending beyond the political boundaries of the United States (e.g., Grand Canyon, Great Lakes, Standing Rock Indian Reservation, Pacific Northwest). (4.Geo.1.a)</li> <li>Use state and regional maps to describe cultural and environmental characteristics of regions (e.g., state capitals, heritage sites, national monuments). (4.Geo.3.a)</li> </ul> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>Madison Public Schools Profile of a Graduate</b> Product Creation: Effectively use a medium to communicate important information. (POG.3.2)</li> </ul>	<p><i>Students will be able to independently use their learning to...</i> <b>T1</b> Apply geographic reasoning of earth’s physical and human features to better understand problems, predict outcomes, and/or develop solutions.</p>	
	<b>Meaning</b>	
	<b>Understanding(s)</b>	<b>Essential Question(s)</b>
	<p><i>Students will understand that...</i> <b>U1</b> Geography is about relationships between people, places, and the environment. <b>U2</b> Maps and globes are tools that represent real places and help us locate and describe them. <b>U3</b> The world is organized into spatial scales—continents, countries, states, regions, cities—and each scale connects to the others. <b>U4</b> Regions can be defined by physical, cultural, political, and economic characteristics. <b>U5</b> Knowing where a place is and what it is like helps us understand how people live there and how places connect to each other. <b>U6</b> People can use geographic knowledge to navigate, make decisions, and explain their place in the world.</p>	<p><i>Students will keep considering...</i> <b>Q1</b> How can we use maps and geographic tools to understand our place in the world?</p>
	<b>Acquisition of Knowledge and Skill</b>	
	<b>Knowledge</b>	<b>Skill(s)</b>
<p><i>Students will know...</i> <b>K1</b> The Five Themes of Geography: location, place, region, movement, human–environment interaction.</p>	<p><i>Students will be skilled at...</i> <b>S1</b> Using a map and globe to locate places at different scales (world, continent, country, state, city).</p>	

## Stage 1: Desired Results - Key Understandings

**K2** The function of a compass rose, map key/legend, and other basic map symbols.  
**K3** The names and locations of the seven continents.  
**K4** That the world is organized into continents, countries, states, regions, cities/towns, neighborhoods.  
**K5** The five regions of the United States and examples of states in each (Northeast, Southeast, West, Southwest, Midwest).  
**K6** The 50 U.S. states and their capitals (introductory awareness).  
**K7** That regions can be defined by physical, cultural, and political characteristics.  
**K8** How maps and globes represent the Earth at different scales.

**S2** Interpreting a compass rose and map key/legend to find directions and understand symbols.  
**S3** Identify and label continents, countries, states, and regions on maps.  
**S4** Organizing geographic information in a logical sequence from largest to smallest area.  
**S5** Creating visual representations (e.g., flipbook) that communicate geographic relationships.  
**S6** Applying geographic vocabulary accurately in speaking and writing.  
**S7** Comparing and contrasting regions based on cultural and environmental characteristics.  
**S8** Explaining their “place in the world” using geographic concepts and tools.