



Grade 4 Social Studies - Unit 3 - Connecting Communities

Unit Focus

In this Grade 4 unit, Connecting Communities, students explore the diverse regions and landmarks of the United States, learning about geography, human and physical characteristics, climate, natural resources, and how people interact with their environment. Through hands-on, inquiry-based activities, students examine maps, read nonfiction texts, analyze images, and investigate how human and environmental factors shape where people live, work, and travel. They explore the movement of people, goods, ideas, and technology across regions and consider the unique features that define each region.

Students apply their learning by researching a specific landmark and synthesizing information through a variety of media. The unit culminates in a project-based assessment, where students create a travel brochure or multimedia presentation that demonstrates their understanding of location, place, movement, and human-environment interaction. This approach encourages critical thinking, collaboration, and communication while helping students recognize the interconnections and diversity across the United States.

Stage 1: Desired Results - Key Understandings

Standard(s)	Transfer	
<p>Common Core English Language Arts: 4</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Refer to details and examples in a text when explaining what the text says explicitly and when drawing inferences from the text. (CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RI.4.1) Determine the meaning of general academic and domain-specific words or phrases in a text relevant to a grade 4 topic or subject area. (CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RI.4.4) Interpret information presented visually, orally, or quantitatively (e.g., in charts, graphs, diagrams, time lines, animations, or interactive elements on Web pages) and explain how the information contributes to an understanding of the text in which it appears. (CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RI.4.7) Recall relevant information from experiences or gather relevant information from print and digital sources; take notes and categorize information, and provide a list of sources. (CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.4.8) Report on a topic or text, tell a story, or recount an experience in an organized manner, using appropriate facts and relevant, descriptive details to support main ideas or themes; speak clearly at an understandable pace. (CCSS.ELALITERACY.SL.4.4) Introduce a topic clearly and group related information in paragraphs and sections; include formatting (e.g., headings), illustrations, and multimedia when useful to aiding comprehension. (CCSS.ELALITERACY.W.4.2.A) Develop the topic with facts, definitions, concrete details, quotations, or other information and examples related to the topic. (CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.4.2.B) 	<p><i>Students will be able to independently use their learning to...</i></p> <p>T1 Apply geographic knowledge while engaging in an iterative process of researching, designing, and refining a product that effectively communicates the significance of a geographic landmark, demonstrating their understanding of the themes of geography for a specific audience and purpose.</p> <p>T2 Apply geographic reasoning of earth’s physical and human features to better understand problems, predict outcomes, and/or develop solutions.</p>	
	Meaning	
	Understanding(s)	Essential Question(s)
	<p><i>Students will understand that...</i></p> <p>U1 Cultural and environmental characteristics of places change over time in the United States.</p> <p>U2 There are environmental and cultural characteristics that shape the movement of people, goods, and ideas in United States regions.</p> <p>U3 There are various ways that human settlement and movement relate to the availability of natural resources in a region.</p> <p>U4 Understanding how economic, social, and political factors influence migration and population distribution throughout the United</p>	<p><i>Students will keep considering...</i></p> <p>Q1 How do people change the places where they live and work? (Human-Environment Interaction)</p> <p>Q2 How does the movement of people, goods, ideas, and technology affect regions in the United States? (Movement)</p> <p>Q3 How do physical and human characteristics define a place and shape the way people live? (Location/ Place)</p> <p>Q4 What makes each region of the United States unique, and how are regions connected?</p>

Stage 1: Desired Results - Key Understandings

- Use precise language and domain-specific vocabulary to inform about or explain the topic. (CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.4.2.D)
- Come to discussions prepared, having read or studied required material; explicitly draw on that preparation and other information known about the topic to explore ideas under discussion. (CCSS.ELALITERACY.SL.4.1.A)
- Follow agreed-upon rules for discussions and carry out assigned roles. (CCSS.ELALITERACY.SL.4.1.B)
- Pose and respond to specific questions to clarify or follow up on information, and make comments that contribute to the discussion and link to the remarks of others. (CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.4.1.C)
- Review the key ideas expressed and explain their own ideas and understanding in light of the discussion. (CCSS.ELALITERACY.SL.4.1.D)

Connecticut Elementary and Secondary Social Studies Standards (2023)

Grade 4 - United States Geography

- Explain how cultural and environmental characteristics of places change over time in the United States (e.g., population diversity, deforestation, urban sprawl, industrialization, land use). (4.Geo.5.a)
- Explain the environmental and cultural characteristics that shape the movement of people, goods, and ideas in United States regions (e.g., waterways, trade routes, highways, digital infrastructure). (4.Geo.7.a)
- Explain how human settlement and movement relates to the availability of natural resources in a region (e.g., fisheries, mining, arable land, access to water for transportation). (4.Geo.8.a)
- Describe how economic, social, and political factors influence migration and population distribution throughout the United States (e.g., El Salvadorian, Guatemalan, Honduran, Haitian, Nigerian, Filipino, and Indian emigration). (4.Geo.6.a)
- Summarize how different kinds of sources can be used to understand the settlement and resettlement of individuals and groups (e.g., census records, diary entries, oral histories, monuments, secondary sources). (4.His.9.a)
- Explain how the cultural characteristics of communities in a particular place are sustained and evolve over time (e.g., Taos Pueblo, South Side Neighborhood in Chicago). (4.Geo.5.b)
- Gather relevant information from multiple sources about an event or issue in a United States region. (4.Inq.3.a)

Madison Public Schools Profile of a Graduate

- Product Creation: Effectively use a medium to communicate important information. (POG.3.2)

States will allow the study of population patterns.
U5 Different kinds of sources that can be used to understand the settlement and resettlement of individuals and groups.
U6 Understanding how the cultural characteristics of communities in a particular place are sustained and evolve over time.

Acquisition of Knowledge and Skill

Knowledge

Students will know...
K1 Absolute and relative location using maps, cardinal directions, and latitude/ longitude.
K2 Human and physical characteristics of places, including landmarks, cities, rivers, mountains, and cultural features.
K3 How geography affects where and how people live.
K4 How and why people, goods, and ideas move between regions.
K5 How natural resources influence settlement patterns, trade, and human activity.
K6 How humans use and modify the environment.
K7 The impact of human activity on the environment over time.
K8 How visual and textual evidence, including nonfiction texts, primary source images, and multimedia, can communicate historical and geographic information.

Skill(s)

Students will be skilled at...
S1 Collecting, recording, and organizing information from texts, illustrations, and multimedia
S2 Asking questions and making connections about places, people, and events
S3 Analyzing text, illustrations, primary sources, and multimedia to interpret meaning and extract evidence.
S4 Comparing human and physical characteristics across places.
S5 Evaluating causes and effects of movement, migration, and environmental changes
S6 Making inferences about how geography shapes communities and vice versa.
S7 Explaining patterns in settlement, trade, and migration.
S8 Synthesizing information from maps, charts, texts, and multimedia sources to support conclusions.
S9 Presenting findings through written responses (RACE), videos, or epic assignments.
S10 Using evidence to support claims and explanations about regions, landmarks, and migration.