

Social Studies

Fifth Grade



Unit 1

Pre-1400s: North American Indigenous Societies

Essential Question

This question guides the student experience throughout the unit and is open-ended and enduring.

How did early Indigenous societies shape the land, culture, and communities we live in today?

Unit Summary

This summary provides high-level information about the main learning outcomes within this unit.

Students consider the diversity of the various Native American cultures in what is today the United States and their unique experiences prior to contact with others outside North America. This will include their locations, populations, and cultural identities. Students should analyze the impact of these nations on past and current American society and connections to model Native Nations.

Guiding Questions

At the end of this unit, students should be able to respond to these questions as they demonstrate understanding of key concepts, skills and relevance to their own lives.

Content

- Where did different Indigenous groups live, and how did where they lived affect their way of life?
- What made each Indigenous nation special in how they lived, believed, and worked together?
- How did early Indigenous people meet their needs through farming, trading, and using natural resources?

Process

- What patterns do you see when you compare how different Indigenous groups made decisions or traded goods?
- What evidence can you find to support your ideas about how Indigenous people influenced America today?

Reflective

- What can we learn from how early Indigenous people worked together and

made decisions?

- What can we learn about America today by exploring cultures of Indigenous groups from long ago?
- If you could live with one of the Indigenous nations before the 1400s, which would you choose and why?

Standards

These state standards have been identified as critical to students' long-term learning progression in this discipline. They are assessed within the scope of this unit.

- Standard 1: Choices have consequences.
- Standard 2: Individuals have rights and responsibilities.
- Standard 3: Societies are shaped by identities, beliefs, and practices of individuals and groups.
- Standard 4: Societies experience continuity and change over time.
- Standard 5: Relationships among people, places, ideas, and environments are dynamic.

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Unit 2

1492 – 1600s: North American Colonization, Compromise, & Conflict

Essential Question

This question guides the student experience throughout the unit and is open-ended and enduring.

How did the encounters between European explorers and Indigenous peoples shape the history and future of North America?

Unit Summary

This summary provides high-level information about the main learning outcomes within this unit.

Students explore the encounters between indigenous and European nations.

Students will concentrate on the causes, conflict, and compromise associated with expansion by European colonists across North America. Students will analyze the varied interests and interactions of European and Indigenous nations.

Guiding Questions

At the end of this unit, students should be able to respond to these questions as they demonstrate understanding of key concepts, skills and relevance to their own lives.

Content

- What were some of the main reasons European explorers came to North America?
- How did the Columbian Exchange change life in both the Old World and the New World?
- How did European settlers and Indigenous people interact in the early days of colonization?

Process

- How can we learn about the past through the motivations and actions of explorers?
- What role did geography play in shaping the exploration and trade routes of early European explorers?
- How can we evaluate whether early treaties between Europeans and Indigenous peoples were fair?

Reflective

- How do you think the European exploration of North America affected the Indigenous people who already lived there?
- What might have been different if the Indigenous nations and European settlers had cooperated more instead of having conflicts?
- How does the Columbian Exchange continue to impact our lives today?

Standards

These state standards have been identified as critical to students' long-term learning progression in this discipline. They are assessed within the scope of this unit.

- Standard 1: Choices have consequences.
- Standard 2: Individuals have rights and responsibilities.
- Standard 3: Societies are shaped by identities, beliefs, and practices of individuals and groups.
- Standard 4: Societies experience continuity and change over time.
- Standard 5: Relationships among people, places, ideas, and environments are dynamic.



Unit 3

1600s - 1760s: Competing Indigenous and European Empires

Essential Question

This question guides the student experience throughout the unit and is open-ended and enduring.

How did different groups in North America use land, share resources, and govern themselves, and what can we learn from their choices today?

Unit Summary

This summary provides high-level information about the main learning outcomes within this unit.

This period of history focuses on the establishment, growth, and distinctive qualities of the various European colonies, interactions with Indigenous nations, and the forced migration of enslaved Africans. This includes the geographical, political, social, and economic differences between the various European colonies and nations. Students will examine how these differences shaped their relationships with each other, to their European countries, and to Native nations.

Guiding Questions

At the end of this unit, students should be able to respond to these questions as they demonstrate understanding of key concepts, skills and relevance to their own lives.

Content

- What were the different ways Indigenous Nations and European Empires used land in North America?
- How were the governments of Indigenous Nations and European Empires similar and different?
- How did trade between Indigenous Nations and European colonists shape daily life in North America?

Process

- How did each group's beliefs about land shape what they wanted to do with it?
- How did the goals of different groups sometimes lead to cooperation, and sometimes lead to conflict?
- How did geography and resources affect the decisions different groups made

about where to settle or trade?

Reflective

- What might be a fair way to use and share land today and how can we learn from past conflicts and agreements?
- Who do you think benefited the most from trade in colonial North America and what was the cost to others?
- How are the laws and councils from the colonial era similar to how we make laws and decisions in our community today?

Standards

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Unit 4

1750s - 1770s: Roads to an Independent United States

Essential Question

This question guides the student experience throughout the unit and is open-ended and enduring.

How did different ideas, people, and places shape the colonies' path to independence?

Unit Summary

This summary provides high-level information about the main learning outcomes within this unit.

The period leading up to the separation of the American colonies from Great Britain was influenced by philosophical movements such as the Enlightenment as well as geography, economics, and complex relationships between colonies, European powers, and sovereign Indigenous nations and communities. Students will examine the ongoing conflicts between people living within North America and Europe. Students should explore how these different ideas, relationships, and conflicts converged, culminating in the Declaration of Independence and ultimately a revolution against Great Britain.

Guiding Questions

At the end of this unit, students should be able to respond to these questions as they demonstrate understanding of key concepts, skills and relevance to their own lives.

Content

- What events led to the American colonies breaking away from Great Britain?
- How did Enlightenment ideas, like liberty and natural rights, challenge the ways Britain governed the colonies?
- How did geography contribute to conflict, control, and cooperation in the colonies before the Revolution?

Process

- How do timelines and multiple perspectives help us understand how history unfolded?
- How did each colony's geography, economy, and beliefs shape their decision

to fight, stay loyal, or compromise?

- What choices did colonists have when they disagreed with British laws?

Reflective

- If you lived during this time, would you choose independence, compromise, or loyalty? Why?
- What might it feel like to follow rules or decisions that you did not help create?
- How can learning about different people's experiences help us better understand our country's history?

Standards

These state standards have been identified as critical to students' long-term learning progression in this discipline. They are assessed within the scope of this unit.

- Standard 1: Choices have consequences.
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Unit 5

1770s - 1780s: The Revolutionary War

Essential Question

This question guides the student experience throughout the unit and is open-ended and enduring.

How did the Revolutionary War shape a new nation and change life for the people who lived through it?

Unit Summary

This summary provides high-level information about the main learning outcomes within this unit.

The war for independence from Great Britain cast a vision for a nation founded upon ideas from the Enlightenment Era, and how those ideas impacted different groups both positively and negatively. Students will construct an understanding of colonial efforts to organize a government based on these ideas, the challenges, hardships, successes, and impact of the conflict on different groups and communities, and the global context of the war.

Guiding Questions

At the end of this unit, students should be able to respond to these questions as they demonstrate understanding of key concepts, skills and relevance to their own lives.

Content

- What kind of government did the colonists want, and what made it different from British rule?
- How did the Revolutionary War affect different people living in the colonies?
- What were the most important turning points of the Revolutionary War, and why did they matter?

Process

- How did geography help or hurt the colonists and the British during the war?
- How did colonists work together to make decisions for a new kind of government after breaking away from Britain?
- How did the choices people made, such as who to support or how to survive, shape their experiences in the war?

Reflective

- What did liberty and justice mean to different people during the Revolutionary War?
- What would have been hardest about living through the Revolutionary War and why?
- How might the ideas from the Revolution still matter in our country today?

Standards

These state standards have been identified as critical to students' long-term learning progression in this discipline. They are assessed within the scope of this unit.

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- Standard 3: Societies are shaped by identities, beliefs, and practices of individuals and groups.
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Unit 6

1770s–1789: Stories of a New Nation

Essential Question

This question guides the student experience throughout the unit and is open-ended and enduring.

How did early Americans build a new nation and what stories of compromise, conflict, and hope helped shape the United States we know today?

Unit Summary

This summary provides high-level information about the main learning outcomes within this unit.

Students will examine this critical period of nation-building by exploring the challenges and opportunities of establishing a new government, analyzing the debates of federalism and individual liberties, and assessing the compromises leading to the Constitution. Students will investigate the beginnings of the United States and the resulting complex social and political issues, including the issue of slavery.

Guiding Questions

At the end of this unit, students should be able to respond to these questions as they demonstrate understanding of key concepts, skills and relevance to their own lives.

Content

- What were some of the most important decisions made between 1770 and 1789, and why did they matter?
- Why did the Articles of Confederation not work well for the new country, and how did the Constitution try to fix those problems?
- What rights and freedoms were debated when building the new government—and who got to have them?

Process

- How did leaders decide what to include in the Constitution and what did they have to compromise on?
- If you were starting a business after the Revolutionary War, what resources and challenges would you have to think about?
- How would you decide the best place for the U.S. capital based on geography,

trade, and fairness to all states?

Reflective

- What does the Constitution tell us about what early Americans believed was fair or unfair?
- Would you have agreed with the compromises made in the Constitution? Why or why not?
- What qualities do you think a good leader needs to help start a new country?

Standards

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- Standard 3: Societies are shaped by identities, beliefs, and practices of individuals and groups.
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- Standard 5: Relationships among people, places, ideas, and environments are dynamic.