



Grade 6 - Unit 2 - The Spread of Ideas

Unit Focus

While following Unit 1 chronologically, the theme of Unit 2, The Spread of Ideas, marks a distinct shift in historical focus. We live in the digital age, a time in which ideas and knowledge spread in nanoseconds. The amount of time it takes for the amount of knowledge in the world to double is now down to less than a year and experts predict it will be down to less than a day before long. Of course, now, through artificial intelligence, information is being learned by nonhumans. Unit 2 examines key moments in history that helped the amount of knowledge to vastly expand and the effects of that spread of knowledge.

Students start their study with an examination of the Han and Song Dynasties of classical China, we focus on the Chinese inventions of the printing press and compass. In each of these cases students predict the potential applications and impact of these inventions on the growth of knowledge. Students continue to the House of Wisdom of Baghdad, the learning center of the Muslim Empire at the crossroads of the world's great civilizations, where a rich culture of learning resulted. Students finally examine the interdependence of economies through a study of the inflation caused by the Mali King, Mansa Musa's hajj to Mecca. Throughout the unit, activities that involve constructing, simulating, designing or interpreting are at the center of the student experience. Students are required to predict, extrapolate, and question the impact and meaning of the inventions on the spread of ideas. The exploration of each civilization is supported by nonfiction reading/listening sources and engaging geography skills. At the end of the unit, students will design an object to sell at our grade-wide trade fair as a summative assessment. The materials, symbols, shape, and design of their object will demonstrate aspects of the theme, content, and skills that were woven throughout the unit.

Stage 1: Desired Results - Key Understandings

Standard(s)	Transfer
Connecticut Elementary and Secondary Social Studies Standards (2023) Grade 6 - World Regional Studies <ul style="list-style-type: none">Explain how compelling and supporting questions represent key ideas about geography or other social science disciplines in the study of a world region. (6.Inq.1.a)Apply disciplinary knowledge and practices to demonstrate an understanding of world regional studies context. (6.Inq.2.a)Gather relevant evidence from multiple sources using both print and digital resources and databases (e.g., origin, authority, structure, context). (6.Inq.3.a)Identify relevant evidence from multiple sources to support claims. (6.Inq.3.b)Develop claims and counterclaims in response to a compelling question. (6.Inq.3.c)Demonstrate spatial awareness by constructing maps to represent spatial patterns and environmental characteristics of a region (e.g., absolute location, built environment, natural features, population density, relative location). (6.Geo.1.a)Explain the relationship between the locations of places and regional characteristics using maps and other representations (e.g., religious centers,	<i>Students will be able to independently use their learning to...</i> T1 Trace key events, statistics, and development of ideas/innovations over time to determine patterns. T2 Apply historical knowledge to develop connections to other eras/situations or provide insight into a contemporary issue.
	Meaning
	Understanding(s)
	<i>Students will understand that...</i> U1 Human settlements and physical systems are in constant interaction. U2 Historical events and developments are shaped by specific individuals, groups, and unique circumstances of time and place, as well as broader historical contexts. U3 Students are historians, investigating and interpreting the past from a variety of perspectives.
	Essential Question(s)
	<i>Students will keep considering...</i> Q1 In what ways have ideas and learning increased and spread throughout history? Q2 What impacts, both positive and negative, do new ideas have on cultures around the world? Q3 What social structures and conditions inhibit/promote the spread of ideas?

Stage 1: Desired Results - Key Understandings

<p>Nile River flooding, sea level rise in Venice, New Northwest Passage). (6.Geo.2.b)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Describe changes in environmental characteristics of a region using maps and other representations in both historical and contemporary contexts (e.g., expansion of the Sahara Desert, urbanization in China, deforestation in Northern Europe). (6.Geo.2.c) Explain how cultural patterns influence the environment and daily life within and among regions (e.g., pollution of the Ganges River, Croatian access to Adriatic Seacoast, Main-Danube waterway, Chinese New Year, Hajj). (6.Geo.4.a) Analyze the cultural and environmental characteristics that have shaped a region (e.g., climate in Northern vs. Southern Europe, pastoralist communities in South Asia). (6.Geo.5.a) Compare the similarities and differences of cultural and environmental characteristics within and among regions (e.g., Abrahamic religions in Israel and Palestine, regional identity in India, Northern and Southern China). (6.Geo.5.b) Explain how physical characteristics of a region are connected to identities and cultures (e.g., agriculture in Ukraine, Indian Diaspora, Ethiopian highlands). (6.Geo.6.a) Explain how human characteristics of a region are connected to identities and cultures (e.g., built environment, language, world religions). (6.Geo.6.b) Classify a series of historical events and developments in a region as examples of political change and continuity (e.g., Fall of Rome, Korean Demilitarized Zone, Fall of Saigon, Partition of India). (6.His.2.a) Explain how economic decisions influence the environment and daily life within and among regions (e.g., agriculture, energy production, population density, resource extraction, waste disposal). (6.Geo.4.b) Explain how economic decisions affect the well-being of individuals, businesses, and societies within a region (e.g., Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries, South Asia Food and Nutrition Security Initiative, National Human Development Initiative, FIFA World Cup). (6.Eco.1.a) Describe the role of supply and demand within and among regions (e.g., oil, gold, chocolate, iron, coffee, gemstones, Tulip mania). (6.Eco.3.a) <p>Madison Public Schools Profile of a Graduate</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Analyzing: Examining information/data/ evidence from multiple sources to identify possible underlying assumptions, patterns, and relationships in order to make inferences. (POG.1.2) 	<p>U4 Individuals and groups create change based on action and the spread of ideas.</p> <p>U5 Historians and social scientists work to explain what happened through a continuous process of questioning, research, analysis, and interpretation.</p>	
Acquisition of Knowledge and Skill		
	Knowledge	Skill(s)
	<p><i>Students will know...</i></p> <p>K1 What caused the fall of the Roman Empire and how it fragmented Europe.</p> <p>K2 The impact of Imperial China's advancements.</p> <p>K3 How the achievements of the Islamic Empire impacted society.</p> <p>K4 Social structures of Medieval Europe and their limitations.</p> <p>K5 How Judaism, Christianity, and Islam are similar and different.</p> <p>K6 How the Silk Road impacted trade, religion, and the spread of ideas.</p> <p>K7 How Mansa Musa's Hajj led to inflation.</p> <p>K8 Students will know unit specific vocabulary: feudalism, Lord, Vassal, Serf, Nobility, Crusades, manorialism, Pope, Cardinal, Arch Bishop, Bishop, Germanic Tribes, Anglo-Saxon, Franks, Islam, 5 Pillars of Islam, House of Wisdom, Arabesque, compass, printing press, Qin Dynasty, Han Dynasty, Terracotta soldiers, Mansa Musa, Inflation, Silk Road</p>	<p><i>Students will be skilled at...</i></p> <p>S1 Deducing what life was like before the internet.</p> <p>S2 Ranking different contributing factors of the fall of the Roman Empire</p> <p>S3 Practicing nonfiction reading skills.</p> <p>S4 Brainstorming possible purposes of the terracotta army.</p> <p>S5 Analyzing the impact of significant ancient Chinese inventions.</p> <p>S6 Identifying key map features of Europe</p> <p>S7 Drawing parallels between chess and feudalism.</p> <p>S8 Completing a DBQ on Jerusalem.</p> <p>S9 Comparing/contrasting the three "religions of the book".</p> <p>S10 Investigating Arab achievements from the House of Wisdom.</p> <p>S11 Identifying key features of a map of the Middle East.</p> <p>S12 Explaining how inflation occurs.</p> <p>S13 Creating a product synthesizing cultural aspects from unit.</p>