

# Introduction to the Middle Grades Flexible Options for Teaching History and Social Science

## World Geography and Cultures in Grades 6 and 7

The purposes of the grades 6 and 7 standards are to:

- extend students' knowledge of the physical and political geography of the world
- expand their capacity for geographical reasoning
- strengthen their ability to develop research questions and conduct inquiries
- introduce the cultural achievements of ancient and classical civilizations worldwide
- establish foundational knowledge about types of societies and governments in preparation for Civics in grade 8 and World History and United States History in high school

The *Framework* organizes the Content Standards for grades 6 and 7 by seven regions:

- North Africa, the Middle East, and Western Asia
- Sub-Saharan Africa
- Central America, the Caribbean, South America
- South and Central Asia
- East Asia
- Southeast Asia and Oceania
- Europe

The topics within this two-year sequence offer rich opportunities for students to inquire about their world and humanity's very long history of achievements. The topics also lend themselves to exploration of what it means to be human and part of a human community, and the concepts that have arisen in societies to guide ethical interactions among individuals, communities, and nations. Teachers, administrators, schools, and districts should make their own instructional decisions about the best ways to inspire their students to become interested in and deepen their understanding of international events and the lives of people around the globe.

It is important for grades 6–7 instruction in history and social science to address all the World Geography and Cultures Content Standards. Teachers may choose, for example, to retain the regional approach, but change the order in which regions are taught. They may design humanities courses that integrate language arts and history and social science, selecting literary and informational texts for language arts that reflect particular regions or civilizations. They may place strong emphasis on investigating current global events and relating them to geographic data.

## Civics in Grade 8

The purposes of the grade 8 standards are to:

- extend students' knowledge of United States and Massachusetts government
- expand their capacity for civic reasoning
- strengthen their ability to develop research questions and conduct inquiries
- introduce significant recurring questions about the United States Constitution, rights, responsibilities, citizenship, a free press, and the concept of the common good
- establish foundational knowledge about government in preparation for High School United States and World History

The *Framework* organizes the Content Standards for grade 8 Civics in seven topics.

- Topics 1 and 2: The founding principles and development of the United States political system and its institutions
- Topic 3: The structure of United States government
- Topics 4 and 5: Rights and responsibilities of citizens and the development of the Constitution through amendments, court decisions, and legislation
- Topic 6: The structure of Massachusetts state and local governments
- Topic 7: Freedom of the press and news/media literacy

The Civics course offers a comprehensive survey of how democratic government is designed to work in the nation, the Commonwealth, and in cities and towns. Teachers, administrators and schools and districts should make their own instructional decisions about the best ways teach this content and to inspire their students to become informed and engaged citizens.

It is important for civics instruction to address all the Content Standards for grade 8. Teachers may, for example, choose to teach about Massachusetts state and local government or freedom of the press/media literacy first. They may select different sets of court cases to illustrate concepts in Topic 5, or make connections between current events in government and politics and historical debates about the role of government.

As they apply the Standards for Practice in History and Social Science and the Standards for Literacy in History and Social Science, students in the middle grades conduct informal research routinely and efficiently to find information and engage in more sustained research projects that begin with defining a research question or problem and result in written, oral, or media presentations. Appendix B includes resources on inquiry and research.

In order to build a coherent and rigorous curriculum, teachers and administrators of elementary, middle and high school history and social science should collaborate to make decisions about topic sequences, instructional materials, research projects, and assessments.

## Grade 6

### World Geography and Ancient Civilizations I

Grades 6 and 7 form a two-year sequence in which students study regions of the world by examining physical geography, nations in the region today, and selected ancient and classical societies before 1000 CE. Regions for grade 6 are: Western Asia, North Africa, and the Middle East; Sub-Saharan Africa; and Central America, the Caribbean, and South America. Students investigate guiding questions such as “How does geography affect how societies develop and interact?” and “How have human societies differed from one another across time and regions?” Additional supporting questions appear under each topic. The questions are included to stimulate teachers’ and students’ own questions for discussion and research.



### Grade 6 History and Social Science Topics

- Topic 1. Studying complex societies past and present
- Topic 2. Human origins, the Neolithic and Paleolithic Eras
- Topic 3. The Middle East and North Africa
- Topic 4. Sub-Saharan Africa
- Topic 5. Central America, the Caribbean, and South America

### Literacy in History and Social Science

In studying these topics, students apply grades 6–8 reading, writing, and speaking and listening skills and learn vocabulary and concepts related to history and social science.

### Looking Back, Looking Ahead: Connections to History and Social Science in Grades 4, 5, and 7

**Fourth Graders** studied the physical and political geography archaeology of the United States, Mexico, and Canada. **Fifth graders** learned about U.S. history from the colonial period through the Civil War and the 20<sup>th</sup> century Civil Rights Movement. **Seventh graders** will continue the study of World Geography and Civilizations, focusing on Asia, Oceania, and Europe.

### Standards for History and Social Science Practice, Pre-K–12\*

1. Demonstrate civic knowledge, skills, and dispositions.
2. Develop focused questions or problem statements and conduct inquiries.
3. Organize information and data from multiple primary and secondary sources.
4. Analyze the purpose and point of view of each source; distinguish opinion from fact.
5. Evaluate the credibility, accuracy, and relevance of each source.
6. Argue or explain conclusions, using valid reasoning and evidence.
7. Determine next steps and take informed action, as appropriate.

\* A statement on civic knowledge, skills, and dispositions adopted by the Massachusetts Board of Elementary and Secondary Education in 2016 is included in the larger explanation of the practices, at the [beginning of the Standards](#) section.

## Grade 6 Content Standards

Building on knowledge from previous years, students should be able to:

### Topic 1: Studying complex societies, past and present [6.T1]

*Supporting question: What do the social sciences contribute to our understanding of the world?*

1. Explain how different academic fields in the social sciences concentrate on different means of studying societies in the past and present.<sup>36</sup>
2. Give examples of ways in which a current historical interpretation might build on, extend, or reject an interpretation of the past.
3. Give examples of how archaeologists, historians, geographers, economists, and political scientists work as teams to analyze evidence, develop hypotheses, and construct interpretations of ancient and classical civilizations.

Clarification statement: *Building on what students have learned about civics, economics, geography, and history in previous grades, the grades 6 and 7 standards are designed to deepen students' understanding of how the social science disciplines can be used systematically in the study of countries, regions, and the past.*

### Topic 2. Human origins, the Neolithic and Paleolithic Eras [6.T2]

*Supporting Question: How did life on Earth begin and why did humans form complex societies?*

1. Describe the great climatic and environmental changes that shaped the earth and eventually permitted the growth of human life.

Clarification statement: *The grade 6 standards for Earth and Space Science of the [Science and Technology/Engineering Framework](#) (2016) address the fossil record and the concept of geological time.*

2. Identify sites where archaeologists have found evidence of the origins of modern human beings and explain current theories of how human groups moved from Africa over time into the continents now known as Asia, Europe, the Americas, and Oceania. Give examples of how ongoing archaeological research adds new data that changes interpretations of how migrations and habitation sites are dated.<sup>37</sup>
3. Explain that the term *Paleolithic Era* refers to the period of earliest human history, beginning c. 2.6 million years ago to c. 11,700 years ago, characterized by the first use of stone tools, fire, hunting and gathering weapons, and, about 50,000 years ago, by cave painting, sculpture, tools, and artifacts using diverse materials such as bone, shell, stone, mineral pigments, and wood).<sup>38</sup>
4. Explain that the term *Neolithic Era* refers to the period beginning about 10,000 years ago to c. 4500 or c. 2000 BCE in different parts of the world, in which the technologies of agriculture

<sup>36</sup> See Swan, Kathy, et. al., *The College, Career, and Civic Life Framework*, 66-68. (see also <https://www.socialstudies.org/c3>)

<sup>37</sup> Students might use current archaeological research from websites such as [Archaeology](#) (the Archaeological Institute of America). (see also <https://www.archaeology.org/>)

<sup>38</sup> Students might discuss images of [rock art in Africa](#), [rock art of Australia](#), or the [cave paintings of Lascaux](#) in France. (see also <https://africanrockart.org/rock-art-in-africa/maps/> and <http://www.heritageportal.eu/Browse-Topics/PAINTINGS-PAINTED-SURFACES/Lascaux.html>)

(growing crops and the domestication of animals) and metallurgy (mining and working of metals) were invented and refined, and in which complex societies begin to appear.

5. Explain how complex societies that practice agriculture may differ, some developing into permanently settled communities, some being nomadic and moving livestock from place to place, some cultivating land temporarily and moving to another location when a plot of land is no longer productive.
6. Explain that scholars have attempted to define the characteristics of a complex society (sometimes called “civilization”) since the early 20th century, and although debates are ongoing, many cite these characteristics:
  - a. an economy that produces food surpluses
  - b. dense populations in distinct areas or cities
  - c. stratified social classes
  - d. specialized occupations
  - e. developed systems of government, religion, and learning
  - f. achievements in technology, art, and monumental architecture
  - g. systems of record keeping, either written or oral<sup>39</sup>
7. Explain the ways in which complex societies interact and spread from one region to another (e.g., by trade, cultural or linguistic exchanges, migration, religious conversion, conquest, or colonization).
8. Construct and interpret a timeline that shows some of the key periods in the development of human societies in the Paleolithic and Neolithic Eras. Use correctly the words or abbreviations for identifying time periods or dates in historical narratives (*decade, age, era, century, millennium, CE/AD, BCE/BC, c. and circa*). Identify in BCE dates the higher number as indicating the older year (that is, 3000 BCE is earlier than 2000 BCE).

Clarification statement: *This can be the beginning of a cumulative timeline that may be in a digital or other format. Students may add to it as they study additional civilizations studied in grades 6 and 7. An ongoing visual timeline can heighten understanding of the relationships among civilizations and provide a foundation for learning about later periods of world history in high school.*

### Topic 3: Western Asia, the Middle East and North Africa<sup>40</sup> [6.T3]

#### Modern countries in Western Asia and the Middle East

Bahrain, Cyprus, Greece, Iran, Iraq, Israel, Jordan, Kuwait, Lebanon, Oman, area governed by the Palestinian Authority, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Syria, Turkey, United Arab Emirates, Yemen

#### Modern countries in North Africa

Algeria, Egypt, Libya, Morocco, Sudan, Tunisia, Western Sahara (mostly under Moroccan Administration)

<sup>39</sup> Brown, Cynthia Stokes. (2009). “[What is a Civilization. Anyway?](#)” *World History Connected* Volume 6, Number 3.

<sup>40</sup> Note that while “the Middle East” is a commonly used term, there is no universally accepted list of countries that compose this area; different people will create different “Middle Easts” depending on whether they are using a strategic, historical, cultural, religious, physical geographical, or other lens. Note that Greece has been included both in this list and in the list of European countries. (see also <http://worldhistoryconnected.press.uillinois.edu/6.3/brown.html>)

**Significant ancient states and empires in Western Asia, the Middle East and North Africa, c. 3500 BCE–700 CE**

Mesopotamia (Sumer, Babylon, Assyria), Phoenicia, ancient Israel and Palestine, ancient Egypt and Nubia; Carthage, the Persian Empire, the Empire of Alexander the Great, the Roman Empire, the beginning of the Islamic Empire

**a. Physical and political geography of modern Western Asia, the Middle East, and North Africa [6.T3a]**

1. On a physical map, use cardinal directions, map scales, key/legend, and title to locate important physical features of the region (e.g. the Indian Ocean, the Black Sea, Aegean Sea, Mediterranean Sea, Red Sea, Arabian Peninsula, the Persian Gulf, the Nile, Tigris, and Euphrates Rivers, the Strait of Gibraltar, the Bosphorus, and the Suez Canal). Use other kinds of maps (e.g., landform, population, climate) to determine important characteristics of this region.
2. On a political map of the region, demonstrate map reading skills to distinguish countries, capitals, and other cities and to describe their absolute location (using latitude and longitude coordinates) and relative location (relationship to other countries, cities, or bodies of water); use knowledge of maps to complement information gained from text about a city, country or region.
3. Explain how absolute and relative locations, major physical characteristics, climate and natural resources in this region have influenced settlement patterns, population size, and economies of the countries.

**b. Western Asia, the Middle East and North Africa: Mesopotamia, c. 3500–1200 BCE [6.T3b]**

*Supporting Question: What are the best explanations for why writing developed in Mesopotamia?*

1. Explain how the presence of the Tigris and Euphrates Rivers contributed to the development of
2. agriculture and ancient complex societies; explain why historians have called the region that surrounds these rivers “the Fertile Crescent.”
3. On a map of archaeological sites in the region, and identify the locations and time periods of the Sumerians, Babylonians, and Assyrians as successive states and empires.
4. Describe how irrigation, mining and metalsmithing, agriculture, the domestication of animals, and inventions such as the wheel, the sail, and the plow contributed to settlement and the growth of Mesopotamian civilizations.
5. Analyze the important characteristics and achievements of early Mesopotamia.
  - a. a complex society with rulers, priests, soldiers, craftspeople, farmers, and slaves
  - b. a religion based on polytheism (the belief in many gods)
  - c. monumental architecture (the ziggurat) and developed art (including large relief sculptures, mosaics, carved cylinder seals)
  - d. cuneiform writing, used for record keeping tax collection, laws and literature
  - e. the first epic (the Epic of Gilgamesh) and the first set of written laws (the Code of Hammurabi, for example, “If a man put out the eye of another man, his eye shall be put out.” [An eye for an eye]).

### **c. Ancient Egypt, c. 3000–1200 BCE [6.T3c]**

*Supporting Question: How did Ancient Egypt's rigid class structure affect its social and cultural development?*

1. Identify the locations of ancient Upper and Lower Egypt and ancient Nubia; and explain what the terms “Upper” and “Lower” mean in this context.
2. Describe the significance of the Nile River to ancient Egyptians.
3. Analyze the kinds of evidence that have been used by archaeologists and historians to draw conclusions about the social and economic characteristics of ancient Nubia (the Kingdom of Kush) and their relationship to the characteristics of ancient Egypt.
4. Analyze the role of the pharaoh as god/king, and describe how pharaohs were represented in painting and sculpture, the concept of dynasties, and significant acts of at least one pharaoh or queen (e.g., Khufu, Akhnaten, Ramses II, Nefertiti, Cleopatra).
5. Describe the relationships among social classes (e.g., the relationship of the pharaoh to priests, nobles, government officials, soldiers, scribes, artisans, farmers, and peasants, laborers, and slaves).
6. Describe the polytheistic religion of ancient Egypt with respect to beliefs about death, proper behavior, the afterlife, mummification, and the roles of deities.
7. Summarize important achievements of the Old, Middle, and New Kingdoms (e.g., the agricultural system; knowledge of mathematics, astronomy, the invention of a calendar; the invention of papyrus and hieroglyphic writing; the organization of monumental building projects such as the Pyramids and Sphinx at Giza; the centralization of government and military power).

### **d. Ancient Phoenicia, c. 1000–300 BCE [6.T3d]**

*Supporting Question: Why were traders and merchants important in ancient societies?*

1. On a map of the ancient Mediterranean world, locate Greece, Asia Minor, Crete, Phoenicia, the Aegean and the Red Sea.
2. Explain how the location of Phoenicia contributed to its domination of maritime trade in the Mediterranean from c. 1000-300 BCE.
3. Describe how the alphabetic Phoenician writing system differed from Mesopotamian cuneiform or Egyptian hieroglyphic writing; explain how Phoenician maritime traders contributed to the spread of the use of the alphabetic system, which eventually evolved into the Greek alphabet and then into letter symbols used in other languages.

### **e. Ancient Israel, Palestine, c. 2000 BCE–70 CE [6.T3e]**

*Supporting question: What were the consequences of the unification of tribes for ancient Israel?*

1. On a historical map of the Mediterranean, locate Asia Minor, Greece and Mesopotamia, the kingdoms of the Hittites and ancient Israel and Palestine and ancient Egypt.
2. Trace the migrations of the ancient Israelite tribes from Mesopotamia to the land called Canaan and explain the role of Abraham and Moses in Hebrew history.
3. Describe the history of ancient Israel and early Christianity:

- a. monotheistic religion (e.g., the belief in one God, the Ten Commandments, the emphasis on individual worth and personal responsibility, the belief that rulers and the ruled must adhere to the same moral obligations)
- b. the Hebrew Bible’s accounts of the history of early Israel: the unification of the tribes of Israel under Saul, David, and Solomon; the founding of Jerusalem as capital city by David (c. 1000 BCE), the building of the first temple by Solomon (c. 900-800 BCE), the destruction of the first temple (c. 400 BCE), the annexation of Judea by the Roman Empire and the Roman destruction of the second temple (c. 70 CE).
- c. the emergence of Christianity as a distinct religion, with roots in Judaism, but increasingly diverse followers throughout the Roman Empire and the relationship of early Christians to the officials of the Roman Empire.
- d. the central features of Christianity (e.g., the belief in a messiah who could redeem humans from sin, the concept of salvation, the belief in an Old and a new Testament in the Bible, the life and teachings of Jesus.).

### **f. The ancient Arabian Peninsula (7<sup>th</sup> century CE) [6.T3f]**

*Supporting question: Why is the belief in one God significant to Islam, Judaism, and Christianity?*

1. On a map of the Arabian Peninsula, identify the Red Sea and the cities of Mecca and Medina as the sites of the beginning of the Muslim religion.
2. Explain Islam’s historical relationship to Judaism and Christianity as monotheistic religions.
3. Describe the life and teachings of Muhammad (570-c. 632 CE) and the significance of the Qur’an as the primary source of Islamic belief.

*Clarification statement: This is intended as a brief introduction to the historical beginnings of one of the major world religions practiced today; in addition to learning about the beginnings of Judaism, Christianity, and Islam in grade 6, students will learn about Hinduism, Buddhism, Confucianism and Daoism in grade 7.*

### **g. Interactions among ancient societies in Western Asia, North Africa, and the Middle East [6.T3g]**

*Supporting Question: How did ideas spread across ancient societies in this region?*

1. Describe the impact of encounters through trade, cultural exchange, and conquest among the societies and empires in the region, in particular, exchanges on land routes of the Silk Roads linking Europe, the steppes of West Asia, East Asia, and Africa, and the goods, languages, and cultural motifs exchanged (e.g., gold, ivory from Africa, grain from Western Asia, produce, horses, livestock, wood, furs from the steppes, ceramics, silk, and other luxury goods from China).
2. Use information from primary and secondary sources to research contributions of **one** of the ancient Mesopotamian, Egyptian, Phoenician, Israelite, Islamic, and Eurasian societies to the modern world.

### Suggested Primary and Secondary Sources for Topic 3 in Appendix D

#### **Mesopotamia**

Excerpts from the [Epic of Gilgamesh](#) (c.2150–1400 BCE): article on Gilgamesh with maps, photographs, and link to 10-minute video animation. [Full text of the epic](#) illustrated with photographs of Assyrian sculpture.

Excerpts from [The Code of Hammurabi](#) (c. 1754 BCE): article with photograph of stele (stone sculpture) showing Hammurabi from the Louvre Museum. [Full text](#) of the Code. [Video interpretation of the stele with the Code of Hammurabi](#)

#### **Ancient Egypt**

Sculpture of [King Menkaura \(Mycerinus\) and Queen](#) (2490–2472 BCE), Museum of Fine Arts, Boston; see also the museum's tours of the collections of [Egyptian Art](#) and [Nubian Art](#)

[The Egyptian Hymn to the Nile](#) (c.2100 BCE)

Excerpts from [The Egyptian Book of the Dead, Negative Confessions](#) (c.1570–1069 BCE): text and article with illustrations. [Text alone](#) of the Negative Confessions

#### **Ancient Israel and Early Christianity**

[Exodus, Chapter 20, the Ten Commandments](#) (c.600 BCE, based on earlier oral tradition). [Background and analysis of the Ten Commandments.](#)

New Testament, Gospel [of Matthew, Chapters 5-7: Sermon on the Mount](#) (c. 80–110 CE)

#### **Islam**

[Selections from the Qu'ran, 1, 47](#) (609–632 CE)

## Topic 4. Sub-Saharan Africa [6.T4]

### **Modern countries in Sub-Saharan Africa**

Angola, Benin, Botswana, Burkina Faso, Burundi, Cameroon, Cape Verde, Central African Republic, Chad, Comoros, Congo, Côte d'Ivoire, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Djibouti, Equatorial Guinea, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Gabon, Gambia, Ghana, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Kenya, Lesotho, Liberia, Madagascar, Malawi, Mali, Mauritania, Mauritius, Mayotte (Fr.), Mozambique, Namibia, Niger, Nigeria, Reunion (Fr.), Rwanda, Sao Tome and Principe, Senegal, Seychelles, Sierra Leone, Somalia, South Africa, South Sudan, Swaziland, Tanzania, Togo, Uganda, Zambia, Zimbabwe

### **Significant early Sub-Saharan African states and societies**

Ancient Ghana, ancient Mali, Songhai, the ancient Kingdom of Axum, the Swahili city-states

## a. Physical and political geography of Sub-Saharan Africa [6.T4a]

1. On a map of the world, locate the continent of Africa, the Atlantic Ocean, the Indian Ocean, and the Mediterranean Sea. On a map of Africa, locate the northern, eastern, western, central, and southern regions of Africa, the Sahara Desert, Mount Kilimanjaro, the Cape of Good Hope, the Great Rift Valley, Lake Victoria). Use other kinds of maps (e.g., landform, population, climate) to determine important characteristics of this region.

2. On a political map of the region, demonstrate map reading skills to distinguish countries, capitals, and other cities and to describe their absolute location (using latitude and longitude coordinates) and relative location (relationship to other countries, cities, or bodies of water); use knowledge of maps to complement information gained from text about a city, country or region.
3. Explain how absolute and relative locations, major physical characteristics, climate (including drought and desertification), and natural resources in this region have influenced settlement patterns, population size, and economies of the countries.

## **b. Selected Sub-Saharan African states and societies, c. 100–1000 CE [6.T4b]**

*Supporting Question: How did long-distance trade influence the development of early sub-Saharan African states and societies?*

1. Identify the location, sources of wealth, and importance of the Kingdom of Axum (c. 100-940 CE); explain the role it played in the adoption of Christianity in Ethiopia and the role east African societies played in the spread of Islam to South Asia,
2. Explain the pivotal role Swahili coastal societies along the Indian Ocean played in linking trade networks between interior Africa and maritime routes along the coasts of Central and South Asia, and connecting to China; identify key goods in this trade (e.g., gold, ivory, iron, people from Africa, and cloth, glass beads, and porcelain from Asia).
3. Identify the locations, sources of wealth and importance of West African cities and empires, including the city of Timbuktu (beginning c.5<sup>th</sup> century CE), and the empire of ancient Ghana (beginning c. 700 CE).
  - i. Clarification statement: *Students will study the later empires of ancient Mali and Songhai in World History I.*
4. Explain the pivotal role these societies played in the trans-Saharan trade, the spread of Islam, and trade with North Africa, Europe, West Asia in gold, ivory, and slaves and the contributions of these societies to the modern world.

## Topic 5. Central America, the Caribbean Islands, and South America [6.T5]

### Modern countries in Central America and the Caribbean Islands

Anguilla (U.K.), Antigua and Barbuda, Bahamas, Barbados, Belize, Bermuda (U.K.), British Virgin Islands (U.K.), Cayman Islands (U.K.), Costa Rica, Cuba, Dominica, Dominican Republic, El Salvador, Grenada, Guadeloupe (Fr.), Guatemala, Haiti, Honduras, Jamaica, Martinique (Fr.), Montserrat (U.K.), Netherlands Antilles (Saint Maarten, Saba, Saint Eustatius, Aruba, Bonaire, Curaçao), Nicaragua, Panama, Puerto Rico (U.S.), St. Kitts and Nevis, St. Lucia, St.-Pierre and Miquelon (Fr.), St. Vincent and the Grenadines, Trinidad and Tobago, Turks and Caicos Islands (U.K.), Virgin Islands (U.S.)

### Modern countries in South America

Argentina, Bolivia, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Ecuador, Falkland Islands (U.K. territory), French Guiana (Fr.), Guyana, Paraguay, Peru, Suriname, Uruguay, Venezuela

### Significant ancient societies and empires in Central and South America (Mesoamerica)

Maya, Teotihuacán, Olmec, Toltec, Zapotec, Chavín, Moche, Nazca

(Note that students will study the later Aztec and Inca empires in World History I)

## a. Physical and political geography and indigenous populations of Central America and the Caribbean Islands [6.T5a]

1. On a physical map of the world, use cardinal directions, map scales, key/legend, and title to locate Central America, the Caribbean Sea. On a map of the region, identify important physical features of the region (e.g. Gulf of Mexico, Yucatan Peninsula, the Panama Canal).
2. Demonstrate knowledge of political geography by locating the current countries and major cities of Central America and the Caribbean Islands on a political map; use knowledge of maps to complement information gained from text about a country or region.
3. Explain how absolute and relative locations, climate, major physical characteristics and natural resources influenced settlement, population size, and the economies of regions and countries in Central America and the Caribbean Islands.
4. Describe the culture and way of life of the indigenous populations of the region (e.g., Carib [Antilles and South America], Taino [Cuba, Trinidad, Jamaica, Hispaniola, Puerto Rico], Lenca [Honduras], Miskito [Nicaragua], Huatares and Chorotegas [Costa Rica], Lokono, also known as Arawak [Trinidad and Tobago]).

## b. Physical and political geography of South America [6.T5b]

1. On a physical map of the world, use cardinal directions, map scales, key/legend, and title to locate South America and the Atlantic and Pacific Oceans. On a map of South America, locate important physical features of the region (e.g. Isthmus of Panama, Andes Mountains, Cape Horn, Amazon River, and the southern, northern, eastern, and western regions of South America). Use other kinds of maps (e.g., landform, population, climate) to determine important characteristics of this region.

2. On a political map of the region, demonstrate map reading skills to distinguish countries, capitals, and other cities and to describe their absolute location (using latitude and longitude coordinates) and relative location (relationship to other countries, cities, or bodies of water); use knowledge of maps to complement information gained from text about a city, country or region.
3. Explain how absolute and relative locations, major physical characteristics, climate and natural resources in this region have influenced settlement patterns, population size, and economies of the countries.

### **c. Major ancient societies in Central America and South America, c. 1400 BCE–1600 CE [6.T5c]**

*Supporting question: What are the most important contributions of ancient societies in the Americas to the modern world?*

1. Research and report on **one** of the major ancient societies that existed in Central America (Maya, Teotihuacán, and other civilizations such as the Olmec, Toltec, and Zapotec), or one of the major pre-Columbian Andean civilizations (Chavín, Moche, Nazca), their locations, and their cultural characteristics. (See Standard 7.)

**Suggested Primary and Secondary Sources in Appendix D:** *Images and text about Mayan architecture and culture c. 900 BCE to 1500 CE in [Tikal National Park](#), Guatemala*  
*Note: Teachers may choose other sites and use other similar resources.*

## Grade 7

# World Geography and Ancient Civilizations II



Grade 7 continues the sequence from grade 6, studying the development of ancient and classical civilizations and physical geography of Asia, Oceania, and Europe. Students study these topics by exploring guiding questions such as, “How did the concept of self-government develop?” and “Why do empires rise and fall?” Additional supporting questions appear under each topic. The questions are included to stimulate teachers’ and students’ own questions for discussion and research.

## Grade 7 History and Social Science Topics

**Topic 1. Central and South Asia**

**Topic 2. East Asia**

**Topic 3. Southeast Asia and Oceania**

**Topic 4. Europe**

## Literacy in History and Social Science

In studying these topics, students apply grades 6–8 [reading](#), [writing and speaking and listening skills](#), and learn vocabulary and concepts related to history and social science.

## Looking Back, Looking Ahead: Connections to History and Social Science in Grades 4, 6, and High School

**Fourth Graders** studied the physical and political geography and ancient civilizations of North America. **Sixth graders** focused on the geography, history, and ancient civilizations of Central and South America and the Caribbean Islands, the Middle East and Africa as **sixth graders**. Students in the **high school** will study **world history** from approximately 500 CE to the first decades of the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

## Standards for History and Social Science Practice, Pre-K–12\*

1. Demonstrate civic knowledge, skills, and dispositions.
2. Develop focused questions or problem statements and conduct inquiries.
3. Organize information and data from multiple primary and secondary sources.
4. Analyze the purpose and point of view of each source; distinguish opinion from fact.
5. Evaluate the credibility, accuracy, and relevance of each source.
6. Argue or explain conclusions, using valid reasoning and evidence.
7. Determine next steps and take informed action, as appropriate.

\* A statement on civic knowledge, skills, and dispositions adopted by the Massachusetts Board of Elementary and Secondary Education in 2016 is included in the larger explanation of the practices, at the [beginning of the Standards](#) section.

## Grade 7 Content Standards

Building on knowledge from previous years, in particular, Topic I from grade 6, students should be able to:

### Topic 1. Central and South Asia [7.T1]

#### Modern countries in Central and South Asia

Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Nepal, Pakistan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan

#### Significant ancient societies, empires, religions, and cultures in Central and South Asia

Indus Valley civilization, the Gandharan Kingdom, Kushan Empire, Mauryan Empire, Gupta Empire, the empire of Alexander the Great, the Persian Empire, contacts with the Roman Empire and Chinese Empire, cultures along the Silk Road, Hinduism, Buddhism, Islam, Zoroastrianism<sup>41</sup>

### a. Physical and political geography of Central and South Asia [7.T1a]

1. On a physical map of the world, use cardinal directions, map scales, key/legend, and title to locate Central and South Asia. On a topographic map of Central and South Asia locate important physical features of the region (e.g. the Indian Ocean, the Arabian Sea, the Bay of Bengal, the Ganges River, the Indo-Gangetic Plain, the Northern Mountains, the Khyber Pass, the Deccan Plateau, the Himalayan Mountains, and the Steppes). Use other kinds of maps (e.g., landform, population, climate) to determine important characteristics of this region.
2. On a political map of the region, demonstrate map reading skills to distinguish countries, capitals, and other cities and to describe their absolute location (using latitude and longitude coordinates) and relative location (relationship to other countries, cities, or bodies of water); use knowledge of maps to complement information gained from text about a city, country or region.
3. Explain how absolute and relative locations, major physical characteristics, climate and natural resources in this region have influenced settlement patterns, population size, and economies of the countries.

### b. Early Indian and Central Asian civilizations, religions, and cultures [7.T1b]

*Supporting question: What was the most significant contribution of early societies in India and Central Asia to mathematics, science, the arts, and technology in the modern world?*

1. Explain the ways in which early Indian and Central Asian societies interacted with East African, Western Asian, and European societies (e.g., by conquest, trade, colonization, diffusion of religion, language, and culture).

<sup>41</sup> Note that the beginnings of Islam on the Arabian Peninsula are addressed in grade 6. Its further development and influence are addressed in the World History I and II standards.

2. Describe important economic, political, and religious developments in Indian and Central Asian history and evaluate the ways in which they conform to or differ from developments in societies in other regions of the world.
  - a. the origins of Indian society in the Indus Valley, c. 3000–1300 BCE
  - b. the evolution and central principles of Hinduism
  - c. the teachings of Gautama Buddha in India in the 6<sup>th</sup> to 4<sup>th</sup> centuries BCE
  - d. the Mauryan Empire in the 4<sup>th</sup> to 2<sup>nd</sup> centuries BCE and the role of the Emperor Ashoka adopting Buddhism’s moral teachings and the philosophy of non-violence and supporting Buddhist missionaries in North Africa, Central and Southeast Asia, and Mediterranean Europe; the Gupta Empire in the 3<sup>rd</sup> to 6<sup>th</sup> centuries CE, sometimes referred to as the “Golden Age of India,” and its Sanskrit classic literature and art
  - e. the development of the caste system in India
  - f. achievements in art, architecture, technology, astronomy, and mathematics
  - g. the role topography and geography played in making trade along the several routes of the Silk Road viable and lucrative; connections through trade routes to Africa, Europe, and China

**Suggested Primary Sources for Topic 1 in Appendix D**

*Hinduism, The Vedas-excerpts from [The Vedas: The Rig Veda](#) (c.1500–500 BCE) Article and excerpts. [Text alone](#).*

*Buddhism, [the Four Noble Truths](#) (c. 500 BCE)*

## Topic 2. East Asia [7.T2]

### Modern countries in East Asia

China, Japan, Mongolia, North Korea, South Korea, Taiwan

### Significant ancient societies, religions, and cultures in East Asia

Dynasties in ancient China, ancient Japan, ancient Korea, the Mongolian Empire, Confucianism, Taoism, Buddhism, Shintoism

### a. Physical and political geography of East Asia [7.T2a]

1. On a physical map of the world, use cardinal directions, map scales, key/legend, and title to locate East Asia. Locate important physical features (e.g. the Huang He [Yellow] River and Chang Jiang [Yangtze] Rivers, and the Himalayan Mountains) and other characteristics of the region. Use other kinds of maps (e.g., landform, population, climate) to determine important characteristics of this region.
2. On a political map of the region, demonstrate map reading skills to distinguish countries, capitals, and other cities and to describe their absolute location (using latitude and longitude coordinates) and relative location (relationship to other countries, cities, or bodies of water); use knowledge of maps to complement information gained from text about a city, country or region.

3. Explain how absolute and relative locations, major physical characteristics, climate and natural resources in this region have influenced settlement patterns, population size, and economies of the countries.

## **b. Early East Asian societies, religions, and cultures**

### **Ancient China, c. 1600 BCE–500 CE [7.T2b]**

*Supporting Question: To what degree have Chinese societies over time been shaped by geography?*

1. Describe the topography and climate of eastern Asia, including the importance of mountain ranges and deserts, and explain how geography influenced the development of Chinese complex societies.
2. Describe important economic, political, and religious developments in early Chinese history and evaluate the ways in which they are similar to or different from the characteristics of societies in other regions of the world.
  - a. the continuity of rule and encouragement of learning in the Shang and Zhou dynasties (c. 1600–256 BCE)
  - b. the teachings of Confucius (551–479 BCE), including writings on ethics and good government, codes of proper conduct, and relationships between parent and child, friend and friend, husband and wife, and subject and ruler and the philosophy/religion of Taoism, emphasizing harmony of humanity and nature
  - c. the First Emperor’s unification of China in the short Qin Dynasty (221–206 BCE) by subduing warring factions, seizing land, centralizing government, imposing strict rules, and creating, with the use of slave labor, large state building projects for irrigation, transportation, and defense (e.g., the Great Wall) and his own tomb with life-size terracotta warriors
  - d. the Chinese ideographic writing system (characters, which are symbols for concepts/ideas) and how it differs from an alphabetic writing system
  - e. important technologies of China such as bronze casting, silk and gunpowder manufacture.
  - f. China’s role in trade across Asia and to and from Africa and Europe along the Silk Roads and the introduction of Buddhism in China starting c. 1<sup>st</sup> century CE.

### **c. Ancient Japan and Korea, c.300 BCE–1300 CE [7.T2c]**

*Supporting Question: How has Korea served as both a cultural bridge and a battleground between China and Japan?*

1. Trace the spread of Buddhism from India in the 4<sup>th</sup> century BCE to China, Korea, and Japan, and its development in Japan from the 6<sup>th</sup> through the 13<sup>th</sup> century CE; explain significant cultural contributions of ancient Japan (e.g., Buddhist philosophy, art, calligraphy, and temple and landscape architecture).
2. Describe the impact of encounters, such as through trade, religion, and conquest, among the ancient civilizations of China, Japan, and Korea.

## Suggested Primary and Secondary Sources for Topic 2 in Appendix D

Excerpts from Confucius, *The Analects* (c. 500 BCE)  
*The Longmen Caves, Loyang* (c. 5<sup>th</sup> to 8<sup>th</sup> centuries CE)  
 Martin Amster and Lier Chen, *Buddhist Art Styles and Cultural Exchange along the Silk Road* (2004)

## Topic 3. Southeast Asia and Oceania [7.T3]

### Modern countries in Southeast Asia and Oceania

Australia, Brunei, Cambodia, Guam (U.S.), Indonesia, Laos, Malaysia, Maldives, Myanmar, New Zealand, Northern Mariana Islands (U.S.), Palau, Philippines, Singapore, Sri Lanka, Thailand, Vietnam

### Significant ancient religions, societies, and cultures in Southeast Asia and Oceania

Hinduism, Buddhism, the ancient Khmer culture in Southeast Asia, Aborigine and Maori cultures in Oceania

## a. Physical and political geography of Southeast Asia and Oceania [7.T3a]

1. On a physical map of the world, use cardinal directions, map scales, key/legend, and title to locate the Indian Ocean, Australia, New Zealand, Antarctica, the major Pacific Islands, the Pacific Ocean, and the Coral Sea. Locate important physical features (e.g. the Bay of Bengal, the South China Sea, the Great Victoria Desert, and the Great Barrier Reef) and characteristics of the region. Use other kinds of maps (e.g., landform, population, climate) to determine important characteristics of this region.
2. On a political map of the region, demonstrate map reading skills to distinguish countries, capitals, and other cities and to describe their absolute location (using latitude and longitude coordinates) and relative location (relationship to other countries, cities, or bodies of water); use knowledge of maps to complement information gained from text about a city, country or region.
3. Explain how absolute and relative locations, major physical characteristics, climate and natural resources in this region have influenced settlement patterns, population size, and economies of the countries.

## b. First People of Australia and New Zealand [7.T3b]

1. Identify and describe the major social features of the indigenous peoples in Australia (the Aborigines) and New Zealand (the Maoris). Describe archaeological evidence, such as rock paintings, from the region and explain what it indicates about early Aboriginal and Maori cultures.

## Topic 4. Europe [7.T4]

### Modern countries in Europe

Albania, Andorra, Armenia, Austria, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Belgium, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Channel Islands (U.K.), Croatia, Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Georgia, Germany, Gibraltar (U.K.), Greece, Hungary, Iceland, Ireland, Italy, Latvia, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Macedonia, Malta, Moldova, Monaco, Montenegro, Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Russia, San Marino, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, Ukraine, United Kingdom, Vatican City

**Significant ancient societies, religions, and cultures in Europe** Paleolithic societies in Spain and France, Celtic societies in northern Europe, Neolithic to Bronze Age sites in Eastern Europe; Minoan and Mycenaean societies in Greece, ancient Athens and Sparta, Etruscan society in Italy, the Roman Republic and the Roman Empire in Europe, the Islamic Empire on the Iberian Peninsula<sup>42</sup>

### a. Physical and political geography of Europe [7.T4a]

1. On a physical map of the world, use cardinal directions, map scales, key/legend, and title to locate Europe. Locate important physical features (e.g. the Atlantic Ocean, Arctic Ocean, Norwegian Sea, and Barents Sea; Lake Baikal, the Volga, Danube, Ural, Rhine, Elbe, Seine, Po, and Thames Rivers; the Alps, Pyrenees, and Balkan Mountains). Use other kinds of maps (e.g., landform, population, climate) to determine important characteristics of this region.
2. On a political map of the region, demonstrate map reading skills to distinguish countries, capitals, and other cities and to describe their absolute location (using latitude and longitude coordinates) and relative location (relationship to other countries, cities, or bodies of water); use knowledge of maps to complement information gained from text about a city, country or region.
3. Explain how absolute and relative locations, major physical characteristics, climate and natural resources in this region have influenced settlement patterns, population size, and economies of the countries.
4. Identify what time zones are, when and how the precise measurement of longitude was scientifically and historically determined, the function and location of the International Date Line, and the function of the Royal Observatory in Greenwich, England, and give examples of differences in time in countries in different parts of the world.

*For example, note that Russia has 11 time zones.*

### b. Ancient and Classical Greece, c. 1200–300 BCE [7.T4b]

*Supporting Question: How does the democracy of Athens compare to the democracies of today?*

1. On a historical map of the Mediterranean area, locate Greece and trace the extent of its influence from c. 1200 to 300 BCE.
2. Explain how the geographical location of ancient Athens and other city-states such as Corinth

<sup>42</sup> Note that the Byzantine Empire is addressed in High School World History I.

and Sparta contributed to their role in maritime trade, colonies in the Mediterranean, and the expansion of their cultural influence.

3. Explain the democratic political concepts developed in ancient Greece.
  - a. the “polis” or city-state
  - b. civic participation and voting rights
  - c. legislative bodies
  - d. constitution writing
  - e. rule of law
4. Compare and contrast life in Athens and Sparta, including the status and role of women and enslaved people in the two city-states.
5. Analyze the causes, and consequences of the Persian Wars between Greek city-states and the Persian Empire (490–480 BCE), the Peloponnesian Wars between Athens and Sparta (431–404 BCE), and the conquests of Alexander the Great in Asia (c.336–331BCE).
6. Give examples of Greek gods and goddesses, heroes, and events; explain the persistence of terms from Greek and Roman mythology in modern English and other European languages (e.g., *Pandora’s box, a Herculean task, the wrath of Achilles, Amazon, Olympics, marathon, narcissism*).
7. Identify the major accomplishments of the ancient Greeks by researching and reporting on one of the following:
  - a. a scientist or mathematician (e.g., Thales, Pythagoras, Euclid, or Hippocrates)
  - b. a philosopher (e.g., Socrates, Plato, or Aristotle), historian (e.g., Herodotus or Thucydides), poet or dramatist (e.g., Homer, Aeschylus, Sophocles, Aristophanes, or Euripides)
  - c. architecture (e.g., the Parthenon, the Acropolis, and the Temple of Apollo)
  - d. writing (e.g., development of the first complete alphabet with symbols for consonants and vowels)
  - e. art (e.g., the development of ideals of beauty and proportions in the human body in sculpture or the depiction of myths and heroes in vase painting)

### **c. Ancient and Classical Rome, the Roman Republic, and the Roman Empire, c. 500 BCE–500 CE [7.T4c]**

*Supporting Questions: What was the influence and legacy of the Roman Empire on the conquered peoples in the territory it controlled?*

1. Locate Rome on a map, trace the expansion of the Roman Empire to 500 CE and explain how Rome’s location contributed to its political power in the Mediterranean and beyond.
2. Describe the rise of the Roman Republic, its government, including separation of powers, rule of law, representative government, and the notion of civic duty.
3. Describe the influence of Julius Caesar and Augustus in Rome’s transition from a republic to an empire and explain the reasons for the growth and long life of the Roman Empire.
  - a. Military organization, tactics, and conquests; and decentralized administration
  - b. the purpose and functions of taxes
  - c. the promotion of economic growth through the use of a standard currency, road construction, and the protection of trade routes and the benefits of a *Pax Romana*
4. Describe the characteristics of the system of classes and slavery under the Romans.

Clarification Statement: *Teachers may want to review relevant grade 6 standards to*

*clarify that lands and peoples of Palestine, Western Asia, Egypt, and other parts of North Africa, and Europe were part of the Roman Empire. Many slaves in the Roman Empire were captives from conquered countries.*

5. Explain how inner forces (e.g., the rise of autonomous military powers, political corruption, and economic and political instability) and external forces (shrinking trade, invasions from northern tribes) led to the disintegration of the Roman Empire.
6. Describe the contribution of the Romans to architecture, engineering, and technology (e.g., roads, bridges, arenas, baths, aqueducts, central heating, plumbing, and sanitation).
7. Explain the spread and influence of the Roman alphabet and the Latin language, and the role of Latin and Greek in scientific and academic vocabulary today.
8. Describe how scientific, philosophical, and aesthetic ideas diffused throughout Europe, Asia, and Africa as a result of trade, migration, conquest, and colonization.

**Suggested Primary Sources for Topic 4 in Appendix D:**

Greece

Greek Art: Sixteen examples of Aegean and Greek sculpture, vase painting, and objects from c.2300 BCE to 100 BCE, Museum of Fine Arts, Boston

Homer, The Iliad or The Odyssey (c. 800 BCE based on earlier oral tradition) Thucydides, History of the Peloponnesian War (431 BCE);

Plato, The Republic (360 BCE);

Aristotle, Politics (350 BCE)

Rome

Excerpts from Julius Caesar, War Commentaries (58–47 BCE)

Mosaic: Hunting Scene (Antioch, early 6th CE), Worcester Art Museum

## A Renewed Mission: Education for Civic Life in a Democracy

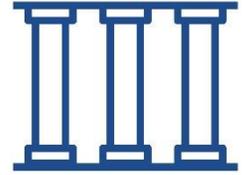
The primary purpose of a history and social science education is to prepare students to have the knowledge and skills to become thoughtful and active participants in a democratic society and a complex world. “Government of the people, by the people, for the people” is not just a historical phrase from Lincoln’s “Gettysburg Address,” but an ideal that must be renewed and reinvigorated by each succeeding generation. The future of democracy depends on our students’ development of knowledge, skills, and dispositions that will enable them to embrace democracy’s potential, while recognizing its challenges and inherent dilemmas.

People who are prepared to continue the legacy of democracy in the United States:

- Know the fundamental ideas central to the vision of the 18<sup>th</sup> century founders, the vision that holds us together as one people of many diverse origins and cultures.
- Understand the intellectual and political tensions and compromises in the Founders’ ideas and how successive generations in the United States have worked to resolve them.
- Know how democratic ideas have been turned into institutions and practices, and the history of the origins, growth, and struggles of democratic societies on earth, past and present.
- Understand what economic, social, cultural, religious, and international conditions have helped to shape democratic practices.
- Understand the purposes, principles, and practices of the United States government as established by the Constitution, which includes their rights and responsibilities, and how to exercise them in local, state, and national government.
- Understand that, in the United States, the Constitution has continued to be vibrant and relevant through amendments and decisions of the federal courts.
- Understand how individuals, groups, organizations, and governments have addressed obstacles to democratic principles by working within the structure set forth in the Constitution.
- Are knowledgeable about local, state, and national politics and policies, and understand the current condition of the world and how it got that way.
- Are prepared to discuss complex and controversial issues and ideas with people of different views, learning to speak with clarity and respectfulness.
- Develop and practice habits of civic engagement and participation in democratic government.

## Grade 8

# United States and Massachusetts Government and Civic Life



Students study the roots and foundations of U.S. democracy, how and why it has developed over time, and the role of individuals in maintaining a healthy democracy. They study these topics by exploring guiding questions such as, “*How have concepts of liberty and justice affected the United States democratic system of government?*” and “*How can power be balanced in government?*” Additional supporting questions appear under each topic. The questions are included to stimulate teachers’ and students’ own questions for discussion and research.

### Grade 8 History and Social Science Topics

- Topic 1. The philosophical foundations of the United States political system**
- Topic 2. The development of the United States government**
- Topic 3. The institutions of the United States government**
- Topic 4. Rights and responsibilities of citizens**
- Topic 5. The Constitution, Amendments, and Supreme Court decisions**
- Topic 6. The structure of Massachusetts state and local government**
- Topic 7. Freedom of the press and news/media literacy**

### Literacy in History and Social Science

In studying these topics, students apply grades 6–8 [reading, writing and speaking and listening skills](#), and learn vocabulary and concepts related to history and social science.

### Looking Back, Looking Ahead: Connections to History and Social Science in Grades 5, 6, 7 and High School

**Fifth graders** studied the U.S from the American Revolution to the Civil War and were introduced to the 20<sup>th</sup> century Civil Rights Movement. **Sixth and seventh graders** learned world geography and history, including the origins of democratic government in ancient Greece and Rome. **High school students** will study both United States History and World History to the present.

### Standards for History and Social Science Practice, Pre-K–12\*

1. Demonstrate civic knowledge, skills, and dispositions.
2. Develop focused questions or problem statements and conduct inquiries.
3. Organize information and data from multiple primary and secondary sources.
4. Analyze the purpose and point of view of each source; distinguish opinion from fact.
5. Evaluate the credibility, accuracy, and relevance of each source.
6. Argue or explain conclusions, using valid reasoning and evidence.
7. Determine next steps and take informed action, as appropriate.

\* A statement on civic knowledge, skills, and dispositions adopted by the Massachusetts Board of Elementary and Secondary Education in 2016 is included in the larger explanation of the practices, at the [beginning of the Standards](#) section.

## Grade 8 Content Standards<sup>43</sup>

Building on knowledge from previous years, students should be able to:

### Topic 1. The philosophical foundations of the United States political system [8.T1]

Supporting Question: *What were the roots of the ideas that influenced the development of the United States political system?*

1. Explain why the Founders of the United States considered the government of ancient Athens to be the beginning of democracy and explain how the democratic political concepts developed in ancient Greece influenced modern democracy (e.g., *civic participation, voting rights, trial by jury, legislative bodies, constitution writing, rule of law*).
2. Describe the government of the Roman Republic and the aspects of republican principles that are evident in modern democratic governments (e.g., *separation of powers, rule of law, representative government, and the notion of civic duty/common good*).
3. Explain the influence of Enlightenment thinkers on the American Revolution and framework of the American government (e.g., John Locke, Charles de Montesquieu).
4. Explain how British ideas about and practices of government (e.g., *the Magna Carta, the concept of habeas corpus, the Mayflower Compact, self-government, town meetings, the importance of education and literacy, the House of Burgesses, colonial legislatures, the Albany Plan of Union*) influenced American colonists and the political institutions that developed in colonial America.
5. Analyze the evidence for arguments that the principles of government of the United States were influenced by the governments of Native Peoples (e.g. the Iroquois Confederacy).

#### Key Primary Source for Topic 1 in Appendix D

[Mayflower Compact \(1620\)](#)

#### Suggested Primary Sources for Topic 1 in Appendix D

[Magna Carta \(1215\)](#)

[The Iroquois Confederacy Constitution](#), *The Great Binding Laws (circa 1451, passed orally, but written down in 1700s)*

[Benjamin Franklin on the Iroquois League in a Letter to James Parker \(1751\)](#)

### Topic 2. The development of the United States government [8.T2]

Supporting Question: *How did the framers of the Constitution attempt to address issues of power and freedom in the design of the new political system?*

1. Apply knowledge of the history of the American Revolutionary period to determine the experiences and events that led the colonists to declare independence; explain the key ideas about *equality, representative government, limited government, rule of law, natural rights,*

<sup>43</sup> See Appendix D for annotations of primary sources and links to key and suggested primary sources for United States History and Civics

- common good*, and the *purpose of government* in the Declaration of Independence.
- Analyze the weaknesses of the national government under the Articles of Confederation; and describe the crucial events (e.g., Shays' Rebellion) leading to the Constitutional Convention.
  - Identify the various leaders of the Constitutional Convention and analyze the major issues (e.g., *distribution of political power, rights of individuals, representation and rights of states, slavery*) they debated and how the issues were resolved.
  - Compare and contrast key ideas debated between the Federalists and Anti-Federalists over ratification of the Constitution (e.g., *federalism, factions, checks and balances, independent judiciary, republicanism, limited government*).<sup>44</sup>

Note: Important topics of individual Federalist Papers: *Federalist 10-factions; Federalist 9-strong union; Federalist 39-republican government; Federalist 51-three branches of government independent of each other to ensure liberty; Federalist 78 -importance of an independent judicial branch and judicial review.*

- Summarize the Preamble and each article in the Constitution, and the rights enumerated in the Bill of Rights; explain the reasons for the addition of the Bill of Rights to the Constitution in 1791.

#### Key Primary Sources for Topic 2 in Appendix D

[The Declaration of Independence](#) (1776)

excerpts from [The Federalist, Number 10](#) (1787)

[The Constitution of the United States](#) (1787)

[The United States Bill of Rights](#) (1791)

#### Suggested Primary Sources for Topic 2 in Appendix D

[Selected Federalist Papers](#), such as numbers 1, 9, 39, 51, and 78 (1787–1788)

*Selected responses by Anti-Federalists* (1787–1789) [The Federal Farmer](#) (Richard Henry Lee) and [Centinel](#)

### Topic 3. The institutions of United States government [8.T3]

*Supporting Question: How do the institutions of the U.S. political system work?*

- Distinguish the three branches of government (separation of powers):
  - Congress as the legislative branch
  - the Presidency and the executive agencies as the executive branch and
  - the Supreme Court and other federal inferior courts as the judicial branch
- Examine the interrelationship of the three branches (the checks and balance system).
  - Congress: enumerated powers, general powers, limits on power, checks on other two branches; roles of political parties in the organization of Congress; roles within the legislative branch, such as the Speaker of the House, the President of the Senate, minority party leaders; the system for accomplishing legislation, including committees, hearings and legislative procedures

<sup>44</sup> Students may need help in reading these documents closely because the 18<sup>th</sup>-century language and sentence structure is complex and unfamiliar.

- the Presidency: roles, powers and limits, checks on other two branches, role of the Cabinet, such as the Vice President, Attorney General and Secretaries of State, Defense, Health and Human Services, Homeland Security; executive departments and agencies (such as the Department of Education, the Federal Bureau of Investigation, or the Food and Drug Administration), and branches of the military
  - the Supreme Court: role and powers, checks on other two branches, lower courts
3. Describe the respective roles of each of the branches of government.
  4. Explain the process of elections in the legislative and executive branches and the process of nomination/confirmation of individuals in the judicial and executive branches.
    - Elections: running for legislative office (U.S. Representative – unlimited two-year terms, U.S. Senator – unlimited six-year terms), or executive office (President – two four-year terms and Vice President – unlimited four-year terms) and the function of the Electoral College in Presidential elections
    - Nomination by the President and confirmation by Congress: Supreme Court Justices and Secretaries/agency heads in the executive branch)
  5. Describe the role of political parties in elections at the state and national levels.

#### **Topic 4. Rights and responsibilities of citizens [8.T4]**

*Supporting Question: What is the role of the individual in maintaining a healthy democracy?*

1. Explain the different ways one becomes a citizen of the United States.
2. Describe the rights and responsibilities of citizens (e.g., voting, serving as a juror, paying taxes, serving in the military, running for and holding elected office) as compared to non-citizens.
3. Distinguish among civic, political, and private life.
4. Define and provide examples of fundamental principles and values of American political and civic life (e.g., *liberty, the common good, justice, equality, tolerance, law and order, due process, rights of individuals, diversity, civic unity, patriotism, constitutionalism, popular sovereignty, and representative democracy*).
5. Describe how a democracy provides opportunities for citizens to participate in the political process through elections, political parties, and interest groups.
6. Evaluate information related to elections (e.g., policy positions and debates among candidates, campaign financing, campaign advertising, influence of news media and social media, and data relating to voter turnout in elections).
7. Apply knowledge of the meaning of leadership and the qualities of good leaders to evaluate political leaders at the community, the state and national levels.
8. Explain the importance of individuals working cooperatively with their elected leaders.
9. Explain the importance of public service, and identify career and other opportunities in public service at the local, state, and national levels.
10. Analyze issues involving liberty in conflict with equality or authority, individual rights in conflict with the common good, or majority rule in conflict with minority rights.
11. Examine the varied understandings of the role of elected representatives and discuss those who have demonstrated political courage or those whose actions have failed to live up to the ideals

of the Constitution.

12. Examine the role of political protest in a democracy.
13. Examine the influence of public and private interest groups in a democracy, including policy research organizations (e.g. Pew Research Center, Brookings Institute, Heritage Foundation) in shaping debate about public policy.

## Topic 5. The Constitution, Amendments, and Supreme Court decisions<sup>45</sup> [8.T5]

Supporting Question: *How has the content and interpretation of the Constitution evolved over time?*

1. Explain why the “necessary and proper” clause<sup>46</sup> and why it is often referred to as the “elastic clause.”
2. Explain the historical context and significance of changes in the Constitution, including key amendments. Examples of amendments include the:
  - a. 14<sup>th</sup> Amendment (1868): citizenship rights, equal protection of laws
  - b. 19<sup>th</sup> Amendment (1920): women’s right to vote in federal and state elections
  - c. 26<sup>th</sup> Amendment (1971): lowering the voting age from 21 to 18 in federal elections
3. Analyze the Constitutional issues that caused the Civil War and led to the eventual expansion of the power of the Federal government and individual civil rights.
4. Explain the historical context and significance of laws enacted by Congress that have expanded the civil rights and equal protection for race, gender, disability (e.g., the 1964 Civil Rights Act, 1965 Voting Rights Act, 1990 Americans with Disabilities Act, 1990 Individuals with Disabilities Education Act), and explain how the evolving understanding of human rights has affected the movement for civil rights for all.
5. Explain the principle of judicial review established in *Marbury v. Madison* (1803) and explain how cases come before the Supreme Court, how cases are argued, and how the Court issues decisions and dissents.
6. Research, analyze, and report orally or in writing on **one area (a, b, or c, below)** in which Supreme Court decisions have made significant changes over time in citizens’ lives.
  - a. Interpretations of freedoms of religion, assembly, press, petition, and speech under the First Amendment; for example,
 

*Tinker v. Des Moines Independent Community School District* (1969)  
The Court held, 7-2, that students’ right to protest is protected in schools.

<sup>45</sup> Useful resources for this section include [Landmark Cases of the Supreme Court](#) (Street Law, Inc., and the Supreme Court Historical Society), the [Official Website of the Supreme Court](#), [The Supreme Court for Educators](#) (Public Broadcasting System/WNET), [Qyez](#) (Cornell’s Legal Information Institute, LII), Chicago-Kent College of Law and Justia.com), the [Bill of Rights Institute](#), and the [National Constitution Center](#). See additional resources in the Supplement to the History and Social Science Curriculum Framework, under Civics.

<sup>46</sup> Under Article I, Section 8, Congress has the power “to make all Laws which shall be necessary and proper for carrying into Execution the foregoing Powers vested by this Constitution in the Government of the United States, or any Department or Officer thereof.”

*Bethel School District v. Fraser* (1986)

The Court held, 7-2, that students' right to use vulgar language is not protected in schools.

*Hazelwood School District v. Kuhlmeier* (1988)

The Court ruled, 5-3, that students' right to school-sponsored student speech in a school newspaper may be restricted with educational justification.

*Citizens United vs. Federal Election Commission* (2010)

The Court ruled, 5-4, that contributions by corporations and organizations such as unions to political campaigns are protected as free speech.

- b. Interpretations of the due process clause and the equal protection clause of the 14th Amendment, for example,

*Dred Scott v. Sandford* (1857)

The Court dismissed the case brought by Dred Scott, an African American, to obtain his freedom from slavery, 7-2, on the grounds that African Americans were not citizens, that the Congress could not ban slavery in federal territories, and that the due process clause prohibited the government from freeing slaves brought into territories.

*Plessy v. Ferguson* (1896)

The Court upheld, 7-1, the ruling that racial segregation was constitutional under the "separate but equal" doctrine.

*Brown v. Board of Education of Topeka* (1954)<sup>47</sup>

The Court unanimously overturned the "separate but equal" doctrine, ruling that state laws establishing separate schools for white and black students were unconstitutional.

*Mapp v. Ohio* (1961)

The Court, redefined, 6-3, the implementation of the exclusionary rule (evidence collected in violation of an individual's Fourth Amendment rights is inadmissible for a criminal prosecution in a court of law) to apply to states.

*Loving v. Virginia* (1967)

The Court unanimously recognized the right to interracial marriage and declared race-based restrictions on marriage unconstitutional.

*Romer v. Evans* (1996)

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<sup>47</sup> *Mendez v. Westminster School District of Orange County, California* (1946) is regarded as a precedent for the *Brown* challenge to "separate but equal" schools. In this California class action suit, Mexican Americans sued to dismantle California's system of schools segregated on the basis of national origin. See [Mendez v. Westminster: Desegregating California's Schools](#), a video interview with Sylvia Mendez, historians, and legal scholars.

The Court determined, 6-3, that the Equal Protection Clause prevents states from denying civil rights protections to sexual minorities, including lesbian, gay, and bisexual people.

*Obergefell v. Hodges* (2015)

The Court held, 5-4, that same sex marriage is protected under the 14th Amendment.

- c. Interpretations in cases where individual rights and perceived community or national interests were in conflict, for example,

#### **The United States Flag and the Pledge of Allegiance**

*Minersville School District v. Gobitis* (1940)

The Court held, 8-1, that the state's interest in national unity allowed school boards to require students to salute the flag.

*West Virginia State Board of Education v. Barnette* (1943)

Court held, 6-3, that students are protected from having to salute the flag or recite the Pledge of Allegiance through the free exercise clause of the First Amendment.

*Texas v. Johnson* (1989)

The Court held, 5-4, that an individual has a right to burn the flag under the First Amendment free expression clause.

#### **School Prayer**

*Engel v. Vitale* (1962)

The Court held, 6-2, that requiring school prayer in public schools was a violation of the First Amendment establishment clause.

#### **National Security**

*Korematsu v. United States* (1944)

The Court held, 6-3, that a government order during World War II sending Japanese-Americans to internment camps, rather than allowing them to remain in their homes, was constitutional.

*Clapper v. Amnesty International* (2012)

The Court, 5-4, dismissed a challenge to the government's power to conduct surveillance on international phone calls and emails under the Foreign Intelligence Surveillance Courts.

#### **Gun Control**

*District of Columbia v. Heller* (2008)

The Court, 5-4, upheld the right of individuals to own guns under the Second Amendment and found the District of Columbia's ban on owning handguns to be unconstitutional.

## Topic 6. The structure of Massachusetts state and local government<sup>48</sup> [8.T6]

*Supporting Question: What is the role of state and local government in the U.S. political system?*

1. Compare and contrast the functions of state government and national government.
2. Describe provisions of the United States Constitution and the Massachusetts Constitution that define and distribute powers and authority of the federal or state government.
3. Distinguish among the enumerated and implied powers in the United States Constitution and the Massachusetts Constitution.
4. Compare core documents associated with the protection of individual rights, including the Bill of Rights, the 14th Amendment to the United States Constitution, and Article I of the Massachusetts Constitution.
5. Explain why the Tenth Amendment to the United States Constitution is important to state government and identify the powers granted to states by the Tenth Amendment and the limits to state government outlined in it.
6. Identify additional protections provided by the Massachusetts Constitution that are not provided by the U.S. Constitution.
7. Contrast the responsibilities of government at the federal, state, and local levels (e.g., protection of individual rights and the provision of services such as law enforcement, welfare payments, and the building and funding of schools).
8. Explain the leadership structure of the government of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts and the function of each branch
  - a. the executive branch (governor and agencies)
  - b. the legislative branch (state representatives and state senators)
  - c. courts of law (Supreme Judicial Court, lower court system)
9. Give examples of tax-supported facilities and services provided by the Massachusetts state government and by local governments.
10. Explain the major components of local government in Massachusetts, including the roles and functions of mayors, city councils, and school committees in cities; town managers, select boards, representative and open town meetings and school committees, in towns, and courts and sheriff's departments in counties.

**Key Primary Source in Appendix D:** [The Massachusetts Constitution \(1780\)](#)

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<sup>48</sup> Useful websites for the study of state and local government include [Commonwealth of Massachusetts: Your Government](#), the [Massachusetts Municipal Association](#), and individual city or town websites.

## Topic 7: Freedom of the Press and News/Media Literacy<sup>49</sup> [8.T7]

*Supporting Question: How does a free press support a democratic government?*

1. Explain why freedom of the press was included as a right in the First Amendment to the United States Constitution and in Article 16 of the Massachusetts Constitution; explain that freedom of the press means the right to express and publish views on politics and other topics without government sponsorship, oversight, control, or censorship.
2. Give examples of how a free press can provide competing information and views about government and politics.
3. Explain the different functions of news articles, editorials, editorial cartoons, and “op-ed” commentaries.
4. Evaluate the benefits and challenges of digital news and social media to a democratic society.
5. Explain methods for evaluating information and opinion in print and online media (e.g., determining the credibility of news articles; analyzing the messages of editorials and op-ed commentaries; assessing the validity of claims and sufficiency of evidence).<sup>50</sup>
6. Analyze the point of view and evaluate the claims of an editorial, editorial cartoon, or op-ed commentary on a public policy issue at the local, state, or national level (e.g., a mayoral or school committee decision, an action by a state legislature or Governor, a vote in Congress or an action by the President).

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<sup>49</sup> For resources in teaching this topic, see websites under News and Media Literacy in Section I of the Supplement, *Resources for History and Social Science*.

<sup>50</sup> For implementing standards 51 and 52, see the Reading Standards for Literacy in History and Social Science for grades 6-8

## History and Social Science and the Standards for Literacy

Because learning civics, geography, history, and economics is dependent on and contributes to strong literacy skills, the framework contains Literacy Standards for History and Social Science drawn from the [Massachusetts English Language Arts and Literacy Curriculum Framework](#) (2017). The History and Social Science Practice Standards and Content Standards were intentionally designed to be integrated with these Literacy Standards. Effective history and social science instruction unites significant content with strong literacy practices. While reading in history and social science will usually focus on high quality informational texts, teachers may also use literary texts to reinforce concepts in the Content Standards. Suggestions for selecting authors and texts can be found in the companion document *Resources for History and Social Science* and [Massachusetts English Language Arts and Literacy Curriculum Framework](#) (2017).

### Grades 6–8 Reading Standards for Literacy in the Content Areas: History and Social Science [RCA-H]

#### Key Ideas and Details

1. Cite specific textual evidence to support analysis of primary and secondary sources, quoting or paraphrasing as appropriate. (See grades 6–8 Writing Standard 8 for more on paraphrasing.)
2. Determine the central ideas or information of a primary or secondary source; provide an accurate summary of the source distinct from prior knowledge or opinions.
3. Identify key steps in a text’s description of a process related to history/social studies (e.g., how a bill becomes law, how interest rates are raised or lowered).

#### Craft and Structure

4. Determine the meaning of general academic and domain-specific words and phrases as they are used in a text, including vocabulary specific to domains related to history/social studies.
5. Describe how a text presents information (e.g., sequentially, comparatively, causally), including how written texts incorporate features such as headings.
6. Identify aspects of a text that reveal an author’s point of view or purpose (e.g., loaded language, inclusion or avoidance of particular facts).

#### Integration of Knowledge and Ideas

7. Integrate visual information (e.g., charts, graphs, photographs, videos, or maps) with other information in print and digital texts.
8. Distinguish among fact, opinion, and reasoned judgment in a text.
9. Analyze the relationship between a primary and secondary source on the same topic.

#### Range of Reading and Level of Text Complexity

10. Independently and proficiently read and comprehend history/social studies texts exhibiting complexity appropriate for the grade/course.

## Grades 6–8 Writing Standards for Literacy in the Content Areas [WCA]

### Text Types and Purposes

1. Write arguments focused on *discipline-specific content*.
  - a. Introduce claim(s) about a topic or issue, acknowledge and distinguish the claim(s) from alternate or opposing claims/critiques, and organize the reasons and evidence logically in paragraphs and sections.
  - b. Support claim(s) with logical reasoning and relevant, accurate data and evidence that demonstrate an understanding of the topic or text, using credible sources.
  - c. Use words, phrases, and clauses with precision to create cohesion and clarify the relationships among claim(s), counterclaims/critiques, reasons, and evidence.
  - d. Establish and maintain a style appropriate to audience and purpose (e.g., formal for academic writing).
  - e. Provide a concluding statement or section that follows from and supports the argument presented.
4. Write informative/explanatory texts, including the narration of historical events, scientific procedures/ experiments, or technical processes.
  - a. Introduce a topic clearly, previewing what is to follow; use paragraphs and sections to organize ideas, concepts, and information into broader categories as appropriate to achieving purpose; include text features (e.g., headings), graphics (e.g., charts, tables), and multimedia when useful to aiding comprehension.
  - b. Develop the topic with relevant, well-chosen facts, definitions, concrete details, quotations, or other information and examples.
  - c. Use appropriate and varied transitions to create cohesion and clarify the relationships among ideas, concepts, or procedures.
  - d. Use precise language and domain-specific vocabulary to inform about or explain the topic.
  - e. Establish and maintain a style appropriate to audience and purpose (e.g., formal for academic writing).
  - f. Provide a concluding statement or section that follows from and supports the information or explanation presented.
3. (See note; not applicable as a separate requirement.)<sup>51</sup>

### Production and Distribution of Writing

4. Produce clear and coherent writing in which the development, organization, and style are appropriate to task, purpose, and audience.
5. Develop and strengthen writing as needed by planning, revising, editing, rewriting, or trying a new approach, focusing on how well purpose and audience have been addressed.

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<sup>51</sup> Students' narrative skills continue to grow in these grades. The standards require that students be able to incorporate narrative elements effectively into arguments and informative/explanatory texts. In history/social studies, students must be able to incorporate narrative accounts into their analyses of individuals or events of historical import.

6. Use technology, including current web-based communication platforms, to produce and publish writing and present the relationships between information and ideas clearly and efficiently.

#### Research to Build and Present Knowledge

7. Conduct short as well as more sustained research projects to answer a question (including a self-generated question), drawing on several sources and generating additional related, focused questions that allow for multiple avenues of exploration.
8. When conducting research, gather relevant information from multiple print and digital sources, using search terms effectively; assess the credibility and accuracy of each source; and quote or paraphrase the data and conclusions of others while avoiding plagiarism and following a standard format for citation.
9. Draw evidence from informational texts to support analysis, interpretation, reflection, and research. (See grades 6–8 Reading Standard 1 for more on the use of textual evidence.)

#### Range of Writing

10. Write routinely over extended time frames (time for reflection and revision) and shorter time frames (a single sitting or a day or two) for a range of discipline-specific tasks, purposes, and audiences.

## Grades 6–8 Speaking and Listening Standards for Literacy in the Content Areas [SLCA]

### Comprehension and Collaboration

1. Engage effectively in a range of collaborative discussions (one-on-one, in groups, and teacher-led) with diverse partners on *discipline-specific topics, texts, and issues*, building on others' ideas and expressing their own clearly.
  - a. Come to discussions prepared, having read or researched material under study; explicitly draw on that preparation by referring to evidence on the topic, text, or issue to probe and reflect on ideas under discussion. (See grades 6–8 Reading Standard 1 for more on the use of textual evidence.)
  - b. Follow rules for collegial discussions and decision-making, track progress toward specific goals and deadlines, and define individual roles as needed.
  - c. Pose questions that connect the ideas of several speakers and respond to others' questions and comments with relevant evidence, observations, and ideas.
  - d. Acknowledge new information expressed by others, and, when warranted, qualify or justify their own views in light of the evidence presented.
2. Analyze the purpose of information presented in diverse media and formats (e.g., visually, quantitatively, orally) and evaluate the motives (e.g., social, commercial, political) behind its presentation.
3. Delineate a speaker's argument and specific claims, evaluating the soundness of the reasoning and relevance and sufficiency of the evidence and identifying when irrelevant evidence is introduced.

### Presentation of Knowledge and Ideas