



## SOCIAL STUDIES

**Course: Ancient World History to the Renaissance**

### Essential Course Information

- Grade 8
- Full Year

### Course Overview

In this course, students will examine historical developments that have shaped the modern world. The course allows students to familiarize themselves with the evolution of human civilization along with the contributions made to society, government, trade, engineering, and arts starting over 12,000 years ago with the Neolithic Era and continuing through the Classical Era and concluding with the Renaissance and Age of Exploration in the 15th, 16th and 17th centuries. *The overview and sequence applies to General Education and Honors Level courses.*

Unit	Estimated Time	Overview
<a href="#"><u>Unit 1</u></a> <a href="#"><u>Uncovering the Past &amp; the Beginnings of Human Society</u></a>	2 weeks	In this unit, students will learn how early humans adapted to their physical environments using resources, the natural world, and technological advancements. Students will examine how archaeology provides historical and scientific explanations for how ancient people lived. Students will explore how the agricultural revolution led to an increase in population, specialization of labor, new forms of social organization, and the beginning of societies. Students will analyze the political, social, and economic differences in human lives before and after the Neolithic Revolution.
<a href="#"><u>Unit 2</u></a> <a href="#"><u>Early River Valley Civilizations</u></a>	8 weeks	In this unit, students will learn that the development of agriculture enabled the rise of the first civilizations, located primarily along river valleys. Students will investigate how the complex societies in Mesopotamia, Egypt, the Indus River Valley and, later, the Yellow River Valley in China were influenced by geographic conditions and shared a number of defining political, social, and economic characteristics. Students will examine how the need for structures within society provided order and stability emerged. They will compare the development of these civilizations through the religious, cultural, economic, and political aspects of their societies.
<a href="#"><u>Unit 3</u></a> <a href="#"><u>Ancient &amp; Classical Civilizations of the Mediterranean</u></a>	10 weeks	In this unit, students will learn about the classical civilizations, Greece and Rome. Students will examine the geography of Greece and analyze its impact on the development of their political and social structures. The students will investigate the cultural diffusion of Greece in order to explain the establishment of the Roman Republic and Empire. Students will examine the legacy of these societies and examine their political, economic and cultural achievements and describe their impact on the United States today. Lastly students will consider how conflict and change impacts the rise and fall of civilizations.
<a href="#"><u>Unit 4</u></a> <a href="#"><u>Civilization in Asia, Africa, and the Americas</u></a>	10 weeks	In this unit, students will that the emergence of empires in Asia, Africa, and the Americas resulted from the promotion of interregional trade, cultural exchanges, new technologies, urbanization, and centralized political organization. Students will examine the diverse characteristics and achievements of African societies and the importance of trade networks to the interaction of these groups. Students will explain the origin of Islam and the growth of its influence throughout the Mediterranean region and beyond, and describe the scholarly contributions of the Islamic Empire. Lastly, students will examine the rise and fall of civilizations and empires in the Americas.
<a href="#"><u>Unit 5</u></a> <a href="#"><u>Medieval Europe, the Renaissance and the Age of Exploration</u></a>	10 weeks	In this unit, students will examine political and social structures in medieval Europe and investigate the effects of the Crusades and the plaque on the development of the modern world. Students will understand that ideas developed during the Renaissance caused Europeans to look outward and led to political, economic, and cultural changes that have had a lasting impact. Students will explore how the encounter between the people of Western Europe, Africa, and the Americas led to a devastating impact on populations in Africa and the Americas and gave rise of the transatlantic slave trade, and the re-orientation of trade networks. Students will Colonization was inspired by the desire to have access to resources and markets, often at the expense of the indigenous culture, population, and environment.

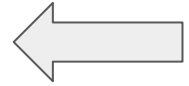
# Content Continuum

7

**Citizenship, Economics, and You**

8

**Ancient World History to the Renaissance**



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**Modern World History**  
Age of Revolutions through Modern Times

## **INSTRUCTIONAL / SUPPLEMENTAL MATERIALS**

1. Textbook: Ancient Civilizations Through the Renaissance, Houghton Mifflin 2012
2. Supplemental readings and online resources to enhance understanding of course content and skills
  - DBQ Project
  - Thinking Like a Historian: Stanford History Education Group
  - Actively Learn
  - NJ Amistad Interactive Curriculum
  - Newsela
  - and others.

All existing resources will be evaluated for alignment to new curriculum

## **KEY FEATURES OF REVISION**

- Eighth grade social studies curriculum was last revised in 2013.
- Student access to digital resources has expanded greatly.
- Goals are designed so that students can independently transfer their learning through authentic performance experiences.
- Integration of performance based assessments and common writing tasks.
- Greater emphasis on historical thinking skills and geographical reasoning.
- Incorporation of activities and assessments that develop 21st century skills.

***Differentiation and ELL strategies will be included.***

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