4th Grade American Online School

SOCIAL SCIENCES CURRICULUM

Understanding People, Places, and Possibilities

Version May/2025

1. Introduction

The Role of Social Sciences Education in 4th Grade

The 4th Grade Social Studies curriculum introduces students to historical investigation, geographic analysis, and civic awareness through the study of diverse topics—from Colonial America to ecosystems and global wonders. Students explore how human systems evolve, how geography influences culture and decision-making, and how people shape the world through exploration, innovation, and cooperation.

By the end of this course, students will:

✔ **Understand the founding of the United States through key historical events.**

✔ **Identify and compare U.S. states and their geographic features.**

✔ **Analyze significant moments in American and world history.**

✔ **Explore ecosystems, landmarks, and cultural contributions across the globe.**

✔ **Demonstrate curiosity, empathy, and informed citizenship.**

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2. Core Competence Areas

SoSCI.1 Foundations of the United States: Colonial America

Learning Outcomes

By the end of this course, students will be able to:

✔ **Describe life in early American colonies.**

✔ **Compare regional economies, cultures, and resources.**

✔ **Understand the motivations for colonization and its effects.**

Competencies

SoSCI.1.A.1 – Exploring life in the 13 Colonies.

- Distinguish between New England, Middle, and Southern Colonies.
- Use primary sources like letters, maps, and artifacts.

SoSCI.1.A.2 – Analyzing colonial society and legacy.

- Debate decisions in town hall simulations.
- Reflect on Indigenous perspectives and colonial impact.

SoSCI.2 U.S. Geography and the 50 States

Learning Outcomes

By the end of this unit, students will be able to:

✔ **Identify all 50 U.S. states and capitals.**

✔ **Understand the five U.S. regions and their physical and cultural characteristics.**

✔ **Use maps and spatial reasoning tools to locate places and interpret data.**

Competencies

SoSCI.2.A.1 – Mapping and geographic analysis.

- Create physical and political maps of the United States.
- Use compasses, legends, and scales.

SoSCI.2.A.2 – Comparing environments and communities.

- Analyze how climate, resources, and landforms affect lifestyle and economy.
- Design a travel brochure for one U.S. region.

SoSCI.3 Historical Milestone: The Moon Landing

Learning Outcomes

By the end of this unit, students will be able to:

✔ **Understand the significance of the 1969 Apollo 11 moon landing.**

✔ **Explore the space race and technological innovation.**

✔ **Analyze primary and secondary sources related to space history.**

Competencies

SoSCI.3.A.1 – Reconstructing the space race timeline.

- Compare Cold War space achievements between the U.S. and USSR.
- Research Neil Armstrong, NASA, and mission control.

SoSCI.3.A.2 – Connecting science and society.

- Discuss how space exploration has influenced technology and culture.
- Write a fictional "I Was There" journal entry from 1969.

SoSCI.4 Human-Environment Interaction: Ecosystems and Sustainability

Learning Outcomes

By the end of this unit, students will be able to:

✔ **Identify major ecosystems and their human and animal inhabitants.**

✔ **Understand the impact of human activity on the environment.**

✔ **Propose solutions for sustainability.**

Competencies

SoSCI.4.A.1 – Classifying global ecosystems.

- Map rainforests, deserts, tundras, and wetlands.
- Compare biodiversity across regions.

SoSCI.4.A.2 – Analyzing human impact and responsibility.

- Debate real-world environmental issues.
- Create "Eco Hero" posters proposing local action plans.

SoSCI.5 Wonders of the World: Human and Natural Monuments

Learning Outcomes

By the end of this unit, students will be able to:

✔ **Explore the Seven Wonders of the World (ancient, natural, and modern).**

✔ **Appreciate architectural achievements and environmental marvels.**

✔ **Connect geography to human expression and innovation.**

Competencies

SoSCI.5.A.1 – Understanding global contributions to civilization.

- Research Petra, the Great Wall, the Amazon Rainforest, and other wonders.
- Compare cultural significance and preservation efforts.

SoSCI.5.A.2 – Presenting cultural research.

- Create posters or models representing one world wonder.
- Share "Wonder Walks" where students explain their projects in gallery format.

SoSCI.6 Global Cultures: Exploring Asia

Learning Outcomes

By the end of this unit, students will be able to:

✔ **Learn about geography, languages, customs, and holidays across Asia.**

✔ **Understand cultural similarities and differences.**

✔ **Foster empathy and curiosity about global citizenship.**

Competencies

SoSCI.5.A.1 – Examining countries across Asia.

- Study major Asian nations using maps and fact files.
- Read folktales and biographies from different regions.

SoSCI.6.A.2 – Celebrating cultural exchange.

- Explore traditions like Lunar New Year or Diwali.
- Participate in a "Culture Day" presenting food, music, and games.

3. Assessment and Evaluation

Formative Assessments – Ongoing Inquiry

✔ **Geography quizzes and map labeling.**

✔ **Journal responses and roleplay discussions.**

Summative Assessments – Project-Based & Content Mastery

✔ **State Poster or Travel Brochure.**

✔ **Moon Landing Story Retelling + Primary Source Reflections.**

✔ **"My Ecosystem" Presentation.**

✔ **Asia Factbook and Visual Project.**

Performance-Based Assessments – Public Sharing and Voice

✔ **Seven Wonders Gallery Walk.**

✔ **Culture Day Oral Presentations.**

4. Instructional Strategies for Online Learning

Integrated Humanities Approach

✓ Connect to ELA (biographies, global stories), science (ecosystems), and art (wonders, symbols).

Project-Based and Inquiry-Driven Learning

✓ Encourage choice and self-direction in research topics.

✓ Scaffold questioning with graphic organizers and sentence starters.

Technology & Global Resources

✓ Use Google Earth, National Geographic Kids, and UNESCO World Heritage resources.

✓ Virtual museum tours and guest speakers from around the world.

Learning Culture

✓ Foster respect, dialogue, and curiosity.

✓ Encourage student voice through discussion, writing, and presentations.

✓ Build global citizenship through empathy and connection.