



Southmoreland School District

Fifth Grade Social Studies Curriculum Overview

Fifth Grade Social Studies Overview:

The fifth grade social studies curriculum is divided into four modules: (1) Civics and Government, (2) Economics, (3) Geography, and (4) History. Fifth grade students focus on United States history, beginning with the colonization of America and continuing through the 20th century. They analyze the reasons behind events, make connections, and comparisons. They are empowered with the knowledge, skills, and abilities to make informed decisions that are relevant to their lives today. Students develop critical thinking and interpersonal communication skills to become responsible and productive citizens in our culturally diverse and interdependent world. In addition, students learn about how their community works as well as the variety of ways that communities organize themselves. Finally, students develop conceptual understandings by examining the geographic and economic aspects of life in their own neighborhoods and compare them to those of people long ago. The civic mission of social studies requires more than the acquisition of content. The National Council of Social Studies defines social studies as “the integrated study of the social sciences and humanities to promote civic competence.”

Module Titles:

Module 1: Civics and Government

Module 2: Economics

Module 3: Geography

Module 4: History

Module Overviews:

Module 1: Civics and Government

The goal of this module is for students to learn about our government and our rights and responsibilities of citizenship. Fifth grade students describe the role of laws in protecting property rights, individual rights, and the common good. They recognize the basic purposes of government. Students analyze the responsibilities and powers of the three branches of government. In addition, students identify individual rights, responsibilities, and needs of individuals and groups in a nation. The students identify specific ways which individuals participate in community and national activities. Finally, students interpret key ideas found in significant documents.

Module 2: Economics

The goal of this module is for students to understand the basic elements of a community’s economic system, including producers, distributors, and consumers of goods and services. Fifth grade students explain how limited resources and unlimited wants cause scarcity. They discuss ways in which people meet their basic needs and



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wants. Students explore the use of human and capital resources to influence the production of a specific good (i.e. corn, rice, tobacco). In addition, students describe the interaction of consumers and producers of goods and services in the state (colonial) and national (imperial) economy. The students analyze factors that influence government's economic decision making. Finally, students explain the growth of regional and trans-Atlantic trade during the colonial era.

Module 3: Geography

The goal of this module is for students to recognize the impact of geographic locations on its people. Fifth grade students identify, create, and implement tools of geography. They identify key regions, cities, and bodies of water in North America. Students describe the human characteristics of a region using the following criteria: population, culture, settlement patterns, economic activity, and political activity. Finally, students identify the human interactions with geographic systems within the major regions in colonial America.

Module 4: History

The goal of this module is for students to understand the significance of historical events that shaped our nation. Fifth grade students identify and explain how economic forces have influenced continuity and change over time. They distinguish between and analyze fact and opinion from multiple points of view and primary sources as related to historical events. Students summarize the findings of a research topic gained from multiple points of view and sources. In addition, students explain the significance of the contributions made by individuals to colonial US history. The students identify and explain the importance of historical documents, artifacts, and insights which are critical to the history of colonial America. Finally, students examine patterns of conflict and cooperation among groups and organizations that impacted the history and development of colonial America.