

Kindergarten Social Studies

Key Instructional Activities

The Kindergarten Georgia Standards of Excellence begins by teaching students the foundations of the social studies strands: history, geography, government/civics, and economics. Students begin their introduction to United States history through the study of important American holidays and symbols. Basic concepts of geography are presented. Civics provides students with an introduction to rules and character traits of good citizens. Basic economic concepts are also introduced. Map and Globe skills and informational processing skills matrices are introduced as a foundation for students to use locate, analyze, and synthesize information related to social studies topics and apply this information to solve problems and make decisions.

The College, Career, and Civic Life (C3) Framework for Social Studies State Standards enhance the rigor in K-12 Civics, Economics, Geography, and History studies. This framework enhances rigor, builds critical thinking, problem solving, and participatory skills necessary for students to become engaged citizens. The C3 Framework serves as the foundation of the Georgia Standards of Excellence.



The C3 Framework emphasizes the acquisition and application of knowledge to prepare students for college, career, and civic life. The Four Dimensions center on the use of questions to spark curiosity, guide instruction, deepen investigations, acquire rigorous content, and apply knowledge and ideas in real world settings to enable students to become active and engaged citizens in the 21st century.



Along with content knowledge, students will be introduced to the following skills through a broad range of topics

- Using a compass rose to identify cardinal directions
- Comparing similarities and differences
- Organizing items chronologically
- Identifying issues and/or problems and alternative solutions

(More information on the skills matrices can be found as an appendix to the GSE at Georgiastandards.org).

The C3 Social Studies Classroom

Inquiry-based approaches...provide students with opportunities to authentically engage in social studies with intellectual, student-centered learning activities. Through inquiry, students can be motivated to explore their curiosities and build their knowledge using approaches beyond simple recitation and memorization of facts (Dague, 2020).

Inquiry Based Practices

1. Teachers and students balance their thoughts, beliefs, and practices.

- Teachers strike a balance between their expertise by allowing students to learn and do on their own with support from the teacher.
- Students actively construct knowledge rather than passively receive it.
- Students engage with featured sources to construct their arguments with support from the teacher.
- Students construct content knowledge and make arguments independently and collaboratively.

2. Teachers and students balance assessment needs.

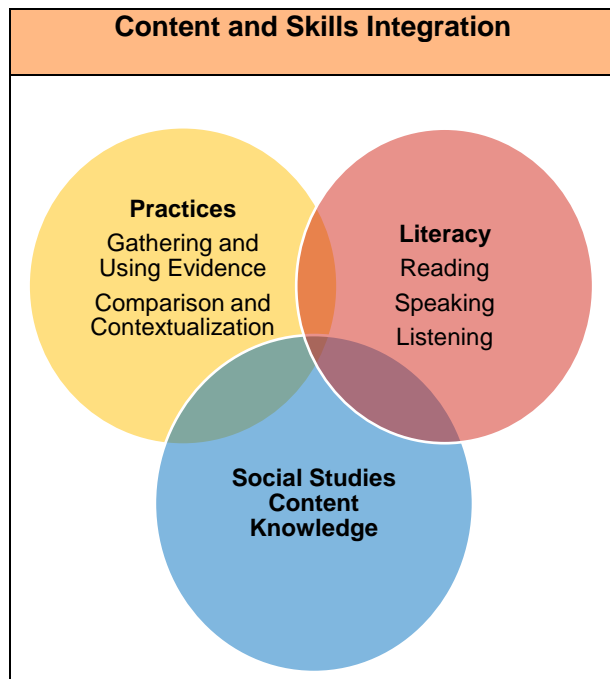
- Teachers develop assessments through formative and summative performance tasks that give students opportunities to learn by doing.
- Teachers create a variety of performance tasks (e.g., T-charts, debates, structured discussions, claim-making, arguments).
- Teachers focus on process and product when supporting students' arguments.
- Students are independent in their work with supporting scaffolding.
- Students develop ideas freely and provide support for all of their ideas.

3. Teachers provide students with scaffolding to complete the complex academic work of inquiry.

- Teachers provide constant feedback and support students' learning as they navigate questions, tasks, and sources.
- Students consider multiple perspectives to deepen their knowledge.

4. Teachers develop practices that are considerate of students' interest and skills.

- Teachers to stage the compelling question to promote students' interest.
- Teachers to encourage students to take their ideas beyond the classroom.
- Students to work with sources that spark their curiosity and interest in the topic.



FROM A Social Studies Classroom Where...	TO A Social Studies Classroom Where...
Students experience an additional nonfiction reading class or textbook-focused instruction.	Students learn to read, discuss, and write like social scientists.
Students develop literacy skills and social studies practices separately.	Students develop disciplinary literacy skills and social science practices in tandem.
Students learn content knowledge.	Students integrate and apply concepts, skills, and content knowledge.

Kindergarten Social Studies System Pacing Overview



This guide provides an overview of what your student will learn in his or her kindergarten social studies course. It focuses on the key skills your student will learn, which will build a strong foundation for success in social studies throughout elementary, middle, and high school. This guide is based on the state-adopted Georgia Standards of Excellence.

August

Unit 1: Connecting Themes

This unit introduces the Connecting Themes used during the Kindergarten year. Teachers can use the themes to help support the beginning of the year work students are already doing. The activities below are designed in this vein; however, teachers may have plans already in place that can just as easily tie into the Connecting Themes. As each school and classroom have their own set of traditions, expectations, procedures, etc., teachers will want to adapt any selected activities to make sure they benefit the development of students' role in their classroom community.

September

Unit 2: The People in Our Neighborhood

This unit incorporates the basic Kindergarten economics standards with the Labor Day holiday to help students learn about the contributions of people who work in their community. Activities within this unit also encourage students to make connections between what they are learning as the school year begins (rules, procedures, basic chronological terms) and larger concepts in their lives. Teachers should feel free to adapt the following activities to reflect school and community culture, particularly in the case of the Star Spangled Banner and Pledge of Allegiance, both of which appear in this unit.

October

Unit 3: Where in the World are We?

This unit introduces basic geography to Kindergarteners. Within it, students will explore maps, globes, and what they represent. The activities in this unit also address the travels of Christopher Columbus, and link them to the geography students are learning. As students continue to work with chronology and relevant vocabulary, they will also explore sequence and change over time. Finally, students learn the practical skill of stating their address, and brainstorm applications for that information.

November- December

Unit 4: Celebrating Our Differences

This particular unit encompasses several national holidays that Kindergarten classrooms usually celebrate and study extensively. Since individual classrooms and schools will have unique traditions, the activities in this unit focus on historical background and student sharing rather than on suggested classroom celebrations. In addition to the activities recognizing similarities and differences among the holidays and among students' personal celebrations, there is also a focus on gratitude, and teachers can certainly weave the two together. The economics standards within this unit can be incorporated within some discussion of the holidays, but a few stand-alone activities appear within the unit for teachers who would like to teach them that way.

January

Unit 5: Becoming a Good American

The historical content in this unit revolves around the Martin Luther King, Jr. holiday, and his work to ensure the fair treatment of all people. Students will learn about positive character traits exhibited by good citizens, and practice using these traits themselves. They can also identify historical figures and people students know personally to better illustrate the traits and inspire students to demonstrate good citizenship through the traits. By learning about making good choices, students can begin to synthesize their knowledge of civics and economics content, using these character traits and the larger idea of good citizenship as an example.

February-March

Unit 6: Being a Good Leader

This unit links the Presidents Day holiday to the presidents that it honors, and gives students an opportunity to learn more about them and their accomplishments. Students will also learn about the monuments built to Washington and Lincoln, and the role of the White House as the home of the president, regardless of who that may be. These pieces of content link together to help students appreciate the importance of the presidency. In addition, students will learn to recite their street address, city, state, and country during this unit, if they have not already done so by this point in Kindergarten.

April

Unit 7: Earning and Spending Money

This unit is based on the basic economic understandings that people earn income by the work they do such as: police officer, fire fighter, soldier, mail carrier, farmer, doctor, etc...Students will explain how money is used to purchase goods and services and that people must make choices because they cannot have everything they want.

May

Unit 8: You're a Grand Old Flag

The final kindergarten unit addresses patriotic holidays, national symbols, and basic economics. While learning about the meaning behind Memorial Day and Independence Day (both of which likely occur during students' summer break), students also learn to identify several key symbols of our state and nation. Teachers will want to use local celebrations and traditions to help students connect to these pieces of our national identity; they will also need to consider specific situations within their classes that may require sensitivity in discussing these topics. The economics activities may serve as a review for students who have grasped the content previously, or as new teaching for students still working to understand these ideas

HOW CAN YOU SUPPORT YOUR CHILD'S SUCCESS?

The adoption of more rigorous standards in Social Studies has led to a change in how social studies is taught in the classroom. As a parent/guardian, you can encourage critical thinking, problem solving, and participatory skills necessary for students to become engaged citizens by asking questions. In each unit, students should have the opportunity to develop their own questions about content, apply disciplinary tools to expand their thinking, evaluate credible sources to gather information, communicate conclusions after inquiries, and determine whether to take action based on new understandings about the world in which we live.

Dimension of Learning	Questions You Might Ask
<p>Developing Questions and Planning Inquiries</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What are you learning in social studies? • What do you wonder about that? • What feelings and thoughts do you have about this topic? • What questions does it raise? • Why do you think this is important for us to learn?
<p>Applying Disciplinary Concepts and Tools</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Historian: How do we know about the past? What has changed or stayed the same over time? Why is this important in American history? • Geographer: What does a map show us? Why do people move from place to place? How can we describe the people in this place? • Political Scientist: What rights do people have? How do people work together? Are people being treated fairly? • Economist: How do people meet their needs and wants? How do people earn income? What goods and services are being produced and consumed?
<p>Evaluating Sources and Using Evidence</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Where could you find out more information about the people, places, objects, activities that you are learning about in history? Try to find one or two other sources in print and online. • Who do you think took this photo and where was it? What do you see that could prove where it is located and when it was taken? • How do you know if this source is fact or an opinion?
<p>Communicating Conclusions and Taking Informed Action</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What claim would you make based on these sources? • Has your thinking changed after learning about this topic? • Have you thought about what you can do to take action to help address an issue related to the topic you are studying in class?

Resources that may help your student in Kindergarten Social Studies.

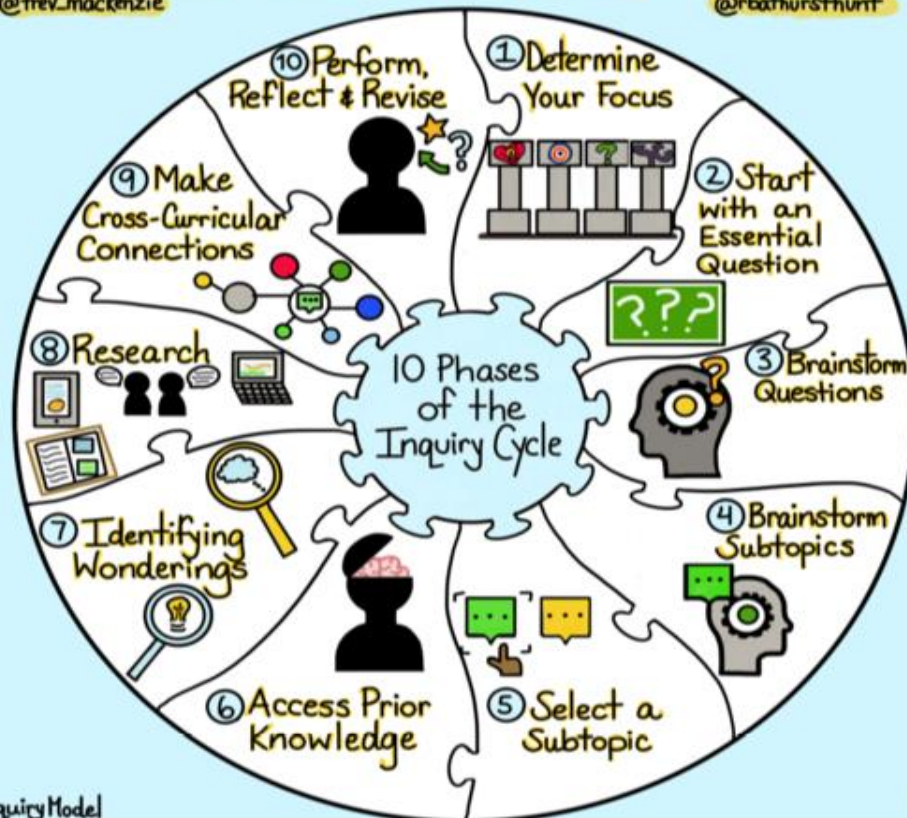
Bring history alive as a family by visiting around the state of Georgia: historic homes and sites, battlefields, forts, local museums, and cemeteries. Also, visit additional resources online:

- <https://www.georgiastandards.org/Georgia-Standards/Pages/Social-Studies-K-5.aspx>
- <https://www.icivics.org/>
- <http://gcss.net/uploads/files/kindersocstkidsbooks.pdf>
- <https://blogs.loc.gov/teachers/2014/12/primary-source-activities-for-the-k-2-classroom/>
- <https://www.readworks.org/books/passages#!q:g:t:pt:/features:/>
- <https://constitutionday.civiced.org/>
- <https://www.americanhistoryforkids.com/>
- <https://www.ducksters.com/>

The Inquiry Cycle

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Inspired by: Alberta Inquiry Model

#InquiryMindset

10 Characteristics of the Inquiry Classroom

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