

4th Grade Social Studies

Key Instructional Activities

In fourth grade, students continue with year two of a three-year study of United States history in which all four strands (history, geography, civics/government, and economics) are integrated. Students begin the year learning about the French and Indian War and end with the Reconstruction period. The geography strand emphasizes the influence of geography on U.S. history during the same times. In the civics/government strand, students learn about concepts and rights contained within our founding documents. The economic strand uses material from the history strand to deepen understanding of economic concepts. Map and Globe and Informational Processing Skills Matrices are integrated as a foundation for students to locate, analyze, and synthesize information related to social studies topics.

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 and intermediate directions
- Using a letter/number grid system to determine location
- Using latitude and longitude to determine location
- Comparing and contrasting the categories of natural, cultural, and political features found on maps
- Using map key/legend to acquire information from historical, physical, political, resource, product, and economic maps
- Identifying main idea, detail, sequence of events, and cause and effect in a social studies context
- Identifying and using primary and secondary sources
- Interpreting and constructing timelines, charts and tables
- Analyzing artifacts, graphs, diagrams
- Interpret political cartoons

(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.

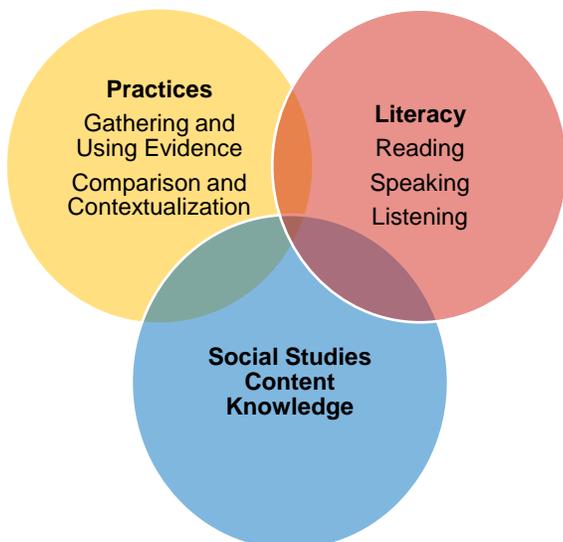
3. Teachers provide students with scaffolding to complete the complex academic work of inquiry.

- 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.

Content and Skills Integration



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.

4th Grade Social Studies System Pacing Overview



This guide provides an overview of what your student will learn in his or her fourth grade 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

The focus of this unit is to familiarize students with eight connecting themes and their associated enduring understandings that will provide meaning and structure to their social studies coursework this year. Activities will focus on relating beliefs and ideals; conflict and change; distribution of power; individuals, groups, institutions; location; movement/migration; production, distribution, and consumption; and technological innovations to students.

September – October

Unit 2: Forming a New Nation

This unit will focus on how the beliefs and ideals of the British colonists in America, especially in regards to the distribution of power, led to the conflict and change that resulted in the writing of the Declaration of Independence and the subsequent American Revolution. It will also show how key individuals, groups, and institutions influenced those beliefs and ideals precipitating many of the events before and during the American Revolution.

October – November

Unit 3: Challenges of a New Nation

This unit will focus on how the beliefs and ideals of the individuals, groups, and institutions that made up our newly formed nation, in regards to the distribution of power within a society, led to conflict and change during the framing of the Constitution. This unit will also look at how location played a role in the ever-widening differences in the beliefs and ideals of the populations of the individual states, fueling the debate over many of the major issues at the Constitutional Convention. This, in turn, led to the compromises that form the structure of our government, and these same concerns led to the inclusion of the Bill of Rights.

December – January

Unit 4: The Nation Expands

This unit will focus on how the beliefs and ideals of our young and developing nation (especially those of "Manifest Destiny"-belief that the expansion of the US throughout the American continents was both justified and inevitable). Technological innovations enabled the westward movement and migration of people, leading to the settling of the American West. This in turn led to the inevitable conflict and change with the American Indians already living there. We will also examine how the opportunities inherent in this territorial expansion gave us new and unique avenues of production, distribution, and consumption that, in turn, led to conflict, once again, with Great Britain

February – March

Unit 5: Civil War and Reconstruction

This unit will focus on how location combined with the movement and migration of people to urban centers in the North played a large role in defining very different systems of production, distribution, and consumption of goods and services resulting in very different beliefs and ideals. We will also explore how these differences, along with technology innovations such as steel production and the railroad further deepened the divide between North and South culminating in the conflict and change that was the Civil War and Reconstruction

April – May

Unit 6: Economics

In this unit, students will specifically look at how the basic economic concepts of trade, opportunity cost, specialization, and voluntary exchange, productivity, and price incentives have a far-reaching impact on all of our connecting themes, and have influenced history throughout the early years of our nation. Students will also apply the basic financial understandings of saving, budgeting, and spending to their own beliefs and ideals.

If the young learners of this nation are to become effective participants in a democratic society, then social studies must be an essential part of the curriculum throughout the elementary years. In a world that demands independent and cooperative problem solving to address complex social, economic, ethical, and personal concerns, core social studies content is as basic for success as reading, writing, and computing. Knowledge, skills, and attitudes necessary for informed and thoughtful participation in society require a systematically developed elementary program focused on concepts from the four core social studies disciplines: civics, economics, geography and history. (NCSS, 2017)

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
Developing Questions and Planning Inquiries	<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 sources do you think would be helpful in looking at other points of view? • Why do you think this is important for us to learn?
Applying Disciplinary Concepts and Tools	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Historian: How do events compare to in other historical times? How have individuals and groups changed or stayed the same throughout history? What kind of historical sources would be used to explain events in the past? • Geographer: What are the relationships between locations of places and regions and their environment? Why do people move from place to place? How can we describe the people in a location? • Political Scientist: What rights do people have? How do people work together? How does a democracy rely on people's responsible participation? • Economist: Why do individuals and businesses specialize and trade? What are some ways the government pays for the goods and services it provides? What goods and services are being produced and consumed?
Evaluating Sources and Using Evidence	<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? • What is the author's purpose, main idea, and point of view in a source? Why is this source useful?
Communicating Conclusions and Taking Informed Action	<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 4th Grade Social Studies.

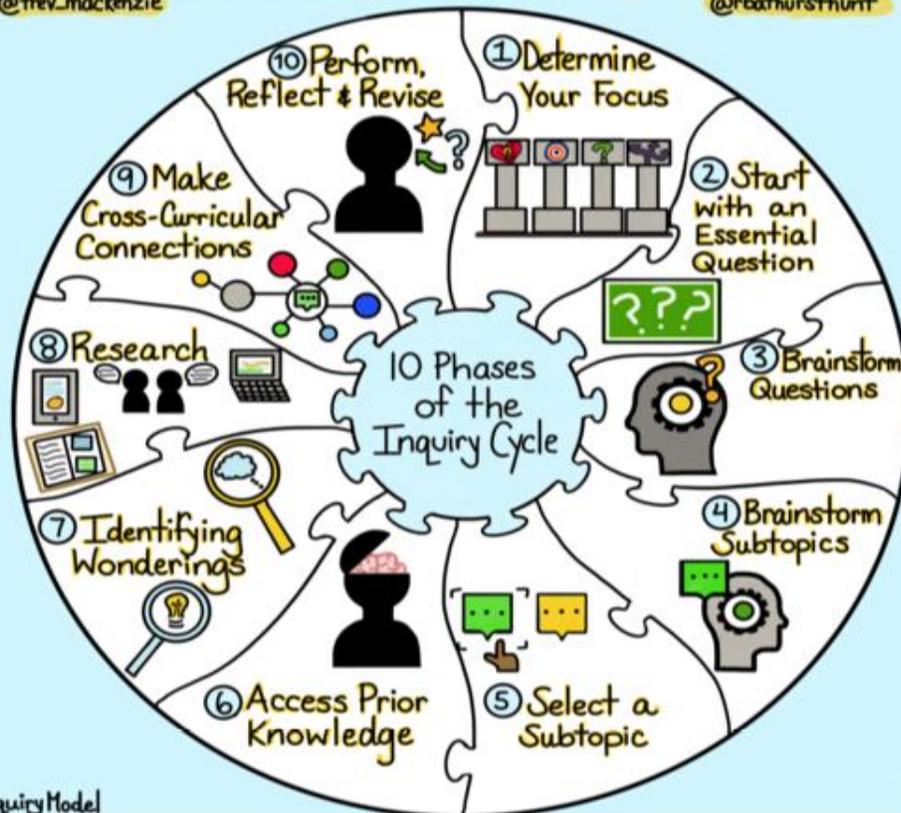
Bring history alive as a family by visiting around the state of Georgia: historic homes and sites, battlefields, forts, local museums and cemeteries. Also, visit additional resources online:

- <https://www.georgiastandards.org/Georgia-Standards/Pages/Social-Studies-K-5.aspx>
- <https://www.icivics.org/>
- <http://gcss.net/uploads/files/gr4socstkidsbooks.pdf>
- <https://bensguide.gpo.gov/>
- <https://www.readworks.org/books/passages#lq:g:t/pt/features/>
- <https://constitutionday.civiced.org/>
- <https://www.americanhistoryforkids.com/>
- <https://www.ducksters.com>
- <https://www.docsteach.org/activities/activities>
- <https://www.archives.gov/education/research/primary-sources>

The Inquiry Cycle

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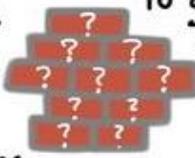
Inspired by: Alberta Inquiry Model

#InquiryMindset

10 Characteristics of the Inquiry Classroom

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- 1 Nurture student passions & talents 
 - 2 Empower student voice & honour student choice 
 - 3 Increase motivation and engagement 
 - 4 Foster curiosity and a love for learning 
 - 5 Teach grit, perseverance, growth mindset & self-regulation 
 - 6 Make research meaningful & develop strong research skills 
 - 7 Deepen understanding to go beyond memorizing facts and content 
 - 8 Fortify the importance of asking good questions 
 - 9 Enable students to take ownership over their own learning and to reach their goals 
 - 10 Solve the problems of tomorrow in the classrooms of today 
- Genius Hour**
 Passion Projects
 20% Time

Information in this brochure has been taken in part from the following sources: Georgiastandards.org, C3 Framework, Trevor McKenzie and the National Council for the Social Studies.