

Social Studies

EIGHTH GRADE

World History to 1500

The study of world history in Grade 8 addresses the time period from prehistoric man to the 1500s. Content standards for this grade incorporate the strands of economics, geography, history, and political science, with an emphasis on the history and geography strands. This course covers the migrations of early peoples, the rise of civilizations, the establishment of governments and religions, the growth of economic systems, and the ways in which these events shaped Europe, Asia, Africa, and the Americas. Unique to this course are the experiences that provide for the study of the ways human beings view themselves over time. The prevailing use of terms to describe the Gregorian calendar is B.C. (before Christ) and A.D. (Anno Domini, Latin for “in the year of our Lord”). The terms B.C.E. (before the Common Era) and C.E. (in the Common Era) are beginning to appear in some schools of theology, state and national assessments, and in national history standards. The use of the abbreviations B.C.E. and C.E., also based on the Gregorian calendar, does not, in any way, diminish/negate the importance of the abbreviations B.C. and A.D.

Students will:

1. Explain how artifacts and other archaeological findings provide evidence of the nature and movement of prehistoric groups of people
 - Identify the founding of Rome as the basis of the calendar established by Julius Caesar, which was used in early Western civilization for over a thousand years
 - Identify the birth of Christ as the basis of the Gregorian calendar used in the United States since its beginning and in most countries of the world today, signified by B.C. and A.D.
 - Use vocabulary terms other than B.C. and A.D. to describe time
 - Identify terms used to describe characteristics of early societies and family structures
2. Analyze characteristics of early civilizations in respect to technology, division of labor, government, calendar, and writings.
 - Compare significant features of civilizations that developed in the Tigris-Euphrates, Nile, Indus, and Huang He River valleys
 - Identify on a map locations of cultural hearths of early civilizations
3. Compare the development of early world religions, philosophies, and their key tenets.
 - Identify cultural contributions of early world religions and philosophies

4. Identify cultural contributions of Classical Greece, including politics, intellectual life, arts, literature, architecture, and science.
5. Describe the role of Alexander the Great in the Hellenistic world.
 - Define boundaries of Alexander the Great's empire and its economic impact
 - Identify reasons for the separation of Alexander the Great's empire into successor kingdoms
 - Evaluate major contributions of Hellenistic art, philosophy, science, and political thought
6. Trace the expansion of the Roman Republic and its transformation into an empire, including key geographic, political, and economic elements.
 - Interpret spatial distributions and patterns of the Roman Republic using geographic tools and technologies
7. Describe the widespread impact of the Roman Empire.
 - Trace important aspects of the diffusion of Christianity, including its relationship to Judaism, missionary impulse, organizational development, transition from persecution to acceptance in the Roman Empire, and church doctrine
 - Explain the role of economics, societal changes, Christianity, political and military problems, external factors, and the size and diversity of the Roman Empire in its decline and fall
8. Describe the development of a classical civilization in India and China.
 - Identify the effect of the monsoons on India
 - Identify landforms and climate regions of China
9. Describe the rise of the Byzantine Empire, its institutions, and its legacy, including the influence of the Emperors Constantine and Justinian, and the effect of the Byzantine Empire upon art, religion, architecture, and law.
 - Identify factors leading to the establishment of the Eastern Orthodox Church
10. Trace the development of the early Russian state and the expansion of its trade systems.
11. Describe early Islamic civilizations, including the development of religious, social, and political systems.
 - Trace the spread of Islamic ideas through invasion and conquest throughout the Middle East, northern Africa, and western Europe
12. Describe China's influence on culture, politics, and economics in Japan, Korea, and Southeast Asia.
13. Compare the African civilizations of Ghana, Mali, and Songhai to include their geography, religions, slave trade, economic systems, empires, and cultures.

- Trace the spread of language, religion, and customs from one African civilization to another
 - Illustrate the impact of trade among Ghana, Mali, and Songhai
14. Describe key aspects of pre-Columbian cultures in the Americas including the Olmecs, Mayans, Aztecs, Incas, and North American tribes.
- Locate on a map sites of pre-Columbian cultures
15. Describe military and governmental events that shaped Europe in the early Middle Ages (600-1000).
- Describe the role of the early medieval church
 - Describe the impact of new agricultural methods on manorialism and feudalism
16. Describe major cultural changes in Western Europe in the High Middle Ages (1000-1350).
- Describe changing roles of church and governmental leadership
 - Compare political developments in France, England, and the Holy Roman Empire, including the signing of the Magna Carta
 - Describe the growth of trade and towns resulting in the rise of the middle class
17. Explain how events and conditions fostered political and economic changes in the late Middle Ages and led to the origins of the Renaissance.
- Identify changes in the arts, architecture, literature, and science in the late Middle Ages