

Overview of Elementary School Social Studies for Families Kindergarten- Fifth grade

The North Carolina Standard Course of Study in Social Studies provides students the opportunity to engage in the disciplines **inquiry; behavioral sciences; civics and government; economics; geography;** and **history**. As students develop cognitively, these disciplines become more focused based on the grade-level content and disciplinary thinking skills. Classrooms are structured with highly collaborative activities that allow students to engage in academic conversations and study rich academic topics. Resources provide an opportunity for reading, writing, speaking, and listening through a variety of instructional strategies. Grade level summaries for each discipline are below:

[What will my elementary student be doing in class?](#)

[What will my elementary student be doing at home?](#)

[What can I do to support my elementary students with Social Studies?](#)

[Who should I contact if I have questions?](#)

[What will my elementary student be doing in class?](#)

<u>Kindergarten</u>	<u>First</u>	<u>Second</u>	<u>Third</u>	<u>Fourth</u>	<u>Fifth</u>
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Inquiry

Inquiry-based learning helps students make their own connections about what they learn. Their curiosity helps them engage and gain a deeper understanding of topics and content, instead of primarily memorizing and recalling rules, ideas or formulas.

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Kindergarten: The World Around Us

In this course, students will learn how they are connected to the world around them. Students will also have the opportunity to look for ways that they can be civic-minded and make change happen within their own classroom and school.

Through their study of **behavioral sciences**, students will become acquainted with diverse cultures. They will also develop an awareness of the similarities and differences among individuals in the classroom as well as within the school, community, and world.

In **history**, students compare life in the past to life today within the home, community, and around the world.

Geography: Kindergarten students will develop spatial awareness of their surroundings by using geographic representations, tools, and terminology to process information about the world around them. They will learn that people not only use the environment to meet their needs and wants but also that the environment often dictates where people choose to live.

Students will also have the opportunity to look for ways that they can be civic-minded and make change happen within their own classroom and school. Studying **civics and government** enables students to develop a sense of purpose regarding their role and the role of other citizens within the community and world.

In **economics**, students will compare how people in different communities use goods from local and distant places.

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First grade: People, Places, and the Environment

In this course students will learn how they are connected to the world around them. Students will have the opportunity to look for ways that they can be civic-minded and make change happen within their own classroom, school, and community.

Through their study of **Behavioral Sciences**, students will become acquainted with diverse cultures and how values and beliefs help shape the communities in which we live. The objectives of the Behavioral Sciences strand will also allow students to develop an awareness of the similarities and differences among ethnically diverse people.

The objectives developed for the **History** strand help facilitate instruction which will allow students in first grade to compare life in the past to life today as they study the contributions of historical figures and how those figures have helped shape and change various communities and environments across the globe.

In the disciplinary lens of **Geography**, students will develop spatial awareness of their surroundings by using geographic representations, tools, and terminology to process information about the world around them. Students will learn that people not only use the environment to meet their needs and wants but also that the environment often dictates where and how people choose to live.

As first-grade students continue the study of **Civics and Government**, students will further develop a sense of purpose regarding their role and the role of other citizens within the community and world.

Through the lens of **Economics**, students will develop an understanding of how basic economic concepts influence people, places, and the environment.

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Second grade: America: Our Nation

In second grade, the focus of learning will shift to learning about America, as a part of the world and as a unique place within that world. Students will learn about America and how it fits into the global community. The intent of this course is that students will complete the second grade understanding that there are many factors that contribute to the development of our national identity.

Behavioral Sciences and History disciplines, students will study significant historic people and events, as well as study the environmental characteristics that helped shape America and culture in America.

In the disciplinary lens of **Geography** students will understand that we are individuals who are influenced by and contribute to our surrounding environment.

As second grade students continue the study of **Civics and Government** students will also learn how our democratic values and ideals guide the roles and responsibilities of our nation's leaders.

Through the lens of **Economics** students will learn how economic decisions and resources are affected by and shape the nation.

Third grade: Our Community and State

In third grade students will focus on what exists around them and how they play a role in their community each and every day. The intent of this course is that students will complete the third grade understanding that there are many factors that contribute to the development of local communities and regions.

History: They will study people and events significant to local regions that represent our communities and our state.

Geography: Students will compare regions and understand how the location of regions, as well as resources found within those regions, both define local communities and help shape their development and growth.

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Economics, Civics and Government: Third graders will also understand the importance of the role that local businesses and entrepreneurs play within the local economy, as well as the roles and responsibilities of local and state government.

Behavioral Science: Finally, students will understand how the interactions between various cultural groups shape local and state communities through aspects such as food, traditions, artistic expression, and more.

Fourth grade: North Carolina History

Pursuant to the passage of House Bill 1032 An Act Modifying the History and Geography Curricula in the Public Schools of North Carolina, the new standards for 4th grade will cover North Carolina history from pre-colonial times through the present day. These standards are designed to be taught throughout the timeline of North Carolina history from the pre-colonial period to the present day. They are meant to be revisited throughout the course of the school year so that by the end of the school year students can understand the ways in which the standards relate to North Carolina throughout history.

In the **behavioral science** strand, students will look at how various groups have contributed to the diversity of North Carolina throughout its history.

In the **history** strand, students will examine North Carolina's role in major United States events. This will lay the foundations necessary for delving into United States history in 5th grade.

In the **geography** strand, students will address the concept of movement and its impact on people, goods, and ideas in North Carolina. Fourth-grade standards help prepare students for more sophisticated studies of our state, nation, and world in later grades.

Civics and Government: Students will also prepare for their role as responsible and informed citizens by examining the North Carolina Constitution and the separation of powers in state government.

Students will also explore the strand of **economics**, where they will learn how natural resources have influenced economic development in the state.

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Fifth grade: United States History

Students will study the same time period as in fourth grade but will transfer their understanding from the state to the national level. Students will examine change and continuity in United States history from pre-colonial times through the present day.

In the **behavioral science** strand, students will examine the influence of the culture and choices made by various groups of people on the development of the United States.

Through **history**, students will learn about how events, people, and ideas shaped and influenced the United States. Students will gain a general understanding in order to have the foundations necessary for later grades where an in-depth study of the role of the United States in world affairs will be covered. Teachers are encouraged to guide students in drawing connections between contemporary issues and their historical origins. They are meant to be revisited throughout the course of the school year so that by the end of the school year students can understand the ways in which the standards relate to the United States throughout history.

While studying **geography**, students will understand the relationship between geography and the people, goods, and ideas of the United States.

In the **civics and government** strand, students will explore the development, structure, and function of the United States government as well as the role of individual rights and responsibilities.

In **economics**, students will examine how life is affected by economic factors and decisions.

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What will my elementary student be doing at home?

Students can extend their learning experiences at home, continuing to read and write each day. As a family, you may have opportunities to engage in conversations around topics of study and current events.

What can I do to support my elementary students with Social Studies?

You may want to consider reading around the topic your child is learning about and sharing your own experiences related to the topic. Engage in conversations by asking probing questions about your child's learning experience such as:

- What new information did you learn about?
- What does this new learning remind you of?
- What do you wonder about?
- How can I help you find out more?
- What questions do you have?
- Read your child's writing and work sent home or have your child read his/her writing or work aloud to you.
 - Not only will you as a parent or guardian begin to understand your child's thinking, but you can also help your child clarify his/her own thinking by talking through the process with him/her.
- Ask your child what he/she is doing for research around the topic.
- Support your child with independent reading (i.e., encourage your child to go to your school's media center or public library, encourage time and space for independent reading at home).

Who should I contact if I have questions?

Please reach out to your child's teacher with any questions you might have.

Resources from the NC Department of Public Instruction (DPI)

[NCDPI Newly Approved K-12 Social Studies Standards](#)

[2021 Social Studies CROSSWALK Documents K-12](#)

[Approved 2021 Social Studies UNPACKING Documents K-12](#)