

INDIAN HILL EXEMPTED VILLAGE SCHOOL DISTRICT

Social Studies Curriculum - May 2013

Global Cultures and Issues

Skills & Objectives (Applicable to all Units):

- Understand the critical role that geography and the interaction of humans and the environment has played and is playing in shaping the cultures of different regions
- Understand and apply the key historical thinking skills of contextualization; continuity and change over time; cause and effect; and, compare and contrast
- Understand the causes, consequences, prominence, speed and reactions to globalization
- Understand the evolution of and impacts of social structure (class, gender and ethnicity/race) over time and space
- Understand the origin, characteristics and contemporary impacts of key cultural phenomena, especially religion and language
- Understand and triangulate between the biases of all information sources
- Become expert at writing social studies essays that contain an analytical thesis that takes a position and that is supported by relevant, correctly referenced evidence
- Become expert at “close reading” of primary and secondary documents
- Understand the role played by supra-national organizations such as the UN, African Union, OPEC, trade blocs and international aid organizations
- Understand the importance of, the obstacles to and the components of “good governance” in the Non-Western World
- Understand the continuing experimentation with the relative prominence of capitalism versus socialism
- Understand the strengths and limitations of democratic versus authoritarian political systems
- Understand key international comparative social and economic concepts such as the Human Development Index (HDI), Gross National Product (GDP), GDP per capita, the Gender Empowerment Index (GEM), the Gini coefficient (measure of income inequality), Purchasing Power Parity (PPP) and balance of payments
- Understand the importance of inclusive (versus extractive) political and economic institutions
- Understand the region/nation specific points of pride and/or anger that impact their thinking and feelings today (e.g. the historical power of the Caliphate and the historical exploitation of former colonies)
- Understand the extent of and role played by English as an emerging global lingua franca
- Experience (via simulation) the challenges of making a living in a developing nation

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Middle East

Big Idea:

The Middle East is the most conflicted region in the world today and contains a very large share of the world's proven oil reserves.

Essential Questions:

- What are the short and long-term causes and effects of the many intense political, economic and cultural conflicts in the Middle East?
- What strategies and tactics may prove effective in resolving these many conflicts?

Main Ideas:

- The decades long resurgence of Islamic fundamentalism continues to change the political, military and cultural landscape of the entire Middle East
- The Iranian drive to acquire nuclear weapons could lead to a new round of nuclear proliferation as well as an intensification of the threat to Israel
- The "Arab Spring" is changing the face of the Middle East, especially in Egypt and Syria
- The long running Arab-Israeli conflict continues to boil with no resolution in sight
- The role of women in Muslim countries continues to be hotly contested
- Continued Israeli settlement in the West Bank is changing the "facts on the ground"
- Turkey is a bridge between the West/NATO and the Middle East
- The "Israel Lobby" in the United States has a major impact on the Middle East
- The aftermath of the 2003-2011 American-Iraq War is very uncertain
- Oil wealth has divided the Middle East into rich and poor nations.
- Rapid population growth and urbanization have brought changes to the Middle East.

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Sub-Saharan Africa (SS Africa)

Big Idea:

Although some progress has finally been made since the start of this century, sub-Saharan Africa remains desperately poor.

Essential Questions:

- How can Africa pull itself out of its desperate poverty?
- What role has the developed world played in the current economic disparity between Africa and the rest of the world?
- What role can/should the rest of the world play in the effort to improve SS Africa's economic outlook?

Main Ideas:

- Africa is poor due to geographical, historical and institutional factors
- Geographical obstacles to development have included desertification, disease, soil leaching and (originally) lack of indigenous domesticatable animals.
- Historical obstacles to development include long periods of slave raiding, colonization and neo-colonialism
- Contemporary institutional obstacles to development include extractive (versus inclusive) political and economic systems run by a kleptocratic elite
- Africa's population is growing faster than any other region of the world
- The majority of SS Africans live on less than \$1.25 per day
- Non-governmental organizations/charities (NGO's) have a very uneven track record in helping Africans
- None of the large rich/developed countries has ever fulfilled the 40 year old pledge to contribute .7% of GDP to foreign aid
- Some Africans have called for "trade not aid"
- The overwhelming majority of Africans today are either Muslims or Christians
- The federal budget of many African countries is funded not by taxes but by foreign aid
- Natural resources discoveries such as oil and diamonds have led to numerous civil wars, rampant corruption and brutal exploitation (sometimes called "the resource curse")
- The African Union, despite a tiny budget, is starting to have an impact on the internal affairs of African nations
- Africa has, by far, the highest incidence of HIV/AIDS in the world
- There has been some progress toward the UN Millennium Development Goals (MDG's)
- China has become one of the largest investors in Africa
- The end of the Cold War between the USA and the USSR (and their proxies in Africa) ended many of the civil wars in Africa
- South Africa produces 40% of SS Africa's economy but appears to be deteriorating

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South Asia/India

Big Idea:

South Asia is the only place in the world where two nuclear armed, frequently belligerent neighbors (Pakistan and India) face each other.

Essential Questions:

- How will India address its current population problem?
- What historical, geographical and economic factors have contributed to the current environment in India, Pakistan and Bangladesh?

Main Ideas:

- South Asia is a well-defined region with geographic features that set it apart from the rest of Asia
- Although most of South Asia is enjoying rapid if uneven economic growth, the region is second only to SS Africa in the percentage of people living in severe poverty
- The caste system, especially the continued (illegal) ostracism of untouchables (Dalits), continues to hold back social progress in India
- India and Pakistan have fought three wars with each other since 1947, several of them about control of Kashmir
- Hindu nationalism has arisen in India, partly as a response to Islamic fundamentalism
- India's population will likely pass China's in the next 30 years
- India and China are becoming stronger trading partners but also geo-political rivals
- India is seeking (and Pakistan is opposing) a veto-wielding permanent seat on the UN Security Council
- Bangladesh is one of the world's most densely populated countries and lacks the geographic and economic resources to support the large population
- Although India has been uniquely successful as a developing country democracy, the Nehru-Gandhi family dynasty, which looks about to end, has been an overly important element
- South Asia is the birthplace of Hinduism, Buddhism, Jainism and Sikhism
- British colonial rule changed the political, economic, and social structure of South Asia
- Ethnic and cultural diversity have posed challenges for Indian and other South Asian nations
- 30 years of war have made Afghanistan one of the poorest and most volatile places in the world, and a top refugee-producing country.

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Southeast Asia

Big Idea:

Southeast Asia (SE Asia) is transforming itself into a relatively stable and wealthy part of the world

Essential Question:

- What is SE Asia doing right that is fostering its success despite its war-torn history and cultural diversity?

Main Ideas:

- Due to its geographic location, SE Asia has been heavily influenced by the cultures of both India and China
- SE Asia's location has made it a cross roads of trade for thousands of years
- Most of the world's Buddhists live in SE Asia
- Indonesia is the world's most populous Muslim nation
- SE Asia is one of the least patriarchal regions in the world
- Every SE Asian country except Thailand was subjected to Western imperial control
- Vietnam was the center of one of the most intense de-colonization wars in history, followed by the most intense "hot war" of the Cold War
- "The Killing Fields" genocide of Pol Pot's Khmer Rouge continues to impact Cambodia
- SE Asia is working hard, through ASEAN, to create an integrated economic zone, somewhat modeled on the EU
- Myanmar/Burma appears to be emerging from decades of isolationism and authoritarian rule
- Islamic fundamentalism and Islamic separatist movements pose a major challenge in about half of the SE Nations
- SE Asia is feeling increasingly threatened by Chinese economic dominance and territorial claims

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East Asia/China

Big Idea:

Although East Asia has a flourishing economy, it is making less progress in the areas of culture and politics and will soon suffer from demographic decline

Essential Questions:

- Will China be able to support its aging population?
- What is the future of the One-Child policy?
- Will China's rise be peaceful?
- Can Japan ever pull out of its multi-decade stagnation?
- What will it take for reform/revolution to take place in North Korea?

Main Ideas:

- China's economy will be the largest in the world by ~2020 even as its per-person wealth remains low
- China has an authoritarian political system that has invented a way to peacefully replace its leadership---a first in world history
- China sees its rise as a restoration of the natural state of things, referring to the period between 600 CE and the Industrial Revolution, when it was the most advanced country in the world
- China's growing economic and military strength is creating a reaction in its neighbors, drawing them closer to the U.S.
- All of East Asia now has birthrates below the replacement rate. This will lead to an aging and then shrinking population (something that is already happening in Japan)
- China and Korea continue to harbor deep resentment towards Japan due to Japan's imperialistic actions between the 1890's and 1945
- Japan's demographic problems are exacerbated by restrictive immigration policies.
- Most East Asians are irreligious, while accommodating multiple faith traditions.
- China is gradually putting pressure on North Korea to reform
- East Asia suffers from having almost no local oil resources
- Supported by its Confucian cultural tradition, East Asia leads the world in measured educational achievement; but many countries are reforming their educational systems to attempt to produce more innovators

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Latin America

Big Idea:

Latin America (LA) is becoming increasingly developed and influential but suffers from the world's worst income inequality

Essential Questions:

- As one of the “BRIC” countries, why do some consider Brazil to be in a “class by itself”?
- How has resource exploitation contributed to lagging development and poverty in many Central and South American countries?
- How have political institutions in Latin America contributed to lack of economic development?
- What economic and political factors contribute to the increased security at the U.S.-Mexico border by the United States government?
- Why are there factories called Maquiladoras along the U.S.-Mexico border, and what role do they play in the economies of each region?
- What is NAFTA and how has it impacted the economies involved?
- What role do remittances and tourism play in the Mexican and Caribbean economies?
- Who are the economic migrants from Mexico and how do they affect the U.S. economy? Where do they reside in the United States and what types of jobs do they do?

Main Ideas:

- Latin America has its roots in extractive/exploitative political and economic systems, rather than inclusive ones
- Many Latin American countries remain in the economic periphery, rather than the core, despite their geographic closeness to the U.S.
- Due to its geographic location and economic underdevelopment, LA is more influenced by the U.S. than any other region of the world
- The ethnic make-up of Latin America includes European-American, African-American, Native-American, Asian-American and Mestizo
- After dominating LA for centuries, the Catholic Church is being challenged by evangelical Protestantism
- Latin America is gradually opening its borders to foreign investment after a period of fierce protectionism spurred on by “Yankee Imperialism”
- Massive oil discoveries recently made off the coast of Brazil promise to turn this regional power into a world power
- Immigrants from Mexico are both legal and illegal and play an important role in the U.S. economy
- Many of the beliefs Americans have about illegal immigrants are myths
- The primary type of migration from Mexico into the U.S. is chain migration, which affects the geographic distribution of Hispanics in the United States
- Since the 2008, more Mexicans in the U.S. have returned home than have migrated to the U.S. This is due to the weakness of the U.S. job market relative to the Mexican one as well as stepped up border control.