

## ACTON PUBLIC SCHOOLS

### Grade Four History and Social Science Program

#### *History, Geography and Culture of North America*

#### DESCRIPTION

The 4<sup>th</sup>-grade History/Social Science curriculum introduces students to the geography of North America, to some of the peoples who have settled the continent at different times and the history behind these settlements, and to the relationship between the environment and the cultures of those peoples. Topics include:

- geography and climate of the United States, Canada, and Mexico, with optional standards for Latin America;
- cultures of indigenous peoples in various regions of North America;
- a brief look at why China lured European explorers and why the Chinese explored;
- European exploration; and
- contemporary regions of North America, including economy, culture, natural resources and features unique to the geographic regions of North America.

The curriculum is tied together by the five themes of Geography (*Location, Place, Regions, Movement, Human and Environmental Interaction*), developed as the year progresses. As each topic is introduced, the thematic understandings learned through previous topics are revisited and deepened through connections to the new subject of study. Standards, Concepts and Skills are from the Massachusetts Curriculum Framework for History and Social Sciences.<sup>1</sup>

In third grade, students study the history, geography, and culture of Massachusetts. In fourth grade, students expand their knowledge to make their first connection beyond Massachusetts to the United States and its closest neighbors. The year begins with reviewing and increasing students' map skills (*Location*). These skills are used for an in-depth study of the physical geography of the U.S., Canada, and Mexico (*Place, Regions*). In fourth grade, students explore content that helps them to develop answers to open-ended, complex essential questions. Questions include the following:

- What are the variations in physical geography across the regions of North America?
- How does physical geography influence life in a region?
- What is culture?

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<sup>1</sup> MA Standards covered: 4.8-4.26, Concepts and Skills CS 1-3 and CS 6 optional 4.1-4.7 - Ancient China; Central America and the Caribbean Islands 4.27- 4.30)

- How does environment influence culture?
  - ~ How did environment influence the lives and culture of indigenous people in pre-contact North America?
  - ~ To what extent do environment and geography still influence the regional cultures of North America?
- Why do people explore?
- What happens when two or more cultures come into contact?
- What are the legacies of indigenous peoples pre-European contact on North America?

This curriculum will provide fourth graders with knowledge of and appreciation for the rich and diverse landscape of the United States and its neighbors to the north and south, an understanding of early human interactions with that landscape, and part of the story of how native peoples came to be displaced by Europeans and others. Students will also develop a sense of the contemporary character of regions of the United States and North America. Comparing early peoples' and modern peoples' relationship to the environment provides an opportunity to discuss with students our civic responsibility for that environment. After the 4<sup>th</sup>-grade curriculum is completed, students will continue their study of U. S. history in 5<sup>th</sup> grade, with an understanding of the nation's geography and how the country came to be settled by people from many parts of the world.

The time spent on history / social science in grade four is suggested to be at least the equivalent of:

- three periods of study per week, at least 40 minutes;
- one 15-minute "current events" study per week;
- additional time spent on content-related fiction.

Big Ideas	Essential Questions	Essential Understandings	Key Concepts
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Physical and cultural geography, economics, and history of the regions of North America (Canada, Mexico, and United States, with option for Central America)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ How does geography influence culture and the human experience?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Geography is the interconnectedness and interdependency of living things and the physical environment.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Five Themes of Geography               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>~ Location – absolute and relative</li> <li>~ Place – physical and human characteristics</li> <li>~ Movement – mobility of people, goods and ideas</li> <li>~ Regions – How they form and change</li> <li>~ Human/Environment Interaction – People interacting with the environment</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Native People of North America (minimum of three regions, one tribe per region, including present day information/ issues)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ What is culture?</li> <li>▪ How does environment influence culture and the human experience?</li> <li>▪ How do interpretations of events and ideas vary according to peoples’ cultural point of view?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Native American Tribes still live in every region of North America and contribute to our culture in a variety of ways.</li> <li>▪ Culture is what people do, what they believe, and the artifacts they make.</li> <li>▪ Historical events are often viewed differently by individuals and/or groups, depending on their cultural/historical perspectives.</li> <li>▪ Human History has been shaped by environment.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Similarities and differences of Native Americans in various regions:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>~ Geography</li> <li>~ Economics</li> <li>~ Government</li> <li>~ Culture</li> </ul> </li> <li>▪ Stereotyping</li> </ul>

Topic	Essential Questions	Essential Understandings	Key Concepts
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Exploration</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Why did the Chinese explore and why was China explored?</li> <li>▪ Why did the Europeans explore and where did they explore?</li> <li>▪ What are the outcomes of cultures coming together?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Civilizations explored for economic, political, religious and philosophical reasons.</li> <li>▪ When cultures come together, one culture usually dominates. Contributing factors can include tools, weapons, money, point of view and skills.</li> <li>▪ Weather, climate, ocean currents and geographic features influenced exploration.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Explorers had a variety of motivations, met obstacles, and had varying levels of success.</li> <li>▪ European explorers often came into contact with indigenous people.</li> <li>▪ Europeans created conflict and change within the regions they settled.</li> <li>▪ Important European explorers               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>~ Henry the Navigator</li> <li>~ The Vikings</li> <li>~ Marco Polo</li> <li>~ Columbus</li> <li>~ Magellan</li> </ul> </li> </ul>

## SUGGESTED YEAR-LONG OUTLINE WITH EXPECTED OUTCOMES

This document outlines a full-year course for History/Social Science. It is suggested that teachers integrate the formerly separate studies of Native Americans, Explorers, Geography and Climate into a regional approach covering North America. Although each school, and perhaps even individual teachers, will determine a specific schedule for accomplishing the agreed-upon curriculum objectives, the following outline is suggested in order to give an example of how the year could be scheduled.

### INTRODUCTION TO FOURTH GRADE HISTORY/SOCIAL SCIENCE (5-6 WEEKS: SEPTEMBER-MID-OCTOBER)

#### *Map Skills*

- Name and locate Continents<sup>2</sup> (7), Oceans (5 - include Southern Ocean).
- Use a map and globe to identify latitude, longitude, equator, prime meridian, poles, hemispheres, (northern, southern, eastern, western). Optional: Tropic of Cancer, Tropic of Capricorn
- Understand the use of map features: scale, key/legend, Compass Rose, cardinal directions.
- Distinguish different types of maps: physical, political (boundaries).
- Culture, economy, geography, history, government, climate, natural resources, indigenous, landforms, waterways, physical features, Five Themes of Geography, exploration, immigration, ethnic, stereotype, primary source/secondary source
- Culture, economy, geography, history, government, climate, natural resources, indigenous, landforms, waterways, physical features, Five Themes of Geography, exploration, immigration, ethnic, stereotype, primary source/secondary source

#### *Movement of people to North America*

- Theories of early settlement of North America, including the Bering Land Bridge, spread of indigenous people throughout North and South America

#### *Motivation for Exploration*

- Needs for land, fish, spices; quest for gold; religious freedom and spread of religious beliefs
- Major Explorers include: Vikings, Marco Polo/Silk Road-Spice route, Prince Henry, Magellan, Columbus, Vespucci

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<sup>2</sup> The teacher should point out that North America includes Central America as well as Mexico, the U.S. and Canada. Optional standard for Central America are listed at the end of this section.

## INTRODUCTION TO NORTHEAST REGION OF THE US

(5 WEEKS: MID-OCTOBER-THANKSGIVING)

### *Northeast U.S.*

#### *Geography*

- States, capitals and major cities
- Landforms: Mountains (Appalachian Range, Adirondacks), coastal plains, rocky coastlines
- Waterways: Hudson River, St. Lawrence Seaway, Lake Ontario, Lake Erie, Connecticut River, Atlantic Ocean, Chesapeake Bay, Niagara Falls
- Natural Resources: timber, fishing, woodland plants and animals, farmland (fruit, dairy / cattle, potato, poultry, tobacco), coal, natural gas, sand, stone
- Climate: precipitation and temperature (climographs) Major climate regions: continental / temperate

#### *Economy*

- Farmland - dairy, apple orchards, cranberry bogs
- Industry – timber, shipping, fishing, tourism

#### *Culture*

- Major Monuments/historical sites in Washington D.C.,
  - From MA framework – suggested, not required:
    - Washington Monument, Lincoln, Jefferson Memorials
    - Vietnam Veterans Memorial, Iwo Jima, Arlington National Cemetery
    - Smithsonian Museum, Library of Congress, National Archives, White House, Capitol Building, Mt. Vernon
- Unique Cultural Features - Smithsonian, Plimoth Plantation, Broadway (NY)
- Music / art / recreation / cuisine / folk tales / legends (including contributions of Native Americans, African Americans, and immigrant groups)

#### *History*

- Native American way of life and interdependence with the environment. Tribes suggested: Iroquois. (Remind students of Wampanoag study from grade 3)
- The Dutch and English explored New England. Major Explorer suggested: Henry Hudson

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### *Southeast U.S.*

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#### *Geography*

- States, capitals, and major cities
- Landforms: Mountains (Appalachian), Piedmont, Coastal Plains (Gulf and Atlantic), Florida Peninsula, Islands
- Waterways: Mississippi River, Gulf of Mexico, Atlantic Ocean, Everglades
- Natural Resources: oil, coal, farmland (poultry, cotton, tobacco, grains, citrus, fruit, sugar), fish, clay, timber, natural gas, stone
- Climate: precipitation and temperature (climographs) Major climate regions: tropical, mild, continental/temperate (limited)
- Unique Features: Everglades, St. Augustine (oldest city in the US)

#### *Economy*

- Farmland: tobacco, citrus fruit, cotton, peanuts, sugar cane, soybeans
- Industry: shipping, fishing, coal mining, oil refineries, textile manufacturing, furniture manufacturing, tourism

#### *Culture*

- Cultural groups who contributed to Southern Culture: Gullah, Acadians (Cajuns), Native Americans (Creek, Cherokee, Seminole) Scots- Irish, Germans
- Music- jazz, country, bluegrass, gospel/art/recreation/cuisine/folk tales/legends (including contributions of Native Americans, African Americans, and immigrant groups)

#### *History*

- Native American way of life and interdependence with the environment. Three tribes required per year- teacher choice. Tribes suggested: Creek, Cherokee.
- The Spanish and English explored the Southeast Region. Major Explorer suggested: Ponce de León

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### *Midwest U.S.*

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#### *Geography*

- States, capitals and major cities
- Landforms: Great Plains/Prairies, Badlands, optional: Black Hills, Sleeping Bear Sand Dunes, Ozarks, caves
- Waterways: Mississippi River, Lake Superior, Lake Huron, Lake Michigan, Lake Erie optional: Ohio, Missouri and Arkansas Rivers
- Natural Resources: coal, farmland (dairy, grains), gold, iron ore, limestone, timber, prairie grasses, fish

- Climate: precipitation and temperature (climographs) Major climate regions: mild, continental/temperate, dry
- Unique Features: Mt. Rushmore, Chief Crazy Horse monument

#### *Economy*

- Farmland: wheat, corn and dairy belts, soybeans, livestock
- Industry: steel, automobile, shipping, railroad, tourism

#### *Culture*

- Cultural groups who contributed to Midwestern Culture: Native Americans (Sioux Nation) Scots- Irish, Germans, African American, Asian, Polish
- Music: Blues, Motown, polka
- Recreation/ cuisine/ folk tales/ legends (including contributions of Native Americans, African Americans, and immigrant groups)
- Unique Cultural Features: (optional) Rock and Roll Hall of Fame, Corn Palace, St. Louis Gateway Arch, Indy 500 Automobile Race

#### *History*

- Native American way of life and interdependence with the environment. Three tribes required per year- teacher choice. Tribe suggested: Lakota.
- The Spanish and English explored the Midwest Region. Major Explorer suggested: La Salle, Marquette and Joliet, de Soto

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### ***Southwest U.S.***

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#### *Geography*

- States, capitals, and major cities
- Landforms: Mountains (Rocky), Grand Canyon, Great Plains, Desert (Sonoran and Painted), optional: Plateaus (Colorado), Death Valley, Mesas, Buttes, Continental Divide
- Waterways: Rio Grande River, Gulf of Mexico, optional: Great Salt Lake, Colorado River, Arkansas River, Red River,
- Natural Resources: oil, natural gas, copper, optional: uranium, gold, silver, turquoise, stone, sand, gravel, cactus,
- Climate: precipitation and temperature (climographs) Major climate regions: mild, dry/desert
- Unique Features: Grand Canyon, Painted Desert, optional: Meteor Crater, Carlsbad Cavern, Monument Valley, Ogallala Aquifer

#### *Economy*

- Farmland: cotton, blue corn, red chili, grains, citrus, livestock
- Industry: computers, aircraft, mining, shipping, oil refineries, tourism

## *Culture*

- Cultural groups who contributed to Southwest Culture: Native Americans (Navajo, Hopi, Pueblo) Mexican, Spanish. More Native Americans
- Arts/Music: Pottery, weaving, Powwows, country-western and Tejano music
- Recreation / cuisine / folk tales / legends (including contributions of Native Americans, African Americans, and immigrant groups)
- Unique Cultural Features (optional): rodeos, the Alamo, Hoover Dam, Johnson Space Center

## *History*

- Native American way of life and interdependence with the environment. Three tribes required per year- teacher choice. Tribes suggested: Navajo, Hopi, Pueblo
- The Spanish and English explored the Southwest Region. Major Explorer suggested: Coronado

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## *West U.S.*

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### *Geography*

- States, capitals, major cities
- Landforms: Rocky Mountains, Great Plains, optional: Columbia Plateau, Volcanoes, Mohave Desert, Death Valley, The Great Basin, Sawtooth Mountains, Fjords and Glaciers (Alaska and Montana)
- Waterways: Pacific Ocean, optional: Columbia River, Colorado River, Yukon River, Snake River, Great Salt Lake, Puget Sound, Gulf of Alaska, Gulf of California
- Natural Resources: oil, natural gas, gold, minerals, forests / timber, minerals and salts, wildlife, farmland (cattle, dairy, sheep, grains, fruit, vegetables, citrus, cotton)
- Climate: precipitation and temperature (climographs) Major climate regions: dry / desert, mild; Alaska- polar, continental / temperate; Hawaii - tropical
- Unique Features: Redwood Forest, Yellowstone and Yosemite National Parks optional: Ring of Fire, Old Faithful, Kenai Fjords, alpine and arctic tundra, Mt. McKinley, Death Valley, Hawaii Volcanoes National Park, Glacier National Park, icebergs, temperate rainforest (Northwest coast)

### *Economy*

- Farmland: potatoes, vineyards, livestock, fruits / vegetables, Hawaii: coffee, sugar cane, pineapples
- Industry: computers, aircraft, mining, forestry, fishing, tourism

### *Culture*

- Cultural groups who contributed to Western Culture: Native Americans (Haida, Tlingit, Nimiipuu (Nez Perce)) Mexican, Chinese, Japanese, Spanish.
- Arts/Music: totem poles, murals, roadside attractions, ukulele

- Unique Cultural Features (optional): Iditarod, Hollywood, luaus
- Recreation/ cuisine/ folk tales/ legends (including contributions of Native Americans, African Americans, and immigrant groups)
- Recreation; skiing, surfing, hiking

### *History*

- Native American way of life and interdependence with the environment. Three tribes required per year- teacher choice. Tribes suggested: Haida, Kwakiutl, Tlingit
- The Spanish and the English explored the Western Region, as did Lewis and Clark. Major Explorers suggested: Lewis and Clark, Cook, Mackenzie

<b>REGIONAL STUDIES OF CANADA AND MEXICO (3-4 WEEKS PER COUNTRY)</b>
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### *Mexico*

#### *Geography*

- Major cities: Mexico City, Guadalajara, Monterrey, Puebla. It is not necessary to learn states and capitals, but students should know that Mexico has 31 states and one federal district (Mexico City – compare to Washington D.C.)
- Geographic regions: Northwest region, Central Plateau, Central Highlands, Southern Region, Tropical Lowlands, Yucatan Peninsula
- Landforms: Mountains (Sierra Madres- Oriental and Occidental), Sonoran Desert, Central Plateau, Central Highlands, rainforests, Baja and Yucatan Peninsulas, The Cordillera
- Waterways: Gulf of Mexico, Gulf of California, Pacific Ocean, Caribbean Sea, Rio Bravo (Rio Grande)
- Natural Resources: oil, natural gas, minerals (gold, silver and copper, lead), timber, fish, limestone, tropical animals and plants, timber (mahogany) fruit trees
- Climate: precipitation and temperature (climographs) Major climate regions: dry / desert and tropical

#### *Economy*

- Farmland: corn, beans, bananas, coffee, sugar, vanilla, rice, avocado, tomatoes, mango, wheat, tropical fruits, cattle
- Industry: fishing, vehicle and high tech manufacturing, steel, oil, tourism, mining

#### *Culture*

- Major Language: Spanish
- Major Religion: Catholicism optional: major feastsdays – Day of the Dead (Nov 2 Dia de Los Muerto, Christmas (Navidad) Dec. 25, Three Kings Day (January 6)

### *History*

- Indigenous peoples – optional Mexico was first settled by the Olmec civilization, followed by the Mayan, and later the Aztec civilizations. Mayan language and culture still survive.
- Mexico gained independence from Spain in 1821 during the 10- year War of Mexican Independence. Optional: Mexican Independence Day is celebrated on Sept 16
- Exploration into Mexico (optional) Cortés overthrew the Aztecs

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### *Central America (Optional)*

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Details optional, but students should know that Central America is part of the continent of North America, and be familiar with names of countries.

### *Geography*

- Central American Countries – Belize, Honduras, Guatemala, Nicaragua, Costa Rico, Panama. Other Caribbean countries include Bermuda, Cuba, Haiti, Dominican Republic, Puerto Rico, Jamaica, Trinidad and Tobago.
- Geographic details: Central America is an isthmus of southern North America, connecting to South America on the southeast portion. There are also numerous island countries in the Caribbean Sea.
- Landforms: Mountains, volcanoes, coastal plains, islands, Isthmus of Panama
- Waterways: Gulf of Mexico, Caribbean Sea, Pacific Ocean
- Natural Resources: copper, gold, silver, zinc
- Climate: precipitation and temperature (climographs) Tropical

### *Economy*

- Farmland: bananas, coffee
- Industry: fishing
- Major Language: Spanish (Cuba and others); French (Haiti); English (Barbados and Jamaica)
- Major Religion: Catholicism

### *History*

- Indigenous peoples – Mayan
- Exploration – Columbus
- Late 1800's - European and Asian immigration to Latin America. 1898 - Cuba gains independence from Spain. 1948 - Organization of American States (OAS) formed.
- Panama Canal 1914

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## *Canada*

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### *Geography*

- Provinces, Territories, capitals, and major cities (Toronto, Montreal, Ottawa, Vancouver, Quebec City)
- Geographic Regions: Optional: Pacific Coast - Cordillera; Great Plains - Prairies; Canadian Shield; Great Lakes / St. Lawrence Lowlands; Arctic Lowlands, Appalachian Region
- Landforms: Mountains (Rocky), Plains (Coastal), optional: Islands, Glaciers
- Waterways: Hudson Bay, Atlantic and Pacific Ocean, Arctic Ocean, Lake Ontario, Lake Huron, Lake Superior, Lake Erie, St. Lawrence River, optional: Gulf of St. Lawrence, Bay of Fundy
- Natural Resources: grains, forests, dairy, coal, copper, gold, iron, lead, nickel, oil, natural gas, silver, uranium, zinc, fur-bearing animals
- Climate: precipitation and temperature (climographs) major climate regions: Continental / Temperate, Polar, Dry, Mild

### *Economy*

- Farmland: wheat, oilseeds (canola oil, flax, etc)
- Industry: forestry, livestock, dairy, steel, tourism, shipping, hydroelectricity

### *Culture*

- Official Languages: English / French. In 1969 Canada officially became a bilingual country.
- Major Religion: Christianity

### *History*

- Indigenous peoples – Kwakiutl, Inuit, Micmac
- Explorers (optional) Cabot, Cartier, Cook, Champlain, Peary
- Canada became an independent nation on July 1, 1867, though it is still part of the British Commonwealth. Additional Canadian provinces and territories have been formed since then, including most recently, the addition of Nunavut as an Inuit homeland.