

ACTON PUBLIC SCHOOLS
Grade Four Social Studies Program
People Come to North America

DESCRIPTION

The fourth-grade Social Studies 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 that settlement, and to the relationship between the environment and the cultures of those peoples. Topics include:

- the geography of the United States, Canada, and Mexico;
- the cultures of indigenous peoples in various regions of North America;
- a short look at why China – with its own explorers – lured European explorers;
- European exploration; and
- the contemporary 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.

In each unit, 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?
- How does environment influence culture?
 - ~ How did environment influence cultures in pre-Columbian America?
 - ~ To what extent do environment and geography still influence the regional cultures of North America?
- Why do people explore?
- What happens when two cultures come into contact?
- What have been the legacies of pre-Columbian peoples and early European explorers/settlers on the regions of modern U.S.?

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. Out of the 4th-grade curriculum, students will have the grounding to continue the study of U. S. history in 5th 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 social studies in grade four is expected to be at least the equivalent of:

- three periods of study per week, at least 40 minutes;
- one 15-30 minute "current events" study per week;
- additional time spent on content-related fiction.

SUGGESTED TIMELINE

Although each school, and perhaps even individual teachers, will determine a specific schedule for accomplishing the agreed-upon curriculum objectives, the following schedule is suggested in order to give an example of how the year could be scheduled. Some teachers may choose to integrate the first two topics into one study.

September to Mid-November (6-7 weeks)	PHYSICAL GEOGRAPHY USA, Canada, Mexico (location, place and region)
Mid-November to Mid-January (6-7 weeks)	INDIGENOUS PEOPLE Geography shaped human history. Interaction with the land influenced culture. (Movement, Human/ Environment Interaction)
Mid-January to April vacation (10-11 weeks)	AGE OF EXPLORATION Motivation for exploring and impact on native peoples. (Movement, Human Environment Interaction)
May to June (6 weeks)	CURRENT POLITICAL GEOGRAPHY USA, Canada, Mexico: The impact of early Europeans and indigenous peoples on the cultural characteristics of a region

TEACHING STRATEGIES

Social Studies in the Acton Public Schools will consist of a wide variety of activities, including such things as studying artifacts, mapping, role playing and simulations, art activities, class discussions, music, projects, as well as reading/being read to. Whenever possible, activities should be planned to allow for integration with other disciplines such as mathematics, language arts and science. Students should be asked to think critically about information and to ask and answer questions whenever possible. An in-depth discussion of social studies teaching practices can be found in the Massachusetts State Framework for History and Social Science.

HABITS OF MIND FOR SOCIAL STUDIES

The goal of the Acton Public Schools Social Studies curriculum is to help students develop ways of reflecting, inquiring and acting (often referred to as “habits of mind”) that they will carry with them beyond their formal education. How do we approach new situations? What kinds of attitudes do we bring to things we see and do? Our teaching will encourage students to:

- ask rigorous questions, try new things, act on beliefs, resist peer pressure, and take other appropriate risks;
- recognize the importance of multiple viewpoints for understanding people, events and issues;
- empathize with people of different historical periods, places, and backgrounds;
- make connections and look for patterns to construct meaning from historical and current events;
- learn that most issues encountered in social studies are complex, need thoughtful analysis, and may lack simple solutions;
- form and express opinions by weighing information and evidence, but be willing to revise these opinions in light of additional information and perspectives;
- inquire into the costs and benefits of competing alternatives;
- visualize a better future and become active and responsible members of their communities;
- use peaceful and just strategies for resolving strongly-conflicting opinions.

INTERDISCIPLINARY CONNECTIONS

Literature Connection

- Specific literature selections are included in the attached bibliography. Literature choices will vary according to the units studied and will require updating and modification on a regular basis. It is expected that both non-fiction and fiction will be incorporated as part of each study, leading to the consideration that history is always somebody's “story.”

Math Connections

- Students will work with large numbers, centuries and dates, timelines ("How long ago?").
- Students will understand and use maps and globes to estimate and measure distances, draw to scale, determine perimeter and area of a region, and find averages.

Science Connections

- Astronomy: time and seasons, the importance of the North Star and seasonal constellations, and early methods for determining latitude and longitude
- STC "Land and Water": streams, rivers, erosion and other aspects of physical geography
- Effect of climate and soil conditions on vegetation and plant life, and therefore on diet; cultivation and harvest of indigenous plants for specific use within the culture

Health Connections

- Students will examine the diets of indigenous people, explorers and early settlers with reference to the food pyramid, general health issues, and disease.
- Students will understand the concepts of rights and responsibilities, fairness, and non-violent conflict resolution through the use of the "Bully Proofing" program or health curriculum.

KEY

CS = State framework Concepts and Skills

4.12 = State Framework Standards

Theme/Unit of Study	Essential Questions	Essential Understandings	Key Concepts
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Physical geography of the regions of North America (i.e., Canada, Mexico, and United States) 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Geography is the interconnectedness and interdependency of living things and the physical environment. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Five Themes of Geography <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ~ Location – absolute and relative ~ Place ~ Movement ~ Regions ~ Human/Environment Interaction ▪ Interpreting maps ▪ Natural Resources
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Native People of North America (minimum of three regions, one tribe per region, including present day information/issues) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ What is culture? ▪ How does environment influence culture and the human experience? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Culture is what people do, what they believe, and the artifacts they make. ▪ Historical events are often viewed differently by individuals and/or groups, depending on their cultural/historical perspectives. ▪ Cultural groups exhibit similarities and differences. ▪ Human history has been shaped by environment. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Technology of Native Americans ▪ Similarities and differences of Native Americans in various regions: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ~ Food ~ Clothing ~ Shelter ~ Transportation ~ Culture ~ Social class ~ Toolkit ~ Technology

Theme/Unit of Study	Essential Questions	Essential Understandings	Key Concepts
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ European and Asian Exploration 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Why did the Europeans explore and where did they explore? ▪ Why did the Chinese explore and why were they explored? ▪ What are the outcomes of two cultures coming together? ▪ Who were the major European and Chinese Explorers? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Civilizations explored for a variety of reasons. ▪ The forces of cooperation and conflict have influenced the division and control of the earth's surface. ▪ Europe and China had economic, political and religious or philosophical reasons for exploration. ▪ There are different points of view when two cultures meet and /or clash. ▪ Cultures have different technology that result in different capabilities. ▪ Human history has been shaped by environment. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Motivations for and obstacles and accomplishments of key European explorations ▪ European explorers came into contact with native peoples wherever they landed. ▪ Europeans created conflict and change within the region they settled. ▪ Regions where Europeans settled: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ~ Spanish ~ English ~ French ~ Dutch ▪ Important European explorers <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ~ Henry the Navigator ~ Columbus ~ Cortes ~ Magellan
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ North American Political/Physical Geography (current) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ What are the legacies of pre-Columbian and early European exploration/settlement on regions of the U.S.? ▪ To what extent do geography and environment still influence regional U.S. cultures? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ How did current boundaries in North America evolve from early European influences? 	

TOPIC #1: PHYSICAL GEOGRAPHY IN THE REGIONS OF NORTH AMERICA (I.E., CANADA, MEXICO AND THE UNITED STATES)

In third grade, students studied the history, geography, and culture of Massachusetts. In the 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*).

Note: Teachers may choose to teach the first two topics ("Physical Geography" and "Native Peoples") either consecutively or as a single integrated unit.

Essential Questions

1. What are the variations in physical geography across the various regions of North America?
2. How does the physical geography of a region influence all living things?

Essential Understandings

1. Geography is the study of the interconnectedness and interdependence of living things in the physical environment.

Key Concepts

- Five themes of geography (location, place, movement, regions, human/ environmental interaction)
- Interpreting maps

Outcomes: Cartography/Map/Globe Skills (CS 1-3)

1. Name and locate continents¹ (7), oceans (4).
2. Use a map and globe to identify latitude, longitude, equator, prime meridian, poles, hemispheres (northern, southern, eastern, western).
3. Understand the use of map features: scale, key, compass rose, cardinal directions.
4. Distinguish different types of maps: physical, political (boundaries).
5. Name and locate physical features of the regions of the United States, Canada, and Mexico: landforms, waterways, natural resources, climate, and unique features. (4.14–4.15, 4.17–4.18, 4.23–4.24, 4.29–4.30)

¹ The teacher should point out that North America includes Central America as well as Mexico, the U.S. and Canada.

Northeast U.S.

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)

Southeast U.S.

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)

Unique Features: Everglades

Midwest U.S.

Landforms: Great Plains/Prairies, Badlands, Ozarks, Black Hills

Waterways: Mississippi River, Ohio River, Missouri River, Lake Superior, Lake Huron, Lake Michigan, Lake Erie

Natural Resources: coal, farmland (dairy, grains), gold, iron ore, limestone, timber

Climate: precipitation and temperature (climographs)

Unique Features: Mt. Rushmore

Southwest U.S.

Landforms: mountains (Rocky), Grand Canyon, Great Plains, deserts (Sonoran, Mojave, and Painted), plateaus (Colorado), Death Valley, mesas, buttes

Waterways: Rio Grande River, Great Salt Lake, Pacific Ocean, Colorado River, Arkansas River, Red River

Natural Resources: oil, natural gas, copper, uranium, gold, silver, stone, sand, gravel, farmland (cattle, cotton, sheep, grains, citrus)

Climate: precipitation and temperature (climographs)

Unique Features: Grand Canyon

West U.S.

Landforms: Mountains (Rocky, Mt. McKinley), Great Plains, Columbia Plateau, volcanoes, deserts, Death Valley, basins, fjords and glaciers (Alaska)

Waterways: Pacific Ocean, Columbia River, Colorado River, Rio Grande River, Yukon River

Natural Resources: oil, natural gas, timber, minerals and salts, wildlife, farmland (cattle, dairy, sheep, grains, fruit, vegetables, citrus, cotton)

Climate: precipitation and temperature (climographs)

Unique Features: Redwood Forest, Yellowstone and Yosemite National Parks

Canada

Physiographic Regions: Pacific Coast – Cordillera; Interior Plains – Prairies; Canadian Shield; St. Lawrence Lowlands – Great Lakes; Appalachian – Atlantic Provinces; Arctic Lowlands.

Landforms: mountains (Rocky), plains (Coastal), islands

Waterways: Hudson Bay, Atlantic and Pacific Oceans, Arctic Ocean, Lake Ontario, Lake Huron, Lake Superior, Lake Erie, Gulf of St. Lawrence, Bay of Fundy

Natural Resources: grains, forests, dairy, coal, copper, gold, iron, lead, nickel, oil, silver, uranium, zinc

Climate: precipitation and temperature (climographs)

Mexico

Geographic regions: Northwest region, Central Plateau, Central Highlands, Southern Region, Tropical Lowlands, Yucatan Peninsula

Landforms: mountains (Sierra Madres), deserts, plains, rainforests, volcanoes, Baja and Yucatan Peninsulas

Waterways: Gulf of Mexico, Pacific Ocean, Caribbean Sea

Natural Resources: oil, minerals, timber, fish, water, farming

Climate: precipitation and temperature (climographs)

TOPIC #2: NATIVE PEOPLE OF NORTH AMERICA (MINIMUM OF THREE REGIONS, ONE TRIBE PER REGION, WITH PRESENT-DAY INFORMATION/ISSUES TO BE DISCUSSED LATER IN THE YEAR WHEN CONTEMPORARY REGIONS ARE STUDIED)

Students apply their knowledge of the physical environment in considering how geography shapes human history. This begins with a study of pre-Columbian indigenous peoples and how their interactions with the land influenced their cultures (*Movement, Human/Environment Interaction*).

Essential Understandings

1. Culture is what people do, what they believe, and the artifacts they make.
2. Cultural groups exhibit similarities and differences.
3. Human history has been shaped by the environment; human beings also shape their environment.

Essential Questions

1. What is culture?
2. How did environment influence culture and the human experience in pre-Columbian America?

Key Concepts

- Similarities and differences of indigenous people in various regions:
 - ◇ food
 - ◇ clothing
 - ◇ shelter
 - ◇ transportation
 - ◇ way of life (gender roles, social hierarchy)
 - ◇ religious beliefs and ceremonies
 - ◇ artistic expression
 - ◇ tool kit/ technology
- Point of view of Native Americans regarding history.

Outcomes

All students will be able to:

1. trace the route of the early migration of people across the Bering land bridge;
2. identify characteristics that define a culture: foodways, medicine, religion, gender roles, language, shelter, artistic expression, clothing;

3. compare cultural characteristics of different groups of indigenous peoples. (See State frameworks 4.21 and 4.27 for suggested tribes in U.S. and Canada and consider Maya and/or Aztec for Mexico);
4. appreciate that Native American groups have a different perspective on many events in U.S. history;
5. describe the ways in which Native American life affected and was affected by geography;
6. understand the present day lives and contributions of Native Americans.

TOPIC #3: EUROPEAN AND ASIAN EXPLORATION

As the study of pre-Columbian native peoples comes to a close, the curriculum shifts from culture/geography studies to historical narrative. The goals of the narrative history are to:

- help students to understand the motivations for European explorations and conquest in the New World – especially their desire to trade with the advanced and wealthy civilizations of East Asia;
- introduce students to the attainments of Chinese civilization during a period of cultural florescence;
- introduce students to the history of European exploration and conquest.

The core of the historical narrative is as follows:

Over a thousand years before Marco Polo, trade occurred between the East and the West through a relay system along the 5,000-mile “Silk Road” and the 9,000-mile “Spice Route.” Traders along these routes faced banditry and warfare. Christians in Europe were reluctant to travel through Islamic Central Asia and typically received goods from Islamic middlemen. Through trade, Europeans received not only goods but also rumors of the fabulous places that were the source of these goods. In the 1260s the merchant Polo brothers traveled all the way to China (Cathay). Through his travel accounts, Marco Polo fired European interest in the wealth and splendor of the East.

In fact, China was the wealthiest and most technologically-advanced society in the world in the 13th and 14th centuries. Chinese cities dwarfed those of Europe. At this time, the Chinese were already employing moveable type, gunpowder, the magnetic compass, large sailing vessels, paper money, and mechanical clocks. China’s temples boasted tall pagodas, and their government maintained the 1000-mile long Grand Canal and defenses all along the Great Wall. Their examination system produced the most highly-skilled government officials in the world.

In the early 15th century, the Chinese launched exploratory expeditions that were a reflection of their technological prowess. With a fleet carrying as many as 28,000 sailors, admiral Zheng He (Cheng Ho) traveled as far as the Persian Gulf and the east coast of Africa, perhaps even rounding the Cape of Good Hope at the tip of Africa sixty years before Bartolemeu Diaz. On these voyages, Zheng He

projected Chinese military and economic power and collected tribute and trade goods, which he brought back to China. However, soon after Zheng He's last voyage, a new emperor and a new foreign policy stopped all naval exploration before the Chinese had sailed to Europe.

In 1492, Marco Polo's book detailing his adventures throughout the Mongol Empire and beyond remained the best source of information Europeans had about the East. The European fascination with the East that this book sparked had not abated, inspiring European explorers to seek a route to Cathay that circumvented the Islamic Middle East and Central Asia.

In the study of European Exploration, students learn about the journeys of famous explorers. In each case, they examine the explorer's goals, the "discoveries" he made, and the impact of those discoveries upon both the "discovered" place and upon Europe. The decimation of Native American cultures that resulted from European diseases and technological advantages will be examined. Explorers studied will include Henry the Navigator, Columbus, Cortez, and Magellan (*Movement, Human/Environment Interaction*).

Essential Questions

1. Why did people leave home?
2. Why did people explore? (the Europeans and the Chinese)
3. What are the outcomes of two cultures coming together?

Essential Understandings

1. Civilizations explored for a variety of reasons.
2. The European and Chinese explorers had economic, political, religious, philosophical and personal reasons for exploration.
3. Technological changes made exploration and conquest possible.
4. Economic, technological, biological and other forces influenced the balance of power between North America and the Europeans.
5. Human history has been shaped by the environment; human beings also shape their environment.
6. Historical events are often viewed differently by individuals and/or groups depending on their cultural/historical perspectives.

Key Concepts

- Each European explorer was driven by particular motivations and faced unique obstacles and advantages; however, there were many common elements in their stories.
- At the dawn of the age of European exploration, China was the most advanced civilization in the world. European exploration was in part driven by a desire to trade with China and the Indies.
- European explorers came into contact with native peoples wherever they landed.

- The contact between Europeans and native peoples led to conflict.
- Different regions of the Americas were explored and/or settled by Spanish, English, French, Dutch, and Portuguese.

Outcomes

1. Describe the earliest explorations of the New World by the Vikings, the period and locations of their explorations, and the evidence for them. (5.1)
2. Recognize and trace the route of Marco Polo, whose explorations and trade brought spices and silk to Europe, and state reasons for his travels.
3. Identify the Chinese explorer Zheng He, his reasons for explorations, where he explored, and why Chinese explorations ceased after his final expedition.
4. Understand the influence of Marco Polo's writings about Cathay (China) on Columbus and other European explorers.
5. Articulate the changes that occurred in indigenous groups as a result of contact with the Europeans.
6. Name several explorers, including Henry the Navigator, Columbus, Cortez and Magellan. Explain the reasons for exploration, tell where their trips originated, show their routes on a map or globe, and describe the effects of their explorations. (See frameworks 5.3 and 5.4)

TOPIC #4: CURRENT NORTH AMERICAN POLITICAL/CULTURAL GEOGRAPHY
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Finally, all the themes are tied together as students learn the current political geography of the U.S., Canada and Mexico. In this study, we explore the influence of geography and climate and the legacies of peoples and the early Europeans on the present-day cultural characteristics of North American regions. We ask to what extent geography and climate shape modern life.

Essential Questions

1. What are the legacies of pre-Columbian and early European exploration and settlement on the regions of the modern U.S.?
2. To what extent do environment and geography still influence the regional cultures of North America?

Essential Understandings

1. Early North American presence and European exploration of the New World each influenced the different regions of the present United States, Canada, and Mexico. However, modern regional cultures have also been shaped by a wide variety of factors, including the settlement of peoples after the Age of Exploration.
2. Environment and resources continue to influence life in each region of North America, although today our lives are less shaped by geography than were the lives of pre-Columbian peoples.

Key Concepts

- The lives of contemporary people in any given region are influenced by the geography, local history, economy, government, population size, infrastructure, and educational resources that exist there.
- Place names, political boundaries, cultural characteristics, and language of different regions of present-day Canada, United States, and Mexico have been influenced by native peoples and by early European explorers. Indigenous peoples are still here; their ways of life have changed.
- Geographical areas are divided into nations, and nations often have within them smaller political divisions – provinces and states, for example. The U. S. and Mexico are divided into states. Canada is divided into provinces. The U. S. and Canada also possess territories.
- These political divisions enable people to govern large territories and populations.

Outcomes

1. Identify and locate the 50 United States, their capitals, and major cities in each region. (4.16)
2. Identify the ten provinces, three territories and major cities of Canada. (4.23) Halifax, NOVA SCOTIA; Quebec, Montreal, QUEBEC; Ottawa (Capital of Canada), Toronto, ONTARIO; Winnipeg, MANITOBA; Regina, SASKATCHEWAN; Edmonton, Calgary, ALBERTA; Victoria, Vancouver, BRITISH COLUMBIA; St. John's, NEWFOUNDLAND; Charlottetown, PRINCE EDWARD ISLAND; Fredericton, NEW BRUNSWICK; Yellow Knife, NORTHWEST TERRITORIES; Whitehorse, YUKON TERRITORY; Iqaluit, NUNAVUT
3. Identify and locate major cities in Mexico: Mexico City, Tijuana, Vera Cruz, Guadalajara, Merida, Acapulco. (4.29)
4. Introduce the countries of Central America (awareness only).
5. Understand that Native American and early European influence can be traced to place names, national and some state boundaries, languages, and cultural characteristics such as art, architecture and foods/ cuisine of present day locations in Canada, Mexico and the United States.
6. Understand that geography, local history, economics, government, population size, infrastructure and educational resources influence contemporary life in regions of North America.