

Social Studies

Grade 7

Unit 1: Geography and Cultures of the World

Identify physical and human characteristics of geographic regions to interpret the interdependent relationship between humans and their environment

Initial Understanding

- Recall geography skills and vocabulary
- Examine the physical geography of the earth and identify types of landforms and land surfaces
- Retell the five themes of geography
- Define characteristics of culture
- Identify major climate regions of the world

Developing an Interpretation

- Use maps to determine relative and absolute location, direction, size and shape
- Describe the purpose and characteristics of globes and various map projections
- Interpret information from, and distinguish between, the various representations of the earth
- Create accurate geographic models (geo-chart)
- Explain the factors that effect climate

Making Connections

- Compare and contrast life in diverse climate zones
- Interpret patterns of natural resources based on geographic location
- Explain how culture and experience influence people's perception of regions and places

Critical Stance

- Analyze a specific society and integrate components of culture, climate, resources and human environmental interaction
- Draw conclusions about the impact of world trade and resources and the interdependence of the world's people
- Evaluate the causes, consequences and possible solutions to a contemporary, global, environmental issue

Unit 2: Africa: Shaped by History and Moving into the Future

Analyze the geographic, political, economic, religious, cultural, and social structures of Sub-Saharan Africa civilization from settlement to present day.

Initial Understanding

- Locate and label important geographic features and regions of Africa
- Identify the climate and vegetation patterns
- Examine early African empires
- Name Africa's major natural resources
- Define desertification, apartheid

Developing an Interpretation

- Describe climate regions of Africa and explain the factors that influence climate
- Explain various ways that Africa uses its natural resources
- Evaluate historic information about Ancient African empires
- Examine historic information about Ancient African empires and describe how they shaped modern ethnic groups
- Describe the social structures of major African empires

Making Connections

- Determine size and relative location of Africa
- Analyze the European colonial expansion into Africa
- Analyze a map of Africa to determine the best places for people to settle
- Summarize the effect of desertification on Africa's land and population
- Compare and contrast oral and written traditions
- Draw conclusions about the manner in which societal needs and concerns are addressed

Critical Stance

- Defend the impact of geography on the development of a community
- Assess how the slave trade affected population, economic systems, family life, and relations between men and women in West and Central Africa
- Predict how Africa will address the challenge of balancing its economic development and protecting their natural resources
- Evaluate the influence of climate and vegetation on African economic activity

Unit 3: North America

Examine the geography and cultures of North America.

Initial Understanding

- Identify key physical features of the U.S. and Canada
- Locate territories, provinces, and states
- Identify similarities and differences between the governments of the United States and Canada

Developing an Interpretation

- Describe the size and relative location of Canada and the U.S.
- Explain why Canada's people have remained culturally distinct
- Describe the relationship between the United States and Canada based on shared physical features
- Describe migration patterns of indigenous people across the continent
- Explain how the U.S. gained independence from Great Britain

Making Connections

- Summarize the contributions of the five economic regions of the United States
- Compare and contrast the natural resources of Canada and the U.S.
- Analyze the impact of geography on the settlement of people and on the economic resources of North America
- Examine the effect of European settlements on Native Americans

Critical Stance

- Evaluate how climate and vegetation patterns affect people's ways of life in Canada and the U.S.
- Debate the success or failure of Canada's indigenous peoples to preserve their culture
- Defend or refute the importance of NAFTA
- Draw conclusions about America's role and policies as a world leader

Unit 4: Latin America

Examine the impact of geography on the culture of Mexico, Central and South America, and the Caribbean.

Initial Understanding

- Describe and locate important landforms, water bodies and climates
- List major imports and exports of the region
- Identify important natural resources
- Name early cultures that developed in Latin America
- Identify characteristics of Caribbean cultures
- Identify the major cultural groups living in South America
- Define colonialism

Developing an Interpretation

- Examine important landforms of the three Latin American regions
- Describe patterns of climate regions and how they affect the way people live
- Examine significant characteristics and achievements of the Mayan, Aztec and Incan civilizations
- Analyze the influence of Ancient American Civilization, European colonialism, and recent events on societies in Latin America
- Explain how geography influenced the ways Latin Americans make a living
- Describe how the Incan civilization interacted with and changed their environment

Making Connections

- Determine how European, African, and Native American cultures blended together to create unique Caribbean cultures
- Deduce how Portuguese and Spanish became the major languages of Latin America
- Categorize the major Caribbean islands physically and culturally
- Determine what impact the Andes Mountains and the Amazon Basin had on cultural diversity
- Summarize the current challenges facing these regions

Draw conclusions about how the regions' history is reflected in its people today

Critical Stance

- Judge the impact of European rule on the Native Americans in this region
- Evaluate the success of Latin American nations as they strive to achieve economic independence

Unit 5: Pacific World

Analyze the geography and cultures of Australia, New Zealand, and the Pacific Island region of Oceania.

Initial Understanding

- Locate and label important physical features Australia, New Zealand, and Oceania
- List main economic features of the region
- Identify groups who settled in this region

Developing an Interpretation

- Describe similarities and differences in climatic regions in Australia, New Zealand, and the islands
- Examine economic influences
- Explain how geography affects climate, vegetation, and animal life

Making Connections

- Compare and contrast highlands and lowlands
- Summarize the history of native populations and their interaction with their environment (Maori, Aborigines)
- Analyze the British influence since Captain Cook
- Discuss the economy of Australia and New Zealand
- Determine how isolation, caused by the ocean, promoted cultural diversity

Analyze how Pacific Island nations have been influenced by other cultures

Critical Stance

- Defend the native peoples rights to reclaim the land of their ancestors
- Judge whether controlling countries are helping or hindering the progress of the people of the islands of Oceania
- Debate whether tourism should be banned in fragile environments such as the Great Barrier Reef