



Social Studies Curriculum – Middle Level

May 2007

Introduction

Social Studies Curriculum

Baker Demonstration School endorses a curriculum that is integrated, flexible, and individualized. Students acquire the cognitive, social, and physical skills needed to become responsible and capable citizens as well as self-directed, continuing learners in fulfillment of the school's mission. In order to meet the challenge of a changing society, students are guided in developing and building a system of values, both idealistic and realistic. Opportunities are provided for problem solving, analysis, interpretation, and evaluation of material. Students develop an appreciation of various cultures, and learn to recognize the dignity and worth of all people.

The social studies curriculum is organized around the five major strands for social sciences that are endorsed by the National Council for the Social Studies: Political Systems, Economic Systems, History, Geography and Social Systems. Within each of these major strands and by grade level, our curriculum integrates the themes listed below in order to help students synthesize information, to construct knowledge about a particular topic, and to develop academic and practical skills. Many of the themes are derived from the State of Illinois goals for the social sciences, and the skills marked with an asterisk (*) are directly related to the Illinois Applications of Learning that have been developed by the Illinois State Board of Education.

During the academic year 2007-2008, the scope and sequence of the middle school social studies curriculum is being revisited, revised and documented.

6th Grade Political Systems:

Concepts

Ancient civilizations
Governmental hierarchies
Monarchies and empires
Introduction to democracy
Introduction to U.S. government
Analysis of current events

Skills and Processes

- Problem solving*
- Critical thinking
- Communicating orally and in writing*
- Collaborating and working on teams*
- Making academic connections*
- Public speaking
- Study skills
- Research and reading expository text
- Using facts to support conclusions
- Research
- Debate and argumentation

6th Grade Economic Systems:

Concepts

Development beyond hunter-gatherer societies
Domestication of plants and animals
Importance of farming to early societies
Origins and implications of surplus
The division of labor
The development of trade

Skills and Processes

- Problem solving*
- Critical thinking
- Communicating orally and in writing*
- Collaboration and working on teams*
- Making academic connections*
- Reading expository text
- Study skills
- Using facts to support conclusions
- Research

6th Grade History:

Concepts

Archaeology
Famous people and events in early history
Connections between modern conveniences and early inventions

Skills and Processes

- Critical thinking
- Communicating orally and in writing*
- Collaboration and working on teams*
- Making academic connections*
- Study skills
- Reading expository text
- Research
- Using technology
- Note-taking

6th Grade Geography:

Concepts

Five Themes of Geography
Landforms
Geographic terminology
Climate systems
Environmentalism

Skills and Processes

- Interpreting data from maps, globes and atlases
- Critical thinking
- Making academic connections*
- Study skills
- Analysis of current events
- Using technology*

6th Grade Social Systems:

Concepts

How social systems form and develop over time
Five characteristics of an advanced culture
Appreciation of language, arts, literature and traditions
Common and differentiating aspects of various cultures

Skills and Processes

- Critical thinking
- Reading
- Communicating orally and in writing*
- Research
- Using facts to support conclusions
- Collaboration and working on teams*

7th Grade Political Systems:

Concepts

Relationship between politics and economics
Feudal system
Development of religion-based socio-political hierarchies
City-states
Monarchies and empires
Significance of the Magna Carta and limitation of power
Nation-states

Skills and Processes

- Problem solving*
- Communicating orally and in writing*
- Critical thinking
- Collaboration and working on teams*
- Making academic connections*
- Study skills
- Research
- Reading expository text
- Debate and argumentation

7th Grade Economic Systems:

Concepts

Manorialism in the Middle Ages
Development of trade guilds
Disparity of wealth
Concentration of wealth within nobility
Reestablishment of monetary system as economic institution

Skills and Processes

- Problem solving*
- Analysis of current events
- Collaboration and working on teams*
- Critical thinking
- Making academic connections*
- Research
- Communicating orally and in writing*
- Reading expository text

7th Grade History:

Concepts

Fall of the Roman Empire
Rise of Islam
Europe in the Middle Ages
Renaissance Europe

Skills and Processes

- Critical thinking
- Communicating orally and in writing*
- Collaboration and working on teams*
- Making academic connections*
- Study skills
- Research
- Reading expository text
- Note-taking

7th Grade Geography:

Concepts

Five Themes of Geography
Interpreting historical maps
Understanding the ebb and flow of empires
Understanding the development of national boundaries
Preserving our environment

Skills and Processes

- Interpreting data from maps, globes and atlases
- Critical thinking
- Making academic connections*
- Study skills
- Analysis of current events
- Using technology*

7th Grade Social Systems:

Concepts

Early Islamic culture
Social classes and the Church in Middle Ages
Feudal system
Code of Chivalry
Common and differentiating aspects of various cultures

Skills and Processes

- Critical thinking
- Reading and research
- Communicating orally and in writing*
- Using facts to support conclusions
- Collaboration and working on teams*
- Analysis of current events

8th Grade Political Systems:

Concepts

European Enlightenment
Agricultural, Scientific and
Industrial Revolutions
American and French Revolutions
U.S. founding documents
United States Constitution
19th Century: Nationalism,
Westward expansion, and
Industrial Revolution
20th Century world and U.S.
history

Electoral process
Judicial system

Skills and Processes

- Problem solving*
- Communicating orally and in writing*
- Critical thinking
- Use of technology*
- Reading and Research
- Analysis of current events
- Collaboration and working on teams*
- Debate and argumentation

8th Grade Economic Systems:

Concepts

Disparity of wealth and the drive
for equal distribution
Regional economics leading to
political differences
The significance of trade and
tariffs in U.S. history
Impact of economic changes
through the 20th Century

Skills and Processes

- Critical thinking
- Communicating orally and in writing*
- Problem solving*
- Using technology*
- Making connections*
- Analysis of current events
- Collaboration and working on teams*

8th Grade History:

Concepts

Pre-Revolutionary America
American revolution
19th Century U.S. history
20th Century world and U.S.
history

Skills and Processes

- Communicating orally and in writing*
- Research and reading
- Using technology*
- Making connections*
- Collaboration and working on teams*
- Expository writing
- Research and note-taking

8th Grade Geography:

Concepts

Five Themes of Geography
Studies of continents and regions
Regions of the U.S.
Environmentalism

Skills and Processes

- Communicating orally and in writing*
- Using technology*
- Making connections*
- Collaboration and working on teams*

8th Grade Social Systems:

Concepts

Search for equitable society

Media literacy

Impact of social changes through
the decades of the 20th Century

Skills and Processes

- Critical thinking
- Communicating orally and in writing*
- Solving problems*
- Using facts to support conclusions
- Collaboration and working on teams*