

GRADE 6 – ANCIENT TO MEDIEVAL WORLD HISTORY AND GEOGRAPHY

In Grade 6, students will expand their worldview through a thematic investigation into early world history and geography. Students will study humankind from the beginnings of civilization to the Middle Ages and will recognize the diversity of cultures that make up the globe. In addition, students will gain an understanding of early world governments as they prepare for their studies of the United States and Rhode Island state government in eighth grade.

Inquiry Topics, Compelling Questions, and Standards

Inquiry Topic 1: Researching the Past

Compelling Question: Is it possible to ever know the whole truth about the past?

SS6.1.1: Experts of the past

SS6.1.2: Sources of the past

SS6.1.3: Understanding time

Inquiry Topic 2: Human Origins and the Development of Complex Societies

Compelling Question: What makes a complex society complex?

SS6.2.1: Environment and early humans

SS6.2.2: Expansion of early societies

SS6.2.3: Development of complex societies

Inquiry Topic 3: The First States (4000 - 1200 BCE)

Compelling Question: Are societies a product of their environments?

SS6.3.1: Early river valley civilizations

SS6.3.2: Nomads and territorial states

Inquiry Topic 4: World Empires and Cultures (1200-350 BCE)

Compelling Question: Did early empires serve everyone's needs?

SS6.4.1: Rise of empires and urban-based societies

SS6.4.2: Spread of ideas and social transformations

Inquiry Topic 5: Encounters in the Afro-Eurasian World (350 BCE - 300 CE)

Compelling Question: How do empires grow and collapse?

SS6.5.1: Solidification of major empires

SS6.5.2: Connecting the Afro-Eurasian Regions

Inquiry Topic 6: Rise and Influence of World Religions

Compelling Question: Does religion define a people?

SS6.6.1: Comparison of world religions

SS6.6.2: Localized belief systems and cultures

Inquiry Topic 7: Global Trade (300 CE - 1300 CE)

Compelling Question: What led to the rise in global trading and interconnection around the world?

SS6.7.1: Expansion of territory

SS6.7.2: Expansion of Religion

Standards Tables

Inquiry Topic 1: Researching the Past

Compelling Question: Is it possible to ever know the whole truth about the past?

SS6.1.1 Experts of the past Analyze the jobs and necessary skills of people who study the past	Connections to the Rhode Island Anchor Standards											
	CG.P	CG.RL	CG.RR	H.CC	H.HP	H.IG	G.HPE	G.HSP	G.WST	E.SA	E.PC	E.EG
					X		X	X	X			
Guiding Questions for Instruction: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What important questions do geographers explore and what tools do they use? • How do archeologists use the physical evidence they find to understand the past? • How do anthropologists work with people today to understand their cultures and histories? • How and why do historians study the past? 	Learning Assessment Objectives: Students demonstrate an ability to: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Explain ways geographers study the Earth, its land, features, and inhabitants to understand the relationship between humans and planet earth, and identify the tools that they use Explain ways archeologists study the physical evidence left behind by humans to understand human culture, and identify the tools that they use Explain ways anthropologists work with people today to learn about their cultures and histories Explain the approaches historians use to analyze and interpret the past using primary and secondary sources, and analyze the advantages and disadvantages of those approaches Analyze similarities and differences in the ways that geographers, archeologists, anthropologists, and historians work to identify primary sources and artifacts, analyze evidence, and construct interpretations of the past 											

SS6.1.2 Sources of the past Analyze the sources scholars use to study the past	Connections to the Rhode Island Anchor Standards											
	CG.P	CG.RL	CG.RR	H.CC	H.HP	H.IG	G.HPE	G.HSP	G.WST	E.SA	E.PC	E.EG
					X							
Guiding Questions for Instruction: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● What are different types of primary and secondary sources and how are they used to study the past? ● Why are oral traditions and storytelling important for understanding the past? ● What are the challenges of using different sources to understand the past? 	Learning Assessment Objectives: Students demonstrate an ability to: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Identify types of primary sources, and analyze ways that scholars use them to study the past b. Identify types of secondary sources, and analyze ways that scholars use them to study the past c. Analyze the importance of using oral traditions when studying history d. Analyze the challenges in using primary and secondary sources (e.g., contextualization, corroboration, bias) 											

SS6.1.3 Understanding time Explain the scale of time from today back to early humans	Connections to the Rhode Island Anchor Standards											
	CG.P	CG.RL	CG.RR	H.CC	H.HP	H.IG	G.HPE	G.HSP	G.WST	E.SA	E.PC	E.EG
				X	X							
Guiding Questions for Instruction: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● How do we measure time? ● What time period are we living in now? ● How do you read a timeline? 	Learning Assessment Objectives: Students demonstrate an ability to: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Identify ways to express the scale of time (e.g., decade, age, era, century, millennium, BCE, CE) and explain why times periods are named differently in different contexts b. Identify terms for historical periods (e.g., Paleolithic Era, Neolithic Era, Before Common Era, Common Era) and the time we are living in now c. Identify linear and comparative timelines, and explain how to read and use them 											

Inquiry Topic 2: Human Origins and the Development of Complex Societies

Compelling Question: What makes a society complex?

SS6.2.1 Environment and early humans Analyze the development of early humans and the characteristics of early human societies	Connections to the Rhode Island Anchor Standards											
	CG.P	CG.RL	CG.RR	H.CC	H.HP	H.IG	G.HPE	G.HSP	G.WST	E.SA	E.PC	E.EG
				X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	
<p>Guiding Questions for Instruction:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How do we know about early proto humans? • What traits separated early hominids from other animal species? • Why did hominid lines succeed in replacing their ancestors? • What type of evidence do experts look for to explain the physical evolution of hominids? • Why is it important to study hunter gatherer communities? • What does evidence of art, language, and religion tell us about <i>Homo sapiens</i>? 	<p>Learning Assessment Objectives: Students demonstrate an ability to:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Identify major geographical features around the world (e.g., climate zones, bodies of water, mountains, deserts) Explain environmental changes that shaped the earth, and analyze how they allowed for the growth and development of human life Identify significant archeological sites and their locations, the techniques used to obtain those findings, and analyze the types of evidence found of human ancestors and their evolution Analyze the reasons human groups moved around the globe and identify the locations of those movements Explain the differences between <i>Homo habilis</i>, <i>Homo erectus</i>, <i>Neanderthals</i>, and <i>Homo sapiens</i> Explain reasons that human ancestor lines transformed and replaced other hominid lines Identify the characteristics of early <i>Homo sapiens</i> (e.g., art, language, religion), and explain how these characteristics lead to our understanding of how they lived and how culture developed 											

SS6.2.2 Expansion of early societies Analyze the lifeways and characteristics of early world societies and their expansion into the Americas	Connections to the Rhode Island Anchor Standards											
	CG.P	CG.RL	CG.RR	H.CC	H.HP	H.IG	G.HPE	G.HSP	G.WST	E.SA	E.PC	E.EG
				X		X	X		X	X		
Guiding Questions for Instruction: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● What are the lifeways and cultural characteristics of early societies? ● How and why did humans expand into the Americas? ● How and why did geography and environment play a role in where early American societies settled and developed? 	Learning Assessment Objectives: Students demonstrate an ability to: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Explain lifeways of early societies (e.g., Hunter-Gatherer, Nomadic, permanent civilization), and identify their locations around the world b. Analyze cultural characteristics of early societies around the world (e.g., language, art, technology, social structure) c. Explain the migration of people from Asia to the Americas d. Identify the location of early hunter gatherer societies in the Americas, and analyze the roles of geography and environment on their settlement and development 											

SS6.2.3 Development of complex societies Analyze the development of complex societies, their characteristics, and interactions with one another	Connections to the Rhode Island Anchor Standards											
	CG.P	CG.RL	CG.RR	H.CC	H.HP	H.IG	G.HPE	G.HSP	G.WST	E.SA	E.PC	E.EG
				X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	
Guiding Questions for Instruction: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● How and why did geography impact the development of complex societies? ● How and why did technology change how early people lived? ● What contributed to the domestication of animals and plants? ● What is the relationship between the natural resources available in the Fertile Crescent and the development of a complex society? ● How and why did civilizations develop in the Americas? 	Learning Assessment Objectives: Students demonstrate an ability to: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Identify the characteristics of a complex society (e.g., economy that produces food surplus and ability to store food surplus, specialized jobs, systems for government, religion, art, technology) and analyze how those characteristics influenced social life b. Analyze the impacts of the development of agriculture and herding on populations c. Analyze the interaction between and spread of complex societies (e.g., migration, trade, agriculture, exchange of culture and/or language, religious conversion, colonization) d. Explain the significance of the Fertile Crescent, identify its location, and analyze the role of natural resources in its development e. Analyze the influence of geography on the development of the social, economic, and political structure of Indigenous civilizations in the Americas 											

Inquiry Topic 3: The First States (4000 - 1200 BCE)

Compelling Question: Are societies a product of their environment?

SS6.3.1 Early river valley civilizations Analyze the development of early cities, states, and empires, and the role of trade between the entities	Connections to the Rhode Island Anchor Standards											
	CG.P	CG.RL	CG.RR	H.CC	H.HP	H.IG	G.HPE	G.HSP	G.WST	E.SA	E.PC	E.EG
	X						X	X	X	X	X	
<p>Guiding Questions for Instruction:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How and why did geography lead to the development of early river valley civilizations? • In what ways did people’s lives change as states and empires grew? • What were the similarities and differences among the river valley civilizations? • How and why did the growth of trade and exchange impact river valley societies? • How and why did river valley societies collapse? 	<p>Learning Assessment Objectives: Students demonstrate an ability to:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Analyze the environmental developments that accompanied the rise of urban river basin societies (e.g., reliable water source, irrigation, warmer weather with expanded growing seasons, richer soil for agriculture) Identify early river cities on a map (e.g., Mesopotamia, Old Kingdom Egypt, Indus Valley, Yellow and Yangzi River basin), and analyze their government structures, leaders, laws, economic systems, religion and belief systems, social hierarchies, technological and social innovations, and relationship to the environment Explain the role of trade and contact between early river valley civilizations Analyze the reasons for the decline of the river valley civilizations 											

SS6.3.2 Nomads and territorial states Analyze the interaction between nomads and their environments as well as the development of new states throughout Afro-Eurasia	Connections to the Rhode Island Anchor Standards											
	CG.P	CG.RL	CG.RR	H.CC	H.HP	H.IG	G.HPE	G.HSP	G.WST	E.SA	E.PC	E.EG
	X					X	X	x	x		X	X
Guiding Questions for Instruction: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How did nomadic groups change trade and interactions in Afro-Eurasia? • What were territorial states and what led to their development? • What was a micro-society and how did it differ from territorial states? • How and why did long-distance trade influence cultural changes? 	Learning Assessment Objectives: Students demonstrate an ability to: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Analyze the role of nomads in the restructuring of the political landscape (e.g., establishment of regional trade networks, technological and social innovations such as horses and chariots) Identify the locations of territorial states (e.g., Middle Kingdom Egypt, Mesopotamia Kingship, Vedic peoples, Shang State), and analyze their ethnic identity, government, and techniques of coexistence with other territorial states, response to environmental changes, trade networks, labor systems, and religion Identify the location of small-scale political entities (e.g., micro-societies such as Austronesians, Mycenaeans, Minoans), analyze their cultural beliefs and social hierarchies, and argue how their role in trade impacted economies and technological advances 											

Inquiry Topic 4: World Empires and Cultures (1200-350 BCE)

Compelling Question: Did early empires serve everyone's needs?

<p>SS6.4.1 Rise of empires and urban-based societies</p> <p>Argue the impacts of the establishment of major empires, smaller urban-based societies, and the ways they interacted with surrounding peoples</p>	Connections to the Rhode Island Anchor Standards											
	CG.P	CG.RL	CG.RR	H.CC	H.HP	H.IG	G.HPE	G.HSP	G.WST	E.SA	E.PC	E.EG
	X	X		X		X	X	X				
<p>Guiding Questions for Instruction:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● How is an empire different from a city or territory? ● What forces led to the rise of early empires? ● What were the similarities and differences of empires across Europe and Asia from 1200-350 BCE? ● What methods of government did leaders of empires develop? ● How did empires in this period interact with groups on their margins? ● What are the similarities and differences between the Empires across Europe and Asia and the urban spaces developing in sub-Saharan Africa and the Americas? 	<p>Learning Assessment Objectives:</p> <p>Students demonstrate an ability to:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Explain the characteristics of empires and analyze the ways empires differed from the river valley civilizations or territorial states b. Argue the impacts of climate change, migrations, new technologies, and administrative innovations in the rise of new empires c. Analyze the similarities and differences in the methods of ruling an empire and the lived experiences of individuals in the Neo-Assyrian (911-612 BCE) and Persian (560-331 BCE) empires in West Asia (Middle East), Vedics (1500-600 BCE) in South Asia, and early Zhou Empire (1045-771 BCE) in East Asia d. Identify methods of government developed in the early empires, analyze how and why they developed, and argue who benefited e. Analyze the interaction of the early empires with peoples on the margins such as the Greeks and the Phoenicians in the Mediterranean, and argue the impacts of those interactions f. Analyze the similarities and differences of the complex urban-based societies in sub-Saharan Africa and the Americas, the lived experiences of the people of Nubia, the Nok in West Africa, the Chavín of the Andes, and the Olmecs of Mesoamerica 											

<p>SS6.4.2 Spread of ideas and social transformations</p> <p>Argue the impacts of the cultural, intellectual, political, economic, and environmental changes happening across Africa, Europe, and Asia during this time period</p>	Connections to the Rhode Island Anchor Standards											
	CG.P	CG.RL	CG.RR	H.CC	H.HP	H.IG	G.HPE	G.HSP	G.WST	E.SA	E.PC	E.EG
	X	X	X	X	X	X	X					
<p>Guiding Questions for Instruction:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How and why did state administration, warfare, thought, and culture transform across the world from 1000-350 BCE? • What are the similarities and differences between the changes happening in different regions of Africa, Europe, and Asia? 	<p>Learning Assessment Objectives:</p> <p>Students demonstrate an ability to:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Analyze cultural and environmental changes across Africa, Europe, and Asia (e.g., Vedic system of hierarchy in Northern India, Northern China’s agriculture revolution, city growth on the Ganges plain), and argue the impacts of those changes Analyze the political and economic changes across Africa, Europe, and Asia (e.g., Shang Yang reforms in the Qin dynasty and new methods of military campaigns, development of <i>polis</i> in Greece or <i>civitas</i> in Rome, development of a system of money), and argue the impacts of those changes Analyze the intellectual changes across Africa, Europe, and Asia (e.g., Master Kong Fuzi or Confucius, Daoism, Siddhartha Gautama or the Buddha, Zoroastrianism, Greek philosophers and thinkers), and argue the impacts of those changes 											

Inquiry Topic 5: Encounters in the Afro-Eurasian World (350 BCE - 300 CE)

Compelling Question: How do empires grow and collapse?

<p>SS6.5.1 Solidification of major empires Argue the reasons for the rise of the globalizing empires of the Afro-Eurasian world and compare their characteristics</p>	Connections to the Rhode Island Anchor Standards											
	CG.P	CG.RL	CG.RR	H.CC	H.HP	H.IG	G.HPE	G.HSP	G.WST	E.SA	E.PC	E.EG
	X			X		X	X	X	X			X
<p>Guiding Questions for Instruction:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In what ways did the Han Dynasty in China, the Roman Empire, and the Mauryan Empire become “globalizing empires”? • How and why did geographic location and environment affect the expansion and influence of these three empires? • How and why did these three empires exert far-reaching political, legal, economic, and cultural influences? • What was the role of caste systems, forced labor, and slavery in these three empires? 	<p>Learning Assessment Objectives: Students demonstrate an ability to:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Analyze the definition of and conditions of a “globalizing empire” Identify the locations of the empires of the Han Dynasty in China, the Roman Empire, and the Mauryan Empire on a map, and analyze the ways their geographic locations and the environment affected their expansion and influence Analyze the formation and course of these globalizing empires including administration and government, labor systems, economic systems, social systems and hierarchies, and relationship to the environment, and argue the impacts of these developments and who benefited in these societies 											

SS6.5.2 Connecting the Afro-Eurasian Regions Argue the impact of the influence of trade routes in connecting the Afro-Eurasian regions	Connections to the Rhode Island Anchor Standards											
	CG.P	CG.RL	CG.RR	H.CC	H.HP	H.IG	G.HPE	G.HSP	G.WST	E.SA	E.PC	E.EG
	X						X	X				
Guiding Questions for Instruction: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What political and geographic motives did empires have to build road systems? • How and why were road systems constructed and at what cost? • What was the importance of the overland and oversea trade routes in connecting Africa, Europe, and Asia? 	Learning Assessment Objectives: Students demonstrate an ability to: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Analyze the use of roads and highways for communication, trade, and control within empires (e.g., roads in the Persian Empire, Roman Empire, and Qin and Han China), and argue their impacts Analyze the development and use of the Silk Road and the role of caravan cities, and argue the impacts of the economic, cultural, and religious changes it brought Identify the routes of Red Sea and Indian Ocean trade, analyze the role of the environment on the success or failure of trade, and argue the economic and cultural influences and importance of navigational technology to the trade 											

Inquiry Topic 6: Rise and Influence of World Religions

Compelling Question: Does religion define a people?

<p>SS6.6.1 Comparison of world religions Argue the impacts of the five major world religions on the development of societies and cultures through time</p>	Connections to the Rhode Island Anchor Standards											
	CG.P	CG.RL	CG.RR	H.CC	H.HP	H.IG	G.HPE	G.HSP	G.WST	E.SA	E.PC	E.EG
	X			X	X	X	X					
<p>Guiding Questions for Instruction:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What were the beliefs and religious practices of each religion? • How did religious practices change and develop over time? • How did the environment, history of the religion’s people, and their interactions with other societies shape the religion? • How did each of the major religions influence the development of society and culture? 	<p>Learning Assessment Objectives: Students demonstrate an ability to:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Analyze the definition and characteristics of universalizing religion Analyze the beliefs and religious practices of Hinduism, Judaism, Buddhism, Christianity, and Islam, their development, and how they changed over time (e.g., central teachings, influence of the environment on teachings, social stratification within the religion, religious texts, religious observations) Analyze the history of Hinduism, Judaism, Buddhism, Christianity, and Islam, how they spread, the role of empires on their development, Argue the impacts of Hinduism, Judaism, Buddhism, Christianity, and Islam on the development of societies and cultures Argue the ways Hinduism, Judaism, Buddhism, Christianity, and Islam continue to influence society and culture today 											

SS6.6.2 Localized belief systems and cultures Argue the influences of other belief systems throughout the ancient world on society and culture	Connections to the Rhode Island Anchor Standards											
	CG.P	CG.RL	CG.RR	H.CC	H.HP	H.IG	G.HPE	G.HSP	G.WST	E.SA	E.PC	E.EG
	X			X	X	X	X					
Guiding Questions for Instruction: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What were the beliefs and religious practices of each religion and how did they change over time? • How and why is there a relationship between political unity and religious development in these religions? 	Learning Assessment Objectives: Students demonstrate an ability to: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Explain the beliefs and religious practices of Bantus of Sub-Saharan Africa, Teotihuacanos of Mesoamerica, and Mayans in the Yucatan and their development, and analyze how they changed over time (e.g., central teachings, influence of the environment on teachings, social stratification within the religion, religious texts, religious observations) Analyze the history and growth of the Bantus of Sub-Saharan Africa, Teotihuacan of Mesoamerica, and Mayans in the Yucatan, and argue the role of political unity on their development Argue the impacts of Bantus of Sub-Saharan Africa, Teotihuacan of Mesoamerica, and Mayans in the Yucatan on society and culture 											

Inquiry Topic 7: Global Trade (300 CE - 1300 CE)

Compelling Question: What led to the rise in global trading and interconnection around the world?

SS6.7.1 Expansion of territory Argue the impact of the expansion of territorial influence across Afro-Eurasian regions from 300-1300 CE	Connections to the Rhode Island Anchor Standards											
	CG.P	CG.RL	CG.RR	H.CC	H.HP	H.IG	G.HPE	G.HSP	G.WST	E.SA	E.PC	E.EG
	X			X		X	X	X	X			
Guiding Questions for Instruction: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What was the relationship between religion, empire, and commercial exchange across Africa, Europe, and Asia during this period? • How and why did new crops contribute to population growth? • How did maritime technological advances lead to expansion of trade and empire across Africa, Europe, and Asia? • In what ways did trade affect the development of sub-Saharan African states and societies? • What influence did the Tang Dynasty have over East Asia? • How did the Black Death take a toll on this part of the world? 	Learning Assessment Objectives: Students demonstrate an ability to: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> • Analyze agricultural changes across Africa, Europe, and Asia from 300-600 CE, and argue the impacts on people and population numbers • Analyze the reasons for the growth of commercial cities such as Alexandria and Cairo in Egypt, Quilon in India, Melaka in Malaysia, and Quanzhou in China (e.g., new maritime technologies and empire expansion), and argue the impact of their growth • Analyze the influence of trade on the development of early sub-Saharan African states and societies including the Kingdom of Axum, Swahili coastal societies, and Timbuktu in West Africa • Analyze the cause and course of the Tang Dynasty’s expansion into Korea and Japan, and argue its impact on those cultures • Explain the Black Death, and argue how its impacts were felt across Africa, Europe, and Asia 											

SS6.7.2 Expansion of religion Argue the impact of the expansion of religion across Afro-Eurasian regions from 300-1300 CE	Connections to the Rhode Island Anchor Standards											
	CG.P	CG.RL	CG.RR	H.CC	H.HP	H.IG	G.HPE	G.HSP	G.WST	E.SA	E.PC	E.EG
	X			X		X		X				
Guiding Questions for Instruction: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What regional distinctions arose in Islam because of its spread, and what impact did its spread have in Africa, Europe, and Asia? • What influence did Christianity have over Europe? • What was the political and cultural impact of Confucianism across Asia? 	Learning Assessment Objectives: Students demonstrate an ability to: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Analyze the decentralization and spread of Islam in places such as Cordoba in Spain, Ghana in West Africa, and Baghdad in Central Asia, and argue the impacts of its growing influence and division Analyze the spread of Christianity across Africa, Europe, and Asia including the role of the Vikings, Charlemagne, the Roman Catholic Church, the Greek Orthodox Church, and the Crusades, and argue its political and cultural impacts on societies Explain the philosophy of Confucianism, analyze its spread across Asia, and argue its impact 											