Grade 5 Science, Unit 5

Earth Systems

Overview

Unit abstract

In this unit of study, students are able to describe ways in which the geosphere, biosphere, hydrosphere, and/or atmosphere interact. The crosscutting concept of systems and system models is called out as an organizing concept for this disciplinary core idea. In the fifth grade performance expectations, students are expected to demonstrate grade-appropriate proficiency in developing and using models and obtaining, evaluating, and communicating information and to use these practices to demonstrate understanding of the core idea.

Essential question

- How much water can be found at different places on Earth?

Bristol–Warren, Central Falls, Cranston, Tiverton, and Woonsocket, with process support from The Charles A. Dana Center at the University of Texas at Austin

Written Curriculum

Next Generation Science Standards

5. Earth's Systems

Students who demonstrate understanding can:

5-ESS2-2. Develop a model using an example to describe ways the geosphere, biosphere, hydrosphere, and/or atmosphere interact. [Clarification Statement: Examples could include the influence of the ocean on ecosystems, landform shape, and climate; the influence of the atmosphere on landforms and ecosystems through weather and climate; and the influence of mountain ranges on winds and clouds in the atmosphere. The geosphere, hydrosphere, atmosphere, and biosphere are each a system.] [Assessment Boundary: Assessment is limited to the interactions of two systems at a time.]

The performance expectations above were developed using the following elements from the NRC document *A Framework for K-12 Science Education*:

Science and Engineering Practices	Disciplinary Core Ideas	Crosscutting Concepts
Developing and Using Models Modeling in 3–5 builds on K–2 experiences and progresses to building and revising simple models and using models to represent events and design solutions. • Develop a model using an example to describe a scientific principle. (5-ESS2-1)	**ESS2.A: Earth Materials and Systems** • Earth's major systems are the geosphere (solid and molten rock, soil, and sediments), the hydrosphere (water and ice), the atmosphere (air), and the biosphere (living things, including humans). These systems interact in multiple ways to affect Earth's surface materials and processes. The ocean supports a variety of ecosystems and organisms, shapes landforms, and influences climate. Winds and clouds in the atmosphere interact with the landforms to determine patterns of weather. (5-ESS2-1)	**Systems and System Models** • A system can be described in terms of its components and their interactions. (5-ESS2-1)

Connections to other DCIs in fifth grade: N/A

Articulation of DCIs across grade-levels: **2.ESS2.A** (5-ESS2-1); **3.ESS2.D** (5-ESS2-1); **4.ESS2.A** (5-ESS2-1); **MS.ESS2.A** (5-ESS2-1); **MS.ESS2.C** (5-ESS2-1); **MS.ESS2.D** (5-ESS2-1)

Common Core State Standards Connections:

ELA/Literacy –

RI.5.7 Draw on information from multiple print or digital sources, demonstrating the ability to locate an answer to a question quickly or to solve a problem efficiently. *(5-ESS2-2)*

SL.5.5 Include multimedia components (e.g., graphics, sound) and visual displays in presentations when appropriate to enhance the development of main ideas or themes. *(5-ESS2-1)*

Mathematics –

MP.2 Reason abstractly and quantitatively. *(5-ESS2-1)*

MP.4 Model with mathematics. *(5-ESS2-1)*

5.G.2 Represent real world and mathematical problems by graphing points in the first quadrant of the coordinate plane, and interpret coordinate values of points in the context of the situation. *(5-ESS2-1)*

5. Earth's Systems

Students who demonstrate understanding can:

- **Obtain and combine information about ways individual communities use science ideas to protect the Earth's resources and environment.**

The performance expectations above were developed using the following elements from the NRC document *A Framework for K-12 Science Education*:

Science and Engineering Practices	Disciplinary Core Ideas	Crosscutting Concepts
Obtaining, Evaluating, and Communicating Information Obtaining, evaluating, and communicating information in 3–5 builds on K–2 experiences and progresses to evaluating the merit and accuracy of ideas and methods. • Obtain and combine information from books and/or other reliable media to explain phenomena or solutions to a design problem. (5-ESS3-1)	**ESS3.C: Human Impacts on Earth Systems** • Human activities in agriculture, industry, and everyday life have had major effects on the land, vegetation, streams, ocean, air, and even outer space. But individuals and communities are doing things to help protect Earth's resources and environments. (5-ESS3-1)	**Systems and System Models** • A system can be described in terms of its components and their interactions. (5-ESS3-1) --- ***Connections to Nature of Science*** **Science Addresses Questions About the Natural and Material World** • Science findings are limited to questions that can be answered with empirical evidence. (5-ESS3-1)

Connections to other DCIs in fifth grade: N/A

Articulation of DCIs across grade-levels: **MS.ESS3.A** (5-ESS3-1); **MS.ESS3.C** (5-ESS3-1); **MS.ESS3.D** (5-ESS3-1)

Common Core State Standards Connections:

ELA/Literacy –

RI.5.1 Quote accurately from a text when explaining what the text says explicitly and when drawing inferences from the text. *(5-ESS3-1)*

RI.5.7 Draw on information from multiple print or digital sources, demonstrating the ability to locate an answer to a question quickly or to solve a problem efficiently. (5-ESS3-1)

RI.5.9 Integrate information from several texts on the same topic in order to write or speak about the subject knowledgeably. (5-ESS3-1)

W.5.8 Recall relevant information from experiences or gather relevant information from print and digital sources; summarize or paraphrase information in notes and finished work, and provide a list of sources. (5-ESS3-1)

W.5.9 Draw evidence from literary or informational texts to support analysis, reflection, and research. *(5-ESS3-1)*

Mathematics –

MP.2 Reason abstractly and quantitatively. *(5-ESS3-1)*

MP.4 Model with mathematics. *(5-ESS3-1)*

Clarifying the standards

Prior learning

The following disciplinary core ideas are prior learning for the concepts in this unit of study. By the end of Grade 2, students know that:

- Wind and water can change the shape of the land.

By the end of Grade 3, students know that:

- Scientists record patterns of the weather across different times and areas so that they can make predictions about what kind of weather might happen next.
- Climate describes a range of an area's typical weather conditions and the extent to which those conditions vary over years.

By the end of Grade 4, students know that:

- Rainfall helps to shape the land and affects the types of living things found in a region. Water, ice, wind, living organisms, and gravity break rocks, soils, and sediments into smaller particles and move them around.

Progression of current learning

Driving question 1
In what ways do the geosphere, biosphere, hydrosphere, and/or atmosphere interact?

Concepts

- A system can be described in terms of its components and their interactions.
- Earth's major systems are the geosphere (solid and molten rock, soil, and sediments), the hydrosphere (water and ice), the atmosphere (air), and the biosphere (living things, including humans).
- The Earth's major systems interact in multiple ways to affect Earth's surface materials and processes.
  - The ocean supports a variety of ecosystems and organisms, shapes landforms, and influences climate.
  - Winds and clouds in the atmosphere interact with landforms to determine patterns of weather.

Practices

- Describe a system in terms of its components and interactions.
- Develop a model using an example to describe a scientific principle.
- Develop a model using an example to describe ways the geosphere, biosphere, hydrosphere, and/or atmosphere interact. (The geosphere, hydrosphere, atmosphere, and biosphere are each a system. Assessment is limited to the interactions of two systems at a time.) Examples could include:
  - The influence of oceans on ecosystems, landform shape, and climate.
  - The influence of the atmosphere on landforms and ecosystems through weather and climate.
  - The influence of mountain ranges on the wind and clouds in the atmosphere.

Driving question 2
How do individual communities use science ideas to protect Earth's resources and environment?

Concepts	Practices
• A system can be described in terms of its components and their interactions. • Science findings are limited to questions that can be answered with empirical evidence. • Human activities in agriculture, industry, and everyday life have had major effects on the land, vegetation, streams, ocean, air, and even outer space. • Individuals and communities are doing things to help protect Earth's resources and environments.	• Describe a system in terms of its components and interactions. • Obtain and combine information from books and/or other reliable media to explain phenomena or solutions to a design problem. • Obtain and combine information about ways individual communities use science ideas to protect the Earth's resources and environment

Integration of content, practices, and crosscutting concepts

The Earth's major systems include the geosphere, the hydrosphere, the biosphere, and the atmosphere. There are multiple interactions that occur within and between each of these systems. What structures and processes make up each of these systems? In what ways do the components of these systems interact? What kinds of changes occur as a result? What impact do humans have on the Earth? How do individual communities use science ideas to protect Earth's resources and the environment? In this unit of study, students develop models to describe the interactions that occur within and between these major Earth systems and conduct research to learn how humans protect the Earth's resources.

Foundational to this unit of study is the understanding of a system, its components, and the interactions that occur within the system. Initially, students may need opportunities to review familiar examples of systems, such as plants and animals, listing external and internal structures and processes and describing the interactions that occur within the system. Students can then begin to think about Earth's major systems, identifying the components and describing the interactions that occur within each. For example:

- The geosphere is composed of solid and molten rock, soil, and sediments. Some processes that occur between the components of the geosphere include erosion, weathering, deposition, sedimentation, compaction heating, cooling, and flow. These processes cause continual change to rock, soil, and sediments.
- The hydrosphere is composed of water in all its forms. Water, unlike the vast majority of earth materials, occurs naturally on the Earth as a solid, liquid, or gas, and it can be found on, above, and below the surface of the Earth. Some processes that occur in the hydrosphere include evaporation, condensation, precipitation, run-off, percolation, freezing, thawing, and flow. These processes cause water to change from one form to another in a continuous cycle.
- The atmosphere is a critical system made up of the gases that surround the Earth. The atmosphere helps to regulate Earth's climate and distribute heat around the globe, and it is composed of layers with specific properties and functions. This system, composed mainly of nitrogen, oxygen, argon, and carbon dioxide, also contains small amounts of other gases, including water vapor, which is found in the lowest level of the atmosphere where weather-related processes occur. In addition to weather

processes, radiation, conduction, convection, carbon cycling, and the natural greenhouse effect are processes that occur in the atmosphere.

- The biosphere comprises living things, including humans. Living organisms can be found in each of the major systems of the Earth (the atmosphere, hydrosphere, and geosphere). Some processes that occur within the biosphere include transpiration, respiration, reproduction, photosynthesis, metabolism, growth, and decomposition.

As students become more comfortable with describing each system in terms of its components and interactions, they should begin to think about and discuss the interactions that occur between systems. This should be a natural progression in their learning, since students will discover that any interactions that occur within a system affect components of other systems. Students should develop models that describe ways in which any two Earth systems interact and how these interactions affect the living and nonliving components of the Earth. Some examples include:

- The influence of oceans on ecosystems, landform shape, or climate.
- The impact of the atmosphere on landforms or ecosystems through weather and climate.
- The influence of mountain ranges on wind and clouds in the atmosphere.
- The role of living organisms (both plants and animals) in the creation of soils.

As a class, students can brainstorm additional examples. They can use any type of model, such as diagrams or physical replicas, to describe the interactions that occur between any two systems, and they can choose to enhance the model with multimedia components or visual displays.

Once students have an understanding of the components and interactions that occur within and between Earth's major systems, they should gather information about the ways in which individual communities use science ideas to protect Earth's resources and environment. Students can work individually, in pairs, or in small groups to conduct research using books and other reliable media resources. They should paraphrase and summarize information as they take notes, then use their information to support their finished work. Students' research should help them determine:

- How human activities in agriculture, industry, and everyday life have had major effects on the land, vegetation, streams, ocean, air, and even outer space; and
- What individuals and communities are doing to help protect Earth's resources and environment.

Students can share their work in a variety of ways and should provide a list of sources for the information in their finished work.

Integration of engineering

Although engineering design is not explicitly called out in this unit, students could incorporate engineering design in a number of ways as they explore human impact on the environment.

- Students may design a way to promote local, sustainable agriculture, making healthy food available to more people in their communities while having minimizing the impact on the local environment.
- Students can design ways to capture and use rainwater throughout their community to lessen the impact on local freshwater reserves.
- Students can design and implement a variety of recycling projects that have a positive impact on the environment by increasing the reuse of materials that normally end up in landfills and decreasing our reliance on earth resources.

- Students can research and design ways to increase the use of environmentally friendly fertilizers and pesticides that do not harm the local environment. Students can create pamphlets, presentations, or even commercials that inform the local community of the impact that chemical fertilizers and pesticides have when used in and around homes and businesses and offer information on safer alternatives that are just as effective.

Students will need time to conduct research, determine criteria for success, consider constraints on available resources, and design solutions based on the information they gather. Students will need access to reliable sources of information that will help them as they work through the design process.

Integration of English language arts and mathematics

English language arts

In order to integrate the CCSS for English language arts standards into this unit, students can use information from print and digital sources to build their understanding of Earth's major systems and the interactions that occur within and between them. As students read and gather information from multiple print or digital sources, they should use the information to make inferences, answer questions, participate in discussions, solve problems, and support their thinking about the interactions that occur among Earth's systems and the impact that humans have on Earth's resources and environments. As students build models to explain the interactions between the systems and research ways in which individual communities use science ideas to protect the Earth's resources and environments, they can enhance their work with multimedia components, such as graphics and sound and visual displays.

There are a number of ways in which the CCSS for mathematics are integrated into this unit. Students:

- Reason abstractly and quantitatively when analyzing data used as evidence to explain how Earth's major systems interact and how human activities affect Earth's resources.
- Model with mathematics by using tables, charts, or graphs to organize data and information they collect to support explanations about the interactions that occur within and between Earth's systems.
- Represent real-world and mathematical relationships through graphing. For example, students can graph data to show the relationship between the amount of rainfall that occurs and changes in air temperature or pressure or the relationship between the types or number of organisms living at various altitudes.

Future learning

The following disciplinary core ideas are future learning for the concepts in this unit of study.

By the end of middle school, students know that:

- All Earth processes are the result of energy flowing and matter cycling within and among the planet's systems. This energy is derived from the sun and Earth's hot interior. The energy that flows and the matter that cycles produce chemical and physical changes in Earth's materials and living organisms.
- The planet's systems interact over scales that range from microscopic to global in size, and they operate over fractions of a second to billions of years. These interactions have shaped Earth's history and will determine its future.
- Water continually cycles among land, ocean, and atmosphere via transpiration, evaporation, condensation and crystallization, and precipitation, as well as downhill flows on land.

- The complex patterns of the changes in and the movement of water in the atmosphere, determined by winds, landforms, and ocean temperatures and currents, are major determinants of local weather patterns.
- Global movements of water and its changes in form are propelled by sunlight and gravity.
- Variations in density due to variations in temperature and salinity drive a global pattern of interconnected ocean currents.
- Water's movements—both on land and underground—cause weathering and erosion, which change the land's surface features and create underground formations.
- Weather and climate are influenced by interactions involving sunlight, the oceans, the atmosphere, ice, landforms, and living things. These interactions vary with latitude, altitude, and local and regional geography, all of which can affect oceanic and atmospheric flow patterns.
- Because these patterns are so complex, weather can only be predicted probabilistically.
- The ocean exerts a major influence on weather and climate by absorbing energy from the sun, releasing it over time, and globally redistributing it through ocean currents.
- Humans depend on Earth's land, ocean, atmosphere, and biosphere for many different resources. Minerals, fresh water, and biosphere resources are limited, and many are not renewable or replaceable over human lifetimes. These resources are distributed unevenly around the planet as a result of past geologic processes.
- Human activities have significantly altered the biosphere, sometimes damaging or destroying natural habitats and causing the extinction of other species. Changes to Earth's environments can have different impacts (negative and positive) for different living things.
- Typically as human populations and per-capita consumption of natural resources increase, so do the negative impacts on Earth, unless the activities and technologies involved are engineered otherwise.
- Human activities, such as the release of greenhouse gases from burning fossil fuels, are major factors in the current rise in the Earth's mean surface temperature (global warming). Reducing the level of climate change and reducing human vulnerability to whatever climate changes do occur depend on the understanding of climate science, engineering capabilities, and other kinds of knowledge, such as understanding human behavior and applying that knowledge wisely in decisions and activities.

Number of Instructional Days

Recommended number of instructional days: 18 (1 day = approximately 45–60 minutes)

Note—The recommended number of days is an estimate based on the information available at this time. Teachers are strongly encouraged to review the entire unit of study carefully and collaboratively to determine whether adjustments to this estimate need to be made.