

Brookline Social Studies Learning Expectations for Grade 4

I. Overview: Continental Connections: North American Geography, History, and Culture:

In fourth grade, students will study North American geography, history, and culture. They will begin with an introduction to a variety of mapping skills through the study of North American geography. They will explore the regions and states of the United States, as well as the provinces of Canada and the major cities of Mexico. They will then delve into the changing American cultural landscape through the investigation of the influence of various groups who settled in the area over time: Native Americans, colonizers from the European empires, African Americans, and immigrants. Finally, students will identify the social characteristics of our neighboring countries, Canada and Mexico, seeing the relationships between the three North American nations. As an extension, students may learn similar information about the nations of Central America and the Caribbean.

II. Big Ideas

North American Geography

Common topography, climate, vegetation, animal life, and location are among the factors that determine how regions are identified.

Geographers create many various kinds of maps to convey different types of information.

The geography of a place affects how people live there.

Native America

People use their environment to provide for their basic needs.

Exploration and Its Influence

People explore for many reasons, including accessing new resources, curiosity, spreading religious beliefs, and acquiring new territory.

Exploration affects both the explorers and the peoples in the "discovered land."

Exploration contributes to human knowledge of the world.

The Changing American Cultural Landscape

People choose to immigrate for many different reasons.

People who immigrate face many challenges.

People who immigrate contribute to the life and culture of the United States.

Canada/Mexico Geography, History and Culture

Geography and history have contributed to the development of distinct cultures in Canada and Mexico.

Canada and Mexico share geography, history, and culture with the United States.

Our neighboring countries depend on each other to solve common problems.

III. Essential Questions

North American Geography

What are the physical features of the different regions of the United States?

How can we use a variety of maps to better understand a place.

Native America

How has the physical geography of North America shaped the way different Native American groups live in their environments?

How do Native American cultures, i.e. religious beliefs and societal roles, influence/contribute to/ adapt to modern North American life?

Exploration and Its Influence

Why do people explore?

Why do people migrate from one place to another?

Why did these people settle where they did and how did they treat the people who were already living there?

The Changing American Cultural Landscape

What pushes people to immigrate to the United States? What pulls them?

What challenges do immigrants have to get to a new country?

What do immigrants have to do to fit into a new country?

How do the immigrant groups keep their culture alive?

Canada/Mexico Geography, History and Culture

What does it mean to be a good neighbor?

How does the geography of the two countries affect the people who live there?

How are the governments, economies, culture (language, religion, etc.) different from each other and our own?

How have the histories of Mexico and Canada framed the way they are today and our relationship with them?

IV. Content Learning Expectations by Topic

North American Geography

Students will:

- Overview of mapping skills:
 - Interpret a map using information from its title, compass rose, scale, and legend.
 - Compare and contrast political and physical maps.
 - Use map and globe skills to determine the absolute locations (latitude and longitude) of place studied.
- On a map of world, locate North America.
 - On a map of North America (Canada through Panama) locate:
 - Atlantic and Pacific Oceans, Gulf of Mexico, Mississippi and Rio Grande rivers, Great Lakes, Hudson Bay, and Rocky and Appalachian mountain ranges.
 - The current boundaries of the United States, including Alaska and Hawaii.
 - The United States, its states, and major cities (capitals).

- Canada, its provinces, and major cities
- Mexico and its major cities
- The Isthmus of Panama, which divides North from South America.
- Islands and countries of Central America and the Caribbean.
- On a map of the United States:
 - Locate US Regions: New England, Middle Atlantic, Atlantic coast/Appalachian, Southeast/Gulf, South Central, Great Lakes, Plains, Southwest Desert, and Pacific states, and the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico.
 - Describe the climate, major physical features, vegetative zones, and major natural resources in each region using thematic maps.
 - Define and give examples of natural resources in the United States.
 - Give examples of limited and unlimited resources and explain how scarcity compels people and communities to make choices about goods and services, giving up some things to get other things.
 - Describe unique physical features of the United States. (e.g. Everglades, Grand Canyon, Mount Rushmore, the Redwood Forest, Yellowstone National Park, Yosemite National Park.)

Native America

Students will:

- Locate 6 indigenous groups in different areas of the country and describe their cultures. (e.g. Eastern Woodlands, Plains, Southwest, Northwest, and Hawaii)
- Cite the location of at least two Native American tribes in Canada (e.g. Kwakiutl and Micmac) and the Inuit Nation and describe their cultures.
- Describe how the physical geography of various Native American cultural regions influenced the way people lived there.

Exploration and Its Influence

Students will:

- Explain the causes of the Age of Exploration, including the contributions of Portugal.
- Describe exploration in North America by explorers from five different European countries (France, Spain, England, Russia, Netherlands).
- Report on early migrants to North America from these European countries; i.e. who migrants were, where they settled in North America, how they lived, and how their influence can be traced in place names, architectural features, and languages of present-day North America.

The Changing American Cultural Landscape

Students will:

- Describe the diverse nature of the American people by discussing the distinctive contributions to American culture of:
 - African Americans, including an explanation of their early concentration the South because of slavery and the Great Migration to northern cities in the 20th

Century, and recent African immigrant groups and where they tended to settle in large numbers.

- Major European immigrant groups who have come to America, locating their countries of origin and where they tended to settle in large numbers (e.g. English, Germans, Italians, Scots, Irish, Jews, Poles, and Scandinavian.)
- Major Spanish-speaking (e.g. Cubans and Mexicans) and Asian (e.g. Chinese, Japanese Korean Vietnamese) immigrant groups who have come to America in the 19th and 20th centuries, locating their countries of origin and where they tended to settle in large numbers.
- Identify major immigrant groups that live in Massachusetts and where they now live in large numbers (e.g. English, Irish, Italians, French Canadians, Armenians, Greeks, Portuguese, Haitians, and Vietnamese).
- Give examples of the major rights that immigrants have acquired as citizens of the United States (e.g. the right to vote and freedom of religion, speech, assembly, and petition).
- Explain the different ways immigrants can become citizens of the United States.

Canada Geography, History, and Culture

Students will:

- Describe the climate, major physical characteristics and major natural resources of Canada and explain their relationship to settlement, trade, and the Canadian economy.
- Investigate the major ethnic and religious groups of modern Canada.
- Explain how Canada became independent.
- Research current issues facing Canada and evaluate proposed solutions.

Mexico Geography, History, and Culture

Students will:

- Describe the climate, major physical characteristics and major natural resources of Mexico and explain their relationship to the Mexican economy.
- Discuss the language, major religion, and peoples of Mexico.
- Explain how Mexico became independent.
- Research current issues facing Mexico and evaluate proposed solutions.

Optional Unit: Central America and the Caribbean

Students will:

- Describe the climate and major natural resources of Central America and the Caribbean islands and explain their relationship to the economy of those regions.
- Identify the different languages used in different countries and the Caribbean region today (e.g. Spanish in Cuba, French in Haiti, English in Barbados and Jamaica).
- Identify when the countries in the Caribbean and in Central America became independent nations and explain how independence was achieved.

V. Skill Learning Expectations by Domain

A. Study Skills by Category

Investigation Skills

Students will:

- Use different types of maps to draw conclusions and make generalizations.
- Collect evidence from text, visuals, and artifacts to support main ideas.

Organization Skills

Students will:

- Make a timeline depicting a chronology of events for an historical period.
- Use data to make maps, charts, and graphs.

Comprehension Skills

Students will:

- Determine importance of main ideas and details.
- Use text features to gather information and understand meaning.

Presentation Skills

Students will:

- Write a report based on text and non-text sources.
- Make oral individual and group presentations.

B. Thinking Skills by Category

Historical Thinking Skills

Students will:

- Assess continuity and change in the experience of North American peoples.
- Explore the causes and consequences of immigration to North America.

Analytical Thinking Skills

Students will:

- Compare and contrast attributes of, for example, the colonies of different countries.
- Perceive and make inferences about the relationships between physical geography and culture.

Organizational Thinking Skills

Students will:

- Summarize essential information.
- Develop hypotheses to explain relationships, for instance, between the way people live and their physical environments.

Critical Thinking Skills

Students will:

- Identify and compare cultural points of view.
- Draw inferential conclusions based on patterns in data.