

# **Elementary Social Studies Curriculum Overview**

## **Grade 1 - My World Near and Far**

The grade 1 social studies program, *My World Near and Far*, focuses on examination of life in communities. In Unit I the students learn about the world of school and explore their roles and responsibilities as individuals and as members of various groups. In Unit II the students learn about being a member of a family group. They will explore the roles and responsibilities of family members and their interdependence upon one another as they make economic choices to meet their wants. In Unit III the students analyze how people interact culturally or socially, politically, and economically in the community. In Unit IV the students explore their relationship with the physical environment. They will identify landforms, bodies of water, and natural resources and describe how these affect their lives. Finally, in Unit V students explore their place in the world. They will learn that the diverse peoples of the world express their own cultures. As they explore places in a world setting, the students learn how transportation and communication networks link places and people.

## **Grade 2 - Living in the Community**

The grade 2 social studies program, *Living in the Community*, focuses on examination of life in communities. In Unit I, the students explore how the geographic characteristics and features of communities and regions promote or limit community development. In Unit II, the students describe the interdependence of producers and consumers of economic goods and services in the community. Citizenship in the community is the focus of Unit III. Finally, in Unit IV, the students develop an understanding of how people in different communities may have similar social needs, but express themselves differently in a rich and diverse cultural tapestry.

## **Grade 3 - The Many People of a Community**

The grade 3 social studies program, *The Many People of a Community*, continues an examination of life in communities. In Unit I the students review concepts of community learned in Grade 2. In Unit 2 *Econ and Me* they learn how people depend on one another for producing, consuming, and selling goods and services. Students will also learn how technology plays an important role in the world of the consumer and the producer. Geography is the focus of Unit 3. Students analyze where people build communities. A case study of Baltimore highlights the skills of the unit. In Unit 4 students learn how citizens in communities elect governments and solve problems. Students learn about important landmarks of Washington, D.C. How people develop culture is the emphasis of Unit 5. In Unit 6 the student takes on the role of an archaeologist to learn about the past.

## **Grade 4 - Our Country's Heritage: Beginnings**

The grade 4 social studies program, *Our Country's Heritage: Beginnings*, makes the study of early United States history engaging and relevant to students. In Unit 1, the students enhance their knowledge of the geography of the country. Knowing the topography and climate of the United States regions will help students in later units to understand the settlement patterns of the

earliest Native Americans and the European newcomers. Also included in Unit 1 is a case study of the geography and economics of the three regions of Maryland. In Unit 2, students learn how different groups of Native Americans settled in diverse geographic regions in the early years of this country, how they modified their culture and ideas to meet the challenges of changing conditions. Students research the history and culture of one of these Native American groups and compare the characteristics of that group to the Eastern Woodland Indians of the Maryland region. The period of exploration is the focus of Unit 3. In this unit students learn about the motivations that caused different nations to send explorers to North America in the 1400s and 1500s. In Unit 4, students learn about the early settlement of the thirteen English colonies. While studying the New England colonies, students explore how increasing economic success led to a decreasing dependence on England as a mother country. This early settlement period introduces students to reasons why people of many cultures and religions settled in the Middle Atlantic colonies. As the study moves to the Southern Colonies, students make connections between an economic dependence on cash crops and the growing institution of slavery. Finally, a case study of the early settlement of Maryland asks students to compare the political, economic, social, and religious institutions in early Maryland with other colonies.

### **Grade 5 - Our Country's Heritage: From Colonies to Country**

The grade 5 social studies program, *Our Country's Heritage: From Colonies to Country*, makes the study of United States history engaging and relevant to students. In Unit 1, "Colonial Regions: 1700-1765," the students explore how the geography of the colonial regions influenced the kind of settlements and economic activity in each region. Students use maps, graphs, and primary sources to make generalizations about life in Colonial America for the gentry, middle, and lower classes. Students also make connections between the growth of plantations in the South and the institutionalization of slavery in America. In Unit 2, "Revolution," students investigate how thirteen original colonies that were loosely connected to each other as colonies of the British Empire became unified in their determination to cut the ties with Great Britain. Students explore the lives of significant people whose contributions are the story of the American Revolution. In Unit 3, "New Government," students gain an understanding of the background and history of the system of government created by our Constitution and the Bill of Rights. It is hoped that students who study the Constitution will see the importance of the document's principles and apply those principles in everyday life. Unit 3 also highlights the importance of being a responsible citizen and protecting the rights named in the Bill of Rights.