Ministry of Education

Saskatchewan Curriculum

Social Studies

7

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January 2026 – Due to the nature of curriculum development, this document is regularly under revision. For the most up-to-date content, please visit: www.curriculum.gov.sk.ca.

Versioning History

This chart provides a summary of revisions made to the final document since publication. The posted document reflects the most recent version.

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Introduction

Social studies is a Required Area of Study in Saskatchewan's Core Curriculum. The provincial requirement for Middle Level social studies is 150 minutes per week (*Core Curriculum: Principles, Time Allocations, and Credit Policy, 2007*).

Social studies education can be defined as the study of people and their relationships with their social, physical, and technological environments. The study of those relationships becomes most relevant when students are encouraged to make connections to their own lives as they explore and apply knowledge, skills, thinking processes, and values.

The social studies program provides opportunity for students to develop a sense of themselves as active participants in their world (personal, local, national, and global). The program encourages students to use the understandings developed to explore and clarify values, discuss issues, question and investigate the world, solve problems, make decisions, and interact with others. Social studies provides students with opportunities to make connections between their own and others' communities, cultures, and environments, and to take action in relevant and meaningful ways that give students a sense of accomplishment and a belief that they can make a difference.

This curriculum includes the following information to support social studies education in Saskatchewan schools:

- Core Curriculum
- Broad Areas of Learning
- Cross-curricular Competencies
- K - 12 Aim and Goals for Social Studies and Social Sciences education
- Teaching Social Studies
- Outcomes and Indicators for Grade 7
- Assessment and Evaluation
- Connections to Other Areas of Study
- Glossary.

Support materials available online will include:

- instructional support materials
- assessment and evaluation support materials
- listing of recommended resources.

Core Curriculum

Core Curriculum is intended to provide all Saskatchewan students with an education that will serve them well regardless of their choices after leaving school. Through its various components and initiatives, Core Curriculum supports the achievement of the Goals of Education for Saskatchewan. For current information regarding Core Curriculum, please refer to *Core Curriculum: Principles, Time Allocations, and Credit Policy* (August 2007) found on the Saskatchewan Ministry of Education website.

The Broad Areas of Learning and Cross-curricular Competencies connect the specificity of the areas of study and the day-to-day work of teachers with the broader philosophy of Core Curriculum and the Goals of Education for Saskatchewan.

Broad Areas of Learning

There are three Broad Areas of Learning that reflect Saskatchewan's Goals of Education. Social studies contributes to the Goals of Education through helping students achieve knowledge, skills, and attitudes related to these Broad Areas of Learning.

Building Lifelong Learners

Related to the following Goals of Education:
- *Basic Skills*
- *Lifelong Learning*
- *Self Concept Development*
- *Positive Lifestyle*

Students engaged in constructing and applying social studies knowledge naturally build a positive disposition towards learning. Throughout their study of social studies, students bring a natural curiosity about their world. This curiosity provides the motivation to discover and explore their personal interests more deeply. Positive values and attitudes about learning involve curiosity and interest with respect to social studies questions, and a sense of wonder regarding the human and natural environments. A spirit of inquiry and the enjoyment of the pursuit of knowledge are integral to social studies education. As students engage in the learning process, they enhance their appreciation of the significance and relevance of questions and issues related to social studies.

Building a Sense of Self and Community

Related to the following Goals of Education:
- *Understanding & Relating to Others*
- *Self Concept Development*
- *Positive Lifestyle*
- *Spiritual Development*

Diversity is a fundamental aspect of human interaction. Living together as members of society requires understanding and appreciation of human diversity and diverse perspectives. Diverse perspectives are reflected throughout social studies curricula and enable students to develop an awareness of differing understandings and worldviews. As students think

critically about contemporary and historical ideas, events, and issues from diverse perspectives, students gain a richer understanding of themselves and of the complexity of cultures, communities, and societies. This understanding enables students to interact with others with sensitivity and open-mindedness, and to respect their own and others' ways of seeing the world. As students consider diverse perspectives in their choices, decisions, and actions, they will be better able to live with others in a pluralistic society (WNCP, 2002, K-9 framework of social studies outcomes, p. 19).

Building Engaged Citizens

Related to the following Goals of Education:

- *Understanding & Relating to Others*
- *Positive Lifestyle*
- *Career and Consumer Decisions*
- *Membership in Society*
- *Growing with Change*

The development of values and attitudes, knowledge and understanding, and skills and processes that support active and responsible citizenship is fundamental to social studies education. As active and responsible citizens, students engage in discussions and take action as members of communities – locally, nationally, and globally. The concept of citizenship provides a foundation that enables students to understand and become committed to democratic ideals.

Citizenship involves the ability and willingness to contribute to collective well-being through personal and collective decisions and actions. Students will explore historical and contemporary issues and ideas related to citizenship to develop an understanding of citizenship in the local, national, and global contexts. Students will engage in discussion, negotiation, consensus building, and conflict resolution. As students interact and explore diverse perspectives, they will build the competencies required for active and responsible citizenship in the Canadian context. Values and attitudes that support active and responsible citizenship are central to social studies learning. These include respect for democratic ideals such as justice and equality, and appreciation of the rights, privileges, and responsibilities of citizenship. Active citizenship also involves willingness to engage in discussion, negotiation, debate, and action regarding Canadian and global social issues. Students will examine the contribution individuals can make to the economic, environmental, and social sustainability of communities.

Cross-curricular Competencies

The Cross-curricular Competencies are four interrelated areas containing understandings, values, skills, and processes which are considered important for learning in all areas of study. These competencies reflect the Common Essential Learnings and are

intended to be addressed in each area of study at each grade level.

Developing Thinking

- *thinking and learning contextually*
- *thinking and learning creatively*
- *thinking and learning critically*

Learners construct knowledge to make sense of the world around them. In social studies, students develop understanding by building on what is already known and use processes such as thinking contextually, initiating and engaging in inquiry, thinking creatively, and thinking critically. This curriculum is inquiry-based and students use their thinking skills to explore a range of questions, topics, issues, and themes in a variety of contexts. Thinking contextually, creatively, and critically enables students to make observations and decisions and to solve problems. These skills involve making connections among concepts and applying a variety of cognitive tools. Creative thinking emphasizes divergent thinking, the generation of ideas and possibilities, and the exploration of diverse approaches to questions. Critical thinking involves the use of criteria and evidence to make reasoned judgements. These judgements include distinguishing fact from opinion, evaluating information and ideas, identifying perspectives and bias, and the consideration of the consequences of decisions and actions.

Developing Identity and Interdependence

- *understanding, valuing, and caring for oneself*
- *understanding, valuing, and respecting human diversity and human rights and responsibilities*
- *understanding and valuing social and environmental interdependence and sustainability*

A strong sense of identity is a necessary foundation for interpersonal relationships, and contributes to students' abilities to participate in their communities as active and responsible citizens. Identities are shaped by many factors including culture, language, ethnic heritage, spiritual beliefs, socio-economic situation, gender identity, personal characteristics, time, and place. Identity formation is an ongoing process that involves observation, reflection, and interaction with others. Individuals affirm who they are by becoming aware of what distinguishes themselves from others, as well as what connects themselves to others. Social studies learning provides opportunities for students to develop self-awareness, and to enrich their personal identities and self-esteem. Focusing on identity and interdependence strengthens students' understanding of who they are as individuals and as social beings. As students reflect on and express who they are, they build upon their identities as contributing members of interdependent groups and communities.

An appreciation of the dependence of human beings upon nature and respect for the natural environment are also important values in social studies. An attitude of stewardship

for the land implies a willingness to adapt one's lifestyle in order to contribute to the well-being of the environment. An awareness of the impact of human societies and activities on the environment enables students to make decisions that reflect concern for present and future quality of life.

Developing Literacies

Multiple literacies involve a continuum of interrelated skills, strategies, and knowledge that contribute to the development of an individual's ability to participate in a variety of roles and situations in the school, home, and community. Literacies provide a variety of ways, including the use of language and technology, to interpret the world and express understanding of it through words, numbers, images, sounds, movements, or other representations. In social studies, development of literacies related to the various social science disciplines (e.g., cultural literacy, economic literacy, geographic literacy, historical literacy) complements development of literacies in other areas of study.

- *constructing knowledge related to various literacies*
- *exploring and interpreting the world through various literacies*
- *expressing understanding and communicating meaning using various literacies*

Developing Social Responsibility

Social studies supports students in participating actively and responsibly in a changing pluralistic society. Important values and attitudes in social studies relate to self, others, community, environment, and citizenship. Positive values and attitudes concerning self involve a sense of personal worth and efficacy. The belief that one can contribute to collective well-being and make a positive difference in society begins with self-esteem and is supported by a sense of connectedness to others. This belief supports the development of values such as respect, integrity, responsibility, and commitment.

- *using moral reasoning processes*
- *engaging in communitarian thinking and dialogue*
- *contributing to the well-being of self, others, and the natural world*

Attitudes with respect to others are grounded in respect for the value and dignity of all human beings. This is reflected in a concern for quality of life and a willingness to understand and respect diversity in individuals, groups, cultures, communities, and societies. Appreciating human diversity implies a critical consideration of one's own and others' perspectives. Such a consideration involves acknowledging the limitations of personal perspectives in understanding the world, and enables students to identify and speak out against intolerance, prejudice, racism, and other forms of discrimination. Social studies helps students become informed, active, and

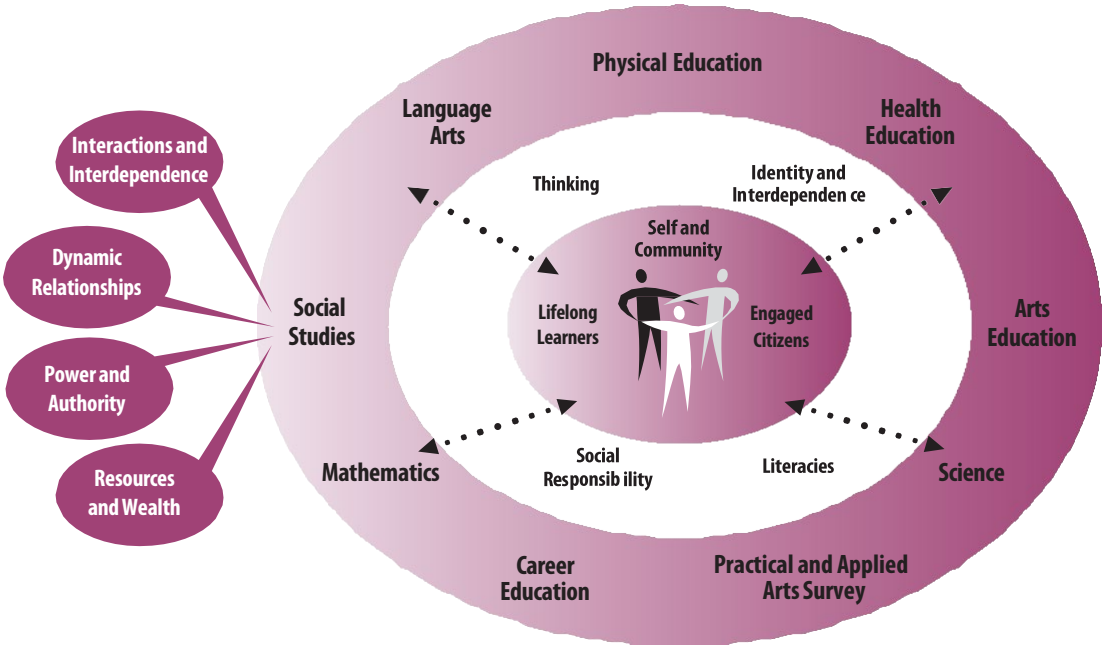
responsible members of communities. Positive values and attitudes regarding community involve a sense of belonging and membership. A sense of belonging enables students to make choices that are motivated by concern for collective well-being. Values such as respect, a sense of personal and collective responsibility, and an appreciation of human interdependence within local, national, and global communities are fundamental to social studies education.

Aim and Goals of Social Studies and the Social Sciences

The purpose of Kindergarten to Grade 12 Social Studies is to help students know and appreciate the past, understand the present, influence the future, and make connections between events and issues of the past, the present, and the future. Further, its purpose is to make students aware that, just as contemporary events have been shaped by actions taken by people in the past, they have the opportunity to shape the future. The ultimate aim is for students who have a sense of themselves as active participants and citizens in an inclusive, culturally diverse, interdependent world.

Goals are broad statements identifying what students are expected to know and be able to do upon completion of the learning in a particular area of study. The four goals of K-12 Social Studies and Social Sciences education are to:

- examine the local, indigenous, and global interactions and interdependence of individuals, societies, cultures, and nations (IN)
- analyze the dynamic relationships of people with land, environments, events, and ideas as they have affected the past, shape the present, and influence the future (DR)
- investigate the processes and structures of power and authority, and the implications for individuals, communities, and nations (PA)
- examine various worldviews about the use and distribution of resources and wealth in relation to the needs of individuals, communities, nations, and the natural environment, and contribute to sustainable development (RW).



The Interactions and Interdependence goal (IN) recognizes and encompasses the disciplines of anthropology, archaeology, philosophy, psychology, and sociology within the social studies and social sciences, while the Dynamic Relationships goal (DR) recognizes and encompasses the disciplines of geography and history. As well, the Power and Authority goal (PA) recognizes and encompasses the disciplines of political science and law, while the Resources and Wealth goal (RW) recognizes and encompasses the disciplines of economics and environmental studies.

Teaching Social Studies

The role of social studies education is to help students develop the values and attitudes, knowledge and understanding, and skills and processes necessary to become active and responsible citizens, engaged in the practice of democratic ideals and aware of their capacity to effect change. Social studies supports active and responsible citizenship by enabling students to:

- understand their rights and responsibilities in order to participate fully in society
- demonstrate a critical understanding of the role of social, political, economic, and legal institutions as they relate to individual and collective well-being
- understand and appreciate the unique nature of Canada, its land, history, complexities, and current issues
- understand and honour the traditions, concepts, and symbols that are the expression of Canadian identities

- thrive in their evolving cultural and Canadian identities with a legitimate sense of belonging to their communities, Canada, and the world
- appreciate and respect diverse Canadian cultural perspectives, including Aboriginal and Francophone, and understand how these perspectives have shaped Canada's political and cultural realities
- value the diversity, respect the dignity, and support the equality of all human beings
- develop a sense of social compassion, fairness, and justice
- recognize, speak out, and take action against injustice as it occurs in their schools, communities, Canada, and the world
- understand Canadian and world history, to better comprehend the present and to influence the future wisely for the well-being of all
- critically consider and understand historic and contemporary issues, including controversial issues, from diverse perspectives
- develop a global consciousness with respect to the human condition and world issues
- understand how political and economic distributions of power affect individuals, communities, nations, and environments
- understand geographic concepts and skills, and that humans exist in a dynamic relationship with the natural environment
- develop a consciousness and sense of stewardship for the land, as well as an understanding of the principles of sustainability
- engage in problem solving and conflict resolution with an awareness of the ethical consequences of decision making
- engage in active inquiry and critical and creative thinking
- conduct research ethically using diverse methods and sources, and organize, interpret, and present their findings, and defend their opinions
- use and manage information and communication technologies
- develop effective communication skills
- develop collaborative and cooperative skills.

(WNCP, 2002, K-9 framework of social studies outcomes, p. 7)

Grade Seven – Canada and Our Pacific and Northern Neighbours

Grade 7 students will explore Canada's northern and Pacific neighbours. They will consider contemporary and historical issues related to land and resource use, survival, and adaptation to the environment. This consideration will include an exploration of diverse cultural and artistic expressions. Students will examine intercultural contact, and the movement of indigenous peoples and immigrants. They will explore the settlement of diverse groups and will consider how people lived with, changed, and were changed by their environments over time. Students will also discover Canada's connections to other Pacific and circumpolar regions. Through this inquiry into Canada's historical influences and northern connections, students will develop an understanding of the complex nature of Canada's evolving identity.

Themes for Grades 6-9 Social Studies:

- *Grade 6 – Canada and Our Atlantic Neighbours*
- *Grade 7 – Canada and Our Pacific and Northern Neighbours*
- *Grade 8 – The Individual in Canadian Society*
- *Grade 9 – The Roots of Society.*

Students may explore some, or all, of the Pacific Rim and northern countries listed below. While the countries listed provide the content for the units in this course, teachers may find it more relevant at times to have students explore other countries of immediate global importance or that are currently in the news.

Argentina	El Salvador	Korea	Finland
Chile	Guatemala	Vietnam	Sweden
Peru	Mexico	Indonesia	Norway
Ecuador	Malaysia	Iceland	Australia
Colombia	Canada	Philippines	Greenland
Panama	Russia	New Guinea	Denmark
Costa Rica	China	United States (Alaska, Hawaii)	
Nicaragua	Japan	New Zealand	

Teaching and Learning Principles

The following principles are fundamental beliefs intended to guide and support decisions related to teaching and learning – decisions about curriculum, classroom environment, resource selection, instruction, and assessment and evaluation. The following principles, based upon current research and knowledge about teaching and learning, are designed to guide instruction and learning in Middle Level social studies.

Learning

Students learn most effectively in environments that promote active learning through purposeful and challenging experiences.

Teaching

Instructional strategies that facilitate active learning include exploration, inquiry, problem solving, decision making, discussion, debate, and reflection. Topics should be personally, as well as academically, meaningful.

Learning	Teaching
Students learn and develop in different ways and at varying rates.	Instructional strategies that appeal to a variety of learning styles provide opportunities for interaction and collaboration, as well as for independent learning. Assessment criteria should be identified for both process and product.
Students learn most effectively when they know and actively select and apply strategies to develop understanding and make meaning.	Instruction should provide opportunities for students to learn a variety of strategies for understanding, generating, and applying new knowledge, skills, and attitudes.
Students learn most effectively when they find personal relevance in the concepts, knowledge, skills, and values being taught.	Instruction should clearly establish connections between what is taught and students' current lives and situations, supporting meaningful connections between the students' prior knowledge and experiences and newly acquired knowledge and experiences.
Students learn to be effective citizens, locally and globally, when they see themselves as active participants in an interdependent world.	Instruction should provide opportunities to develop, value, and practise citizenship skills as students explore, reflect on issues, construct thoughtful points of view, and recommend and engage in appropriate actions based upon adequate knowledge and consideration.
Students develop a sound understanding of their abilities and needs when assessment and evaluation are integral components of the learning process.	Assessment and evaluation should be continuous, and consist of a variety of methods of collecting, sharing, and using data. Teachers should provide frequent opportunities for students to assess and evaluate their own learning and performance, and to set goals for further learning. Assessment and evaluation must address skills and processes, as well as content and products.
Students develop and clarify their own views and values, and come to understand and respect the views and values of others through opportunities to reflect on information and ideas from a variety of perspectives.	Instruction should use a variety of strategies to encourage students to examine, clarify, and reflect upon their values and viewpoints, as well as to consider and discuss several perspectives regarding a variety of concepts, issues, and topics. In addition, teachers should encourage students to celebrate their Canadian identity, while fostering multicultural and global perspectives that help students to respect and understand other people's cultures and viewpoints.
Students' language skills and abilities are integral to their learning, both independently and collaboratively.	Instruction should engage students in the language processes of listening, speaking, reading, writing, viewing, and representing, and should provide support for students as they use these processes to develop concepts and clarify and extend their understanding of subject-specific material and vocabulary.

Learning

Students at the Middle Level display unique developmental characteristics. While no two individuals are the same, in general, these students are experiencing physical, emotional, moral, ethical, social, and intellectual growth and change at a rate more rapid than at any other stage of their lives.

Teaching

Instruction is most successful with Middle Level students if their characteristics are acknowledged and taken into consideration when planning or implementing learning situations and activities.

Teaching Controversial Issues

The teaching of value-laden issues has generated much controversy. Some argue that, in a pluralistic society, there can be no broad consensus on values. People who adopt this assumption argue that social studies education has to be objective and value free in order to avoid offending certain points of view. A second position is to provide students with opportunities to clarify their personal values, contemplate the consequences of those values, and decide for themselves what they will or will not accept. A third position is to argue that there is some basic consensus on fundamental moral and ethical values in Canadian society and that these values can be taught in a meaningful way.

It is assumed in social studies that there are fundamental values on which there is agreement. It is also assumed that there are many disagreements and that students need to learn to deal with diverse beliefs. The social studies and social sciences curricula provide students with learning experiences that help identify some of the fundamental value positions of society and understand how these arose. In order to achieve the K-12 goals of social studies and social sciences curricula, students must be exposed to a variety of viewpoints and beliefs. This does not suggest, however, that any belief is as good as any other belief. Canadian society does not accept that premise, and that impression should not be given to students. Therefore, this curriculum makes no attempt to be value free.

> *"Social issues can be one of the most interesting and important components of the social studies curriculum. They add vitality to the curriculum and help make it significant for both students and teachers."*
> *Banks & Banks, 1999, p. 196*

Social studies provides students with opportunities to examine controversial issues. Contemplating these issues will provide students with the opportunity to apply concepts and higher order thinking skills in organizing, interpreting, and communicating information meaningfully. In this process, students can begin to understand the role of values as the

basis for making inferences. It is, then, a natural progression to understanding that values provide us with evaluative criteria and we depend upon the traditions of Canadian society to provide us with guidelines. A short list of these criteria would include human dignity, basic rights, and responsibilities as defined in the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms, and respect and acceptance of individual differences.

When addressing values in the classroom, teachers should be aware of family and community standards. Teachers should also consult the *Renewed Objectives for the Common Essential Learnings of Critical and Creative Thinking (CCT) and Personal and Social Development (PSD)* for support in addressing controversial issues. Educational decisions related to values in the classroom should reflect these standards as well as those in the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms. If a controversy arises between positions taken by family and community and that of the Charter, students should be encouraged to engage in dialectical thinking about the various positions before arriving at their personal value position.

Multicultural Content, Perspectives, and Resources

Multicultural education fosters understanding, acceptance, empathy, and constructive and harmonious relations among people of diverse cultures. It encourages learners of all ages to view cultures different from their own as sources of learning and enrichment.

> *"Multiculturalism is a recognition of the diversity of cultural differences which exist in a pluralistic society and an endorsement of a society in which individuals of all cultures are accepted and accorded respect."*
>
> *Saskatchewan Education, 1994, p. 1*

While the first and most lasting influence on children and youth is that of the home environment, educators and educational institutions have a responsibility to prepare children to function in our culturally diverse society. The educational system must address a variety of issues with cultural diversity in mind: additional language programming, teaching and learning styles, curriculum and resource materials, teacher attitudes and expectations, student groupings, and assessment and evaluation. Sound teaching practices such as being aware of a student's social and psychological background, encouraging the development of self-esteem, and responding to individual needs are consistent with the philosophy underlying multicultural education.

Multicultural Education and Heritage Language Education Policies (Saskatchewan Education, 1994) identifies goals that provide a foundation for multicultural education in the classroom. These goals, exemplified below, include self-concept development,

understanding and relating to others, spiritual development, and membership in society.

To demonstrate and promote cultural respect and understanding, teachers can:

- affirm each student as unique and important
- accept and respect the language that each student brings to the classroom
- become educated about the cultural backgrounds of their students
- determine if unexpected behaviours and actions reflect a student's culture
- respect students' knowledge about their own cultures
- build a classroom environment that encourages inclusion and validation of student's language usage and abilities, and varied cultural and ethnic backgrounds
- deal with racist incidents in a direct manner, if they occur
- view students of all cultures as having equal potential
- become informed about a variety of cultures and inform their students
- help students to understand that individual identities are shaped by many factors, one of which is cultural background
- give students opportunities to select and respond to resources listened to, read, and viewed
- encourage students to read, view, and listen to a variety of resources and media representative of cultural groups with which students do and do not identify
- encourage students to take risks when expressing themselves in spoken and written forms
- use interpreters for second language speakers (e.g., parents, community members)
- use a variety of instructional and assessment strategies to accommodate students' cultural learning preferences and backgrounds
- develop students' collaborative and cooperative skills and attitudes through group work, problem-solving discussions, and consensus activities
- encourage students to talk and write about their experiences and places where students have lived or travelled
- provide opportunities for students to tell their stories orally, in writing, or through other representations
- choose resources and media selections that represent a diversity of cultures and cultural perspectives
- discuss stereotypical beliefs and cultural biases in resources and media.

The inclusion of multicultural content, perspectives, and resources in social studies helps students to develop multicultural perspectives that prepare students to live more enriched and compassionate lives while contributing harmoniously to a pluralistic society.

Portrayal of Persons with Disabilities

Persons with disabilities have often been depicted inaccurately in print, media, and other classroom resources. Stereotypical depictions have served to give readers, listeners, and viewers inappropriate information and have engendered attitudes ranging from feelings of pity or revulsion to expectations of superhuman powers of intellect. It is critical that social studies teachers use materials that portray persons with disabilities realistically and fairly.

"It is important to be aware that literature, the media, and other resources frequently portray people with disabilities in a stereotypical way."
Heim, 1994, p. 140

Wherever possible, ability rather than disability should be emphasized. Instructional materials should convey respect for the individuality of all persons, including those with disabilities. When evaluating material for use in the social studies classroom, the teacher should consider the following:

- Accurate and up-to-date information should be used in the resource to describe the disability. The best approach is one where aspects of the disability are revealed, not as the main focus of the text, but through the unfolding of the documentary or story.
- Stereotypes frequently found in media portrayals of people with disabilities include: pitiable and pathetic, objects of violence, or burdens who are incapable of fully participating in everyday life. Materials that include characters or people with disabilities should provide an insight into the feelings and thoughts of the individuals with disabilities. The characters or people should not be used to provoke certain feelings and thoughts in the reader, listener, or viewer (e.g., pity).

Worldview in Social Studies and Social Sciences Curricula

A worldview is a description of reality providing natural and believable knowledge which is generally accepted by the members of a cultural group, because it meets their needs, creates order and coherence, and provides a basis for predictions. A worldview acts as a template providing people with a set of beliefs about the reality in which people find themselves. Critical attributes include:

- spiritual beliefs defining the meaning and purpose of existence

- moral beliefs about people's rights and obligations
- social beliefs about the organization of individuals into a society
- intellectual beliefs about determining truth and beauty
- economic beliefs about creating and distributing wealth
- political beliefs about making and enforcing decisions within society.

Societal belief systems play an important role in guiding human behaviour. Individuals in societies use beliefs to guide behaviour because they provide authority, stability, and predictability regarding issues that are important and/or controversial. Each society has fundamental belief systems from which people draw the core of their personal beliefs and behaviours. These collective belief systems are the basis for a society's worldview. Compatible worldviews are necessary for the orderly functioning of a society because they determine:

- what things are worth working for (purposes)
- what things are worth believing (values)
- those ideas that are acceptable (based on values)
- those things considered beautiful, pleasurable, fun, tragic, and/or comic (aesthetics)
- those things that are worth enforcing (rules and laws).

> *"Worldview is a comprehensive view or philosophy of life, the world and the universe. Worldview can be described as a philosophy or view of life that shapes how we interact and respond to the world around us. Our own worldview influences, shapes and interprets what we experience, and provides us with a sense of vision for the future."*
>
> *Office of the Treaty Commissioner, 2008, p. 60*

Through social studies and social sciences curricula, students investigate the worldviews of various societies and cultures in their achievement of the K-12 goals and grade specific outcomes.

Inquiry in Social Studies

Inquiry learning provides students with opportunities to build knowledge, abilities, and inquiring habits of mind that lead to deeper understanding of their world and human experience. Inquiry is more than a simple instructional method. It is a philosophical approach to teaching and learning, grounded in constructivist research and methods, which engages students in investigations that lead to disciplinary and transdisciplinary understanding.

Inquiry builds on students' inherent sense of curiosity and wonder, drawing on their diverse backgrounds, interests, and experiences. The process provides opportunities for students to become active participants in a collaborative search for meaning and understanding. Students who are engaged in inquiry:

- construct knowledge and deep understanding rather than passively receiving it

> *"Inquiry is a philosophical stance rather than a set of strategies, activities, or a particular teaching method. As such, inquiry promotes intentional and thoughtful learning for teachers and children."*
> *Mills & Donnelly, 2001, p. xvii*

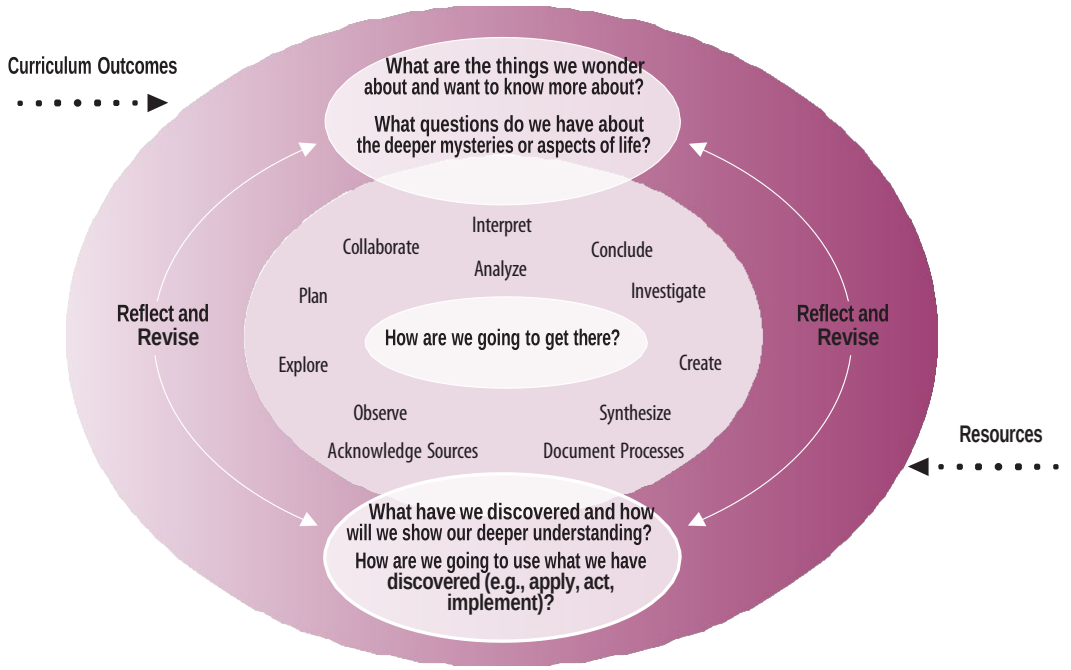
- are directly involved and engaged in the discovery of new knowledge
- encounter alternative perspectives and differing ideas that transform prior knowledge and experience into deep understandings
- transfer new knowledge and skills to new circumstances
- take ownership and responsibility for their ongoing learning and mastery of curriculum content and skills.

(Adapted from Kuhlthau & Todd, 2008, p. 1)

An important part of any inquiry process is student reflection on their learning and the documentation needed to assess the learning and make it visible. Student documentation of the inquiry process in social studies and the social sciences may take the form of works-in-progress, reflective writing, reports, notes, three-dimensional models, arts expressions, photographs, video footage, action plans, and various other representations.

Inquiry learning is not a step-by-step process, but rather a cyclical process, with various phases of the process being revisited and rethought as a result of students' discoveries, insights, and construction of new knowledge. Experienced inquirers will move back and forth among various phases as new questions arise and as students become more comfortable with the process. The following graphic shows various phases of this cyclical inquiry process.

Constructing Understanding Through Inquiry



Inquiry focuses on the development of questions to initiate and guide the learning process. These questions are formulated by teachers and students to motivate inquiries into topics, problems, and issues related to curriculum content and outcomes.

Well-formulated inquiry questions are broad in scope and rich in possibilities. Such questions encourage students to explore, observe, gather information, plan, analyze, interpret, synthesize, problem solve, take risks, create, conclude, document, reflect on learning, and develop new questions for further inquiry.

Creating Questions for Inquiry in Social Studies

Teachers and students can begin their inquiry at one or more curriculum entry points; however, the process may evolve into transdisciplinary integrated learning opportunities, as reflective of the holistic nature of our lives and interdependent global environment. It is essential to develop questions that are evoked by student interests and have potential for rich and deep learning. These questions are used to initiate and guide the inquiry and give students direction for investigating topics, problems, ideas, challenges, or issues under study. The process of constructing questions for deep understanding can help students grasp the important disciplinary or transdisciplinary ideas that are situated at the core of a particular curricular focus or context. These broad questions lead to more specific questions that can provide a framework, purpose, and direction for the learning activities in a lesson, or series of lessons, and help students connect what they are learning to their experiences and life beyond school.

> *"… questions stimulate thought, provoke inquiry, and spark more questions—not just pat answers..... The best questions point to and highlight the big ideas."*
>
> *Wiggins & McTighe, 2005, p. 106*

Questions give students some initial direction for uncovering the understandings associated with a unit of study. Questions can help students grasp the big disciplinary ideas surrounding a focus or context and related themes or topics. They provide a framework, purpose, and direction for the learning activities in each unit and help students connect what they are learning to their experiences and life beyond the classroom. They also invite and encourage students to pose their own questions for deeper understanding. When devising essential questions that lead to deeper understanding, teachers and students should note that these questions should:

- cause genuine and relevant inquiry into the key ideas and core content
- provide for thoughtful, lively discussion, sustained inquiry, and new understanding as well as more questions

- require students to consider alternatives, weigh evidence, support their ideas, and justify their answers
- stimulate vital, ongoing rethinking of big ideas, assumptions, and prior lessons
- spark meaningful connections with prior learning, personal experiences, and ways of knowing
- naturally recur, creating opportunities for transfer to other situations and subjects.

(Adapted from Wiggins & McTighe, 2005, p. 110)

Effective questioning is essential for teaching and student learning and should be an integral part of planning in social studies. Questioning should also be used to encourage students to reflect on the inquiry process and the documentation and assessment of their own learning.

Social studies inquiry involves the exploration of issues, questions, or problems. The inquiry process begins with the natural curiosity of students and draws upon their prior knowledge. Throughout the process, students engage in creative and critical thinking, carry out research, and design creative responses to questions. Students use a variety of strategies to plan inquiry and analyze issues, and to make decisions or devise innovative approaches to problems that may or may not have solutions.

Through the inquiry process, students strive to understand and explain the world. They pose problems or seek information about relevant issues or questions. It is important that students consider diverse perspectives as they evaluate alternatives and explore consequences. Central to this process is an awareness of the complexity and change inherent in issues related to social studies.

As students inquire into issues, they explore diverse choices and possibilities, and may make decisions or take action. Where resolution is not possible, students may pose new questions or plan alternative approaches. An important part of this process is a consideration of the beliefs, values, and implications of various alternatives. This complex process includes weighing priorities, predicting consequences, negotiating compromises, and making decisions or exploring possibilities.

Questions for deep understanding in social studies are the key to initiating and guiding students' investigations and critical thinking, problem solving, and reflection on their own learning. In Grade Seven, questions such as, "What is the state of the environment in Pacific and northern countries?", "How do various systems of government in Pacific and Northern countries compare to Canada?", and "How does globalization affect Canada and Pacific and northern countries?" are examples of questions that will move students' inquiry toward deeper understanding.

Outcomes and Indicators

Goal: To examine the local, indigenous, and global interactions and interdependence of individuals, societies, cultures, and nations. (IN)

Outcomes (What students are expected to know and be able to do.)	**Indicators** (Students who have achieved this outcome should be able to:)
IN7.1 Investigate examples of conflict, cooperation, and interdependence between Canada and circumpolar and Pacific Rim countries.	a. Examine the mission, goals, and structure of an organization whose mandate is national or international co-operation (e.g., United Nations, NORAD, NAFTA, APEC, Organization of American States, Association of Southeast Asian Nations, Western Aboriginal Development Alliance). b. Critique the influence of an organization with a mandate for national or international co-operation in terms of its contributions toward conflict, cooperation, self-reliance, and interdependence. c. Diagnose reasons for a current or historical conflict involving Canada and a circumpolar or Pacific Rim country. d. Create an inventory illustrating the interdependence of Canada and circumpolar and Pacific Rim countries.
IN7.2 Examine the effects of globalization on the lives of people in Canada and in circumpolar and Pacific Rim countries.	a. Identify the countries of origin of people, or of personal objects or tools (e.g., clothing, foods, friends, classmates, teachers, electronic equipment, favourite websites). b. Investigate the international links of a Saskatchewan business. c. Define globalization, and identify examples of globalization in the local community. d. Analyze the economic impact of globalization in relation to the effects on the environment. e. Articulate and interpret the main arguments for and against globalization. f. Conduct an inquiry to determine the effects of globalization on the local community.
IN7.3 Analyze the relationship of technology to globalization.	a. Identify technological connections that exist in the student's life, and classify them as local, national, or international. b. Analyze the risks and benefits related to various technologies. c. Develop an argument that addresses the impact of technology and globalization on societies.

Goal: To analyze the dynamic relationships of people with land, environments, events, and ideas as they have affected the past, shape the present, and influence the future. (DR)

Outcomes (What students are expected to know and be able to do.)	**Indicators** (Students who have achieved this outcome should be able to:)
DR7.1 Analyze and use various types of maps (that provide differing perspectives and information for differing purposes) in order to situate current issues in Canada, and in a selection of Pacific Rim and northern circumpolar countries.	a. Locate the continents and significant physical features (e.g., landforms, water bodies, climatic zones, vegetation zones) on a world map. b. Identify the major population clusters in Canada, and in a selection of Pacific Rim and northern circumpolar countries and locate them on a map. c. Locate and identify Treaty territories on a map of Canada. d. Examine maps of various projections and scales (e.g., Mercator, Peters, circumpolar, plate tectonics) in order to determine the characteristics and application of each map. e. Examine and propose the advantages, limitations, and potential uses of a variety of types of maps (e.g., Mercator, Peters, circumpolar, plate tectonics). f. Describe the nature of the physical, political, and population geography of Pacific and northern Canada, and of a selection of Pacific Rim and circumpolar countries using data from various maps, charts, and graphs. g. Construct generalizations about the nature of the physical, political, and population geography in Pacific and northern Canada, and in a selection of Pacific Rim and circumpolar countries.
DR7.2 Appraise the impact of human habitation on the natural environment in Canada, and in a selection of Pacific Rim and northern circumpolar countries.	a. Identify the influence of physical features such as water bodies, topography, and natural resources on the location of people in Pacific and northern Canada (including the traditional homelands of indigenous peoples) and in a selection of Pacific Rim and circumpolar countries. b. Examine the effects of humans and their technology on the natural environment in Canada, and in a selection of Pacific Rim and circumpolar countries, including the consequences for indigenous peoples who inhabit those regions (e.g., over harvesting of salmon fishery, increased incidence of severe weather, influence of logging industry on the natural world and ecosystems, effects of deforestation and coral removal, and efforts to reclaim shorelines and restore the natural barriers).

Outcomes	Indicators
DR7.2 continued	c. Explore situations where changes in the environment, induced naturally or by humans, have resulted in the relocation of peoples in Canada, and in a selection of Pacific Rim and circumpolar countries, including indigenous peoples who inhabit those regions. Explain the reasons for the relocation and its consequences.
	d. Trace examples of current effects of climate change on the movement of peoples (e.g., melting of the polar icecap and greater accessibility to the North-West Passage and the oil underneath) and hypothesize about the potential effects of climate change on the movement of peoples in the future.
	e. Explore the Treaty relationship and the values and beliefs associated with sharing the land.
DR7.3 Analyze the relationship between current and historical events and the physical and social environments in Pacific and northern Canada and in a selection of Pacific Rim and circumpolar countries.	a. Relate current issues to location by using physical maps, political maps, and population maps of Canada, and a selection of Pacific Rim and circumpolar countries in order to understand the role of geography in shaping political events (e.g., sovereignty over the North-West Passage, Western intervention in other countries, political alliances, adoption of a system of government) and economic activity (e.g., economic alliances, trading partners, exploitation of resources, impact of the reserve system on First Nations populations) in Canada, and a selection of Pacific Rim and circumpolar countries.
	b. Examine the effects of natural or human catastrophes on affected populations, and, by extension, on the history of human habitation of the region.
	c. Analyze the influence of contact with another culture on the Aboriginal peoples of Canada, circumpolar countries, and a selection of Pacific Rim countries (e.g., the influence of Europeans on the indigenous peoples of Canada, Mexico, and Australia).
	d. Assess the effects of relocations and deportations of affected groups in Canada, and in circumpolar and Pacific Rim countries (e.g., the Acadian deportation, the treatment of European immigrants during WWI, the internment of Japanese-Canadians in WW2, First Nations children in Canada and Australia abducted from their homes to attend residential schools).
	e. Conduct an inquiry synthesizing the link between historical events, population dynamics, and environment.
	f. Investigate relationships within and among select circumpolar and Pacific Rim countries to determine reasons for current political and economic relationships.

Outcome	Indicators
DR7.3 continued	g. Debate the positions of circumpolar and Pacific Rim countries with respect to climate change.

Goal: To investigate the processes and structures of power and authority, and the implications for individuals, communities, and nations. (PA)

Outcomes (What students are expected to know and be able to do.)	**Indicators** (Students who have achieved this outcome should be able to:)
PA7.1 Compare the sources of power for individuals, nations, and regions in a selection of Pacific Rim and circumpolar countries.	a. Describe the source of power (resources, numbers, organization) and forms of power (force, authority, influence) used by individuals in a position of leadership in the local community or a local organization. b. Analyze the sources of power, including organization, resources (technological, human, and military), and numbers, evidenced in the exercise of power by an individual, organization, or nation as described in a current events article. c. Assess the sources of power held by the First Nations and the Europeans respectively in the negotiations of the treaty which governs the local area. d. Identify examples of the use of co-operation balance and harmony as a sources of power used to effect change in the local, provincial, national, or international community (e.g., service organizations, trade unions, First Nations and Métis organizations, co-operative movements, advocacy groups). e. Analyze the sources of power of a national leader of a Pacific Rim or circumpolar country.
PA7.2 Investigate the structures and processes of democratic government in Canada.	a. Survey the principles of democracy as defined by family, school, and community members, and synthesize into a definition of democracy. b. Compare the responsibilities of municipal, provincial or territorial, and federal and First Nations governments in Canada. c. Describe the roles of the elected representatives in the local (reeve, mayor, councillor), provincial or territorial (member of the legislative assembly), federal (member of parliament), First Nations (councillor, chief) system of government and Métis governance structures. d. Investigate the federal, provincial or territorial, or local election processes in Canada.

Outcome	Indicators
PA7.2 continued	e. Chart the structures of Canadian government at the local, provincial, and national levels.
PA7.3 Compare the strengths and weaknesses of oligarchy, dictatorship, and democracy as systems of government.	a. Examine the systems of government of circumpolar or Pacific Rim countries which are not democracies (e.g., China, North Korea, Vietnam, Fiji). b. Contrast the systems of government of the non-democracies in circumpolar and Pacific Rim countries with Canada's system of government. c. Identify the criteria by which countries are described as dictatorships, oligarchies, or democracies. d. Analyze the strengths and weaknesses of democracy, oligarchy, and dictatorship as systems of government.

Goal: To examine various worldviews about the use and distribution of resources and wealth in relation to the needs of individuals, communities, nations, and the natural environment and contribute to sustainable development. (RW)

Outcomes (What students are expected to know and be able to do.)	**Indicators** (Students who have achieved this outcome should be able to:)
RW7.1 Explain the role of barter, trade, and sharing in traditional economies in Canada and the circumpolar and Pacific Rim countries.	a. Role play the practices of barter, trade, and sharing used to obtain goods and services. b. Describe examples of barter, trade, and sharing in the local community. c. Present the experiences of Elders and senior citizens in the local community regarding barter, sharing, and trade. d. Question whether economies based on barter, trade, and sharing are sustainable.
RW7.2 Investigate the influence of resources upon economic conditions of peoples in circumpolar and Pacific Rim countries.	a. Formulate a definition of a natural resource, and differentiate between renewable and non-renewable resources. b. Identify the locations of natural resources of circumpolar and Pacific Rim countries using appropriate maps, and analyse the impact of the resources on local communities. c. Differentiate between primary, secondary, and tertiary industry. d. Correlate the presence of resources and industries to the gross national product of circumpolar and Pacific Rim countries.

Outcome	Indicators
RW7.2 continued	e. Draw conclusions about the standard of living of people in Pacific Rim and circumpolar countries using material wealth measures (gross national product, gross domestic product) and non-material measures (the quality of life index, happiness index).
RW7.3 Assess the ecological stewardship of economies of Canada and the circumpolar and Pacific Rim countries.	a. Research and illustrate the origins and current meanings of the words "steward" and "stewardship". b. Define the word "sustainable", and discriminate between the concepts of sustainable and unsustainable as they apply to resources and industry. c. Examine the sustainability of the economies of a selection of circumpolar and Pacific Rim countries, and propose practices which might increase the level of sustainability.

Assessment and Evaluation of Student Learning

Assessment and evaluation require thoughtful planning and implementation to support the learning process and to inform teaching. All assessment and evaluation of student achievement must be based on the outcomes in the provincial curriculum.

Assessment involves the systematic collection of information about student learning with respect to:

- ☑ achievement of provincial curricula outcomes
- ☑ effectiveness of teaching strategies employed
- ☑ student self-reflection on learning.

Evaluation compares assessment information against criteria based on curriculum outcomes for the purpose of communicating to students, teachers, parents/caregivers, and others about student progress and to make informed decisions about the teaching and learning process. Reporting of student achievement must be based on the achievement of curriculum outcomes.

There are three interrelated purposes of assessment. Each type of assessment, systematically implemented, contributes to an overall picture of an individual student's achievement:

Assessment for learning involves the use of information about student progress to support and improve student learning, inform instructional practices, and:

- is teacher-driven for student, teacher, and parent use
- occurs throughout the teaching and learning process, using a variety of tools
- engages teachers in providing differentiated instruction, feedback to students to enhance their learning, and information to parents in support of learning.

Assessment as learning actively involves student reflection on learning, monitoring of her/his own progress, and:

- supports students in critically analyzing learning related to curricular outcomes
- is student-driven with teacher guidance
- occurs throughout the learning process.

Assessment of learning involves teachers' use of evidence of student learning to make judgements about student achievement and:

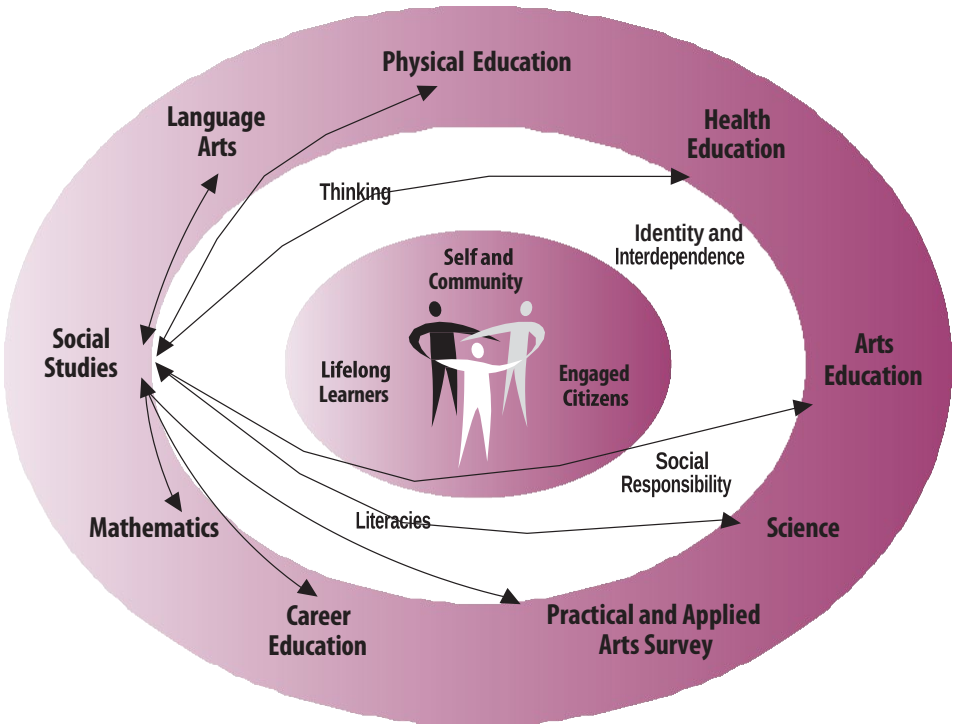
- provides opportunity to report evidence of achievement related to curricular outcomes
- occurs at the end of a learning cycle using a variety of tools
- provides the foundation for discussion on placement or promotion.

> *"Assessment is basically a formative process in which information on students' knowledge, skills, and understandings is fed back into the instructional process and used to improve instruction and student learning. Evaluation is basically a summative process in which teachers use information on students' knowledge, skills, and understandings to make value judgements about student performance."*
>
> *Banks and Banks, 1999, p. 464*

Connections with Other Areas of Study

The curriculum is more relevant when connections are made to students' lives and previous learning. Although some learning outcomes or subject area knowledge may be better achieved through discipline-specific instruction, deeper understanding may be attained through the integration of disciplines. Some outcomes for each area of study complement each other and offer opportunities for subject area integration.

By using a particular context and identifying a common theme to use as an organizer, the outcomes from more than one subject area can be achieved and students can make connections. **Integrated, interdisciplinary instruction in a thematic unit, however, must be more than just a series of activities. An integrated unit must facilitate students' learning of the related disciplines and their understanding of the conceptual connections.** The unit must achieve each individual subject area's outcomes and ensure that in-depth learning occurs. If deep understanding is to occur, the unit cannot be based on superficial or arbitrarily connected activities (Brophy & Alleman, 1991). Further, the outcomes and activities of one area of study must not be obscured by the outcomes or activities of another area of study (Education Review Office, 1996, p. 13).



Glossary

Antisemitism is a certain perception of Jews, which may be expressed as hatred toward Jews. Rhetorical and physical manifestations of antisemitism are directed toward Jewish or non-Jewish individuals and/or their property, toward Jewish community institutions and religious facilities.

Authority is power that is recognized by both those who possess it and those who are subject to it, by virtue of such conditions as legal appointment, particular knowledge or education, employment status or expertise.

Barter is the exchange of goods or services for other goods or services, with no exchange of money.

Citizenship is full membership in a community, including political rights and obligations.

Circumpolar is the area of northern latitudes on the globe.

Culture is a learned way of living that is shared by a group of people.

Democracy is a system of government in which the citizens have power through their elected representatives.

Dictatorship is a system of government in which power is concentrated to one person or group, with little or no influence on decision making by the population governed.

Globalization is international economic integration, particularly in terms of production and distribution of goods and services.

Habitation is the act of living in a particular place.

Inquiry involves students in some type of "research" on a specific topic, problem, or issue for learning and action. Inquiry is a way of opening up spaces for students' interests and involving them in as many different aspects of a topic, problem, or issue as students can find.

Maps are drawings of part or all of the earth's surfaces that efficiently portray and communicate spatial data. There are many types of maps, providing a variety of data (e.g., physical, political, population distribution).

Multiculturalism is a policy supporting the existence of many distinct cultural groups in one society.

Oligarchy is a system of government in which a small group has power through wealth, social position, and /or military strength.

Pacific Rim Countries include lands bordering on, or contained in, the basin of the Pacific ocean.

Place refers to the human, physical, and environmental characteristics of a location that distinguish it from any other.

Power is the ability to exert control over people and situations.

Resources are the raw materials or component parts of a finished product that may include natural resources, human resources, and capital resources (equipment and buildings).

Society is a structured community of people bound together by similar traditions, institutions, or nationality.

Technology is a creative human activity (a way of knowing nature) concerned with solving practical problems that arise from human/social needs, particularly the need to adapt to the environment and to fuel a nation's economy.

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