

# 6TH GRADE SOCIAL STUDIES

Students should be able to:

## Early Cultures to 1600

- Explain the characteristics of hunter-gatherer groups and their relationship to the natural environment
- Explain the emergence of agriculture and its effect on early human communities, including the domestication of plants and animals, the impact of irrigation techniques, and subsequent food surpluses
- Compare the river valley civilizations of the Tigris and Euphrates (Mesopotamia), the Nile (Egypt), the Indus (India), and the Huang He (China), including the evolution of written language, government, trade systems, architecture, and forms of social order
- Explain the origins, fundamental beliefs, and spread of Eastern religions, including Hinduism (India), Judaism (Mesopotamia), Buddhism (India), and Confucianism and Taoism (China)
- Describe the development of ancient Greek culture (the Hellenic period), including the concept of citizenship and the early forms of democracy in Athens
- Analyze the role of Alexander the Great (Hellenistic period), Socrates, Plato, Archimedes, Aristotle, and others in the creation and spread of Greek governance, literature, philosophy, the arts, math, and science
- Describe the development of Roman civilization, including language, government, architecture, and engineering
- Describe the expansion and transition of the Roman government from monarchy to republic to empire, including the roles of Julius Caesar and Augustus Caesar (Octavius)
- Explain the decline and collapse of the Roman Empire and the impact of the Byzantine Empire, including the Justinian Code and the preservation of ancient Greek and Roman learning, architecture, and government
- Compare the polytheistic belief systems of the Greeks and the Romans with the origins, foundational beliefs, and spread of Christianity
- Summarize the major contributions of the Chinese civilization from the Qin dynasty through the Ming dynasty, including the golden age of art and literature, the invention of gunpowder and woodblock printing, and the rise of trade via the Silk Road
- Summarize the major contributions of the Japanese civilization, including the Japanese feudal system, the Shinto traditions, and works of art and literature
- Summarize the major contributions of India, including those of the Gupta dynasty in mathematics, literature, religion, and science
- Explain the origin and fundamental beliefs of Islam and the geographic and economic aspects of its expansion
- Compare the major contributions of the African civilizations of Ghana, Mali, and Songhai, including the impact of Islam on the cultures of these kingdoms
- Describe the influence of geography on trade in the African kingdoms, including the salt and gold trades
- Compare the contributions and the decline of the Maya, Aztec, and Inca civilizations in Central and South America, including their forms of government and their contributions in mathematics, astronomy, and architecture
- Explain the contributions, features, and rise and fall of the North American ancestors of the numerous Native American tribes, including the Adena, Hopewell, Pueblo, and Mississippian cultures
- Explain feudalism and its relationship to the development of European monarchies and nation-states, including feudal relationships, the

- daily lives of peasants and serfs, and the economy under the manorial system.
- Explain the effects of the Magna Carta on European society, its effect on the feudal system, and its contribution to the development of representative government in England
- Summarize the course of the Crusades and explain their effects on feudalism and their role in spreading Christianity
- Explain the role and influence of the Roman Catholic Church in medieval Europe
- Summarize the origins and impact of the Bubonic Plague (Black Death) on feudalism
- Summarize the contributions of the Italian Renaissance, including the importance of Florence, the influence of humanism and the accomplishments of the Italians in art, music, literature, and architecture
- Identify key figures of the Renaissance and the Reformation and their contributions (e.g., Leonardo da Vinci, Michelangelo, Johannes Gutenberg, John Calvin, and Martin Luther)
- Explain the causes, events, and points of contention and denominational affiliations (of nations) of the Reformation and the Catholic Reformation (Counter Reformation)
- Compare the economic, political, and religious incentives of the various European countries to explore and settle new lands
- Identify the origin and destinations of the voyages of major European explorers
- Explain the effects of the exchange of plants, animals, diseases, and technology throughout Europe, Asia, Africa, and the Americas (known as the Columbian Exchange)

## Activities:

### Have your child:

- Read about the similarities and differences of early civilizations in Egypt, Mesopotamia, India, and China and make a chart to compare them
- Create a tour brochure that shows the cultural attractions of a place related to one of the following classical civilizations – Greek, Roman, Indian, Chinese
- Make a Venn diagram comparing the Old Stone Age and the New Stone Age
- Identify items in the home that were used or invented by ancient civilizations (for example: baskets, clocks, paper, calendars)
- Talk about what life would have been like if agriculture had never been developed
- Find a map that shows the locations of the Aztecan, Mayan, and Incan civilizations (your child's textbook should have these maps). Talk about how geography might have affected the development of these civilizations.
- Read the world section of the newspaper or a news magazine and talk about what's happening in countries that are linked to early or classical civilizations
- Visit local museums that have exhibits about early and/or classical civilizations
- Watch programs about early and/or classical civilizations on public television or history channels. Talk about how the content of these programs related to topics being studied in school.

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- Create a time line that shows the expansion and the decline of the Roman Empire
- Trace the route of the Silk Road on a physical map and talk about why the road followed that particular route
- Read about the Crusades and talk about the successes and failures
- Color a map of Europe showing the spread of the Bubonic Plague (Black Death) using different colors for different years
- Create a map of West Africa that shows the routes of the trans-Saharan caravan trade. Talk about some of the dangers traders might have faced along these routes.
- Create an advertisement for a voyage of discovery to search for new trade routes to India, China, and Southeast Asia

## Books:

- Adler, Karen. *The King's Shadow*
- Caselli, Giovanni. *The Renaissance and the New World*
- Connolly, Peter. *The Ancient City: Life in Classical Athens and Rome*
- Cowley, Marjorie. *Maroo of the Winter Caves*
- Denzel, Justen. *The Boy and the Painted Cave*
- Ganeri, Anita. *Emperors and Gladiators*
- Gilchrist, Cherry and Nilesh Mistry. *Stories From the Silk Road*
- Harvey, Miles. *Look What Came from China!*
- Hoobler, Dorothy and Thomas. *The ghost in the Tokaido Inn*
- Macdonald, Fiona. *You Wouldn't Want to be a Crusader!*
- McDermott, Gerald. *Anansi the Spider: A Tale from the Ashanti*
- Richardson, Hazel. *Life in the Ancient Indus River Valley (Peoples of the Ancient World)*
- Snyder, Zilpha Keatley. *The Egypt Game*
- Souhami, Jessica. *The Leopard's Drum: An Asante Tale from West Africa*
- Wroble, Lisa A. *Kids During the Renaissance (Kids Throughout History)*

## Series:

- *Cultural Atlas for Young People*
- *Eyewitness Books*
- *History of the World*

## Web Sites:

- Africa for Kids – <http://africa.mrdonn.org/index.html>
- Ancient Rome Jeopardy and Games – <http://ancienthistory.pppst.com/rome/jeopardy.html>
- Ancient Egypt at the British Museum – [www.ancientegypt.co.uk](http://www.ancientegypt.co.uk)
- Ancient Civilizations for Kids – [www.kathimitchell.com/ancivil.html](http://www.kathimitchell.com/ancivil.html)
- Ancient Greece for Kids – Socrates – <http://greece.mrdonn.org/socrates.html>
- Crusades - - <http://medievaleurope.mrdonn.org/crusades.html>
- 6th Graders' CroMagnon Caves – [www.lascaux.culture.fr](http://www.lascaux.culture.fr)
- Feudalism – <http://medievaleurope.mrdonn.org/feudalism.html>
- History for Kids: India – [www.historyforkids.org/learn/india/people/index.htm](http://www.historyforkids.org/learn/india/people/index.htm)
- Inca Mummies – [www.nationalgeographic.com/inca](http://www.nationalgeographic.com/inca)
- PBS Kid's Africa – [www.pbs.org/wonders/Kids/kids.htm](http://www.pbs.org/wonders/Kids/kids.htm)
- Prehistoric Art – [www.metmuseum.org](http://www.metmuseum.org)
- The Awesome Aztecs for Kids – <http://aztecs.mrdonn.org/index.html>
- The Black Plague for Kids – [medievaleurope.mrdonn.org/plague.html](http://medievaleurope.mrdonn.org/plague.html)
- The British Museum Site – China - [www.ancientchina.co.uk/geography/home\\_set.html](http://www.ancientchina.co.uk/geography/home_set.html)
- The British Museum Site – Mesopotamia – [http://www.mesopotamia.co.uk/geography/home\\_set.html](http://www.mesopotamia.co.uk/geography/home_set.html)
- The Incredible Incas for Kids – <http://incas.mrdonn.org/index.html>
- The Making of a Medieval Book – [www.getty.edu/art/exhibitions/making/](http://www.getty.edu/art/exhibitions/making/)
- The Mysterious Mayas – <http://mayas.mrdonn.org/empire.html>
- Trades – <http://ancientegypt.co.uk/trade/home.html>
- WebMuseum - Michelangelo – [www.ibiblio.org/wm/paint/auth/michelangelo](http://www.ibiblio.org/wm/paint/auth/michelangelo)
- Why Explorers Explored – <http://library.thinkquest.org/J002678F/why.htm>
- World Religions for Children – <http://www.woodlands-junior.kent.sch.uk/Homework/Religion.html>
- Write Like a Babylonian (click on languages) – [www.virtualsecrets.com/index.html](http://www.virtualsecrets.com/index.html)