

Social Studies Curriculum Update

**New Fairfield Public Schools
BOE Curriculum Subcommittee**

11.24.25

Vision

Curriculum Development Process

Study & Research

Design & Develop

Implement

Monitor, Review,
Revise

Systems

Structures

Collaboration and Communication



Connecticut's Social Studies Students can:

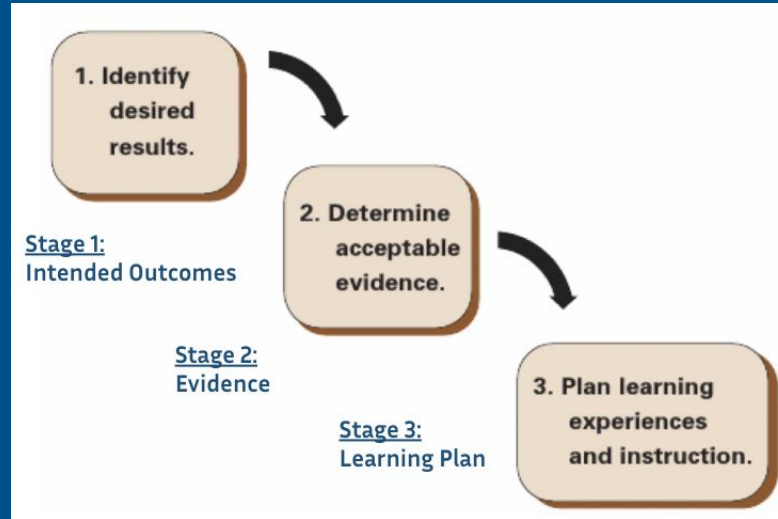


Connecticut's Social Studies Students understand:



Understanding by Design

Curriculum Approach





NFPS K-12 Social Studies Transfer Goals

Students will use their learning to:

- Raise questions about the world, past and present, as an inquisitive and critical thinker. (KS, SRI)
- Use knowledge and understanding of context to make connections across people, places, time, and global events. (KS, CCT)
- Seek and evaluate a variety of sources for credibility and effectiveness to develop, refine, and support a position. (CCT, EGC)
- Communicate conclusions and take informed action as a civic-minded, empathetic individual after considering diverse perspectives. (TC, EGC)





NFPS Unit Design Tool



NEW FAIRFIELD PUBLIC SCHOOLS

Unit Title:		Curriculum Area: Social Studies	
Course:		Grade:	Time:
Overview / Storyline:			
About the Learner:			
STAGE ONE: INTENDED OUTCOMES			
Standards		<u>Transfer Goal(s)</u>	
<p><i>This curriculum is aligned with (inquiry and content Standards):</i></p> <p><u>Inquiry Standards</u></p> <p><u>Content Standards</u></p>	<p>Students will use their learning to ...</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 		
	Meaning		
	Enduring Understandings (EUs)	Essential Questions (EQs)	
	<p>Students will understand that ...</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 	
	Acquisition		
	Knowledge	Skills	
<p>Students will know ...</p> <p>Vocabulary</p>	<p>Students will be skilled at ...</p>		
<p>NFPS Vision of a Learner Competencies</p> <div> </div>			

Curriculum Storyboards

Grade 2

UNIT 1

Working Together as a Community



FOCUS OF THE STORY

What makes New Fairfield our town?

Our town of New Fairfield is the focus of our work in social studies to start the year.

We use maps first to understand the land in New Fairfield and also the community resources that are here. We look at photos from long ago to track how places and life in New Fairfield have changed over time.

Then we look at the jobs in our town that help make New Fairfield a great place to live. With all that we learn, we take on the job of creating a Welcome brochure for families that move to our town!

UNIT 2

Decision-Making in Our World



FOCUS OF THE STORY

How do groups make fair decisions?

We continue to learn about New Fairfield by studying the decisions that need to be made everyday by citizens in town and by our town leaders.

We look at how to make choices when there may not be enough of what we want for everyone (scarcity), and we look at ways that communities can compromise and make fair decisions when there is a disagreement.

Then we get to know our town officials to hear about decisions they need to make for New Fairfield and learn how we can help solve problems in our town too.

UNIT 3

Leadership Past and Present



FOCUS OF THE STORY

What is a leader?

We end our year using our research skills to study famous leaders from the past and present not only in New Fairfield but across the country and the world.

We look at more than one source about a leader and continue to think about what is fact and what is opinion when we research.

Our research helps us think about what makes a good leader and then we work to honor leaders who have made a difference in our world.

Process to Date

- **Summer 2024** - UbD Institute, curriculum inventory
- **Fall 2024** - Examining standards (content and inquiry)
- **Spring 2025** - Research of curriculum models (CSDE model curriculum, other districts), curriculum mapping
- **Summer 2025** - Curriculum design work (Stage 1)
- **Fall 2025** - Finalizing Stage 1, curriculum storyboards (6-12); K-5 units underway

K-5 Grade-Level Unit Mapping

Communities - family, class, school	Kindergarten	Roles and Responsibilities in the Community	Communities Past and Present	Familiar Places and Communities
	Grade 1	Contributing in a Democratic Society	Honoring the Past and Present	Global Communities
Town: New Fairfield	Grade 2	Working Together as a Society	Decision-Making in Our World	Leadership Past and Present
State: Connecticut	Grade 3	State Constitution and Government	Communities in CT Past and Present	Innovation, Industry, and Economic Growth
U.S. Regions	Grade 4	Understanding Regions	Location, Place, and Movement	Regional Interdependence
North America / U.S. History	Grade 5	Migration and Settlement	Colonial Era and The American Revolution	The U.S. Constitution and Civic Participation

Units integrate geography, civics, history, and economics understandings.

Grade 3

UNIT 1

Our State and the Constitution



FOCUS OF THE STORY

How can laws be “fair” for all?

With a focus on the State of Connecticut this year, we first study Connecticut's state leaders and compare the State Constitution to the US Constitution to understand what guides our laws.

To understand more about laws, we map the path of a bill as it becomes law in the State Capitol. We use this to propose our own bill for a change we want to see happen for our state.

We also explore how we all help pay for what we need in our towns across the state. All of this learning helps us be responsible citizens who can make a difference in our town and state.

UNIT 2

Communities in Connecticut, Past and Present



FOCUS OF THE STORY

How are Connecticut communities the same and different?

We shift our focus from government in Connecticut to the way that geography and the land and water in the State led people to settle in communities and build towns and cities.

We use maps from long ago to see where towns were settled and notice what it is about the land that made it a good choice for a town.

We learn that culture can connect people in many ways, and we look at different groups of people, including the Northeast Woodland Native Americans, to learn about the different cultures that can be found here in Connecticut today.

UNIT 3

Innovation, Industry, and Economic Growth



FOCUS OF THE STORY

What inventions have made Connecticut the place it is?

Now we look at the ways that Connecticut changed over time to meet the needs of the people here.

We look at photographs, videos, art from long ago to see how school, transportation, and even entertainment changed over the past 100 years or so.

There are many famous people who lived here, with new ideas and inventions, so we learn about them too.

We will take all that we have learned about work and school in the past and use evidence from history.

Grade 4

UNIT 1

Understanding Regions



FOCUS OF THE STORY

If you could travel anywhere in the United States, where would you travel?

In this unit, we learn about the different regions of our country.

We learn about the physical features of the land we would find in each region, about how the natural resources shape the types of work and jobs there, and about the ways that people in each region live.

Then we share our learning with others to highlight some wonderful places to visit in the US.

UNIT 2

Location, Place, and Movement



FOCUS OF THE STORY

Why do people move?

Now that we understand the different regions of the United States, we look at how people have moved across our country and the reasons for that movement.

There are push and pull factors that we study as a way of understanding why people move and how they change the places where they move.

Then we use new learning about primary sources to interview our own family and tell our family's story.

UNIT 3

Regional Interdependence



FOCUS OF THE STORY

How does what happens somewhere across the country affect us here in New Fairfield?

We end our year learning how regions of the United States - and even across the world - are connected and depend on each other.

We look at how a big event, like a wild fire or drought, in one part of the country can impact others.

We learn about “supply and demand” and what that means when we go shopping at Johnny's Food Center. Finally, we find out how individuals and groups of people (including each of us) can help each other across the country.

K-12 Vertical Articulation: Economic Standards

Grade 2

Decision-Making in Our World



FOCUS OF THE STORY

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Grade 7

Understanding Trade and Cultural Diffusion



Focus of the Story

How does trade connect the world?

We start the year exploring how trade has allowed societies to acquire necessities, exchange brilliant ideas, and spark innovation, despite limitations imposed by geography.

We track the ripple effect of cultural diffusion—watching how the movement of goods, services, and ideas transformed diverse cultures into an increasingly interconnected world. Ultimately, we see that trade is the unseen, powerful force that weaves humanity's story together.

Grade 9

Age of Industry



How did industry change the world?

As change continues over time, we examine how machines changed *everything* in the "Age of Industry," including how people lived, worked, and related to the world. We see how factories rose, cities boomed, and how some powerful nations used their industrial strength to take control of lands across the globe. We analyze documents and economic data to see how industrial inventions transformed global life and power. We evaluate the cause-and-effect of this massive change—from factory life to global imperialism—and construct arguments about its lasting moral and economic impact on the world today.

Grade 11

From Boom to Bust



To what extent should the government intervene in the economy?

Our study of the United States now explores the dramatic contrast and change from the Roaring Twenties, a time when America was booming with excitement and growth, to the Great Depression, when the nation faced colossal struggles with war looming. We examine how as more Americans struggled economically and socially, the nation questioned the role of government and its legacy.

Inquiry Skills

Grade 2

UNIT 1

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Enhancements

- Alignment with **CT Social Studies Standards (2023)**
- Alignment with **VoL**
- Ensures **high-level thinking**
- Emphasis on **inquiry** process and **performance task** opportunities
 - Facilitating **transfer** of knowledge
- Stronger **global** perspective
- Emphasis on making connections to **contemporary issues**



6-12 Shifts

- Emphasis on regions and geography in 6/7 grades, causing shift in 9th grade, therefore causing shift in 10th grade
- Intentionally structured to minimize redundancy → increased engagement
 - Middle School/High School
 - World History/ U.S. History
- 2-year phase-in of new curriculum

Grade 6 - World Regions I

Grade 7 - World Regions II

Grade 8 - U.S. History

Grade 9 - Global Studies I

Grade 10 - Global Studies II

Grade 11 - U.S. History

Grade 11/12 - Am. Government

Grade 9 Global Studies I

Age of Exploration



What drives exploration and how does it change the world?

Let's set sail into one of the most dramatic chapters in world history! We uncover how daring explorers set out across the globe in search of gold, power, and adventure, and how their voyages changed the world forever.

From epic journeys and new trade routes to powerful empires and cultural clashes, we explore the good, the bad, and the lasting impact of this global age. We discover how this era helped shape the world we live in today – and question whose stories have been told (and whose haven't).

Age of Revolution



How can Revolutions change the world?

Next, we see how powerful new ideas literally *revolutionized* the world! We look at how bold thinkers questioned everything – from how the universe works to who should hold power. These "revolutionary ideas" sparked scientific breakthroughs and calls for freedom, equality, and new ways of governing. We analyze the philosophical and scientific ideas that ignited global change, interpreting primary sources to see how calls for freedom led to revolutions. We debate ethical choices and compare movements to construct arguments about how these revolutions shape our world today.

Age of Industry



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Age of Conflict







How does conflict change the world?

We bring our new insights to explore the most intense and impactful period in modern history. We journey through two World Wars and the rise of powerful new ideas that shook the globe.

We uncover how nationalism, imperialism, and new technologies led to unimaginable destruction, reshaping countries and creating new forms of government. This reveals how decisions made in this era still influence global power, human rights, and the ongoing quest for peace today.

Grade 10 Global Studies II

<p>Decolonization and Nationalism</p> 	<p>Modernization and Globalization</p> 	<p>Human Rights and Genocide</p> 	<p>Contemporary Issues</p> 
<p>How do new nations reshape our world?</p> <p>We begin our year exploring how, after World War II, many countries in places like India, Africa, and the Middle East that had been ruled by powerful empires finally fought for and won their independence.</p> <p>But this new freedom came with challenges, as two huge ideas—communism and democracy—battled for influence around the globe in what we call the Cold War. We see how these struggles affected newly independent nations and how countries started working together through groups like the United Nations to try and prevent future wars.</p>	<p>Who benefits most from a connected world?</p> <p>Now that we understand the landscape of the modern world, we explore how super-fast technology, communication, and transportation have made our world more connected than ever before. We see how goods, ideas, and even cultures move across the globe.</p> <p>This connectedness also brings big questions: Who benefits most? What happens to our environment? How do countries hold onto their own identities? We dive into how this interconnected world works, the challenges it creates, and our role in shaping its future.</p>	<p>How do we ensure human dignity?</p> <p>With the connectedness of the world in mind, we look at some of the darkest chapters in human history, but also explore the incredible efforts to defend human dignity. We examine how discrimination can escalate into violence.</p> <p>We investigate real-world examples like the Holocaust, Rwanda, and Cambodia, trying to understand <i>why</i> these atrocities happen. We also examine the courage of those who fought for justice and the ongoing global efforts to protect everyone's rights, prevent future genocides, and help people affected by conflict. We challenge ourselves to think critically about justice, responsibility, and how we can contribute to a more humane world.</p>	<p>How does technology change power and belief?</p> <p>Welcome to a unit about OUR world, right now! In this final unit of the year, we raise questions about some of the biggest challenges facing our planet and its people today. We investigate topics like global health crises (think pandemics!), widespread poverty, and the issue of child labor. We explore <i>why</i> these problems exist, <i>how</i> they are all connected, and what people, countries, and global groups are doing to solve them.</p> <p>This final unit isn't just about learning facts; it's about understanding our place in a connected world and figuring out how we can be part of the solutions.</p>

Grade 9

Global Studies I
Honors Global Studies I

Grade 10

World History II
AP European History

Grade 11

U.S. History
Honors U.S. History
AP U.S. History

Grade 11/12

American Government
AP U.S. Government &
Politics

Electives

Introduction to Economics
Introduction to Psychology
Introduction to Sociology
Black & Latino Studies
Contemporary Issues
Honors Post WWII

Social Studies Course Sequence 2026-2027

AP Electives

AP Psychology
AP Human Geography
AP World History

Grade 9

Global Studies I
Honors Global Studies I

Grade 10

Global Studies II
Honors Global Studies II

Grade 11

U.S. History
Honors U.S. History
AP U.S. History

Grade 11/12

American Government
AP U.S. Government &
Politics

Electives


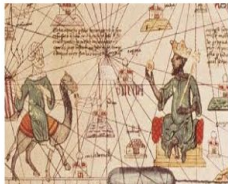



Introduction to Economics
Introduction to Psychology
Introduction to Sociology
Black & Latino Studies
Contemporary Issues
Honors Post WWII

Social Studies Course Sequence 2027-2028

AP Electives

AP European History
AP Psychology
AP Human Geography
AP World History

Interdisciplinary Connections

Units of Study				
Understanding Trade and Cultural Diffusion 	Tracking Cultural Diffusion 	Trade, Ideas, and Innovation 	Native American Civilizations and Global Influence 	Unearthing Solutions: Conflicts, Choices, and Climate Action 
Focus of the Story	Focus of the Story	Focus of the Story	Focus of the Story	Focus of the Story
<p>How does trade connect the world?</p> <p>We start the year exploring how trade has allowed societies to acquire necessities, exchange brilliant ideas, and spark innovation, despite limitations imposed by geography.</p> <p>We track the ripple effect of cultural diffusion—watching how the movement of goods, services, and ideas transformed diverse cultures into an increasingly interconnected world. Ultimately, we see that trade is the unseen, powerful force that weaves humanity's story together.</p>	<p>What is the true cost of moving goods across the globe?</p> <p>Now we take a close look into 12th-century West Africa to discover empires like Ghana and Mali that buzzed with life. These kingdoms mastered the Sahara Desert, using gold and salt as keys to unlock wealth along their trade routes. But their thriving cities were not just trading posts; they became centers where scholars shared groundbreaking knowledge. These advanced societies prove that incredible global connections and learning flourished long before our modern world.</p>	<p>Can a trade route change who a country is and how it deals with the world today?</p> <p>We apply our new learning about cultural diffusion to unravel ancient mysteries as we journey back to the Silk Road, China's superhighway for trade.</p> <p>This legendary route wasn't just for moving valuable goods like silk and spices across deserts and mountains. It also served as a massive channel for ideas, religions, and new technologies to spread across the world. We will uncover how this global exchange forever shaped the civilizations it touched.</p>	<p>How does the movement of people change the world?</p> <p>In this unit, we examine how, long before Europeans arrived, powerful Indigenous civilizations thrived all across North America. These societies engineered complex irrigation systems and terraced farms, while cultivating foods that nourish the entire globe today. Their forms of government, such as the Iroquois League, shaped ideas found in the U.S. Constitution.</p> <p>After facing devastating challenges and forced moves, Native American nations continue to battle for their rights and sovereignty today.</p>	<p>Who wins when one community's need conflicts with a global need?</p> <p>We use all that we have learned this year about economics and interdependence to tackle the planet's biggest challenge: protecting Earth while meeting human needs. We zoom in on tropical rainforests to see how our daily choices spark issues like deforestation and climate change.</p> <p>We analyze evidence and build models to unearth conflicting viewpoints from farmers, consumers, and huge companies. Using these powerful facts, we develop arguments for real-world solutions. Finally, we launch a PSA to inspire others to take action!</p>

Unit 4: Human Choices and Their Impact on Ecosystems



How could our snack choices affect the rainforest and animals that live there?

Building on our 6th-grade understanding of ecosystems, we examine product labels and trace ingredients to their sources.

Population data is analyzed to compare and evaluate different farming methods. With this evidence, we can support claims about the ecological impacts.

Then, we argue and advocate for sustainable solutions and everyday human choices that help protect rainforests and wildlife.

Continuing the Work

Curriculum Work This Year

- Full PL days
 - October ✓ , November ✓ , February
- Half day PL
 - December, March, May
- Embedded work sessions, curriculum subgroups
- Department meetings
- Summer work
 - Finish curriculum for required courses
 - Electives



Vision

Curriculum Development Process

Study & Research

Design & Develop

Implement

Monitor, Review,
Revise

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Collaboration and Communication

