



Archdiocese of Washington Catholic Schools

Academic Standards

Social Studies



6th GRADE

Peoples, Places, and Cultures in Europe and the Americas

Students in Grade 6 study the regions and countries of Europe and the Americas, including geographical, historical, economic, political, and cultural relationships. The areas emphasized are Europe and North and South America, including Central America and the Caribbean.

The Archdiocese of Washington's Academic Standards for social studies are organized around five content areas. The content area Standards and the types of learning experiences they provide to students in Grade 6 are described below. On the pages that follow, age-appropriate concepts are listed underneath each Standard. Skills for thinking, inquiry, and participation in a democratic society are integrated throughout. Specific terms are defined and examples are provided when necessary.

Standard 1 — History

Students will examine the key historic movements, events, and figures that contributed to the development of the modern European and American nations from early civilizations to early modern times.

Standard 2 — Civics and Government

Students will compare and contrast forms of government in different historical periods with contemporary political structures of Europe and the Americas and examine the rights and responsibilities of individuals in different political systems.

Standard 3 — Geography

Students will identify the characteristics of climate regions in Europe and the Americas and describe major physical features, countries, and cities of Europe and the Western Hemisphere.

Standard 4 — Economics

Students will examine the influence of physical and cultural factors upon the economic systems of countries in Europe and the Americas.

Standard 5 — Individuals, Society, and Culture

Students will examine the role of individuals and groups in societies of Europe and the Americas, identify connections among cultures, and trace the influence of cultures of the past on present societies. They will also analyze patterns of change, including the impact of scientific and technological innovations, and examine the role of artistic expression in selected cultures of Europe and the Americas.



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Standard 1 – History

Students will examine the key historic movements, events, and figures that contributed to the development of the modern European and American nations from early civilizations to early modern times.

Historical Knowledge

- 6.1.1 Describe the development of ancient Aegean civilizations and the Greek city-based republics, including the cultural achievements of Athens.
- 6.1.2 Trace the major developments and achievements of the Roman Republic and the rise and expansion of the Roman Empire.
- 6.1.3 Describe the migration of Jews and the spread of Christianity and the Roman Catholic Church in Western Europe during the Roman Empire.
- 6.1.4 Analyze the reasons for the decline and fall of the Roman Empire.
- 6.1.5 Explain the continuation and contributions of the eastern Roman Empire, referred to as the Byzantine Empire, after the fall of Rome, including its influence on the spread of Christianity in Russia and Eastern Europe.
- 6.1.6 Describe medieval society and explain the political, social, and economic organization provided by the feudal system.
- 6.1.7 Analyze the diverse points of view and interests of those involved in the Crusades and give examples of the changes brought about by the Crusades.

Example: The expansion of trade routes, increased contact between European and non-European peoples, changes in technology, and centralization of political and military power.
- 6.1.8 Explain the effects of the Black Death, or bubonic plague, along with economic, environmental, and social factors that led to the decline of medieval monarchies.
- 6.1.9 Examine the importance of Asian trade routes and trace the rise of cultural centers and trading cities, such as Florence and Venice.
- 6.1.10 Recognize the diverse perspectives, ideas, interests, and personalities that brought about the Renaissance in Europe.

Example: Ideas — the importance of the individual; scientific inquiry based on observation and experimentation; interest in Greek and Roman thought; and new approaches in the fine arts and literature.

Personalities — Leonardo da Vinci, Michelangelo, Nicholas Copernicus, William Shakespeare, and Galileo Galilei.



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- 6.1.11 Analyze the interconnections of people, places, and events in the economic, scientific, and cultural exchanges that led to the European Renaissance and voyages of discovery.
- 6.1.12 Describe the development of Spain during and after the defeat of the Muslims and the completion of the “re-conquest” in 1492.
- 6.1.13 Describe the development of Mesoamerican* civilizations — such as the Mayas, Toltecs, and Aztecs in Mexico and the Incas in South America — prior to contact with Europeans.
Example: Agricultural, scientific, and artistic achievements.
- 6.1.14 Examine the causes and outcomes of the defeat of the Aztec and Incan empires by the Spanish.
- 6.1.15 Compare Spanish colonies in Mexico and South America with French and British colonies in Canada.

* Mesoamerica: the area of Mexico and Central America where early civilizations were located

Chronological Thinking, Comprehension, Analysis, and Interpretation

- 6.1.16 Develop and compare timelines that identify major people, events, and developments in the history of individual civilizations and/or countries that comprise Europe and the Americas.
- 6.1.17 Use the terms decade, century, and millennium and compare alternative ways that historical periods and eras are designated by identifying the organizing principles upon which each is based.
- 6.1.18 Recognize, historical perspectives in fiction and nonfiction stories by identifying the historical context in which events unfolded and by avoiding evaluation of the past solely in terms of present-day norms.
Example: Read accounts of the travels of Marco Polo considering perspectives on the geography of the world during his time.
- 6.1.19 Analyze cause-and-effect relationships, keeping in mind multiple causation, including the importance of individuals, ideas, human interests, beliefs, and chance in history.
- 6.1.20 Differentiate between factual and fictional historical accounts; explain the meaning of historical passages by identifying who was involved, what happened, where it happened, what events led to these developments, and what consequences or outcomes followed.

Research Capabilities

- 6.1.21 Form research questions and use a variety of information resources* to obtain, evaluate, and present historical data on the people, places, events, and developments in the history of Europe and the Americas.

Example: Collect data and develop maps, graphs, or spread sheets showing the impact of the Black Death on the population of Europe.

* information resources: print media, such as books, magazines, and newspapers; electronic media, such as radio, television, Web sites, and databases; and community resources, such as individuals and organizations



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Standard 2 – Civics and Government

Students will compare and contrast forms of government in different historical periods with contemporary political structures of Europe and the Americas and examine the rights and responsibilities of individuals in different political systems.

Foundations of Government

- 6.2.1 Compare the characteristics of different types of government developed by ancient European civilizations — such as the Greek democracies, the Roman Republic, and the Roman Empire — and compare these to governments today.
- 6.2.2 Examine key ideas of the Magna Carta (1215), the Petition of Right (1628), and the English Bill of Rights (1689) as documents to place limits on the English monarchy.
- 6.2.3 Define the term nation-state* and describe the rise of nation-states headed by monarchs in Europe from 1500 to 1700.
- nation-state: a political entity that claims the right to rule over a defined territory and jurisdiction over everyone within it

Functions of Government

- 6.2.4 Identify major forms of government in Europe and the Americas and compare them with that of the United States.
- Example: Compare the constitutional government of the United States with that of Canada or the United Kingdom; compare constitutional democracies with nondemocracies, such as the Soviet Union in the past and Cuba in the present.
- 6.2.5 Describe the governmental institution of the European Union (EU) and its relationship to the sovereign governments of particular members of the EU.

Roles of Citizens

- 6.2.6 Define citizenship and roles of citizens in selected nation-states of Europe and the Americas, and make comparisons to the United States.
- Example: Examine the roles of citizens in voting and participating in political parties and voluntary organizations of civil society.

International Relations

- 6.2.7 Identify the functions of governmental international organizations in the world today. Example: Examine the functions of the Organization of American States (OAS), the World Court, North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), and the United Nations.
- 6.2.8 Analyze the impact of the concept of democracy on nations of Europe and the Americas.
- Example: Explain the development of European democracies and political change toward democracy in South America.



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6.2.9 Use data gathered from a variety of information resources~ to compare different forms of government in Europe and the Americas.

* information resources: print media, such as books, magazines, and newspapers; electronic media, such as radio, television, Web sites, and databases; and community resources, such as individuals and organizations

Standard 3 – Geography

Students will identify the characteristics of climate regions in Europe and the Americas and describe major physical features, countries and cities of Europe and the Western Hemisphere.

The World in Spatial Terms

6.3.1 Explain the components of most maps (title, scale, legend, grid, and projection) . Compare different map types (topographic, thematic, etc.) and different map projections, and explain the appropriate use for each.

6.3.2 Use latitude and longitude to locate places on Earth and describe the uses of locational technology, such as Global Positioning Systems (GPS)* and Geographic Information Systems (GIS)*.

* Global Positioning Systems (GPS): a system of satellites and ground stations used to locate precise points on the surface of Earth

* Geographic Information Systems (GIS): information technology systems used to store, analyze, manipulate, and display a wide range of geographic information

Places and Regions

6.3.3 Identify the names and locations of countries and major cities in Europe and the Western Hemisphere. Identify the states of Mexico and the provinces of Canada.

6.3.4 Describe major physical characteristics* of regions in Europe and the Americas.

6.3.5 Describe major cultural characteristics* of regions in Europe and the Western Hemisphere.

* physical characteristics: natural features, such as land and water forms, climate, natural vegetation, and native wildlife

* cultural characteristics: human features, such as population characteristics, communication and transportation networks, religion and customs, and how people make a living or build homes and other structures



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Physical Systems

- 6.3.6 Explain how Earth/sun relationships*, ocean currents, and winds influence climate differences on Earth.
- 6.3.7 Locate and map the climate regions of Europe and the Western Hemisphere. Describe the characteristics of each and explain how they differ.
- 6.3.8 Identify major biomes* and explain ways in which the natural environment of places in Europe and the Americas relates to their climate, which is influenced by Earth/sun relationships.

* Earth/sun relationships: the rotation and tilt of Earth on its axis and the revolution of Earth around the sun influence climate variation on Earth; this region has major seasonal differences in climate relating to changes in the position of the sun and the amount of sunlight received

* biomes: major ecological communities, such as rainforest, desert, grassland

Human Systems

- 6.3.9 Identify patterns of population distribution and growth in Europe and the Americas and explain changes in these patterns, which have occurred over time.
- 6.3.10 Compare and contrast cultural patterns — such as language, religion, and ethnicity — in various parts of Europe; the Caribbean; and North, South, and Central America.
- 6.3.11 Research the reasons for the locations of the major manufacturing and agricultural regions of Europe and the Americas, using a variety of information resources*.

* information resources: print media, such as books, magazines, and newspapers; electronic media, such as radio, television, Web sites, and databases; and community resources, such as individuals and organizations

Environment and Society

- 6.3.12 Analyze the distribution of natural resources in Europe and the Western Hemisphere.
- 6.3.13 Analyze and give examples of the consequences of human impact on the physical environment and evaluate ways in which technology influences human capacity to modify the physical environment.
- 6.3.14 Give examples of how both natural and technological hazards have impacted the physical environment and human populations in specific areas of Europe and the Americas.

Uses of Geography

- 6.3.15 Give examples of how land and water forms, climate, and natural vegetation have influenced historical trends and developments in Europe and the Western Hemisphere.
- 6.3.16 Identify environmental issues that affect Europe and the Americas. Examine contrasting perspectives on these problems and explain how human-induced changes in the physical environment in one place cause changes in another place.

Example: Acid rain, air and water pollution, deforestation.



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Standard 4 – Economics

Students will examine the influence of physical and cultural factors upon the economic systems of countries in Europe and the Americas.

6.4.1 Give examples of how trade related to key developments in the history of Europe and the Americas.

Example: The growth of trading towns and cities in medieval Europe led to money economies. Competition to expand world trade led to European voyages of trade and exploration.

6.4.2 Analyze how countries of Europe and the Americas have benefited from trade in different historical periods.

Example: Increased production and consumption, lower prices.

6.4.3 Explain why international trade requires a system for exchanging currency between nations and provide examples of currencies from Europe and the Americas.

6.4.4 Define types of trade barriers*.

6.4.5 Describe how different economic systems* (traditional*, command*, market*, mixed*) in Europe and the Americas answer the basic economic questions on what to produce, how to produce, and for whom to produce.

6.4.6 Explain how financial institutions (banks, credit unions, stocks-and-bonds markets) channel funds from savers to borrowers and investors.

6.4.7 Compare the standard of living of various countries of Europe and the Americas today using Gross Domestic Product* (GDP) per capita as an indicator.

6.4.8 Analyze current economic issues in the countries of Europe or the Americas using a variety of information resources*.

Example: Use information search methods and the Internet to examine changes in energy prices and consumption.

6.4.9 Identify economic connections between the local community and the countries of Europe or the Americas and identify job skills needed to be successful in the workplace.

6.4.10 Identify situations in which the actions of consumers and producers in Europe or the Americas help or harm other individuals who are not directly involved in the consumption or production of a product.

6.4.11 Give reasons why saving and investing are important to the economies of the United States and other countries and compare and contrast individual saving and investing options.

Example: Savings accounts, certificates of deposit, and stocks.

* trade barriers: things that hinder trade, such as tariffs, quotas, or embargos

* economic systems: ways that people allocate economic resources, goods, and services

* traditional economy: an economy in which resources are allocated based on custom and tradition

* command economy: an economy in which resources are allocated by the government or other central authority

* market economy: an economy in which resources are allocated by individuals



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* mixed economy: an economy in which resources are allocated by some combination of traditional, command, or market systems

* Gross Domestic Product (GDP): the value of all final goods and services produced in a country in a year

* information resources: print media, such as books, magazines, and newspapers; electronic media, such as radio, television, Web sites, and databases; and community resources, such as individuals and organizations

Standard 5 – Individuals, Society, and Culture

Students will examine the role of individuals and groups in societies of Europe and the Americas, identify connections among cultures, and trace the influence of cultures of the past on present societies. They will also analyze patterns of change, including the impact of scientific and technological innovations, and examine the role of artistic expression in selected cultures of Europe and the Americas.

6.5.1 Explain the term socialization*, and compare the way people learn the rules and their roles in the groups to which they belong in different cultures and times.

Example: Compare the different types of schooling that people have received in different times and places, such as in ancient Greece and Rome, in medieval Europe, and early America. Compare schools in specific countries in Europe with those in the United States in the present.

6.5.2 Distinguish between material* and nonmaterial* aspects of culture.

6.5.3 Explain that cultures change in three ways: cultural diffusion*, invention*, and innovation*.

6.5.4 Give examples of how religious beliefs and philosophical ideas have spread from one culture to another among societies of Europe and the Americas.

Example: The spread of Christianity from Europe to the Americas during the colonial period and the exchange of ideas about democratic government between Europe and the Americas in the past and the present are examples of the diffusion of ideas.

6.5.5 Identify examples of inventions and technological innovations that have brought about cultural change in Europe and the Americas and examine their impact.

Example: Innovations in communications, such as computer technology, help to spread information and ideas very rapidly. One result may be an increase in the rate of cultural change.

6.5.6 Define the terms anthropology* and archeology* and explain how these fields contribute to our understanding of societies in the present and the past.

6.5.7 Examine art, music, literature, and architecture in Europe and the Americas; explain their relationship to the societies that created them; and give examples of how artistic ideas have spread from one culture to another.

6.5.8 Use a variety of resources, including newspapers, magazines, Web sites, and databases, to collect and analyze data on cultural factors in countries of Europe and the Americas. Use charts, graphs, and other data to compare and hypothesize the relation of these factors to a nation's development.



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6.5.9 Examine artifacts*, including documents*, from other cultures to determine their use and significance.

Example: A seashell is a natural object, but a seashell that has been made into a necklace is an artifact.

* socialization: the process through which people learn the rules of society

* material culture: the things that a society makes or uses, such as clothing, shelter, food, tools, and other things needed for both survival and enjoyment

* nonmaterial culture: behavior, such as customs, traditions, beliefs, values, interactions among people, and ways of going about daily activities

* cultural diffusion: the spread of ideas from one culture to another

* invention: a new idea about how something can be made or done

* innovation: an improvement in a culture's technology

* anthropology: the study of human beings; there are four major fields of anthropology: cultural anthropology, forensic anthropology, linguistics, and archeology

* archeology: a branch of anthropology which studies past cultures through the things that remain, such as buildings, tools, or pottery

* artifact: any object made or modified for use by human beings

* document: a two-dimensional artifact, such as a letter, chart, map, photograph, painting, or drawing