

History and Geography: Grade 1

Teachers: In first grade, children often study aspects of the world around them: the family, the school, the community, etc. The following guidelines are meant to broaden and complement that focus. The goal of studying selected topics in World History in first grade is to foster curiosity and the beginnings of understanding about the larger world outside the child's locality, and about varied civilizations and ways of life. This can be done through a variety of means: story, drama, art, music, discussion, and more.

The study of geography embraces many topics throughout the *Core Knowledge Sequence*, including topics in history and science. Geographic knowledge embraces a spatial sense of the world, an awareness of the physical processes that shape life, a sense of the interactions between humans and their environment, an understanding of the relations between place and culture, and an awareness of the characteristics of specific regions and cultures.

WORLD HISTORY AND GEOGRAPHY

I. Geography

A. SPATIAL SENSE (Working with Maps, Globes, and Other Geographic Tools)

Teachers: Foster children's geographical awareness through regular work with maps and globes. Have students regularly locate themselves on maps and globes in relation to places they are studying.

- Name your continent, country, state, and community.
- Understand that maps have keys or legends with symbols and their uses.
- Find directions on a map: east, west, north, south.
- Identify major oceans: Pacific, Atlantic, Indian, Arctic.
- Review the seven continents: Asia, Europe, Africa, North America, South America, Antarctica, Australia.
- Locate: Canada, United States, Mexico, Central America.
- Locate: the Equator, Northern Hemisphere, Southern Hemisphere, North and South Poles.

B. GEOGRAPHICAL TERMS AND FEATURES

- peninsula, harbor, bay, island

II. Early World Civilizations

Teachers: As you introduce children to early civilizations, keep in mind the question, *What is civilization?* Help children see recurring features such as settling down, agriculture, building towns and cities, and learning how to write.

A. MESOPOTAMIA: THE "CRADLE OF CIVILIZATION"

- Importance of Tigris and Euphrates Rivers
- Development of writing, why writing is important to the development of civilization
- Code of Hammurabi (early code of laws), why rules and laws are important to the development of civilization

B. ANCIENT EGYPT

- Geography
 - Africa
 - Sahara Desert
- Importance of Nile River, floods and farming
- Pharaohs
 - Tutankhamen
 - Hatshepsut, woman pharaoh
- Pyramids and mummies, animal gods, Sphinx
- Writing: hieroglyphics

See also Visual Arts 1:
Art from Long Ago: Art of
Ancient Egypt.

Note: Students will be introduced to Hinduism and Buddhism in grade 2, and examine Islam in more detail in grade 4. They also examine lasting ideas from Judaism and Christianity in grade 6.

Note: In older sources you may find these formerly used spellings: Mohammed, Mecca, Koran.

C. HISTORY OF WORLD RELIGIONS

Teachers: Since religion is a shaping force in the story of civilization, the *Core Knowledge Sequence* introduces children in the early grades to major world religions, beginning with a focus on geography and major symbols and figures. The purpose is not to explore matters of theology but to provide a basic vocabulary for understanding many events and ideas in history. The goal is to familiarize, not proselytize; to be descriptive, not prescriptive. The tone should be one of respect and balance: no religion should be disparaged by implying that it is a thing of the past. To the question, “Which one is true?” an appropriate response is: “People of different faiths believe different things to be true. The best people to guide you on this right now are your parents or someone at home.”

- Judaism
 - Belief in one God
 - Story of the Exodus: Moses leads the Hebrews out of Egypt
 - Israel, Chanukah, Star of David, Torah, synagogue
- Christianity
 - Christianity grew out of Judaism
 - Jesus, meaning of “messiah”
 - Christmas and Easter, symbol of the cross
- Islam
 - Originated in Arabia, since spread worldwide
 - Followers are called Muslims
 - Allah, Muhammad, Makkah, Qur’an, mosque
 - Symbol of crescent and star (found on the flags of many mainly Islamic nations)

III. Modern Civilization and Culture: Mexico

A. GEOGRAPHY

- North American continent, locate Mexico relative to Canada and the United States
- Central America, Yucatan Peninsula
- Pacific Ocean, Gulf of Mexico, Rio Grande
- Mexico City

B. CULTURE

- Indian and Spanish heritage
- Traditions: fiesta, piñata
- National holiday: September 16, Independence Day

Note: For historical connections, see American History 1: Maya and Aztec civilizations; Conquistadors, Cortes, Moctezuma. See also Music 1: “La Cucaracha”; Language Arts 1: “Medio Pollito,” and Visual Arts 1: Diego Rivera, *Piñata* and, *The History of Medicine in Mexico* (mural).

AMERICAN HISTORY AND GEOGRAPHY

Teachers: The study of American history begins in grades K–2 with a brief overview of major events and figures, from the earliest days to recent times. A more in-depth, chronological study of American history begins again in grade 3 and continues onward. The term “American” here generally, but not always, refers to the lands that became the United States. Other topics regarding North, Central, and South America may be found in the World History and Geography sections of this Sequence.

I. Early People and Civilizations

A. THE EARLIEST PEOPLE: HUNTERS AND NOMADS

- Crossing from Asia to North America (the land bridge as one possibility)
From hunting to farming
Gradual development of early towns and cities

B. EARLY AMERICAN CIVILIZATIONS

Teachers: Children will study the Maya, Inca, and Aztec civilizations in detail in grade 5. First grade teachers should examine the fifth grade guidelines to see how these topics build in the later grade.

Here, introduce children to these civilizations. Though it is historically accurate to note the warlike nature of the Maya and Aztecs, it is recommended that mention of the practice of human sacrifice be left to the fifth grade.

- Maya in Mexico and Central America
- Aztecs in Mexico
Moctezuma (also called Montezuma)
Tenochtitlan (Mexico City)
- Inca in South America (Peru, Chile)
Cities in the Andes, Machu Picchu

II. Early Exploration and Settlement

A. COLUMBUS

Teachers: Review from kindergarten the story of Columbus’s voyage in 1492.

B. THE CONQUISTADORS

- The search for gold and silver
- Hernán Cortés and the Aztecs
- Francisco Pizarro and the Inca
- Diseases devastate Native American population

C. ENGLISH SETTLERS

- The story of the Lost Colony
Sir Walter Raleigh
Virginia Dare
- Virginia
Jamestown
Captain John Smith
Pocahontas and Powhatan
- Slavery, plantations in Southern colonies
- Massachusetts
Pilgrims, Mayflower, Thanksgiving Day
Massachusetts Bay Colony, the Puritans

Note: Early exploration and the colonial years will be studied in greater depth and detail in grade 3. First grade teachers should examine the third grade guidelines to see how these topics build in the later grade.

Note: The now-familiar name “Powhatan” was used by English settlers for the leader whose name was Wahunsonacock.

See below, Symbols and
Figures: Liberty Bell.

See also Music 1: “Yankee
Doodle.”

III. From Colonies to Independence: The American Revolution

Teachers: The American Revolution will be studied in greater depth and detail in grade 4. First grade teachers should examine the fourth grade guidelines to see how these topics build in the later grade. It is recommended that first grade teachers focus on the topics specified here, and leave for fourth grade the more detailed study of the Revolution. In first grade, emphasize the *story* of the birth of our nation.

- Locate the original thirteen colonies.
- The Boston Tea Party
- Paul Revere’s ride, “One if by land, two if by sea”
- Minutemen and Redcoats, the “shot heard round the world”
- Thomas Jefferson and the Declaration of Independence, “We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal. . . .”
- Fourth of July
- Benjamin Franklin: patriot, inventor, writer
- George Washington: from military commander to our first president
Martha Washington
Our national capital city named Washington
- Legend of Betsy Ross and the flag

IV. Early Exploration of the American West

Teachers: America’s westward growth will be studied in grade 2 and in greater depth and detail in grade 5. First grade teachers should examine the second and fifth grade guidelines to see how these topics build in later grades.

- Daniel Boone and the Wilderness Road
- The Louisiana Purchase
Explorations of Lewis and Clark
Sacagawea
- Geography: Locate the Appalachian Mountains, the Rocky Mountains, and the Mississippi River.

V. Symbols and Figures

- Recognize and become familiar with the significance of
Liberty Bell
Current United States president
American flag
Bald eagle

Visual Arts: Grade 1

SEE INTRODUCTION, “The Arts in the Curriculum.”

Teachers: In schools, lessons on the visual arts should illustrate important elements of making and appreciating art, and emphasize important artists, works of art, and artistic concepts. When appropriate, topics in the visual arts may be linked to topics in other disciplines. While the following guidelines specify a variety of artworks in different media and from various cultures, they are not intended to be comprehensive. Teachers are encouraged to build upon the core content and expose children to a wide range of art and artists.

I. Art from Long Ago

Teachers: Help children see how art has been an important human activity since early times.

- Look at and discuss
 - Cave paintings
 - Art of Ancient Egypt
 - Great Sphinx
 - Mummy cases: Tutankhamen’s coffin
 - Bust of Queen Nefertiti

See also World History 1:
Ancient Egypt.

II. Elements of Art

Teachers: The generally recognized elements of art include line, shape, form, space, light, texture, and color. In first grade, focus on the following:

A. COLOR

Teachers: Review from Kindergarten the idea of “warm” and “cool” colors.

- Know that red, yellow, and blue are commonly referred to as the “primary colors,” and that
 - blue + yellow = green
 - blue + red = purple
 - red + yellow = orange
- Observe the use of color in
 - Claude Monet, *Tulips in Holland*
 - James A. McNeill Whistler, *Arrangement in Black and Gray* (also known as *Whistler’s Mother*)
 - Diego Rivera, *Piñata*

See also World History 1:
Mexico, *re piñata*.

B. LINE

- Identify and use different lines: straight, zigzag, curved, wavy, spiral, thick, thin
- Observe how different lines are used in
 - Jacob Lawrence, *Parade*
 - Henri Matisse, *The Swan*
 - Georgia O’ Keeffe, one of her *Shell* paintings

C. SHAPE

- Recognize basic geometric shapes—square, rectangle, triangle, circle, oval—in nature, man-made objects, and artworks, including
 - Jacob Lawrence, *Parade*
 - Grant Wood, *Stone City, Iowa*