Ontario

hands-on social studies
An Inquiry Approach

Grade 4

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# Contents

## Introduction to Hands-On Social Studies, Grade 4
- Program Introduction
- What Is Social Studies?
- The Goals of Social Studies
- The Inquiry Approach to Social Studies

### Hands-On Social Studies Concepts and Expectations
- Overall Expectations
- Concepts of Social Studies Thinking
- Big Ideas
- Specific Expectations

### Hands-On Social Studies Program Principles
- Program Implementation
- Program Resources
- Introduction to the Unit
- Lessons

## Accommodating Diverse Learners

## Classroom Environment

## Planning Units (Time Lines)

## Classroom Management

## Social Studies Skills: Guidelines for Teachers
- Communication
- Research

### Hands-On Social Studies Assessment Plan
- The Hands-On Social Studies Assessment Plan
  - Assessment for Learning
  - Assessment as Learning
  - Assessment of Learning
  - Performance Assessment

## Portfolios

## Summative Achievement Levels

## Important Note to Teachers

## References

## Social Studies Achievement Chart

## Assessment Blackline Masters

### Strand A: Heritage and Identity

#### Unit 4A: Early Societies, 3000 BCE–1500 CE
- Unit Overview
- Curricular Expectations
- Concepts of Social Studies Thinking: Success Criteria
- Cross-Curricular Connections
- Books for Students
- Websites and Videos
- Introduction to the Unit
  - 1 Launching the Unit: Learning From History
  - 2 Early Societies
  - 3 Learning From Artifacts
  - 4 Constructing Time Lines
  - 5 Historical Maps
  - 6 Architecture of Early Societies
  - 7 Social Organization in Early Societies
  - 8 The Natural Environment of Early Societies
  - 9 Daily Life in Early Societies
  - 10 Cooperation and Conflict in Early Societies
  - 11 The Collapse of Early Societies
  - 12 Culminating Activity: Museum Exhibits

## References for Teachers

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**Note:** The above content is a representation of the table of contents in the document. It is organized in a structured format with specific sections, sub-sections, and page numbers indicating the location of each topic within the document.
## Strand B: People and Environments

Unit 4B: Political and Physical Regions of Canada

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Unit Overview</td>
<td>131</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Curricular Expectations</td>
<td>132</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Concepts of Social Studies Thinking: Success Criteria</td>
<td>133</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cross-Curricular Connections</td>
<td>135</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Books for Students</td>
<td>136</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Websites</td>
<td>137</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Introduction to the Unit</td>
<td>141</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 Launching the Unit: Images of Canada</td>
<td>143</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 Canada’s Political Regions</td>
<td>152</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 The People of Canada</td>
<td>167</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 Regions and Resources</td>
<td>191</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5 Exploring Canada’s Physical Regions</td>
<td>196</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6 Characteristics of Canada’s Physical Regions</td>
<td>201</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7 Exploring Significance</td>
<td>207</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8 Natural Resources in Canada</td>
<td>213</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9 Primary Industries in Canada</td>
<td>218</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10 Economic Sectors</td>
<td>224</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11 Environmental Stewardship</td>
<td>228</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12 Human Needs, Wants, and Perspectives</td>
<td>231</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13 Finding the Balance</td>
<td>237</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14 Culminating Activity: Canadian Challenge</td>
<td>243</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15 Reflection</td>
<td>249</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>References for Teachers</td>
<td>251</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Appendix</td>
<td>253</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>About the Contributors</td>
<td>265</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Introduction to *Hands-On Social Studies, Grade 4*
Introduction to Hands-On Social Studies

Program Introduction

The Hands-On Social Studies program focuses on developing students’ knowledge, skills, and attitudes through active inquiry, problem solving, and decision making. Throughout all activities, students are encouraged to explore, investigate, and ask questions to heighten their own curiosity about, and understanding of, the world around them.

What Is Social Studies?

Social studies is an interdisciplinary study that draws from such traditional disciplines as history, geography, political studies, economics, and law. It involves the examination of communities, both locally and globally. In essence, social studies allows students opportunities to learn about the world around them, helping them become active citizens. Social studies also involves the development of disciplinary thinking, as well as inquiry, communication, and spatial skills. Students apply these skills to develop an understanding of their world by investigating and analyzing different perspectives, which enables them to make decisions and solve problems in everyday life.

The foundational background for social studies includes citizenship, disciplinary thinking, inquiry process, big ideas, framing questions, and spatial skills.

The Goals of Social Studies

The Hands-On Social Studies program has been designed to focus on the goals of the Ontario Social Studies Curriculum as identified by the Ontario Ministry of Education (2013). These goals are:

- to develop the ability to use the concepts of disciplinary thinking to investigate issues, events, and developments
- to develop the ability to determine and apply appropriate criteria to evaluate information and evidence and to make judgments
- to develop skills and personal attributes that are needed for discipline-specific inquiry and that can be transferred to other areas in life
- to build collaborative and cooperative working relationships
- to use appropriate technology to help students gather and analyze information, solve problems, and communicate
- to develop the skills, strategies, and habits of mind required for effective inquiry and communication

The Inquiry Approach to Social Studies

As students explore the concepts of social studies thinking, they should be encouraged to ask questions to guide their own learning. The inquiry model is based on five components:

1. formulating questions
2. gathering and organizing information, evidence, or data
3. interpreting and analyzing information, evidence, or data
4. evaluating information, evidence, or data, and drawing conclusions
5. communicating findings

Using this model, the teacher becomes the facilitator of the learning process, and students initiate questions, gather information, evaluate findings, and communicate their learning. As such, the process focuses on students’ self-reflections as they ask questions, discover answers, and communicate their understanding.
**Hands-On Social Studies Concepts and Expectations**

The Ontario Social Studies curriculum for all grade levels is organized into two strands: “Heritage and Identity” and “People and Environments.” The overall expectations, related concepts of social studies thinking, and big ideas for each grade and strand can be found in a chart in the introduction to each unit of the *Hands-On Social Studies* program. This chart identifies the following components:

### Overall Expectations

The overall expectations describe the general knowledge and skills that students are expected to demonstrate at the end of the strand. These are presented in chart form in the introduction to each unit.

### Concepts of Social Studies Thinking

The six underlying concepts of all social studies learning are:

1. **Understanding historical and spatial significance:** Students examine and identify the importance of something, whether it is an event, process, person, object, or location. The determination of significance is usually related to the impact on people or places.

2. **Cause and consequence:** Students evaluate how events and interactions affect society and/or the environment.

3. **Continuity and change:** Students compare and evaluate past and present events to determine how some things stay the same, while other things evolve or change over time.

4. **Patterns and trends:** Students examine characteristics and traits of environments to identify patterns and, over time, to identify trends.

5. **Interrelationships:** Students explore connections between natural and human systems.

6. **Perspectives** (both historical and geographic): Students analyze and evaluate sources to identify whose perspectives are being represented, and to determine the importance of considering different perspectives when gathering information, data, and research.

**NOTE:** The Ontario Elementary Social Studies Teachers Association (OESSTA) has developed success criteria for the concepts of social studies thinking, for all strands and units in grades 1 to 6. This document is a useful resource in supporting teachers as they infuse the concepts of social studies thinking into their classroom programs. The OESSTA success criteria are included as a chart at the beginning of each unit.

### Big Ideas

Big ideas are the enduring understandings that students carry with them into the future. Big ideas are often transferable to other subjects and real-life experiences.

### Specific Expectations

Specific expectations for each strand are presented in chart format in the introduction to each unit. Alongside each specific expectation, corresponding lessons are identified.

### Hands-On Social Studies Program Principles

- Effective social studies programs involve hands-on inquiry, field studies, problem solving, and decision making.
- The development of students’ understanding of the concepts of social studies thinking, skills, and attitudes form the foundation of the social studies program.
Children have a natural curiosity about the world around them. This curiosity must be maintained, fostered, and enhanced through inquiry and active learning.

Social studies activities must be meaningful, worthwhile, and connect to real-life experiences.

Teachers should encourage students to ask questions and should themselves model inquiry by formulating and asking their own questions. The teacher’s major roles in the social studies program are to facilitate activities and to encourage thinking and reflection.

Social studies should be taught in correlation with other school subjects. Themes and topics of study should integrate ideas and skills from several core areas whenever possible.

The social studies program should encompass a wide range of educational resources, including nonfiction research material, primary source documents and photos, audio-visual resources, technology, as well as people and places in the local community (such as the local neighbourhood, historic sites, museums, Elders, witnesses to historic events).

Assessment of student learning in social studies should be designed to focus on performance and understanding, and should be conducted through meaningful assessment techniques carried on throughout the units of study.

**Program Implementation**

**Program Resources**

The *Hands-On Social Studies* program is arranged in a format that makes it easy for teachers to plan and implement. Units are the selected topics of study for the grade level.

The lessons within each unit relate directly to the expectations identified at the start of each unit (see pages 31 and 133), which complement those established in the Ontario Social Studies Curriculum document (2013). Units are organized as follows:

**Curriculum Correlations**

Four charts are included in this section:

1. **Unit Overview.** This includes overall expectations, the concepts of social studies thinking, and Big Ideas.
2. **Curricular Expectations.** This provides correlations between lessons and expectations.
3. **Concepts of Social Studies Thinking: Success Criteria.** This chart reflects the curriculum focus on concepts of social studies thinking and the application of success criteria for student learning.
4. **Cross-Curricular Connections.** This presents a synopsis of correlations between lessons in the unit and other subject areas, including Language Arts, Mathematics, Science, the Arts, and Physical Education/Health.

Teachers are encouraged to review these charts prior to beginning the unit, and to refer back to them throughout the teaching and learning process.

**Books for Students and Websites**

The curriculum charts are followed by a list of student books and several annotated websites that relate to the unit topic.

**Introduction to the Unit**

Each unit begins with an introduction to the topic of study. This introduction provides a general outline for the unit, brief background information for teachers, planning tips for teachers, and vocabulary related to the unit. It also suggests a culminating task for the end of the unit that the class will work toward.
Lessons
The unit activities are organized into topics based on the specific expectations. Each lesson includes:

Lesson Description
This section describes the lesson and its purpose, including Guided Inquiry Questions, Learning Goals, and the Concepts of Social Studies Thinking upon which the lesson focuses. The Learning Goals are an integral part of the assessment process. From these, students and teachers co-construct success criteria for the lessons, which students will use to monitor their learning.

Information for Teachers
Some lessons provide teachers with content knowledge that focuses specifically on the topic of study. Such information is presented in a clear, concise format.

Materials
A complete list of materials and resources required to conduct the activities is provided. The quantity of materials required will depend on how teachers conduct the activities. If students are working individually, teachers will need enough materials for each student. If students are working in groups, the materials required will be significantly reduced. Many of the identified items are for the teacher to use for display purposes or to make charts for recording students’ ideas. In some cases, visual materials have been provided with the activity in the form of photographs, illustrations, maps, sample charts, and diagrams to assist the teacher in presenting ideas and questions and to encourage discussion. A black-and-white thumbnail reference is included in the appendix, and colour images of the thumbnails can be found in the picture file on the CD at the back of this book.

NOTE: Images on the CD may be projected or printed for use in the lessons. Some activities require that students work with hard copy prints. Other images are intended for use in a slide show or displayed/projected for the whole class. Teachers can choose to use various options based on the availability of projectors, as well as on the needs of their students.

Activating Prior Knowledge
This includes strategies to connect with prior knowledge and experiences related to the learning goals for the lesson, to establish a positive learning environment, and to set the context for learning. The strategies often involve questions that are a starting point, to be augmented by students’ own questions and observations.

Activity
Instructions are given step by step. This procedure includes higher-level questioning techniques and suggestions for encouraging discussion, inquiry, decision making, and problem solving. It also introduces new learning and provides opportunities to practise and apply learning.

Most lessons include activity sheets for students to use to communicate their learning. At the discretion of the teacher, the activity sheets may be completed by individual students, pairs of students, or small working groups. As an option, activity sheets can be projected and completed together as a class.

In some lessons, inquiry guides are provided. These are to be used to model the presentation of content for students, and to ensure the generation of inquiry questions on specific topics. As with activity sheets, inquiry guides can be completed by individual students, pairs of students, small working groups, or projected and completed together as a class.
Consolidate and Debrief
Students are provided with ways to demonstrate what they have learned through consolidation and reflection. This process allows for synthesis and application of inquiry and new ideas.

Extending the Learning
This section includes optional activities intended to extend, enrich, and reinforce the expectations.

Assessment Suggestions
Throughout each lesson, assessment suggestions are provided. These assessment strategies focus specifically on the learning goals of the lesson. In the next section, on page 12, assessment is dealt with in detail. Keep in mind that the suggestions made in the lessons are merely ideas to consider – you may also refer to the other assessment strategies presented in the next section, or use your own techniques.

Accommodating Diverse Learners
It is important to consider the unique learning styles and needs of each student in the social studies classroom. In order to ensure that all students meet with success, including students with special needs and English-language learners, accommodations should be made during activities and assessment. Please see the Ontario Curriculum for Social Studies, pages 37–43, for accommodation guidelines.

Classroom Environment
The classroom environment is inclusive of the diverse backgrounds and learning needs of all students. The strengths students bring to school are identified, nurtured, and used to promote student achievement. Students are encouraged to ask questions, and different perspectives are appreciated.

The classroom environment must also foster the conditions that are required for inquiry and discussion. To promote inquiry in the classroom, consider doing the following:

- Foster an atmosphere that is non-threatening, so that all students are comfortable asking questions.
- Provide lots of opportunities for students to reflect on the questions and discuss their ideas with one another and the teacher.
- Model for students how to gather the information they need so they have an adequate foundation for discussion.
- Ensure questions are clear and vocabulary is appropriate to learners.
- Avoid dominating discussion.
- Provide equal opportunities for all learners to participate.
- Model good questions and questioning strategies.
- Guide students in discovering answers to questions.

The classroom setting is an important component of the learning process. An active environment – one that gently hums with the purposeful conversations and activities of students – indicates that meaningful learning is taking place. When studying a specific topic, the room should display related objects and materials: student work; pictures and posters, maps, graphs, and charts made during activities; and anchor charts of important concepts, procedures, skills, or strategies that are co-constructed with students. Visuals serve as a source of information and reinforce concepts and skills that have been stressed during social studies activities, and also serve to support those students who are visual learners. Charts outlining success criteria are also displayed in the classroom.
Planning Units (Time Lines)

No two groups of students will cover topics and material at the same rate. Planning the duration of units is the responsibility of the teacher. In some cases, the activities described herein will not be completed during one block of time and will have to be carried over. In other cases, teachers may observe that the students are especially interested in one topic, and they may choose to expand upon it. The individual needs of students should be considered; there are no strict time lines involved in the Hands-On Social Studies program. It is important, however, to spend time on every unit in the program so that students focus on all of the curriculum expectations established for their grade level.

Classroom Management

Inquiry is emphasized throughout this program; the manner in which these experiences are handled is up to the teacher. In some cases, teachers may have all students working with materials and resources individually; in other cases, teachers may choose to use small-group settings. Small groups encourage the development of learning skills and social skills, enable all students to be active in the learning process, and mean less cost in terms of materials and equipment. Again, classroom management is left up to the teacher – it is the teacher who, ultimately, determines how the students in his or her care function best in the learning environment.

Social Studies Skills: Guidelines for Teachers

While involved in the Hands-On Social Studies program, students will use a variety of skills while asking questions, conducting inquiry, solving problems, and making decisions. The following provide some guidelines for teachers when encouraging students’ skill development in social studies.

Communication

In social studies, one communicates by means of visuals, maps, diagrams, graphs, charts, models, symbols, as well as with written and spoken language. Communicating spatial and statistical information through visuals includes:

- examining and discussing visuals, and making inferences
- drawing pictures and labelled diagrams
- reading, interpreting, and annotating a variety of maps and globes
- making and labelling maps
- examining and discussing artifacts, and making inferences
- reading and interpreting data from tables and charts
- making tables and charts
- reading and interpreting data from graphs
- making graphs
- making models
- using oral and written language

Visuals

Students should be given many opportunities to examine and discuss visuals related to topics of study. Visuals include illustrations, artwork, photographs, satellite images, aerial maps, and diagrams; in history, it will include primary documents and photographs (originals created during the time period being studied). Observation skills are developed by examining and analyzing such visuals. In turn, students should be encouraged to create their own visuals (e.g., drawings and diagrams) to communicate their understanding of concepts and ideas.
Spatial Skills
Spatial skills involve the use of maps, globes, graphs, and related language.

Maps
When presenting maps or when students make their own maps as part of a specific activity, there are guidelines that should be followed. Maps should have an appropriate title that indicates specifically the information being presented. Maps may also have:

- a compass rose, which is used to identify directions
- a legend, which describes the symbols used on the map
- a scale, which communicates relative area and distance

As students progress through the grade levels, they should become proficient in reading maps and in producing maps that include the above-mentioned components, as in the following example:

Maps convey various types of information—geographical locations, physical land features, population, natural resources, vegetation, and so on. Students should be provided with opportunities to use, read, and construct a variety of maps in order to develop these skills of communication on social studies.

Mapping skills are best integrated within student inquiries, rather than as discrete topics. Students should be encouraged to ask simple geographic questions, such as the following:

- Why is that town there?
- How are landforms and waterways used?

Mapping activities should also include the use of geotechnologies. There are many digital websites that teachers and students can use to map and analyze communities and their characteristics (see Websites and Videos, page 36 and Websites, page 138).

Spatial Journals
A spatial journal, which is used in geography, is a type of annotated map. It is useful as a teaching and learning strategy for connecting text to maps. It is a visual representation, or map, that includes information relevant to specific locations. In its simplest form, the development of a classroom spatial journal might involve attaching sticky notes—with inquiry questions and answers (or interesting anecdotes related to the topic of study) — to a wall map. Map locations are numbered and correspond to numbers on the notes. The notes and locations are also connected with lines (which could be made of string or wool), as in the example on page 9.
Technology such as Google Earth or ArcGIS Explorer can also be used to create spatial journals.

**NOTE:** Spatial journals are especially useful when addressing concepts related to the People and Environments strand of the Ontario Social Studies curriculum. However, annotated maps are also useful when exploring the units in the Heritage and Identity strand.

**Charts**

Charts require appropriate titles, and both columns and rows need specific headings. All of these titles and headings should be capitalized. A chart can be in the form of a checklist or can include room for additional written information and data. For example:

**Data Chart**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Province/Territory</th>
<th>Land (km²)</th>
<th>Freshwater (km²)</th>
<th>Total (km²)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yukon</td>
<td>478970</td>
<td>4480</td>
<td>483450</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Manitoba</td>
<td>548360</td>
<td>101590</td>
<td>649950</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| Ontario            | 891190     | 117390           | 1008580     

**Graphs**

There are guidelines that should be followed when presenting graphs or when students are constructing graphs.

A *bar graph* is a common form of communication used in the early grades. Bar graphs should always be titled so that the information communicated is easily understood. The title should be capitalized in the same manner as one would title a story. Both axes of the graph should also be titled and capitalized in the same way. In most cases, graduated markings are noted on one axis, and the objects or events being compared are noted on the other. On a bar graph, the bars must be separate, as each bar represents a distinct piece of data.

A *double bar graph* is commonly used when comparing similar attributes in two different sets, events, or objects.
For example:

**Models**

When students are given the opportunity to construct models, they present their learning in a concrete manner. Modelling also serves as an excellent precursor to more abstract tasks. For example, when students build a concrete model of a community and look at the model from above, they better understand how maps are created to communicate physical locations.

**Vocabulary**

Communicating involves using the language and terminology of social studies. This can be complex, because it often includes technical terms and words from many languages. Students should be encouraged to use the appropriate vocabulary related to the topics of study (e.g., community, province, country, culture, tradition, origin, urban, and rural). As well, teachers should use, and encourage students to use, vocabulary related to the inquiry model and spatial skills.

Vocabulary related to spatial skills includes the language of location. Descriptions of relative location use terms such as near, far, close, beside, above; as well as cardinal directions (north, east, south, west); and intermediate directions (northeast, northwest, southeast, southwest). Absolute location uses terminology that is not related to another location; for example, latitude, longitude, address, and postal code are examples of absolute location.

Students should use the vocabulary and terminology both orally and in written form, as appropriate to their developmental stages. Consider developing word walls and whole-class or individual glossaries whereby students can record the terms learned and define them in their own words. Glossaries can also include sketches, labelled diagrams, and examples.
Geographic Definition

In defining geography, Charles Gritzner (2002, 38–40) notes that all geographic inquiry should begin with the question, “Where?” He suggests that geographers, and learners of geography, also investigate why they are where they are, or why events happen where they happen. And, because these events, features, and conditions have impact on humans, it is worthwhile to consider why they are important to us. Gritzner has condensed these ideas into a short but meaningful phrase: “What is where, why there, and why care?”

For teachers, the use of the geographic definition is valuable when exploring geographical issues, and can be considered when posing questions to students. For example:

- When exploring the local community, have students identify places of significance and discuss why specific places are located where they are (e.g., Why is the grocery store located where it is? How is the location of the store important to us?)
- When investigating provincial parks, discuss where they are located, why they are located in those places, and how humans impact the natural environment in those parks.

These kinds of inquiries generate thoughtful discussion related to geographical issues while fostering connections to students’ real-life experiences.

NOTE: The geographic definition is directly connected to concepts in the People and Environments strand of the Ontario Social Studies Curriculum. As such, in the introduction to these units, specific details are provided to assist teachers and students in exploring the geographic definition as it relates to the unit of study.

Research

Research is to be done within an inquiry approach. Research involves the following:

- asking questions
- locating information from a variety of reliable sources
- organizing the information
- interpreting and analyzing information
- presenting findings

To enhance the learning experience, teachers should always provide a structure for the research that highlights student-generated questions, as well as a format to be followed. It is also essential that teachers review research resources (both print and online) to ensure that they are appropriate for student use. Suggestions for research guidelines are presented regularly throughout the Hands-On Social Studies program.
The Hands-On Social Studies Assessment Plan

The Hands-On Social Studies program provides a variety of assessment tools that enable teachers to build a comprehensive and authentic daily assessment plan for students. Based on current research about the value of quality classroom assessment (Davies 2011), suggestions are provided for authentic assessment, which includes assessment for learning, assessment as learning, and assessment of learning.

Ontario’s policy on assessment is outlined in the document Growing Success: Assessment, Evaluation, and Reporting in Ontario Schools (see <www.edu.gov.on.ca/eng/policyfunding/success.html>). The document outlines a fundamental shift in the roles of teachers and students in the learning process:

In a traditional assessment paradigm, the teacher is perceived as the active agent in the process, determining goals and criteria for successful achievement, delivering instruction, and evaluating student achievement at the end of a period of learning. The use of assessment for the purpose of improving learning and helping students become independent learners requires a culture in which student and teacher learn together in a collaborative relationship, each playing an active role in setting learning goals, developing success criteria, giving and receiving feedback, monitoring progress, and adjusting learning strategies. The teacher acts as a “lead learner,” providing support while gradually releasing more and more responsibility to the student, as the student develops the knowledge and skills needed to become an independent learner.

The primary purpose of assessment is to improve student learning. Assessment for learning provides students with descriptive feedback and coaching for improvement. Assessment as learning helps students self-assess by developing their capacity to set their own goals, monitor their own progress, determine their next steps in learning, and reflect on their learning. Assessment of learning is summative in nature and is intended to identify student progress in relation to learning expectations. The challenge for educators is to integrate assessment seamlessly with other learning goals. The Ontario assessment model uses the following process:

- **Establish learning goals from curriculum expectations:** Lessons include learning goals in student-friendly language that have been developed from curriculum expectations. These learning goals are to be shared with students and used to guide instruction.

- **Develop success criteria:** These descriptors are written in student-friendly language to help students understand what successful learning looks like. Criteria can be established by the teacher, using assessment task exemplars of student work, or by using the Achievement Chart from the Ontario Curriculum for Social Studies, grades 1 to 6 (page 16). Success criteria can also be determined in collaboration with students.

- **Provide descriptive feedback:** In conversation with students, identify what criteria they have and have not met, and provide any needed instruction. At this stage, teachers work with students to identify next steps to determine how students may improve. This may include differentiating instruction.
Assessment Plan

- Use information for peer and self-assessment: Students assess their own work and the work of others to determine what still needs to be done.

- Establish individual goals: Students determine what they need to learn next and how to get there.

The Hands-On Social Studies program provides assessment suggestions, rubrics, and templates for use during the teaching/learning process. These suggestions include tasks related to assessment for learning, assessment as learning, and assessment of learning.

Assessment for Learning

It is important for teachers to assess students’ understanding before, during, and after a social studies lesson. The information gathered helps teachers determine students’ needs and then plan the next steps in instruction. Students may come into class with misconceptions about the concepts of social studies thinking. By identifying what they already know, teachers can help students make connections and address any challenging issues.

To assess students as they work, use the assessment-for-learning suggestions provided with many of the activities.

When assessment for learning is suggested in a lesson, the following icon is used:

While observing and conversing with students, teachers may use the Anecdotal Record sheet and/or the Individual Student Observations sheet to record assessment-for-learning data.

- Anecdotal Record: To gain an authentic view of a student’s progress, it is critical to record observations during social studies activities. The Anecdotal Record sheet, presented on page 18, provides the teacher with a format for recording individual or group observations.

- Individual Student Observations: When teachers wish to focus more on individual students for a longer period of time, consider using the Individual Student Observations template, found on page 19. This template provides more space for comments and is especially useful during conferences, interviews, or individual student performance tasks.

Students should have a method to monitor this feedback from the teacher. Students may use the Social Studies Journal (a template for the journal is included with lesson 1), add notes to their portfolios, or keep online social studies blogs or journals to record successes, challenges, and next steps related to the learning goals.

Assessment as Learning

It is important for students to reflect on their own learning in relation to social studies. For this purpose, teachers will find a Student Self-Assessment sheet on page 23, as well as a Student Reflections sheet on page 24. In addition, the Social Studies Journal will encourage students to reflect on their own learning.

When assessment as learning is suggested in a lesson, the following icon is used:

Student reflections can also be done in many ways other than using these templates. For example, students can:

- interview one another to share their reflections on social studies
- write an outline or brief script and make a video reflection
- create an electronic slide show with an audio-recording of their reflections

**Assessment of Learning**

Assessment of learning provides a summary of student progress related to the accomplishment of the learning goals at a particular point in time. It is important to gather a variety of assessment data to draw conclusions about what a student knows and can do. As such, consider collecting student products, observing processes, and having conversations with students. Teachers should also consider which student work is formative and which is summative in their deliberations. Only the most recent and consistent evidence should be used.

When assessment of learning is suggested in a lesson, the following icon is used:

![AOI](image)

Assessment of learning suggestions are provided with the culminating lesson of each unit of the *Hands-On Social Studies* program. Teachers may use the Anecdotal Record sheet, found on page 18, the Individual Student Observations sheet, found on page 19, and the Rubric, found on page 21, to record student results.

**Performance Assessment**

Both assessment for learning and assessment of learning include performance assessment. Performance assessment is planned, systematic observation and assessment that is based on students actually doing a specific social studies activity. Teacher- or teacher/student-created rubrics can be used to assess student performance.

A sample rubric and template for teacher use are included on pages 20 and 21. For any specific activity, before the work begins, the teacher and students should together discuss success criteria for completing the task. This will ensure that the success criteria relate to the lesson’s learning goals. The teacher can then record these criteria on the rubric.

When conducting assessment for learning, the rubric can be reviewed with students to determine strengths, challenges, and next steps related to learning goals.

When conducting assessment of learning, the rubric can be used to determine summative data. For example, teachers can use the rubric criteria to assess student performance, and students can receive a check mark point for each criterion accomplished to determine a rubric score from a total of four marks. These rubric scores can then be transferred to the Rubric Class Record, found on page 22.

When using the rubric for assessment of learning, consider using four levels of achievement to correlate with the Ontario Social Studies Achievement Chart (see page 16). For example:

1. Achievement that falls much below the provincial standard
2. Achievement that approaches the provincial standard
3. Achievement that meets the provincial standard
4. Achievement that surpasses the provincial standard

The *Hands-On Social Studies* program provides numerous opportunities for students to apply their skills. By considering the same levels of achievement throughout the year, teachers should be able to track student learning and
determine when students have a thorough understanding and in-depth application of concepts and skills.

**Portfolios**

A portfolio is a collection of work that shows evidence of a student’s learning. There are many types of portfolios – the showcase portfolio and the progress portfolio are two popular formats. Showcase portfolios highlight the best of students’ work, with students involved in the selection of pieces and justification for choices. Progress portfolios reflect students’ progress as their work improves and aim to demonstrate in-depth understanding of the materials over time.

Select, with student input, work to include in a social studies portfolio or in a social studies section of a multi-subject portfolio. Selections should include representative samples of student work in all types of social studies activities. Templates are included to organize the portfolio (Portfolio Table of Contents is on page 25, and Portfolio Entry Record is on page 26).

**Summative Achievement Levels**

At the end of each unit, the teacher can determine achievement levels for each student. All assessment information gathered throughout the unit can be used to identify these levels, by referring to the Ontario Social Studies Achievement Chart on page 16.

A black line master, Summative Achievement Levels, is included on page 27 for recording this information.

**Important Note to Teachers**

Throughout the *Hands-On Social Studies* program, suggestions are provided for assessment for learning, assessment as learning, and assessment of learning. Keep in mind that these are merely suggestions. Teachers are encouraged to use the assessment strategies presented in a wide variety of ways, and to ensure that they build an effective assessment plan using these assessment ideas, as well as their own valuable experiences as educators.

**References**


Unit 4A

Early Societies,
3000 BCE–1500 CE
## Unit Overview

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Overall Expectations</th>
<th>Concepts of Social Studies Thinking</th>
<th>Big Ideas</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>A1. Application</strong></td>
<td>Continuity and Change; Perspective</td>
<td>By studying the past, we can better understand the present.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Compare key aspects of life in a few early societies (3000 BCE–1500 CE), each from a different region and era and representing a different culture, and describe some key similarities and differences between these early societies and present-day Canadian society.</td>
<td>Interrelationships</td>
<td>The environment had a major impact on daily life in early societies.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>A2. Inquiry</strong></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Use the social studies inquiry process to investigate ways of life and relationships with the environment in two or more early societies (3000 BCE–1500 CE), with an emphasis on aspects of the interrelationship between the environment and life in those societies.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>A3. Understanding Context</strong></td>
<td>Significance</td>
<td>Not all early societies were the same.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Demonstrate an understanding of key aspects of a few early societies (3000 BCE–1500 CE), each from a different region and era and representing a different culture, with reference to their political and social organization, daily life, and relationships with their environment and with each other.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Introduction to the Unit

In this unit, students will develop their understanding of how we study the past. To do this, they will use various methods to examine a number of early societies (3000 BCE to 1500 CE) representing different cultures from different eras that emerged in different regions of the world. Students will examine the social organizations, daily life, and the societies’ relationships with the environment. Students will build on what they learned in earlier grades by using visual evidence, primary and secondary sources, and thematic maps to investigate these early societies. Students will investigate the interrelationship between daily life and the environment in these societies and will compare aspects of life in these societies with aspects of life in present-day Canada.

Planning Tips for Teachers

This unit uses the city–state of Teotihuacan as a case study. Background information and images of artifacts, artwork, and landscape are provided for examination, but access to additional resource information for teachers and students will be beneficial.

The study of Teotihuacan is used as a springboard to study other early societies. As such, most lessons present a model for inquiry, and then have students conduct their own inquiries into other early societies. Student resource materials (online and print) related to a variety of early societies will be required throughout the unit.

The culminating activity for this unit involves students working in groups to design an exhibit on an early society for a history museum. They will work as a team to illustrate continuity and change in a particular early society, highlighting daily life while describing some similarities and differences to present-day Canadian society. To develop an understanding of museums and exhibits, students will benefit from visiting local sites. Teachers are encouraged to plan field trips to local history museums in order to provide students with firsthand experience and background knowledge. Visits to virtual museums are also an option if access to local museums is not manageable.

Vocabulary Related to this Unit

Throughout this unit, teachers should use, and encourage students to use, vocabulary such as: history, the past, social studies thinking skills, historian, archaeology, archaeologist, region, time period, era, time line, primary source, secondary source, artifact, early society, environment, sustainability, social classes, roles, power, pyramid, culture, social structure, social organization, significance, natural resources, architecture, structure, technology, roles and responsibilities, environment, plains, drought, physical features, food production, collapse, conflict, cooperation, theory, city–state, museum, exhibit.

Also, consider including vocabulary related to the social studies inquiry model. This includes vocabulary related to:

- asking questions
- gathering and organizing information
- analyzing and interpreting information
- evaluating and drawing conclusions
- communicating learning

The vocabulary related to the inquiry process may include terminology such as: analyze, propose, ask, predict, observe, find, brainstorm, collect, create, develop, follow, identify, improve, estimate, measure, select, record, survey, tally, graph, compare, order, investigate, connect, describe, recognize, consider, explore, access, respond, explain, repeat, research, plan.
As well, students should be encouraged to use vocabulary related to spatial skills such as: map, globe, atlas, title, legend, relative direction (e.g., right, left, in front, behind), cardinal directions, symbol, scale, location, hemisphere, poles, equator, grid, model, community, country, lake, river, body of water, flood plain, mountain, volcano, ocean shore, fertile soil, erosion.

Furthermore, as appropriate, teachers should use, and encourage students to use, language related to the concepts of social studies thinking such as: cause, consequence, change, result, significance, importance, interrelationships, perspective, pattern, trend.

**NOTE:** A success criteria chart for the concepts of social studies thinking is included on page 33 to guide teachers in their focus on these concepts during this unit of study.

Throughout the course of this unit, a glossary is referred to, where students are encouraged to record new terminology, along with definitions and illustrations (see Template A: Glossary on page 44). Whenever possible, encourage students to draw pictorial representations of the word(s) to enrich learning and support literacy.

As well, a social studies word wall can be created on a bulletin board or on a piece of poster paper. On the bulletin board or poster, record the vocabulary that is introduced throughout the unit, along with related visuals, examples, and definitions. Ensure that the word wall is placed in a location in the classroom where all students can see and access the vocabulary.
Launching the Unit: Learning From History

The purpose of this lesson is to have students explore the meaning of the term *history*, as it pertains to their own lives and to the study of the past. They will be introduced to the inquiry model by asking questions and finding information about what childhood and daily life were like in various regions and times, and comparing them to childhood and daily life in present-day Canada.

**Guided Inquiry Questions:**
- What are the most significant differences between being a child in Canadian society today and being a child in societies of the past?
- How has the daily life of children changed or stayed the same over time and place?

**Learning Goal:**
- We are learning to explore the concept of the past.

**Concepts of Social Studies Thinking:**
- Perspectives
- Continuity and Change

**Information for Teachers**

History is the record of what happened in the past. The study of history involves establishing the facts, interpreting them, and explaining their importance.

**Materials**
- chart paper
- markers
- sticky notes
- Image File: People in Early Civilizations
  (See appendix, page 253, for black-and-white thumbnail references. Colour images can be found on the CD at the back of this book. Print full-page copies of these images.)
- projector
- Activity Sheet: People Today and in the Past (A.1.1)
- Template A: Glossary (A.1.2)
- Template B: Social Studies Journal (A.1.3)
- Template C: Book Report (A.1.4)
- Template D: Text Frame (A.1.5)

**Activating Prior Knowledge**

Provide each student with several sticky notes. On their sticky notes, have students write a description of an important event that happened in the past. For example:
- I had my birthday last month.
- My grandparents moved here from Jamaica.
- Astronauts landed on the moon.

Have students share their ideas with a partner, and then with the class. Compare the events to find similarities and differences. Ask students:
- What does the term *the past* mean?
- How is the event you recorded the same as everyone else’s?
- How is the event different?

Discuss students’ ideas related to events that have occurred in the past, whether it be yesterday, one week ago, or five years ago.

**Assessment for Learning**

Observe students as they record and share their ideas. Consider:
- Are students making comparisons, showing similarities and differences of the various events?
- Are they beginning to understand the meaning of the term *the past*?
Activity: Part One
Project one image from Image File: People in Early Civilizations (from CD) for modelling. Have students carefully examine the image. Ask:
- What do you see in this image?
- What are the people doing?
- How are they dressed?
- Does this image portray people of the past, present, or future? How do you know?
- Where do you think these people lived?
- How are these people different from people today?
- How are they the same?

Draw a large intersecting Venn on chart paper. Label one circle “People Today,” and label the other circle “People in the Past” (the same labels that are used on Activity Sheet: People Today and in the Past, A.1.1). As a class, discuss the image, and record similarities and differences between the people in the image and people today.

Activity: Part Two
Project the same image used in Activity: Part One. On chart paper, record the term history in the centre of the page, and circle it. Create an outline of a concept web by connecting four more circles to the centre circle. Ask:
- What can we learn from looking at this kind of image?
- What does the term history mean?

Have students share their understanding of this term, and record their ideas in two of the blank circles. Ask:
- Have you read books or watched shows/movies about historical events?
- What have you learned about history in previous grades?

Have students share their past experiences and knowledge about historical events. Record students’ responses in another circle on the concept web. Ask:
- Do you think it is important to learn about history? Why?

Record students ideas in the fourth blank circle of the concept web. The web may emerge as follows:

Activity: Part Three
Divide the class into working groups. Provide each group with one of the other images from the Image File (from CD) showing daily lives of people in the past from various regions and time periods.

Have the groups discuss the images, focusing on what it shows about people in the past.
Provide each student with a copy of Activity Sheet: People Today and in the Past (A.1.1). Have students record the similarities and differences between the people depicted in the image and people of today.

Give each group a sheet of chart paper and a marker. Have the groups make a larger version of the Venn diagram on the chart paper and attach their image to the sheet.

**Activity Sheet**

**Directions to students:**

Record the similarities and differences between the people depicted in the image and people of today (A.1.1).

**Assessment for Learning**

Observe students as they work in groups, present their work, and discuss the changing lives of people. Focus on their ability to acquire information from images and draw conclusion from those visual representations.

**Consolidate and Debrief**

Have all groups share their images and Venn diagrams with the class.

Discuss the similarities and differences among people during different time periods and from different places. Encourage students to infer why life has changed for people over time.

**Assessment for Learning**

Observe students and provide oral feedback as students discuss their ideas, draw conclusions, and make inferences.

**Extending the Learning**

- Create a class word wall for this unit. Add new and important vocabulary to the word wall, along with related visuals and examples.

- Have students create personal glossaries to record, illustrate, and provide examples of new and important terminology. Template A: Glossary (A.1.2) is included at the end of this lesson for this purpose.

- Have students create social studies journals in which they can record their activities, ideas, conceptual understandings, and learning goals. Template B: Social Studies Journal (A.1.3) is included at the end of this lesson for this purpose. Photocopy several sheets for each student, add a cover, and bind the sheets together. Students can then create title pages for their own journals. For variety, you may also have students use the blank reverse side of each page for other reflections. For example, have students draw or write about:
  - new social studies challenges
  - favourite social studies activities
  - real-life experiences with social studies
  - mapping skills and concepts

- Begin a social studies library of books about early societies and ancient civilizations. Create a class book box with the collection of books for this unit. The books can be used for research, as well as specific tasks such as book reports. Book reports enable students to learn to summarize information and about the importance of bibliographical information (for enabling others to use the same books and for giving credit to authors of books used). It is important to note that these book reports are as valuable for use with nonfiction as with fiction books. Template C: Book Report (A.1.4) is included with this lesson.

- Text frames are valuable tools for students to use when they are accessing information from nonfiction works. Template D: Text Frame (A.1.5) is included at the end of this lesson. Students select a section of text from...
a resource related to the topic of study. They then reformat the text so that it fits into the left column of the text frame. Students use three highlighters of different colours: one is to highlight information they already knew, another is to highlight vocabulary they need to learn, and the third is to highlight ideas they wonder about. In the right-hand column, students make jot notes related to the text. The focus of text frames is paraphrasing information and having students make sense of text in their own language. Paraphrasing is different from summarizing – paraphrasing involves using other words to restate the meaning of a text. Consider modelling this process with various text selections, then have students continue this exercise throughout the unit.

- Have students interview parents/guardians to find out what childhood was like for them. Create interview questions together as a class, and have students share results with the class and make comparisons.
People Today and in the Past

People Today

People in the Past
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Definition</th>
<th>Term</th>
<th>Illustration</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
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<tr>
<td>Social Studies Journal Sheet</td>
<td>Social Studies Journal Sheet</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>-------------------------------</td>
<td>-------------------------------</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Today in social studies,</strong></td>
<td><strong>Today in social studies,</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I learned</td>
<td>I learned</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I would like to learn more about</td>
<td>I would like to learn more about</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Today in social studies,</strong></td>
<td><strong>Today in social studies,</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I learned</td>
<td>I learned</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I would like to learn more about</td>
<td>I would like to learn more about</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**SAMPLE PAGES**

www.portageandmainpress.com
Book Report

Bibliographical Information

Title: ____________________________________________

Author: __________________________________________

Publisher: ________________________________________

Publication Date: _____________________________

Summary: What information is presented in the book?

Make a sketch of your favourite illustration in the book.

Record two questions that you have about the information in the book.

1. ____________________________________________

2. ____________________________________________
### Text Frame

**Source:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Original Text</th>
<th>In My Own Words</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Date:** __________________________

**Name(s):** _____________________________________
2 Early Societies

The purpose of this lesson is to have students learn that many different societies developed in different regions of the world throughout various periods. Students will investigate, through analyzing maps, the environmental factors that influenced the development of these societies.

Guided Inquiry Questions:
- What is an early society?
- Where were they located?

Learning Goal:
- We are learning to determine criteria for what an early society is.

Concepts of Social Studies Thinking:
- Significance

Information for Teachers

A civilization is characterized by a strong central government responsible for organizing and maintaining a society's internal structure. Civilizations also feature all or most of the following characteristics: cities; advanced division of labour based on specialized occupational groups; social classes, including a ruling class exempt from working for basic subsistence; an administration that can collect taxes; public buildings designed for communal purposes; written record keeping; and social organization established by and for the people for health, education, and religion.

Society is the way groups of people organize themselves so that they can live together (e.g., in bands, chiefdoms, towns, cities). The people in a society share a number of things in common, including identity (e.g., Canadian, Mexican, Japanese). People in a society share laws, and often but not always, values and traditions. Societies can exist on many levels, and it is possible to belong to several societies at the same time.

A city-state is an independent city and the surrounding area, with its own laws and government.

NOTE: Before beginning this lesson, see Information Sheet: Some Early Societies (A.2.1) on page 53 for further details on some ancient civilizations.

NOTE: This lesson is rich in vocabulary related to the unit. Throughout the lesson, record terms that arise, discuss the terms, and include these on the social studies word wall. Also, have students use their glossaries (A.1.2) to record their understandings of the terms.

Materials
- Ancient Civilizations by Joseph Fullman or other book about ancient civilizations
- document projector (if available)
- access to print and online resources on early societies
- Information Sheet: Some Early Societies (A.2.1)
- Activity Sheet A: Early Societies Around the World (A.2.2)
- Activity Sheet B: What Is an Early Society? (A.2.3)
- world map showing physical features, vegetation, and ecosystems (atlases or wall map)
- map showing the local area's physical features, vegetation, and ecosystems (atlases or large wall map)
- ledger-sized (430 cm x 280 cm) paper (enough for each pair of students)
- sticky notes (different colours)
- chart paper
- markers (coloured and black)

Activating Prior Knowledge

Display the map of your local area showing physical features, vegetation, and ecosystems (atlases or wall map).
Ask:

- What is the natural environment like around our community?
- What natural features do you see? (e.g., rivers, lakes, hills, valleys)
- Why do you think people chose this location to settle?
- What would settlers have needed in order to survive here? (e.g., food, water, shelter, safety)
- How did they meet their needs when they first came here?
- Where do we get our food? Clothes? Water? Materials for shelter?
- How do we rely on the natural environment to meet our physical needs?

Discuss the importance of the natural environment in determining where people settle, and how people rely on the natural environment to survive.

**Assessment for Learning**
Observe students during the discussion. Focus on their understanding of how the natural environment influences human survival.

**Activity: Part One**
Construct a KWHL chart on chart paper, as in the following example:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Early Societies</th>
<th>What We Know About Early Societies</th>
<th>What We Want to Know About Early Societies</th>
<th>How We Can Find Out What We Want to Know</th>
<th>What We Learned About Early Societies</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Discuss with students the previous activity exploring images of people in early societies. Provide students with sticky notes, and have students record what they already know about early societies. On different coloured sticky notes, have them record inquiry questions reflecting what they would like to learn about early societies. Post these notes on the chart.

As a class, discuss various ways in which students can answer their inquiry questions. Record their ideas on the chart.

Throughout the unit, record answers to students' questions on the KWHL chart. Also, record new questions as they arise.

**Assessment for Learning**
Observe students as they generate inquiry questions and discuss strategies to answer those questions. Focus on these inquiry skills, and provide feedback on next steps in learning.

**Activity: Part Two**

**NOTE:** If a document projector is available, use it to project the pages for easy visibility and discussion about images and text.

Rather than read the book aloud to students, conduct a picture walk, slowly flipping the pages of the book and discussing the title, headings, subheadings, and visuals.

Divide the class into pairs of students, and provide each pair with two different coloured markers and a ledger-sized sheet of paper. With their partner, give students two to three minutes to brainstorm what they saw or learned during the picture walk. Have each student in the pair...
use a different coloured marker to record his or her ideas on the paper. Encourage students to record the names of places that were referred to during the picture walk.

Display the sheets, and, as a class, discuss students’ ideas. On a separate sheet of chart paper, record the names of early societies listed on students’ sheets. Circle and highlight one of the well-known societies such as Rome or Egypt. Ask:

- Where do you think this society was located?
- How could you find out?

Have students share their ideas. Check available resources to identify the location of this ancient society. Project a copy of Activity Sheet A: Early Societies Around the World (A.2.2), and, as a class, identify the general area in which this society was located.

**NOTE:** Maps and country borders have changed over time, so this is an opportunity to model how to locate an early society on a contemporary map, by identifying landforms and bodies of water.

Shade in the area of the map where the early society was located, and model how to create a legend for the map.

Now, display a map of the world showing vegetation and landforms. Indicate the location of the early society, and ask students:

- Why do you think this early society developed here?
- What resources were available that you can see?
- How could the environment have met the people's physical needs?
- Where could the people have gotten food? Clothes? Water? Materials for shelter?
- What challenges would people in this society have faced?

Discuss students’ ideas. Divide the class into working groups, and have each group choose an early society to explore in further detail from the list generated. Record group members’ names on the chart alongside the corresponding early society.

**NOTE:** At this point, groups may choose one society to study in depth throughout the unit, and explore various aspects of the same society, such as daily life, social organization, culture, and so on. As an alternative, students can conduct inquiries on a variety of early societies by selecting a different society for each topic of study. This decision is up to teachers and students to make.

**Activity: Part Three**

In their groups, have students show the location of the society they are going to study. Students can then research the natural environment of that society. Students will then create their own spatial journals.

**NOTE:** A spatial journal is a map that tells a story. See page 8 in the Introduction for more details on spatial journals.

Model how to create a spatial map, using a map that was made for an early society selected in Activity: Part One. Using resources or background knowledge about the natural environment in the area, record information on sticky notes. Label locations on the map with numbers, and record the corresponding numbers on the sticky notes. See the example on page 51.
As a class, co-construct success criteria for students’ spatial journals. These may include:

- locates and colours the ancient society on the world map
- creates a legend
- describes the land in the area
- records facts and questions about the land in this early society

Provide students with maps, atlases, and reference materials about the physical features, vegetation, ecosystems, and natural environment in various regions where the early societies were located. On a map of their society, have students identify, circle, label, and number (consecutively) the features of the land. Then, have students record questions and relevant facts about their society on sticky notes. Each sticky note should also be labelled with the appropriate number to show correlation between the recorded information on the note and the land features shown on the map.

**NOTE:** Although students work together to gather information and do research, they may create their own spatial journals. As an alternative, students can create a larger version of the spatial journal as a group, once they have completed the activity sheet.

Provide each student with a copy of Activity Sheet A: Early Societies Around the World (A.2.2). On the activity sheet, have students identify and label the features of the land they are studying.

**Activity Sheet A**

Directions to students:

Locate the ancient society you will be studying. Identify and label land features such as mountains, rocky terrain, rivers, lakes, vegetation, and forests. Create a legend (A.2.2).

---

**Legend**

- **Shang Territory**
- **Great Wall**

**Map**

- **North China Plain** was very fertile for crops.
- **Huang Ho River** flooded a lot, so people controlled it with dikes, dam, canals.
- **Yangtze River** cut deep gorges through the mountains.
- **Rivers** were important transportation routes; also irrigated crops.

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**Sample Pages**

- Early Societies, 3000 BCE–1500 CE

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**Online Resources**

- www.portageandmainpress.com
Assessment for Learning
Observe students as they conduct this inquiry. Focus on their spatial skills in completing the map, and their research skills in gathering information about the land.

Consolidate and Debrief
Have students in each group present their spatial journals to the class. On the wall map of the world, locate each society. Begin an annotated map for the unit by recording the names of these societies on sticky notes and attaching the notes to the world map. This annotated map will be added to throughout the unit.

Discuss the features of the land in various regions, and the effects that the land had on early societies. Ask guiding questions such as:

- How did the societies differ from one another in the ways the people used the land to meet their needs?
- What challenges would they have had?
- Do you think that it was easier for people in some societies to meet their needs than it was for people in other societies? Why? Why not?
- How does the natural environment in these regions compare to Canada’s natural environment?
- What similarities do you observe?
- What differences can you identify?

Provide each student with a copy of Activity Sheet B: What Is an Early Society? (A.2.3), and discuss this graphic organizer.

Activity Sheet B
Directions to students:
Begin to add your ideas to this sheet. You will continue to use this activity sheet throughout the unit (A.2.3).

Assessment for Learning
Review students’ Frayer Models to determine their growing understanding of the concept of early societies.

Extending the Learning
- Throughout the unit, add to the KWHL chart as new ideas are explored and as new inquiry questions are asked.
- Add new and important vocabulary from the lesson to the social studies word wall, along with related visuals and examples.
- Have students use their personal glossaries (A.1.2) to record, illustrate, and provide examples of new and important terminology from the lesson.
- Continue to develop the annotated world map throughout the unit, attaching relevant notes to the map that connect to specific locations and societies studied. Notes can also be added throughout the unit, as students pose inquiry questions, acquire new ideas, and build spatial skills.
- Have students use their social studies journals (A.1.3) to record their activities, ideas, conceptual understandings, learning goals, and ongoing questions.
Some Early Societies

Mesopotamia

The name Mesopotamia comes from the Greek meaning “between the rivers.” It refers to an ancient area between the Tigris and Euphrates rivers. Today, most of what was Mesopotamia is in Iraq. Starting around 7500 BCE, people began to settle in Mesopotamia and became some of the earliest farmers. Various cultures lived and flourished there, most notably the Sumerians, Akkadians, and, later, the Babylonians and Assyrians. Mesopotamia is sometimes referred to as the “cradle of civilization” for advancements from the early Sumerian period, including the domestication of animals and agriculture, the practice of irrigation, the establishment of city-states, and writing. Later inventions include the wheel, used for transportation and pottery making, various medicines, and the creation of bronze from tin and copper. The division of time into sixty seconds and sixty minutes is a Mesopotamian invention, and reflects the advanced mathematics and astronomy of a great intellectual culture. The Code of Hammurabi, 282 laws written by the king of Babylon around 1800 BCE, was one of the first set of written laws in the world. Mesopotamia began its decline following the Persian invasion of 550 BCE.

Ancient Egypt

The ancient Egyptian civilization lasted almost 3000 years, from about 3100 BCE until 332 BCE. Geography played a key role in the society’s development. With the Mediterranean at its northern border, it spread south through the Nile Valley. A series of cataracts (waterfalls) along the Nile River made travel difficult, but provided protection from enemy attacks, as did deserts to the west and the east. The Nile’s annual deposit of silt in the spring provided rich soil for farming. Egypt was ruled by pharaohs, considered to be descendants of the gods. Most Egyptians were farmers, but there were also governors and nobles, as well as a middle class, which included doctors, merchants, and scribes. Egypt is known for its advancements in medicine, embalming, its hieroglyphic writing system, the Sphinx, and its pyramids, which began to be built around 2700 BCE as tombs for pharaohs and other important people. The Egyptians developed advanced tools for building, papyrus (for writing and for constructing boats), advanced mathematics for architecture and surveying, and an accurate 365-day, 12-month calendar based on astronomy. The civilization came to an end with its conquest by Alexander the Great in 332 BCE.

The Indus Valley

Although a civilization flourished in the Indus Valley of Pakistan and northwestern India, less is known about it than Mesopotamia and Egypt, due to few written sources and difficulty uncovering artifacts due to flooding. People began moving to the region around 2600 BCE, settling along the Indus and Riva rivers. They built cities, with well-planned and constructed drainage and sewage systems, as important commercial and religious centres. Mohenjo
Some Early Societies (continued)

Daro, the largest, was home to as many as 40,000 people. The Citadel, or upper level, housed government, religious, and other buildings, as well as a granary and Great Bath. Writing developed as the society became more complex, and it is believed to have been governed by a priest king and strong central government. Most people in the Indus Valley lived in small farming villages near the river floodplains, with mixed farming the basis of its economy. The farmers there were possibly the first to cultivate cotton. They taught the Chinese how to grow rice around 2000 BCE. People were also active traders, importing copper, turquoise, and gold, and exporting cotton and other agricultural products. The Indus Valley civilization began to decline around 1900 BCE.

Minoans and Mycenaeans

The Minoan civilization was a maritime culture that flourished on the island of Crete from around 2000 BCE to 1500 BCE. Minoans were fishermen, farmers, and traders, exporting an abundance of natural resources, including timber, farm produce, and cloth; they imported metals and precious stones. Artifacts uncovered in the early 20th century show the extent of its trade with Egypt, Asia Minor (present-day Turkey), and Mesopotamia. The Minoans are often called the first European civilization. Around 2000 BCE, kings started to rule the civilization from large palaces, such as that at Knossos, which acted as administrative centres. Society was divided into classes of nobles and peasants. It is not known what caused the decline of the Minoan civilization – a natural disaster, such as an earthquake, and invasion are both theories.

Around 1600 BCE, power in the Aegean shifted to the Mycenaeans from the Peloponnesian in southern Greece. Its wealth came from agriculture, trade, and piracy, for Mycenaean ships sailed the eastern Mediterranean from Italy to Asia Minor. Trade made Mycenaean a wealthy culture, where kings ruled over farmers, craftspersons, tradespeople, and slaves. The Mycenaeans worshipped goddesses and gods of Greek myth that became so fundamental to the later Greek culture. By 1150 BCE, the Mycenaean civilization had collapsed. Historians are not sure why.

Ancient China

China is a very old civilization that, unlike others, has developed continuously over many centuries, even during times of occupation by foreigners. The Chinese have given many innovations to the world, including the wheelbarrow, paddlewheel boat, gunpowder, paper, and silk production. Chinese history is divided into dynasties, with the Xia (2000 BCE to 1766 BCE) the first known one, and the Shang dynasty (1766 BCE to 1027 BCE) the earliest dynasty known to use writing. Ruled by a king, also the religious leader, the society was highly stratified, with nobles (warriors) at the top, craftspersons and merchants next, farmers below, and slaves the lowest. Craftspersons made bronze weapons and tools, and also worked
Some Early Societies (continued)

jade, wood, and bone. Qin Si Huang, whose Ch’in dynasty ruled from 221 BCE to 206 BCE, and from which the name “China” comes, had perhaps the longest lasting effect on China. He united many states in the area, declaring himself the first Emperor, setting standards for writing, weights and measure, money, and the law. During his reign, the Great Wall of China, Grand Canal, and terra cotta warriors were built. The last dynasty in China, the Ch’ing, ended in 1912 CE.

Ancient Greece

The Dorians overtook the Mycenaeans in southern Greece around 1100 BCE, moving in from the north. The Ionians settled in Athens and on the islands of the Aegean. Eventually, the Ionians began to farm and establish permanent settlements. From these rose city-states such as Athens, Sparta, and Corinth. Though loyal to their own city-states, all citizens also spoke the same language, worshipped the same deities, and believed in the same myths. Homer’s *Odyssey* and *Iliad* were known to all Greeks and became central to Greek culture. Athens became the centre of democracy, with citizenship awarded to men over 20, allowing them to participate in government. The Greeks gave the world western philosophy, drama, mathematics, the Olympic games, scientific method, and democracy.

After the Peloponnesian wars in the fifth century BCE, Athens lost much of its influence. However, the Macedonian ruler Alexander the Great would extend the empire through Egypt, Persia, Asia Minor, and Turkey, carrying Greek philosophy, ideals, and culture with him. Its influence continued until the rise of the Romans beginning about 168 BCE.

Ancient Rome

The origin of the city of Rome is not known (legend has it founded 753 BCE by Romulus and Remus). In about 500 BCE, the Latins overthrew Rome’s Etruscan rulers, who had developed the community on the Tiber River into a prosperous trading centre. The Roman Empire began with the rule of Augustus Caesar, who became the first emperor in 31 BCE. At its height, Rome had the most organized military in the world, as Roman legions conquered new lands. Roman society was divided into distinct classes, with the emperor at top, then the noble patricians, the plebeians (farmers, tradespeople, labourers), and slaves. The Romans were known for their great architecture (including the Pantheon, Colosseum, and Forum) and building design (arches, vaults, domes). They built public works such as aqueducts, road systems, sewage systems, and bridges. The practice and rule of law was developed. The Latin alphabet and language became the basis for many English words, as well as for common terms in medicine, law, and science. At its most extensive, the Roman Empire spanned much of Europe, from Scotland to the Caspian Sea, Asia Minor, Egypt, and Northern Africa. The Roman Empire fell in 476 CE, after invasions from northern Germanic tribes.
Some Early Societies (continued)

Phoenicia

Phoenicia consisted of a series of city-states along the Eastern Mediterranean. The most powerful were Tyre, founded about 2750 BCE, Sidon, founded around 4000 BCE, and Carthage, founded about 800 BCE. The Phoenicians were expert traders, and the purple dye they manufactured from sea snails was a valued commodity throughout the Mediterranean, commanding high prices. They were known as skilled shipbuilders, and their innovative boat design allowed them to trade all over the Mediterranean. They were also excellent craftsmen. It is believed that glass was invented at Sidon, and the Phoenicians were known for their metalwork and faience (tin-glazed pottery). Because their goods were so prized by their trading partners, the states enjoyed good relations for many centuries. With the fall of Tyre to Alexander the Great in 332 BCE, Phoenicia fell into decline, ultimately annexed by the Roman Empire about 64 CE.

The Maya

Maya society reached its peak between about 300 CE and 900 CE. The Maya lived in the jungles and mountains of Mexico and Central America, and were a farming culture, with corn their main crop. They developed canal systems and built terrace systems on hillsides. Though they did not have beasts of burden or advanced technology, they were able to support their communities. Mayan cities were ruled by a chief and priests and their families. Traders were considered the noble class. They travelled to distant places in long canoes and traded cotton, salt, honey, wax, fish, cacao, as well as jade, flint, and quetzal feathers. The Mayan writing system was practised by scribes. This early society is also famous for its calendar. Farmers, hunters, and fishermen were lower class. Mayan cities were built around central plazas, with temples, palaces, and government offices around them. The Mayan culture collapsed around 900 CE, following a series of droughts, which caused famine, death, and dispersal of survivors.

The Persian Empire

The Persian Empire was concurrent with Ancient Greece. It stretched from North Africa, through Egypt and the Middle East, to northern India, reaching its height about 499 BCE. With huge armies manned by soldiers from all the lands it controlled, the Persians were also admired for their achievements in astronomy, mathematics, medicine, art, and architecture. Persia ruled some Greek cities in Asia Minor, and the Greeks feared that the Persian thirst for conquest would mean their democratic form of government would give way to the Persian king’s supreme power. In the first half of the fifth century, wars between Greece and Persia resulted in the destruction of Athens, but ultimately Greece prevailed, with Alexander the Great defeating the Persians by 331 BCE.
Early Societies Around the World
What Is an Early Society?

Early Society

Definitions

Examples

Characteristics

Non-Examples
3 Learning From Artifacts

The purpose of this lesson is to have students examine a variety of sources (images of artifacts) and learn how to critically examine and use images as sources of information. Students will infer about early people’s culture and way of life.

Guided Inquiry Questions:
- How can I use images as a source for historical information?
- How do I use sources as historians do?
- What can artifacts and documents teach me about past societies?
- What if there were no documents or written texts about past societies? How could I find out about the past?
- What methods can I use to compare societies from different eras and regions?

Learning Goals:
- We are learning to ask critical-thinking questions in order to make inferences about images of artifacts.
- We are learning how to work with sources. (e.g., What are primary and secondary sources, and which sources give us the most accurate historical information?)
- We are learning how to use and interpret/infer information from a variety of sources (e.g., images, documents, artifacts, maps).

Concepts of Social Studies Thinking:
- Perspective

Information for Teachers

Primary sources are records of information that are created during the time that an event happens or by a person who actually experiences the event. Primary sources include original documents (speeches, diaries, manuscripts, letters, newspaper accounts), photographs, and artifacts. Examples include the diaries of Mackenzie King, letters from war veterans, the photograph of Donald Smith driving the last spike in the Canadian Pacific Railway, a copy of a handwritten poem by Louis Riel as he awaited execution, and a parfleche used for carrying pemmican.

Secondary sources are works in which the author interprets, analyzes, or summarizes events, based on the study of primary sources. These include such things as textbooks, histories, magazine articles, encyclopedias, biographies, and other nonfiction works. Photographs of some primary sources, such as artifacts, are classified as secondary sources since the viewer cannot get the same information as he or she could from the original item (e.g., material, dimensions, and view of all sides).

While primary sources are preferable for use in classrooms in terms of developing critical-thinking and related social studies skills, it not always possible to access primary documents from a given time period. Therefore, secondary sources may be used as an alternative.

Some societies did not produce textual or written records, so archaeologists and others study the objects and materials left behind, infer what they were used for, and attempt to decode any inscriptions and images that appear on them. As a result, archaeology is based on the interpretation and analysis of objects by archaeologists and others, rather than on definitive written records.

Materials
- Activity Sheet A: Archaeological Dig (A.3.1)
- Activity Sheet B: Examining Artifacts (A.3.2)
- chart paper
- markers
- large sticky notes
- LCD projector/Smart board (or photocopies of images provided)