



# 7–12 SOCIAL STUDIES



---

UTAH CORE STATE STANDARDS  
*for*  
**SOCIAL STUDIES**

Adopted December 2016  
by the  
Utah State Board of Education

Revised September 2016



The Utah State Board of Education, in January of 1984, established policy requiring the identification of specific core standards to be met by all K–12 students in order to graduate from Utah’s secondary schools. The Utah State Board of Education regularly updates the Utah Core Standards, while parents, teachers, and local school boards continue to control the curriculum choices that reflect local values.

The Utah Core Standards are aligned to scientifically based content standards. They drive high quality instruction through statewide comprehensive expectations for all students. The standards outline essential knowledge, concepts, and skills to be mastered at each grade level or within a critical content area. The standards provide a foundation for ensuring learning within the classroom.

# WORLD GEOGRAPHY

**Geography** is the study of physical and human characteristics of the Earth’s people, places, and environments. Students will develop geographic thinking skills by studying the “why of where” as they examine the interactions, interconnections, and implications of forces shaping our world today. They will apply geographic knowledge and geo-literacy skills to identify, locate, interpret, analyze, and evaluate geographic patterns and processes. These standards emphasize both human geography and physical geography, and students will explore the interconnections between the two.

## Civic Preparation

One of the fundamental purposes for public schools is the preparation of young people for participation in America’s democratic republic. The progress of our communities, state, nation, and world rests upon the preparation of young people to understand the interconnections and interactions between their local, national, and global communities in order to make reasoned and far-reaching decisions. The study of geography supports students in understanding how human and natural systems interact and connect places to each other. Geographically informed students can better participate in their communities and the world in a responsible, informed and civically minded way. The skills and habits of mind that students develop as they study the world through geography will nurture their sense of citizenry, as well as civic and global awareness.

To that end, throughout this course, students should have ample opportunities to:

- ] Apply spatial analysis and reasoning to identify, examine, and rationalize a variety of issues facing local, national, and global communities today.
- ] Consider various perspectives, including political, historical, economic, cultural, and environmental aspects to analyze and explain current events.
- ] Develop and demonstrate the values that sustain America’s democratic republic, including open-mindedness, engagement, honesty, problem-solving, responsibility, diligence, resilience, empathy, self-control, and cooperation.

## Foundational Geographic Skills

The study of world geography begins with asking geographic questions. Students of geography use information gleaned from geographic texts such as maps, statistics, geospatial technology, media, and other geographic information to answer those questions. Geography students use evidence to make inferences about the interconnections and interactions between people and places. They also use spatial thinking to identify patterns and processes occurring at various scales. The following stan-

dards promote foundational skills and dispositions vital to the discipline of geography. These skills and dispositions are reinforced in subsequent strands as students engage with specific geographic content and inquiry.

Students will have ample opportunities, throughout the course, to:

- ] Conduct geographic investigations at various scales, including local, national, and global. They will formulate geographic questions, acquire information, select and organize relevant data, analyze patterns in the data, and arrive at evidence-based conclusions.
- ] Apply map-reading skills to analyze features, purposes, and uses of various types of maps, including mental maps.
- ] Use and create maps, graphs, and other types of data sets to show patterns and processes influencing our world.
- ] Use existing and emerging technologies, such as GIS and other geospatial technologies, whenever possible and appropriate.
- ] Compare the implications of interactions and interconnections between various people and places at various scales.
- ] Use evidence to analyze and explain the spatial organization of people, places, and environments and how they have changed over time.

### **A Note on the Organization of the Utah Standards in All Core Areas**

The Geography core standards are organized into **strands**, which represent significant areas of learning within content areas. Depending on the core area, these strands may be designated by time periods, thematic principles, modes of practice, or other organizing principles.

Within each strand are **standards**. A standard is an articulation of the demonstrated proficiency to be obtained. A standard represents an essential element of the learning that is expected. While some standards within a strand may be more comprehensive than others, all standards are essential for mastery.

## **WG Strand 1: HUMANS AND THEIR PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT**

The earth's physical environment varies greatly from place to place. The interactions between physical systems and human systems create opportunities and challenges for people and places. The implications of these interactions affect both physical systems and human systems.

### ***Possible Guiding Questions to Consider:***

- ] How does the physical geography of a place influence the lives of the people in that place?
- ] What are the most significant consequences of human interactions with their environment?
- ] How do physical and human characteristics help geographers define a region?

- ] How are places and regions connected? How are they similar? How are they different?
- ] How does the environment influence which agricultural methods are used in various places?
- ] What are the intended and unintended effects of altering our physical landscape?
- ] How do geographers use geospatial data to help make informed decisions?

- **WG Standard 1.1:** Students will describe the significant forces that influence the physical environment, such as plate tectonics, erosion, climate, and natural disasters, and explain how the effects of physical processes vary across regions of the world.
- **WG Standard 1.2:** Students will identify patterns evident in the geographic distribution of ecosystems and biomes and explain how humans interact with them.
- **WG Standard 1.3:** Students will cite evidence of how the distribution of natural resources affects physical and human systems.
- **WG Standard 1.4:** Students will use geographic reasoning to propose actions that mitigate or solve issues, such as natural disasters, pollution, climate change, and habitat loss.

## WG Strand 2: POPULATION DISTRIBUTION AND MIGRATION

The movement and distribution of people is influenced by many factors, including environmental, cultural, economic, and geopolitical forces. These migration trends alter geographic conditions. Geographers use data to understand population distribution and migration by looking at population characteristics, push and pull factors, and numerous other variables. Analyzing this data offers an opportunity to examine complex and challenging real-world issues.

### *Possible Guiding Questions to Consider:*

- ] Why do people live where they live?
  - ] Why do people move, sometimes at great risk to themselves?
  - ] How might population trends influence aspects of daily life at local, regional, or global scales?
  - ] Why do urbanization patterns differ around the world?
  - ] How can governmental policies have both intended and unintended consequences for population and migration?
  - ] What are the costs and benefits of mass urbanization?
  - ] How do geographers use demographic data to make informed decisions?
- **WG Standard 2.1:** Students will evaluate the impact of population distribution patterns at various scales by analyzing and comparing demographic characteristics such as gender, age, ethnicity, and population density using maps, population pyramids, and other geographic data.

- **WG Standard 2.2:** Students will explain push and pull factors causing voluntary and involuntary migration and the consequences created by the movement of people.
- **WG Standard 2.3:** Students will investigate the effects of significant patterns of human movement that shape urban and rural environments over time, such as mass urbanization, immigration, and the movement of refugees.

### WG Strand 3: CULTURE

Culture is the total sum of human expression. A culture’s purpose, as well as how and where cultures originate, diffuse, and change, are all topics worth studying. Students will explore religion, language, ethnicity and other cultural characteristics by looking at patterns and processes. As students explore what people care about and care for, they can learn not only about other cultures but also about the unique attributes of their own culture.

***Possible Guiding Questions to Consider:***

- ] How does culture manifest itself on the landscape of the earth?
  - ] How does culture influence social structures and gender roles?
  - ] What effect does globalization and emerging technologies have on the divergence and convergence of culture?
  - ] How do cultures maintain their identities and traditions?
  - ] How are humans shaped and influenced by their own cultures?
  - ] How can learning about other cultures teach us about our own?
- **WG Standard 3.1:** Students will identify and describe the essential defining characteristics and functions of culture.
  - **WG Standard 3.2:** Students will explain how the physical environment influences and is influenced by culture.
  - **WG Standard 3.3:** Students will identify how culture influences sense of place, point of view and perspective, and the relative value placed upon people and places.
  - **WG Standard 3.4:** Students will identify the causes, methods, and effects for the diffusion and distribution of cultural characteristics among different places and regions.
  - **WG Standard 3.5:** Students will explain how the basic tenets of world religions affect the daily lives of people.
  - **WG Standard 3.6:** Students will cite examples of how globalization creates challenges and opportunities for different cultures.
  - **WG Standard 3.7:** Students will demonstrate an understanding of their own culture’s connection to geography.



**WG Strand 4: POLITICAL SYSTEMS**

People organize themselves into distinctive groups. Geographers examine how the interactions between these groups influence the division and control of the earth’s surface. Political systems have profound influences on the lives of people, including their access to resources, economic opportunities, and basic rights.

**Possible Guiding Questions to Consider:**

- ] How and why do people organize themselves into political entities?
- ] How do people distribute power and define roles?
- ] How do political structures interact on a global scale?
- ] Who holds the power at a variety of scales and how are decisions made?
- ] Why is power concentrated in certain parts of the globe?
- ] How do political systems protect or deny the rights of marginalized peoples?

- **WG Standard 4.1:** Students will explain why and how people organize into a range of political structures at different scales.
- **WG Standard 4.2:** Students will describe and explain the role physical and human characteristics play in establishing political boundaries.
- **WG Standard 4.3:** Students will explain how cooperation and conflict have many causes, such as differing ideas regarding boundaries, resource control, and land use, as well as ethnic, tribal, and national identities.

**WG Strand 5: ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT**

Humans have created complex and varied economic systems. These systems, whether based on free markets or other structures, have various levels of development, infrastructure, and divisions of labor. Economic systems are influenced by their unique landscapes and resources, and their locations influence patterns of interconnections with other economic systems. Geographers can use the insights they learn about economic development to identify patterns or propose solutions to complex issues.

**Possible Guiding Questions to Consider:**

- ] What and who defines a state as developed?
- ] How does culture manifest itself in the development of economic systems?
- ] How does geography influence the ways in which people make a living?
- ] Why have some regions developed more rapidly than others?
- ] What are some of the economic patterns evident in more-developed and less-developed countries?
- ] Why are economic activities sometimes located in unexpected or unconventional places?



] What are the challenges of sustainable development?

- **WG Standard 5.1:** Students will explain the essential attributes of a developed economy and the patterns of development that differentiate less-developed from more-developed places.
- **WG Standard 5.2:** Students will describe and compare the function and distribution of economic activities in primary, secondary, and tertiary sectors.
- **WG Standard 5.3:** Students will explain key economic concepts and their implications for the production, exchange, distribution, and consumption of goods and services.
- **WG Standard 5.4:** Students will cite examples of various levels of economic interdependence between nations and peoples.
- **WG Standard 5.5:** Students will describe the costs, benefits, and sustainability of development in terms of poverty rates, standards of living, the impact on indigenous people, environmental changes, gender equality, and access to education.