

**The Department's Educational Philosophy and Guiding Principles**

The goal of the Social Studies Department is to provide students with the information and skills necessary to act as responsible global citizens. We believe that:

- Students learn best in a safe and comfortable learning environment that fosters mutual support, respect of differences, and active participation in the educational process.
- Students and teachers should be partners in the learning process.
- Students should be provided learning experiences that involve higher-level critical thinking and multiple learning styles.
- Students should be provided opportunities to connect the curriculum to something relevant in their own lives.
- Students should have opportunities to construct their own meaningful, relevant learning experiences.
- Students who have opportunities to better understand and reflect upon their own experiences are better equipped to more deeply understand the experiences of others.
- Students will be better prepared for the larger community and become active and thoughtful citizens when they believe that they have an important voice.

## **WORLD CULTURES: GRADE 8**

Course Frequency: This course meets every day for the entire school year.

Credits Offered: N/A

Prerequisites: N/A

### **Background to the Curriculum**

The World Cultures curriculum seeks to reinforce the environment of respect for differences established in Grade 7 and to explore the experiences of individuals and groups in diverse cultures around the world. Each of the major cultures studied in the Grade 8 curriculum – China, India, and the Middle East – has a rich and complex history and plays an important role in current events. Students learn important elements of the physical and human geography, key historical developments, and unique aspects of each culture, including traditions, major belief systems, and forms of artistic expression. Students learn about and appreciate the contributions that each culture has made to world culture. Aspects of contemporary life, including the roles of young people, are also studied. This process of discovery broadens the students' understanding and appreciation of different cultures of the world and helps enrich their understanding of their own cultures.

It is hoped that by studying the peoples of these particular cultures, students will face the future positively and knowledgeably as world citizens. Hopefully, too, students will become more interested in and excited about world culture as a whole and will explore opportunities to make positive connections and build productive relationships with peoples all over the globe. By studying the experiences of individuals and groups in American society in seventh grade, and three different regions and cultures of the world in eighth grade, students are able to draw connections between their own lives and those of others.

### **Essential Questions (for Iran and China units)**

- ↳ *What are the dangers of a single story?*
- ↳ *How does the past influence the present?*
- ↳ *How should power be used?*
- ↳ *How does ideology shape culture and people's behavior?*

## **PREPARE TO TRAVEL (Introductory Mini-unit)**

**Vocabulary:** *economic, political, social, western, state* (also *circa, century, BCE, CE*)

### **↳ Essential Questions**

1. What is culture?
2. How do our own perspectives and experiences influence how we see other cultures that are different from our own?
3. What is the danger of a single story?

### **↳ Essential Understandings**

1. Culture is made up of material and nonmaterial aspects, and shapes our ideology and global perspective.
2. It is important to have an awareness of our own perspectives and experiences and how these might influence how we learn about and experience other cultures.
3. Defining a culture by a single story or single idea can lead to an incomplete or inaccurate understanding of that culture.

### **↳ Suggested Activities**

- *Nacirema* reading (excerpt from Horace Miner's "Body Ritual of the Nacirema," 1956)
- "Fuzzy cow" picture (available from eighth grade teachers)
- Cultural Universals (available in various forms from eighth grade teachers)
- [Flip Flotsam](#) (online)
- [The Danger of a Single Story](#) (online TED Talk)
- [Planet Money Makes a T-shirt](#)
- [Video from CIA officer about "listening to our enemies"](#)
- poverty image from Primary Source
- Relevant vocabulary: *ethnocentrism, cultural relativism, ideology*

## **IRAN (September to January)**

**Vocabulary:** *ideology, imperialism, “long arm of history”*

### **↳ Objectives**

- A.** Use primary sources to conclude that Iran is a diverse place that often defies common stereotypes held by westerners. **(2 days)**
- B.** Locate and label: **(2 days total - annotated throughout unit; assessed at end of unit)**
  - 1.** 4 countries (Iran, Syria, Iraq, and Saudi Arabia)
  - 2.** Significant cities, including Abadan, Esfahan (*alt. Isfahan*), Mecca, Medina, and Tehran
  - 3.** Water features (Caspian Sea, Persian Gulf)
  - 4.** Mountain ranges (Elburz Mountains)
- C.** Draw conclusions about Iran and its place in the world using online demographic information comparing Iran with the United States and other countries around the world. **(1-2 days)**
- D.** Make observations about the geography and culture of Iran from an introductory video. **(2-3 days)**
- E.** Conclude that modern Iran has been and is still influenced by ancient Persian culture and spirituality (e.g. Zoroastrianism) through the “long arm of history.” **(3-4 days)**
- F.** Infer from excerpts of sacred texts that Islam shares beliefs, teachings, and “roots” with Judaism and Christianity. **(2 days)**
- G.** Identify and infer from primary and secondary sources the tenets, beliefs, virtues, and/or values of Islam, including the pilgrimage to Mecca, major sects (e.g. Sunni and Shia), understanding of female modesty, and stereotypes regarding terrorism. **(2 weeks)**
- H.** Identify and infer the main themes of the Persian epic *Shahnameh* and examine its lessons on leadership and power. **(3-4 days)**
- I.** Identify and infer from primary and secondary sources major events in late 19th and early 20th century Iran, including the leadership of the Qajar Dynasty, British and Russian imperialism, the AIOC, popular uprisings (e.g. the Tobacco Revolt), efforts towards democratization, and the rise of the Pahlavi Dynasty. **(1-2 weeks)**

- J. Examine the factors and various ideological perspectives that contributed to the rise of Mohammad Mossadegh and evaluate the benefits and drawbacks of privatizing versus nationalizing the Iranian oil industry. **(2-3 days)**
- K. Infer from primary and secondary sources the motivation and justification for the 1953 Anglo-American *coup d'etat* (e.g. The Cold War, oil) overthrowing the democratically elected prime minister Mohammad Mossadegh. **(6-7 days)**
- L. Infer from primary and secondary sources the motivation and justification for the Iranian Revolution of 1979. **(6-7 days, plus 2 additional if showing Persepolis)**
- M. Evaluate the consequences of the Iranian Revolution of 1979, including its domestic impact, the Iran Hostage Crisis, and Iran's changing role in regional and world politics. **(2 days)**
- N. Examine and explore methods of anti-government protest in modern Iran (e.g. art, poetry, music, visual arts, etc.) **(2 days)**
- O. Explore and make inferences from current events articles about contemporary political and social issues in modern Iran and the wider Middle East, including the Iran nuclear negotiations, the rise of ISIS, media and pop culture, gender issues, and lifestyles of the young. **(1 week, depending on current events)**
- P. Experience the uniqueness of Iran and Persian culture through exposure to literature, food, art, celebrations, etc. **(4-5 days)**
- Q. Write a thesis-based essay answering one of the year's essential questions, using evidence from the Iran unit **(1 week)**

### ↳ **Resources**

#### Geography/Culture

- *Rand McNally Classroom Atlas* (most recent edition)
- *World Almanac* (most recent edition)
- [CIA World Factbook](#)
- [Rick Steves Iran](#)
- [Map of Iran and the Middle East](#) and [Map work guide](#) (to be used by all four teachers)

## Religion

- *World History: Patterns of Interaction* (high school textbook), pages 77-82 (Judaism), pages 168-172 (Christianity), pages 263-272 (Islam)
- *DK World Religions* (by John Bowker)
- SPICE's (Stanford Program on International and Cross-Cultural Education) *Islamic Civilization and the Arts*
- The Hebrew Bible (The *Tanakh*)islamic art
- The Christian Bible
- [The Bible Gateway](#)
- The *Qur'an* (English translation)
- *The Essential Rumi* (translated by Coleman Barks)
- National Geographic's *Inside Mecca* (DVD)

## Shahnameh

- Elizabeth Laird's print translation
- [New online version](#)
- [Shahnameh project](#)

## Art

- [Tabriz school of miniaturists](#)

## History

- [Maps of War](#)
- *Argo* (2012)
- Primary Source [newsreel](#) of Nationalization of Abadan Oil Refinery (1st and 2nd video)
- Primary Source [newsreel](#) of the the return of the Shah and overthrow of Mossadegh in 1953 (3rd video)
- [Declassified CIA documents](#) regarding 1953 coup d'etat
- *Persepolis* (Marjane Satrapi) - Highly acclaimed graphic novel: supplements students' understanding of the Islamic revolution with illustrations and personal narrative
- [The American Experience: Jimmy Carter](#) (PBS) - A quick, broad summary of the beginning of the Hostage Crisis and Carter's attempts to resolve the situation. 1:30:20 to 1:39:45 (*up to the failure of Desert One*)
- [TV Eye American Embassy Report](#) (Thames Television) This is a British television report based on primary source interviews during the crisis. Of particular interest are the exchanges between the host and Masoumeh Ebtekar, then a student spokeswoman known simply "Mary" and a current vice president of Iran (*Ebtekar featured at 4:18 and 12:24*)
- [Preamble to Iranian Constitution](#) - To be compared with U.S. Constitution using guided reading strategies

### Modern Day Iran

- MTV's "[Rebel Music Iran: The Music Never Stopped](#)" - Overview of Iranian history from today with an emphasis on freedom of speech in the post-Islamic Revolution Iran - May 2015 - 24 minutes
- [President Obama interview](#) with NYT's Thomas Friedman on the Iran Nuclear deal - July 14, 2015 - 47 minutes
- [Rageh Omaar's "Rageh Inside Iran"](#) - Documentary focusing on Tehran
- Anthony Bourdain: [Parts Unknown in Iran](#) - A look at food, culture and freedom of the press - November 2014 - 47 minutes
- [Teacher's guide](#) to "Choices" curriculum about the nuclear issues with Iran
- [No One Knows About Persian Cats](#): the film follows a pair of young musicians, recently released from prison, on a mission to take their rock band to Europe. Forbidden by the authorities to play in Iran, they plan their escape abroad with a fast-talking music promoter...2010 - 1:47 minutes, \$2.99 fee on Youtube

### Resources for Teachers and Support Staff

- [PBS recap of '53 coup to Islamic Revolution](#) - 2 ½ minutes
- [Bill Moyer's Mossadegh Project](#) - video and text - 2 hours
- Teacher's guide to "Choices" curriculum about Islamic Revolution in Iran
- *The Mantle of the Prophet* (Roy Mottahedeh): Comprehensive history of Iran to 1980s
- *All the Shah's Men* (Stephen Kinzer): Another often-cited history, focusing more on coup
- [Recap of Persian history](#) - 1:10 minutes
- [Timeline of Iranian history](#)
- [The Last Shah](#) (BBC) - A really great, nuanced biography of Mohammad Reza Shah. Lots of excellent primary source footage from start to finish; almost any clip would be useful for an eighth grade audience. Obviously, the focal point is the Shah himself, but this documentary really presents a clear narrative for understanding the path to the 1979 Revolution. Plus, as a bonus, it's narrated by Ben Kingsley.
- [444 Days](#) (BBC) - A very thorough account of the crisis from start to finish. Way too long for eighth grade, but great source material for teachers and lots of usable clips, particularly interviews with former hostages.
- [Background](#) on Anglo-Iranian Oil Company
- [Structures of Power](#) - the power hierarchy within Iranian government from *Frontline*
- [The Mossadegh Project](#) - Background on Mohammad Mossadegh
- [Timeline of 1953 coup](#) - *NY Times*

### ▷ Skills

- Disciplinary literacy/active reading
- Evaluate the reliability of a website
- Purposeful talk/conversation
- Introduction to scholarly writing and persuasive use of supporting evidence
- Paraphrasing/strategies for avoiding plagiarism
- Writing a thesis statement
- Reinforcement of Grade 7 critical thinking skills:
  - Making inferences
  - Drawing conclusions
  - Identifying supporting evidence
- ELL collaboration tool:  
[https://wida.wisc.edu/sites/default/files/Website/State%20Pages/Massachusetts/MA\\_Collaboration\\_Tool.pdf](https://wida.wisc.edu/sites/default/files/Website/State%20Pages/Massachusetts/MA_Collaboration_Tool.pdf)

### CHINA (February to May)

**Vocabulary:** *dynasty*

### ▷ Objectives

- A.** Use primary sources to conclude that China is a place with diverse geography and culture that defies a monolithic understanding. **(2 days)**
- B.** Locate and label: **(2 days total - annotated throughout unit; assessed at end of unit)**
1. 4 countries [China (People's Republic of China), India, Russia, Taiwan (Republic of China)]
  2. Significant cities, including Beijing, Guangzhou (formerly Canton), Hong Kong, Shanghai, and Taipei
  3. Water features [Yangtze River, Yellow River (Huang He)]
  4. Mountain ranges (Himalayas)
- C.** Draw conclusions about China and its place in the world using online demographic information comparing China with Iran, the United States, and other countries around the world. **(1-2 days)**



- D.** Examine the ways in which Confucianism, Buddhism, and Daoism (Taoism) developed and are practiced, including sources of power, significant texts, historical contexts, important rituals, etc. **(1 week)**
- E.** Infer from excerpts of significant texts the tenets, beliefs, virtues, and/or values of Confucianism, Buddhism, and Daoism. **(4 days)**
- F.** Compare, contrast, and conclude that there are fundamental connections and similarities among Confucianism, Buddhism, and Daoism; moreover, conclude that Confucianism, Buddhism, and Daoism are not mutually exclusive and the practices of all three belief systems are integrated into everyday life in China. **(1 day)**
- G.** Infer from primary and secondary sources important ideas, themes, values, or interpretations of philosophy/spirituality expressed in selected works of Chinese literature (e.g. *Magical Monkey King*) **(1 week)**
- H.** Identify and explore some important introductory aspects of the Chinese dynastic system, including longevity, sequence, political functions, and international relations. **(1 day)**
- I.** Identify key historical changes beginning in the late 18th century in China, including trade with the West, the Opium Wars, and the decline of the Qing Dynasty. **(4 days)**
- J.** Identify key historical changes beginning in the early 20th century in China, including the creation of the Republic of China, the rise of Communism (including its basic tenets and values), the Communist revolution, World War II, and the creation of the People's Republic of China and the Republic of China. **(3-4 days)**
- K.** Identify important developments in China under Mao Zedong's rule, including the Great Leap Forward and the Cultural Revolution. **(2 days)**
- L.** Infer from primary sources important themes, concepts, values, or ideas from the Maoist era in China. **(3-4 days)**
- M.** Identify important developments in China under Deng Xiaoping's rule, including the One Child Policy, economic reform and expansion, and the Tiananmen Square protests. **(3-4 days)**
- N.** Explore and make inferences from current events articles about contemporary political and social issues in China, including international influence, environmental concerns, censorship, media and pop culture, and lifestyles of the young. **(3-4 days, depending on current events)**
- O.** Experience the uniqueness of Chinese culture through exposure to literature, food, art, celebrations, etc. **(4-5 days)**

P. Write a thesis-based essay answering one of the essential questions, using evidence from the China unit (**1 week**)

Q. Conduct a group research project on China. Focus on:

1. Detecting a website's bias.
2. Evaluating if a website is reliable or not.
3. Using note-taking approach to avoid plagiarism.
4. Using oral presentation skills to engage an audience.
5. Creating an engaging PowerPoint.
6. Creating a Works Consulted page for research and images.

### ↳ **Resources**

#### Geography/Culture

- *Rand McNally Classroom Atlas* (most recent edition)
- *World Almanac* (most recent edition)
- [CIA World Factbook](#)
- SPICE's (Stanford Program on International and Cross-Cultural Education) *Demystifying the Chinese Language*
- China travel guides (DK, Lonely Planet, Fodor's)
- Discovery Channel's *China: Revealed* (DVD)
- *Last Train Home* (DVD)
- *One Day in Ping Wei* (DVD)
- *New Year in Ping Wei* (DVD)
- [China from Above](#) photography/video collection (online)
- [Your Shot China](#) (online)

#### Belief Systems/Religion

- *DK World Religions* (by John Bowker)
- SPICE's (Stanford Program on International and Cross-Cultural Education) *Religions and Philosophies in China: Confucianism, Daoism, and Buddhism*
- *Facts on File World Religions* series
- History Alive's *The Ancient World*
- Confucius's *Analects* (translated by Edward Slingerland)
- [Confucius's Analects](#) (online)
- *Tao Te Ching* (Dao De Jing) (translated by D.C. Lau)

- *The Magical Monkey King* (by Ji Li Jiang)
- [Invitation to World Literature: Journey to the West](#) (online)
- *Journey to the West* (DVD)

### History

- *World History: Patterns of Interaction* (high school textbook), pages 805-809 (Qing Dynasty)
- *Chronicle of the Chinese Emperors* (by Ann Paludan)
- Discovery Channel's *What the Ancients Knew: China* (DVD)
- Discovery Channel's *Zheng He: Emperor of the Seas* (DVD)
- Primary Source's *China in the World: A History Since 1644*
- ***The Rise of Modern China* (by Tony Allen)**
- *Quotations from Chairman Mao* ("Little Red Book")
- *The Private Life of Chairman Mao* (by Dr. Li Zhisui)
- *10,000 Shovels: China's Urbanization and Economic Development* (DVD)
- **PBS's *People's Century: Great Leap* (VHS)**
- [NYT article](#) highlighting different people's experiences during the Cultural Revolution, 50 years later
- PBS's *Tank Man* (DVD)
- *Please Vote for Me* (DVD)
- [Vibrant Chinese Propaganda Art](#) (online)
- *The Tiananmen Papers* (edited by Andrew J. Nathan and Perry Link)

### ○ Skills

- Disciplinary literacy/active reading
- Evaluate the reliability of a website
- Purposeful talk/conversation
- Introduction to scholarly writing and persuasive use of supporting evidence
- Paraphrasing/strategies for avoiding plagiarism
- Writing a thesis statement
- Reinforcement of Grade 7 critical thinking skills:
  - Making inferences
  - Drawing conclusions
  - Identifying supporting evidence

## **Assessment**

Assessment is used to analyze student performance over time and should include a variety of methods so that students with different learning styles have opportunities to demonstrate their understanding. Assessment should inform instruction and guide teachers to develop strategies that lead to improved student performance. Students should be actively involved in the assessment process through self-evaluation and reflection. They should be given expectations, goals, and criteria for assessment before any major assignment or project.

Our philosophy of learning, teaching and assessment has implications for the type of work we expect students to do. At a time when young adolescents are consciously beginning to think more abstractly and sharpen their analytical skills, students are expected to apply complex critical thinking skills. These include making inferences, drawing conclusions, and using supporting evidence. Students learn that history is a collection of primary and secondary sources expressing many different points of view. Primary sources, both visual and verbal, allow students to learn through the use of real-world resources, which make the learning process discovery-based. Though the process is more difficult, it is also more rewarding as students learn to construct knowledge for themselves out of the primary sources. Students are expected to generate responses and complete projects, applying their complex thinking skills and knowledge. They are learning to work more responsibly and independently, as they learn to set benchmarks for longer-term assignments and projects.

## **Materials and Resources**

Materials and resources are constantly being added and updated. For each unit, students are provided with a wide variety of both primary and secondary source materials, which they are required to keep in an organized social studies binder.