

Grade 8 Social Studies: Year-at-a-Glance

Overview

Grade 8 asks students to think about worldview: the beliefs, values and knowledge that shape how a society sees itself and the world around it. The year moves through three case studies of contact between societies with different worldviews. Students begin with Japan, examining how isolation during the Edo period gave way to rapid adaptation during the Meiji period, and what that shift cost and changed. They then turn to Renaissance Europe, exploring how the exchange of ideas in science, art, religion and politics helped build the worldview that still shapes the Western world today. The year closes with the Spanish and the Aztecs, a case where two very different worldviews met and one society came to dominate the other, a topic students examine critically rather than as a simple story of conquest. Across all three units, students practise historical and geographic thinking, build research and communication skills, and reflect on how their own worldview has been shaped by the past. [See the curriculum: 1, 2.](#)

The year at a glance

Social Studies › Social Studies (7 to 9) › Grade 8

Unit	General outcomes	Specific outcomes
8.3: Worldviews in Conflict: The Spanish & the Aztecs	Through an examination of Spanish and Aztec societies, students will demonstrate an understanding and appreciation of how intercultural contact affects the worldviews of societies.	Students will: 8.3.1 - appreciate how a society's worldview influences the society's choices, decisions and interactions with other societies (C, I) (see the curriculum); Students will: 8.3.3 - appreciate and recognize how rapid adaptation can radically change a society's beliefs, values and knowledge (TCC, GC). (see the curriculum); Students will: 8.3.4 - assess, critically, how the Aztecs were affected by the Spanish worldview by exploring and reflecting upon the following questions and issues: - What were the key elements of the worldview of the Aztec... (see the curriculum); Students will: 8.3.2 - appreciate how Aztec and Spanish identities and worldviews were affected by intercultural contact (TCC, GC, I) (see the curriculum)

Alberta Education's Information and Communication Technology (ICT) curriculum is infused throughout the social studies program of studies.	Research for Deliberative Inquiry; Social Participation as a Democratic Practice; Communication; Dimensions of Thinking	Students will: 8.S.7 - apply the research process: • integrate and synthesize concepts to provide an informed point of view on a research question or an issue • develop a position that is supported by information gathered through research... (see the curriculum); Students will: 8.S.6 - develop age-appropriate behaviour for social involvement as responsible citizens contributing to their community: - volunteer with organizations, projects and activities that ensure the growth and vitality of... (see the curriculum); Students will: 8.S.5 - demonstrate skills of cooperation, conflict resolution and consensus building: - identify and use a variety of strategies to resolve conflicts peacefully and fairly - consider the needs and perspectives of... (see the curriculum); Students will: 8.S.8 - demonstrate skills of oral, written and visual literacy: - communicate in a persuasive and engaging manner through speeches, multimedia presentations and written and oral reports, taking particular audiences... (see the curriculum); Students will: 8.S.9 - develop skills of media literacy: - examine techniques used to enhance the authority and authenticity of media messages - examine the values, lifestyles and points of view represented in a media message -... (see the curriculum); Students will: 8.S.2 - develop skills of historical thinking: - distinguish cause, effect, sequence and correlation in historical events, including the long-and short-term causal relations - use historical and community resources to... (see the curriculum); Students will: 8.S.4 - demonstrate skills of decision making and problem solving: - demonstrate skills of compromise and devise strategies to reach group consensus - propose and apply new ideas and strategies, supported with facts... (see the curriculum); Students will: 8.S.1 - develop skills of critical thinking and creative thinking: - analyze the validity of information based on context, bias, source, objectivity, evidence and reliability to broaden understanding of a topic or an... (see the curriculum); Students will: 8.S.3 - develop skills of geographic thinking: - interpret
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historical maps to broaden
understanding of historical events -
use thematic maps to describe
cultural and political regions -
construct and interpret various...
(see the curriculum)

8.2: Origins of a Western Worldview: Renaissance Europe	Through an examination of Renaissance Europe, students will demonstrate an understanding and appreciation of how the exchange of ideas and knowledge contributed to shaping the worldview of the Western world.	Students will: 8.2.2 - demonstrate a willingness to consider differing beliefs, values and worldviews (C, I) (see the curriculum); Students will: 8.2.3 - recognize how beliefs and values are shaped by time, geographic location and societal context (C, TCC, LPP) (see the curriculum); Students will: 8.2.1 - appreciate how Renaissance Europe formed the basis for the worldview of the Western world (C, TCC) (see the curriculum); Students will: 8.2.4 - examine, critically, the factors that shaped the worldview evolving in western Europe during the Renaissance by exploring and reflecting upon the following questions and issues: - What was the Renaissance? (see the curriculum)
The following terms and concepts are contained within the general and specific outcomes in the grade.	(none in the selection)	(none in the selection)
8.1: From Isolation to Adaptation: Japan	Through an examination of Japan, students will demonstrate an understanding and appreciation of the ways in which beliefs, values and knowledge shape worldviews and contribute to a society's isolation or adaptation.	Students will: 8.1.3 - appreciate how models of governance and decision making reflect a society's worldview (C, I, TCC, PADM) (see the curriculum); Students will: 8.1.1 - appreciate the roles of time and geographic location in shaping a society's worldview (C, I, TCC, LPP) (see the curriculum); Students will: 8.1.4 - appreciate how a society's worldview shapes individual citizenship and identity (C, I, TCC). (see the curriculum); Students will: 8.1.2 - appreciate how a society's worldview can foster the choice to remain an isolated society (C, I, TCC) (see the curriculum); Students will: 8.1.6 - analyze the effects that rapid adaptation had on traditionally isolated Japan during the Meiji period by exploring and reflecting upon the following questions and issues: - What were the motivations for the... (see the curriculum); Students will: 8.1.5 - analyze the effects of cultural isolation during the Edo period by exploring and reflecting upon the following questions and issues: - In what ways did Japan isolate itself from the rest of the world? (see the curriculum)

Across the year

- Each unit uses the same lens: how contact between societies with different worldviews changes both sides, whether through isolation, exchange or conquest, so students can compare Japan,

Renaissance Europe and the Spanish-Aztec encounter as variations on one big idea. [See the curriculum.](#)

- Historical thinking runs through every case study: students place events in Edo and Meiji Japan, Renaissance Europe and the Spanish-Aztec encounter in their proper time and place, and trace causes and effects across each. [See the curriculum.](#)
- Geographic thinking connects to each unit as well, since physical geography helped shape Japan's isolation, Europe's trade routes and city-states, and the contact between Spain and the Aztec civilization. [See the curriculum.](#)
- Research and communication skills, including evaluating sources for bias and reliability and presenting findings persuasively, apply across all three units rather than belonging to any one topic. [See the curriculum.](#)
- The year builds toward a habit of reflection: after studying how other societies' worldviews shaped their choices, students are asked to look back at their own beliefs and assumptions. [See the curriculum.](#)