

THE TOWN SCHOOL

SOCIAL STUDIES/HISTORY CURRICULUM SUMMARY

SCHOOL-WIDE GOALS:

- TO UNDERSTAND SELF AND CULTURE AS THEY RELATE TO OTHERS AND THE WORLD.**
- TO BECOME KNOWLEDGEABLE ABOUT AND APPRECIATIVE OF PEOPLE'S HISTORIES AND CULTURES.**
- TO LEARN HOW TO APPROACH HISTORICAL RESEARCH.**
- TO ACQUIRE A BASIC KNOWLEDGE OF GEOGRAPHY.**
- TO APPRECIATE AND UNDERSTAND THE ROLE OF GOVERNMENT IN SOCIETY.**

NURSERY/KINDERGARTEN: The social studies program in the Nursery/Kindergarten Division focuses on the most familiar and immediate social structures of family, school, and neighborhood. Each grade level aims to help young children gather and reflect on information that will enable them to better interpret the world around them so students can find a meaningful, personal relationship to that world. A core approach is formally introduced in the Kindergarten year.

Nursery 3 and Nursery 4: These classes choose from a group of social studies topics and develop several units during the year based on the children's interests and skills. Topics that have been included are:

Nursery 3:	Nursery 4:
Colors	Emotions
Shapes	Our Neighborhood
Five Senses	Parts of the Body
Nature/Study of the Seasons	Cultural Foods

Kindergarten: The Kindergarten studies self and family life and integrates into these studies work in the areas of language arts, science, math and art into a comprehensive educational program. Field trips are central to the development of the curriculum units as well as providing opportunities to build skills in observing, collecting and recording information.

- ❖ Self-study.
- ❖ Examine a variety of family structures, learning to respect similarities and differences.
- ❖ Study and celebrate cultural family traditions.
- ❖ Develop skills of observation and collection of information by making charts, graphs, drawings, interviews, block buildings, maps, and murals.

LOWER SCHOOL: The Lower School social studies program is a spiraling curriculum centered around issues of community life in different cultures and time periods. Students begin in First Grade by examining their immediate community at The Town School as well as exploring the surrounding neighborhood. In Second and Third Grades children are introduced to historical studies, but again the emphasis is on how the family lived in previous times. In Fourth Grade children study the waves of immigration that settled this country while examining their own personal ethnic roots. In all grades children learn to utilize research techniques such as interviewing, observing, categorizing, and report writing. Field trips are important tools for building observation skills and collecting information.

First Grade:

- ❖ Examining the defining components and characteristics of a community, including who and what is necessary for a community to function.
- ❖ Exploration of job of family members and other community workers.
- ❖ Study of jobs and rules in the school community and the neighborhood.
- ❖ Mapping of neighborhood.

Second Grade:

- ❖ Study of New York City beginning with the neighborhood, emphasizing mapping, transportation, shelter and acquisition of food in today's world.
- ❖ Study of the habitat of the Lenape in New York City long ago with an examination of how life in the forest influenced beliefs and daily living.
- ❖ Extension of research skills, observation and categorizing, and the recreation of clothing and personal items of the Lenape.
- ❖ Learning legends and games of the Native Americans.

Third Grade:

- ❖ Use a terrain model to recognize and identify land formations.
- ❖ Study of NYC and U.S. geography.
- ❖ Study of historical New Amsterdam in the 17th Century, beginning with the explorers and emphasizing family life and daily living in a new country.
- ❖ Study of Westward Expansion, focusing on why settlers chose to leave one section of the country and the process of traveling west.

Fourth Grade:

- ❖ Study of personal family heritage.
- ❖ Study of immigration of various ethnic groups to the U.S., including the history of the old country and the causes of immigration.
- ❖ Understanding of how immigrants adapted to the new country, and the impact they made on the culture and community.
- ❖ Dramatic re-enactments, including the disembarkation at Ellis Island.

UPPER SCHOOL: The Upper School program continues the inquiry approach begun in Lower School, combining it with course content that begins with the study of ancient civilizations in Fifth Grade and culminates with American history and government in Eighth Grade. Each grade accomplishes a research project. Classes meet daily in Fifth and Sixth Grades and four times per week in Seventh and Eighth Grades. Museum trips are coordinated to enhance social studies curriculum in all grades.

Fifth Grade:

- ❖ Organization of humans as town and city dwellers.
- ❖ Archaeology, Ancient Egypt, and Ancient Greece.
- ❖ Geography in connection with course topics, and basic map-reading skills.

Sixth Grade:

- ❖ Study of the Middle Ages (600-1500) - societies in Europe, Islamic civilizations, Japan and West Africa.
- ❖ Geography in historical context/map skills.
- ❖ Expository/historical writing.
- ❖ Research skills, computer skills - PowerPoint, Dreamweaver.

Seventh Grade:

- ❖ The Age of Discovery: Study of the period of rapid geographical, intellectual, artistic and social expansion and growth spanning the 14th through 17th Centuries.
- ❖ Exploration of the Globe: examination of primary and secondary source material surrounding Marco Polo, Columbus and the Incas - research paper on explorers; study of maps, developing cultures.
- ❖ Exploration of the mind: focus on creative genius and its historical impact, as seen in Leonardo Da Vinci, Shakespeare and Galileo - interdisciplinary emphasis, including painting and astronomy; substantial work with primary source materials and computer-based research tools.
- ❖ Exploration of Community: comparison between cultures of Roanoke, Salem and Native American societies.

Eighth Grade:

- ❖ U.S. history, including:
 - ◆ Philosophies behind revolution and democracy
 - ◆ Constitution and formation of government
 - ◆ Structure of government
 - ◆ Westward expansion
 - ◆ Antebellum U.S.
 - ◆ Civil War
 - ◆ Jim Crow South and great migration
 - ◆ Civil Rights Movement
- ❖ U.S. facing world in contemporary era.

Supplementary materials include: primary source documents, films, visual art, literature.

