

New York State Social Studies Framework:

Prekindergarten – Grade 5: **Areas of Focus**

Grade Level Focus	Description
Prekindergarten: <i>Exploring Myself and The World Around Me</i>	Social Studies in prekindergarten focuses on children’s natural interest in learning about themselves and other people, what they do, what languages they speak, and their roles and responsibilities. Prekindergarten children begin to become curious about places and events that are meaningful to them within the context of their own lives. They also have a strong sense of fairness and are honing their understanding of right and wrong in the greater community. This natural curiosity about people sets the stage for teachers to incorporate learning experiences that help children learn more about themselves and others. The Social Studies Practices, especially civic participation (e.g., following rules in the classroom) and gathering as well as interpreting and using evidence (e.g., asking questions to clarify something), should be woven into prekindergarten classroom practices.
Kindergarten: <i>Self and Others</i>	In kindergarten, students study “Self and Others.” The course is organized into five units of study—Individual Development and Cultural Identity; Civic Ideals and Practices; Geography, Humans, and the Environment; Time, Continuity, and Change; and Economic Systems. These units represent five of the unifying themes of social studies, and may be presented in any order. Each unit helps students study themselves in the context of their immediate surroundings. Students will learn about similarities and differences between children, families, and communities and about holidays, symbols and traditions that unite us as Americans. Students learn about respect for others, and rights and responsibilities of individuals.
Grade 1: <i>My Family and Other Families, Now and Long Ago</i>	“My Family and Other Families, Now and Long Ago” is organized around the same five units of study that organize kindergarten Social Studies—Individual Development and Cultural Identity; Civic Ideals and Practices; Geography, Humans, and the Environment; Time, Continuity, and Change; and Economic Systems. These units represent five of the unifying themes of social studies, and may be presented in any order. Students examine families and develop an awareness of cultural diversity within the American culture. Responsible citizenship is introduced, as well as the role of authority in making rules and laws. The students will increase their geography skills through the use of maps and directions. Family history provides the basis for examining sources of information and organizing that information. Economic terminology and principles are introduced in the context of family resources, as well as in making economic decisions.

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Grade 2: <i>My Community and Other Communities</i>	"My Community and Other Communities" is organized into five units of study—Individual Development and Cultural Identity; Civic Ideals and Practices; Geography, Humans, and the Environment; Time, Continuity, and Change; and Economic Systems. Students study their local community and learn about characteristics that define urban, suburban, and rural communities. Democratic principles and participation in government are introduced. Interaction with the environment and changes to the environment and their effects are examined. The concept of change over time and examining cause and effect are introduced. Students will examine the availability of resources and the interdependence within and across communities.
Grade 3: <i>Communities Around the World</i>	In "Communities around the World," students learn about communities around the globe and about global citizenship. Students bring with them knowledge about their communities. In this course, students make comparisons across time and space, examining different communities and their cultures. Culture includes social organization, customs and traditions, language, arts and literature, religion, forms of government, and economic systems. Students are introduced to the concepts of prejudice, discrimination and human rights, as well as to social action. The communities selected should reflect the diversity of the local community. The key ideas, conceptual understandings, and content specifications guide the study of communities while exploring the major themes of social studies.
Grade 4: <i>New York State and Local History and Government</i>	Grade 4 Social Studies is focused on New York State and local communities and their change over time, incorporating the study of geography, history, economics, and government. Teachers are encouraged to make and teach local connections throughout the course. The course is divided into seven Key Ideas that span the State's history from before the European colonial era to the modern period. The Key Ideas allow teachers to make connections to present-day New York State and the local community.
Grade 5: <i>The Western Hemisphere</i>	Grade 5 Social Studies is based on the history and geography of the Western Hemisphere, including the development of cultures, civilizations, and empires; interaction between societies; and the comparison of the government and economic systems of modern nations. It also incorporates elements of archaeology. The course is divided into seven Key Ideas that cover a time span from prehistory into modern times. Teachers are encouraged to make and teach local connections throughout the course, especially in the examination of citizenship related to modern political and economic issues.