

# Seventh Grade Social Studies Overview

## Social Studies

### First Semester

Empires of Asia  
European Age of Enlightenment  
French Revolution  
Industrial Revolution  
Slavery and U.S. Civil War  
Nationalism and Imperialism  
World Wars

### Second Semester

Influential people in history  
United Nations  
Cold War  
Conflicts in Asia and the Middle East  
Information Age  
Technology

# Grade 7

## World History

### Teacher Manual



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# Introduction

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History is about people. Rather than viewing history as a series of events and dates, this course will look at the people behind the events. Students will gain an understanding of not only what happened in the past, but why, and how one person can make a profound difference in the world.

In this course, students will be asked to look for patterns, make connections across time and geographical regions, and view historical events from multiple perspectives. Students will sometimes be asked to do additional research. In addition to library resources, we have collected online resources, which can be found on the Oak Meadow website ([www.oakmeadow.com/curriculum-links/](http://www.oakmeadow.com/curriculum-links/)).

While doing independent research, it may be helpful to remind students that the internet is unpredictable as to quality and accuracy. Advise students to always evaluate sources in terms of reliability and relevance. The student coursebook includes information about this in the appendix.

Students will also be using the following book:

*National Geographic Kids World Atlas, Sixth Edition (2021)*

Please note that there are a wide variety of assignments included in this course to give students many options for engaging with the material. Students are not expected to complete every single assignment. You can help your student determine which assignments to focus on each week, based on the student's interests, strengths, and areas needing development. You might also give your student the option to complete some of the written assignments orally. Keep an eye on the workload as your student progresses, and make adjustments so that the student has time for meaningful learning experiences rather than rushing to try to get everything done. If your student is enrolled in Oak Meadow School, please consult with your teacher when making adjustments to the workload.

We hope you join your student in this exploration of world history, and together find new ways of looking at the past.

## Lesson

# 1

# African Empires (1500 BCE–700 CE)

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## Learning Objectives

At the end of this lesson you will be able to:

- Locate major geographical features of Africa on a map or globe.
- Identify natural features of one African nation.
- Demonstrate knowledge of one aspect of African history in creative form.

## Reading

Read the following reading selections (found at the end of the lesson):

- Ancient Kingdoms of Africa
- Africa and Europe Establish Trade

As you read, keep a globe, atlas, or world map next to you and look up each area that you are reading about. This is an important part of every lesson! By looking at the geographical location of each region, you will gain a better understanding of how the environment and neighboring regions influenced each culture.

Before you begin reading, scan the assignments for this lesson and look at the length of the reading selections. This will give you an idea of how much work there is to do and help you plan your time accordingly. You may want to use a planner or the assignment checklist (found at the beginning of each lesson) to divide the work into manageable tasks so you can make steady progress.

**At the beginning of the course, it might be helpful for you to sit down with your student to locate places on a globe, atlas, or map. You can model active inquiry by studying the natural landforms and geographical features such as mountain ranges, rivers and lakes, deserts, bays, and peninsulas. This can help your student get into the habit of looking closely at areas covered in the reading sections, and considering how the natural resources, geography, and proximity to other landforms and nations can influence history.**

## ASSIGNMENT SUMMARY

- ☐ Complete the reading selections.
- ☐ Study the geography of Africa.
- ☐ Show the geographical features of one African nation.
- ☐ Choose a creative activity related to ancient Africa.

**In addition, check that your student has a clear understanding of how much work is expected in one week. Time-management skills are an essential part of independent learning. Planners, checklists, and regular check-ins can help ensure your student will make steady progress and keep up with the workload throughout the year across all courses.**



### Reflect and Discuss

When you think of Africa, what comes to mind? Think about it and then ask this question of one or two other people. Often, we have perceptions of a place that may or may not be accurate. When studying history, it's important to notice any preconceptions we have (ideas we have about something before we really know about it), and try to put them aside as we learn.

**This section asks students to talk about different concepts or aspects of what they are studying. By talking with peers, family members, and other adults, students can gain a wider perspective and reflect more deeply on their learning. You can facilitate discussions by volunteering your own thoughts, displaying your own curiosity or uncertainty, and asking questions to extend the conversation.**

## Assignments

When doing assignments for this course, you will often need to do additional research. As a starting point, you can find excellent online resources at [oakmeadow.com/curriculum-links](https://oakmeadow.com/curriculum-links). Bookmark the page so you can easily return to it to find more resources for each lesson.

1. Refer to the Africa section of *National Geographic Kids World Atlas* (pages 128–145). Notice what you observe about the following:
  - Major rivers and lakes
  - The bodies of water that border different sides of the continent
  - Mountain ranges
  - Deserts
  - Other unique natural features

After you've had a chance to look through this section, write a few sentences about what surprised you or new things you learned.

**Answers will vary as students examine the landforms of the African continent. Some notable features include Lake Victoria and Lake Chad; the long, narrow Lake Malawi; mountain ranges along the northern and eastern edges; the mountainous island of Madagascar off the southeastern region; heavily forested regions across the center of the**

**continent; and desert regions in both the north and south. Closer inspection will reveal numerous African islands along the extensive coastline. The continent is surrounded by the Atlantic Ocean, Mediterranean Sea, Red Sea, and Indian Ocean.**

2. Select one African nation and learn about its geographical features. Draw or find photos of at least two natural features, such as bays, mountains, rain forests, deserts, rivers, peninsulas, etc. Write captions for each illustration or photo explaining what the picture shows. If you use photographs, include citation information.

**Students may choose any African nation to learn more about. The focus should be on the natural features of the landscape with relevant visuals that include informative captions. Look for citations for any photographs. The goal of this assignment is to help students gain an awareness of the incredible diversity of natural environments on the African continent.**

3. Choose one of the following creative activities:

**The creative activities below are designed to encourage students to become familiar with one aspect of life in ancient Africa. Student work can be evaluated based on effort and engagement rather than on the outcome of the project.**

- a. Learn about recent excavations in Morocco, Ethiopia, or elsewhere in Africa and write a brief description of some of the evidence found related to the earliest human civilizations. Draw or include a photograph of one artifact or fossil.
- b. Some ancient empires used pictographs to make written records. Write something in pictographs! Make sure to include a translation of your message.
- c. Design an obelisk in honor of a civilization or a ruler (real or imaginary). You can draw a picture of your obelisk or make a model using clay or other materials. Write a brief description of the meaning of the decorations or inscriptions on your obelisk.
- d. Learn about one of the ancient African kingdoms you read about: Kush, Punt, the Phoenicians, Aksum, Mali, or Songhai. Write about or illustrate some aspect of this culture, such as the system of government, art, customs, religious beliefs, architecture, or monuments.
- e. Read a firsthand account of sailors navigating around the Cape of Good Hope in the early days of exploration. Alternately, you might want to imagine yourself as an early sailor and write a journal of your trip around the Cape of Good Hope.



## Learning Checklist

Use this learning checklist to keep track of how your skills are progressing. Include notes about what you need to work on. Please remember that these skills continue to develop over time, so you aren't expected to be able to do all of them yet. The main goal is to be aware of which skills you need to focus on.

**The following checklist is found in the student's coursebook and students are encouraged to use it to keep track of their own skill development. It is included here so you can keep your own notes as well. If your student is using the checklist, take note of what is written and use it to help better support your student's work.**

SKILLS	Developing	Consistent	Competent	Notes
Locate continents, peninsulas, and other landforms on a map or globe				
Identify relevant research sources				
Provide accurate and relevant information based on research				
Demonstrate knowledge of one aspect of life in ancient Africa				

## Lesson

# 2

# The Early Dynasties of Asia (400 BCE–1854 CE)

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## Learning Objectives

At the end of this lesson you will be able to:

- Locate China and Japan on a map and identify significant geographical features.
- Draw a historically accurate map.
- Present a creative project based on an ancient cultural tradition.

## Reading

Read the following reading selections:

- Chinese Dynasties
- The Shogunates of Feudal Japan

As you read, look up each area on a globe, atlas, or world map. Take a few minutes to notice where the region is in relation to other nearby or influential countries.

**Encourage your student to become familiar with using a map or globe, and to use it in each lesson to gain a solid understanding of relative locations.**

## ASSIGNMENT SUMMARY

- ☐ Complete the reading selections.
- ☐ Study the geography of China and Japan.
- ☐ Draw a map of the major routes of the Silk Road.
- ☐ Choose a creative project related to ancient China or Japan.



## Reflect and Discuss

Think about the concept of isolationism. Do you think a nation should be allowed to isolate itself from the influence, trade, and cultural exchange with other nations? What would be the benefits of this policy? What would be the drawbacks? Consider your opinion and then discuss your ideas with someone else. Listen to their point of view.

On a related note, how do you feel about the way in which Commodore Perry and the United States forced Japan to end its isolationist policy? Imagine you were present when ideas were being discussed about how to approach Japan. What would you say to Perry or others in charge? Would you present an alternate plan? With a partner, role play this scenario. Make sure to give the reasoning behind your ideas. Be convincing—try to persuade others to agree with your plan!

**Consider ways in which you can encourage your student to reflect on lesson topics, discuss ideas, and ask questions. Some students will do this more naturally than others; all can benefit from it.**

## Assignments

1. Refer to the Asia section of *National Geographic Kids World Atlas* (pages 104–127). Focus on the areas of China and Japan. Consider the terrain, coastal regions, and nearby countries as you think about how the empires of China and Japan would have traveled, traded, and defended themselves from invaders. Write down what you notice about how the geography might have created obstacles or benefits for each country.

**Answers will vary; students may enjoy discussing what they've learned.**

2. Research the major routes of the Silk Road, and draw a simple map. Note the locations of countries who were trading partners (you don't have to draw borders around the countries; just show the general area of each). Make sure to include both overland and sea routes. Show on your map or write a few sentences about the geographical features that would have influenced the route or difficulty of travel.

**The student's map doesn't have to be completely accurate and to scale, particularly if the student is drawing freehand. The major routes of the Silk Road are shown below.**



Overland routes of the Silk Road are shown in red and water routes are shown in blue. (Image credit: NASA/Goddard Space Flight Center and Splette)

3. Develop a creative project project based on the contributions of traditional Chinese or Japanese culture, such as pottery, haiku, calligraphy, or theater.

**Creative projects are designed to offer students multiple ways to explore the lesson material. The active exploration and the union of research and creativity are more important than the actual product. However, all student work can be recognized and appreciated for its effort and originality.**



### Up for a Challenge?

Calligraphy is a decorative, stylized form of writing found in many Chinese paintings. Bamboo also features prominently in many traditional Chinese paintings and can be quite simple to draw. Draw or paint a picture of bamboo and write a favorite or original verse in calligraphy on your painting. You can find simple calligraphy instructions online or in the library. (Hint: Practice your calligraphy skills first before writing on your drawing.) If you are particularly interested in becoming skilled at calligraphy, you might consider purchasing special pens. Calligraphy is a fun technique to use in making cards, report covers, posters, and other projects.

This is an optional project.



*Twelve Plants and Calligraphy, Xu Wei, sixteenth century, Ming dynasty*  
(Image credit: Honolulu Academy of Arts)

**This section provides another idea for how to explore the material. These sections are designed for students who are particularly interested in a topic or who are looking for an additional way to challenge themselves and develop their knowledge and skills. All “Up for a Challenge?” sections are optional.**

## Learning Checklist

Use this learning checklist to keep track of how your skills are progressing. Include notes about what you need to work on. These skills will continue to develop over time. The main goal is to be aware of which skills you need to focus on.

SKILLS	Developing	Consistent	Competent	Notes
Locate specific locations and significant landforms on a map				
Draw a historically accurate map				
Label a map with locations and geographical features				



## Lesson 5/ 6

# Unit Project and Learning Reflection

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## Learning Objectives

At the end of this lesson you will be able to:

- Design a project that combines personal interests with the unit theme.
- Demonstrate project-management skills.
- Reflect on the learning process and content.

## ASSIGNMENT SUMMARY

- ☐ Complete a unit project of your own design.
- ☐ Complete a learning reflection.

## Unit Project

History is often framed by wars and conflicts. For the next two weeks, you'll look away from the conflicts and struggles of humanity and turn your attention to the accomplishments of people around the world. Based on the historical periods you've studied in this unit, you'll explore some element of human achievement in art, science, math, music, technology, engineering, architecture, medicine, literature, or any other creative endeavor or innovation.

What do *you* like? Find something you are interested in and explore an aspect related to it. Do you like maps? Fashion? Animals? Food? Whatever it is, look back in time to see how that interest could be used as a framework for a project. Your project doesn't have to be anything elaborate; you just have to create something that shows what you've discovered.

You have two weeks to complete this project.

Here are a few examples of project ideas, just to help with your own brainstorming:

- If you are interested in food from different cultures, you might find out what kinds of crops were grown in one particular region during that time period, and then create a menu of what might have been a typical meal or feast. You might even try to make the meal! You can photograph what you've cooked, or create a handwritten menu. You might draw an illustration of the feast, or make up a new recipe based on the available ingredients.
- If you like art, you might draw, paint, or sculpt a reproduction of artwork from that culture and time period. You might learn about one particular artist and create a slideshow of that artist's

work, using captions to highlight historical details. You could compare the art style of the time to earlier or later styles, or you could show how art was a reflection of the social and political events of that era.

- If you like movies, you could watch a movie based on the historical time period and write a movie review. You could use film clips or trailers from different movies related to one time period and compare how historical details were represented (costume, geographical features, food, family or social structure, etc.). Or you might create your own short film or video compilation that highlights one aspect of the time period.
- If you like building things, you might create a diorama (either physical or computer generated) that shows a particular region or historical event. You could recreate a style of architecture or make a model of a typical house. Or you might create a replica of an artifact, such as a type of tool, jewelry, container, vehicle, or other item in daily use at the time.

**Use your imagination!** Try to come up with a project that you will enjoy doing. Talk to friends and family members before you start your project. Discussing and brainstorming ideas with others will help you refine your project before you begin. Plan the different stages or steps of your project so that it can be completed within two weeks. (If you have a longer project in mind, discuss your idea with your teacher.) Make a checklist of tasks, write down how long you expect each to take, and check off tasks as they are completed. If you find yourself getting bogged down, think about how you can streamline the process or adjust the original time line.

As you are working on your project, continue to talk about it and get input from others, especially if you come to a challenging part or need to adapt your original idea. You don't have to do this project by yourself—make it a collaboration with others! (Just make sure to give them credit when your project is complete.)

**Students have two weeks to work on a project of their own design, preferably one that combines their own personal interests with the material in Unit I: The Age of Empires. The main thing students are likely to need support with is project- and time-management. Since students will be doing a self-designed project at the end of each unit, it's a good idea to work closely with them to develop good organizational skills with this first project. Creating a step-by-step plan is crucial; many projects have been derailed by students not taking into account something as simple as how long it will take to collect necessary materials or how much help they will need during a construction phase. Ask to see your student's project plan and make sure there is a realistic time table. While there are benefits to allowing students to extend projects over a long period, there are also great benefits to learning how to complete a project within a specific time period. In particular, students tend to underestimate how much time or effort a project will take. Helping them develop this skill will serve them well throughout their lives.**

**When assessing the student's project, you might take into consideration the complexity of the project, the clarity of the plan, how well the student adhered to the time line, and how well**



**the final product expressed the vision of the project. Alternatively, you might prefer to simply acknowledge the student's effort and engagement, to enjoy the student's work rather than analyze it. The primary goal of this project is to allow students time and space to absorb and integrate what they've learned and address it in a way that has meaning for them. If they have accomplished this, the project can be considered a success.**

## Learning Reflection

You have just spent several weeks exploring a great deal of information about world history. It's important to take time to let what you've learned sink in, to ponder its relevance to modern life.

Let your mind wander back over what you've discovered in the past weeks. (It might help to look over the table of contents, reading material, or the assignments you did to refresh your memory.) You can use the following questions to guide your reflections, but you shouldn't feel limited by them—reflections are personal, and each person will think about different aspects of what they've learned.

- What stands out as meaningful or baffling to you?
- What did you learn that was new or surprising?
- Did something raise a strong emotion in you, such as resentment, empathy, or wonder?
- What types of assignments did you most enjoy? Which were most challenging to you?
- If you had a time machine, is this a time period you would wish to visit? Why or why not?
- Is there some element of this time period that you wish was present in our modern culture?
- Is there a lesson to be learned from the struggles, mistakes, and triumphs experienced by the people long ago?

When you have spent some time reflecting and turning over ideas in your head, express your thoughts in some sharable form. This can be in writing, poetry, music, art, discussion or interview format, or any other way you'd like to share your reflections.

**Reflections are an important element of the learning process. As students examine their struggles, surprises, gains, and emotions, they further integrate the new material they have learned. You can use this reflection as an insight into the student's process and use this knowledge to lend focused support moving forward.**



## Learning Checklist

Use this learning checklist to track how your skills are developing over time and identify skills that need more work.

SKILLS	Developing	Consistent	Competent	Notes
Plan and implement a self-designed project				
Identify discrete project tasks				
Create a project time line				
Produce a tangible outcome that can be shared				
Express thoughts related to self-reflection				



## Lesson 17/ 18

# Unit Project and Learning Reflection

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## Learning Objectives

At the end of this lesson you will be able to:

- Design a project that combines personal interests with the unit theme.
- Demonstrate project-management skills.
- Reflect on the learning process and content.

## ASSIGNMENT SUMMARY

- ☐ Complete a unit project of your own design.
- ☐ Complete a learning reflection.

## Unit Project

In this unit, you have learned about colonization, slavery, and revolutions in the Americas and Africa. This week, you'll have a chance to reflect on what you've learned, and create a small project of your own design. Rather than focusing on the conflict, the goal is to create a project that celebrates or highlights some element of human achievement related to the places and time periods you've been studying in this unit.

You can look over the table of contents or your past lessons to refresh your memory. Do you like to create art? Make a decorative piece by embossing or etching a metal or aluminum pie plate in a traditional Mexican style. Do you like reading and writing? Envision how you might have taught literacy to newly freed African Americans of all ages after the Civil War, using the technology of the time. Do you like cooking? Try making food over a campfire using ingredients that Native Americans or pioneers traveling west would have used. Use your imagination! You can also review the project ideas shown in lesson 5/6 and lesson 11 for inspiration.

Remember, your project doesn't have to be anything elaborate; you just want to create something that lets you share information that you've learned. Brainstorm, discuss, and collaborate with others. Try to come up with a project that you will enjoy doing, based on your own interests and abilities.

Here are the steps you'll take to organize your project and manage your time:

- Decide on a project and discuss it with others to refine your ideas. Be reasonable about the materials you have, and how long it will take to complete. Adjust your plans until you have something that will work for you.

- Plan each step of your project. Write down each task and how long it will take. Note if you will need certain supplies or help with a task and who you will ask for help.
- Check off each task as it is completed. When you encounter an obstacle, talk it over with someone and look for ways to adapt the project, get help, or find a solution.
- When the project is complete, share it with others for their input and make any final adjustments.

**You have two weeks to complete this project.** (If you have a longer project in mind, discuss your idea with your teacher.)

**As this is the third unit project, you may see progress in the development of time-management skills. The student is expected to create a clear plan for accomplishing the project. If the historical context or relevance of the project is not obvious, ask your student to discuss the work. As always, collaboration and soliciting feedback throughout the process is encouraged.**

## Learning Reflection

Use the following questions to guide you as you reflect on what you have learned in Unit III: Revolution and Independence.

- What stands out as meaningful or baffling to you?
- What did you learn that was new or surprising?
- Did something raise a strong emotion in you, such as resentment, empathy, or wonder?
- What types of assignments did you most enjoy? Which were most challenging to you?
- If you had a time machine, is this a time period you would wish to visit? Why or why not?
- Is there some element of this time period that you wish was present in our modern culture?
- Is there a lesson to be learned from the struggles, mistakes, and triumphs experienced by the people long ago?

Take some time to reflect, and then express your thoughts in writing or in any creative form.

**You may find it useful to compare this reflection to the previous two (lesson 5/6 and lesson 11). Are you seeing similar themes or patterns, or is new information surfacing? Students might appreciate the opportunity to discuss their learning reflection.**

## Learning Checklist

Use this learning checklist to track how your skills are developing over time and identify skills that need more work.

SKILLS	Developing	Consistent	Competent	Notes
Plan and implement a self-designed project				
Identify discrete project tasks				
Create a project time line				
Produce a tangible outcome that can be shared				
Express thoughts related to self-reflection				



## Lesson

# 23

# Colonialism in Modern Times (1774–1950)

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## Learning Objectives

At the end of this lesson you will be able to:

- Demonstrate knowledge of a historical figure.
- Identify relevant graphics to support a text.
- Demonstrate skills in revision and proofreading.

## ASSIGNMENT SUMMARY

- ☐ Complete the reading selections.
- ☐ Research and write a report on Gandhi's life and India's quest for independence.

## Reading

Read the following reading selections:

- India under Colonial Rule
- European Presence and Apartheid in South Africa
- Colonial Rule in Cuba

Remember to look up each location on an atlas, map, or globe as you read.

In *National Geographic Kids World Atlas*, review Southern Asia on pages 122–123. Notice the many significant geographical features and vast population of India, and consider how those elements might make different forms of control challenging, both from a colonial standpoint and in terms of India trying to gain its independence.

Also refer to information in the atlas about South Africa (pages 144–145) and Cuba (page 59) to gain more perspective about those regions as you read about them in this lesson.



## Reflect and Discuss

Rudyard Kipling was a popular writer who lived from 1865 to 1936. He wrote about the glories of imperialism through his many stories set in India while it was under British rule. He believed that Europeans had a duty to civilize the rest of the world, and in one of his poems, says,

Take up the White Man's  
Burden—  
Send forth the best ye  
breed—  
Go bind your sons to exile  
To serve your captives'  
need . . .

What do you think he meant? Discuss your ideas with someone and listen to what they have to say.

## Assignments

Learn more about Mohandas “Mahatma” Gandhi’s life and India’s journey toward independence. Write a two or three page report about Gandhi and India. You have two weeks to complete this report.

Address some of the questions below as well as any others you think of:

- What ideal did Gandhi hold for India?
- How did he go about helping people to achieve this ideal?
- In what way was Gandhi’s life an example we can follow today?
- There is a spinning wheel on the Indian flag. What is its significance?
- Who was Jawaharlal Nehru and why was he important?
- What kind of government does India have today?
- What are the current state of relations between India and Pakistan?

Include illustrations, photographs, graphics, or other visual information (make sure you have at least two pages of writing in addition to your visuals). Use at least three sources and cite them in MLA format in a works cited section at the end of your paper.

When writing your report, be sure to use your own words to explain what you have learned. If you quote a resource directly, use quotation marks and add an in-text citation (see information on in-text citations in Oak Meadow’s English Manual for Middle School). Organize your ideas into a logical sequence. Identify the main points you will make and use them to organize paragraphs. Include specific details to explain or illustrate each main point.

After you complete your rough draft, **save it**—you will share it with your teacher along with your finalized report.

Read your rough draft to find places to clarify your writing, eliminate repetition, and reorganize your ideas for a better flow. After revising your report, place the images and graphics where they make the most sense, and add titles or captions to explain what the graphics show. Then proofread your report to correct any errors in punctuation, spelling, capitalization, and grammar. Do your best to ensure your final report is your best work.

This is your only assignment this week, so take your time to present your ideas in an interesting way. Don't just write about the facts and dates but think about the ideals, emotions, and hopes behind the actions. Highlight the most interesting details of what you have learned.

**This is the only assignment this week, so students are expected to show evidence of careful attention to detail. Students are expected to locate relevant sources, sequence their ideas logically, organize paragraphs around main ideas that are supported with details, and cite at least three sources. Use the instructions above and the learning checklist below as a reference when evaluating student work.**

## Learning Checklist

Use this learning checklist to track how your skills are developing over time and identify skills that need more work.

SKILLS	Developing	Consistent	Competent	Notes
Identify relevant research sources				
Use original language in expository writing				
Organize ideas into a logical sequence				
Organize paragraphs around key ideas				
Use specific details to support main ideas				
Cite sources in MLA format				
Use in-text citations				
Locate relevant graphics to support a text				
Demonstrate revision skills				
Demonstrate proofreading skills				