

SAMPLE SOCIAL STUDIES UNIT PLAN GRADE 3: AMERICAN INDIANS

Important Note: *The following unit plan fills in the gaps between the current (2014) and revised (2019) Tennessee Academic Standards for Social Studies. In addition to thoughtful preparation from these resources, there are additional components for which educators will need to plan and prepare. This includes but is not limited to the following: reviewing all activities prior to use, adapting the unit plan for the teacher's specific classroom, and adjusting material as seen fit.*

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GUIDANCE FOR EDUCATORS

1. WHY IS THE DEPARTMENT PROVIDING SAMPLE GAP UNIT PLANS?

To support social studies instruction in Tennessee and in response to feedback from educators over gaps between the current (2014) and [revised \(2019\) Tennessee Academic Standards for Social Studies](#), the department has created sample gap unit plans for grades 3 and 4. The resources found in each of these unit plans serve as a model to reference as educators begin designing units and becoming more familiar with the revised standards. These lessons are intended to be used at the end of the 2018-19 school year to cover one-time content gaps some students will experience as a result of the shifts in standards.

2. WHAT ARE THE SPECIFIC GAPS IN CONTENT THAT THESE UNIT PLANS ADDRESS?

Though the majority of the content remained the same between the current (2014) and revised (2019) social studies standards, some content has shifted to new grade levels:

Grade Level	Current Standards (2014)	Revised Standards (2019)
Grade 3	World Geography and Cultures	Part 1: Geography and Economics Part 2: Early American and Tennessee History
Grade 4	The History of the United States (to 1850)	The History of the United States: Revolution to Reconstruction

Content students cover in grade 4 in the current standards (2014) will shift to grade 3 in the revised standards (2019) and content students cover in grade 5 in the current standards (2014) will shift to grade 4 in the revised standards (2019). These shifts will cause one-time content gaps for students who are in grades 3 and 4 during the 2018-19 school year. These gaps are outlined below:

Grade Level	Gap
Grade 3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Early American History (including: American Indians, Exploration, and The Thirteen English Colonies) • Early Tennessee History
Grade 4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pre-Civil War • Civil War • Reconstruction

To ensure that students cover this material, the department has developed a series of six sample unit plans that focus specifically on the content outlined above.

3. WHAT IS INCLUDED IN THE SAMPLE GAP UNIT PLAN?

The sample gap unit plans include several key components that serve as a foundation for a strong unit:

Essential Question: Essential questions are open-ended questions that guide students' exploration of content while building knowledge and promoting thinking. Essential questions are not typically answerable within a single lesson as their aim is to stimulate thought, provoke inquiry, and spark thoughtful student questions. In other words, essential questions ask students to understand, not just recall, information after the deep exploration of content. An example from Grade 3 is *Why do people come to a new place?* This question helps students understand the beginning of the Thirteen English Colonies.

Supporting Question(s): Supporting questions help guide students in answering the essential question. These are specific to each lesson and lead students in answering the essential question. Some supporting questions are used for multiple lessons within a unit as they may take students more time to answer. Supporting question(s) are open ended and support student thinking, exploration, and learning. An example from Grade 4 is *What were the social, political, economic, and physical implications of the Civil War on the United States?* This question directly relates back to the essential question (*How did the end of the Civil war impact the United States?*) by guiding students into their exploration of the chosen topic.

Standards: The standards for the sample gap unit plans come from the revised Tennessee Academic Standards for Social Studies Standards (2019) and address the specific gaps between the current (2014) and revised (2019) standards. Although not all of the gapped standards are used in the lesson plan, the units cover the most essential gaps between the standards.

Content Strands: Each sample gap unit plan includes narratives about the connections to the content strands. The content strands are the seven disciplines that are used within social studies that help guide learning. The content strands include culture (C), economics (E), geography (G), history (H), politics/government (P), Tennessee history (T) and Tennessee Code Annotated (TCA). Each unit plan will focus on a selection of content strands but will not necessarily include all of them.

Social Studies Practices: The sample gap unit plan includes connections to the social studies practices. The social studies practices are specific skills that students should apply when learning social studies in order to create and address questions that will guide inquiry and critical thinking. The practices allow students to progress through the inquiry cycle by analyzing primary and secondary sources to construct and communicate their conceptual understanding of the content standards (SSP.01–SSP.04) and to develop historical and geographic awareness (SSP.05–SSP.06).

Lessons: Each sample gap unit plan includes lessons for multiple days of instruction and provides opportunities for students to demonstrate their understanding by applying what they have learned. These lessons have been carefully sequenced within their units to support students in building disciplinary understanding so that students can successfully engage in the end-of-unit task. It is up to teachers to determine the amount of time needed for each lesson.

Extension Activity: Each sample gap unit plan includes an extension activity that provides an opportunity for students to demonstrate their understanding of the unit concept and to answer essential questions for the unit through authentic and meaningful context.

Appendices: Additional resources and activities developed for use within lessons are linked throughout the unit. [Click here to view the folder](#) that contains all of these resources and activities.

4. ARE DISTRICTS REQUIRED TO USE THE SAMPLE GAP UNIT PLANS?

No, districts are **not** required to use the sample gap unit plans; however, if districts do not address the gaps in content, students will **not receive instruction on essential content** and may be unprepared for the next year's academic content.

5. WHEN SHOULD THESE BE USED IN THE CLASSROOM?

Districts are not required to use the sample gap unit plans; however, these sample lessons are designed for use after teachers have completed teaching their current social studies standards (2014). Because these lessons focus on the revised standards (2019), teachers may wish to focus on these sample lessons after completing TNReady testing, as they are not focused on the current (2014) social studies standards.

6. HOW WERE THE STANDARDS SELECTED?

The standards used in the sample gap unit plans do not include the totality of the revised Tennessee Academic Standards for Social Studies. Instead, these units have a narrowed focus on the content gaps students in grades 3 and 4 during the 2018-19 school year will incur without intentional, targeted instruction focused on this content.

UNIT BACKGROUND

Essential Question

How does where we live shape how we live?

Social Studies Standards Alignment

The questions and tasks outlined in this unit plan are aligned to the following Tennessee Academic Standards for Social Studies, social studies practices, and content strands:

Content Standards

3.19 Compare and contrast the geographic locations and customs (i.e., housing and clothing) of the Northeast, Southeast, and Plains North American Indians.

Further Social Studies Standards Connections

Though the standards below are not the focus of the questions and tasks outlined in this unit plan, these standards are also connected to the lessons.

3.01 Analyze maps and globes using common terms, including: country, North Pole, equator, prime meridian, hemisphere, region, latitude, South Pole, longitude, time zones

3.03 Examine major physical features on globes and maps, including: desert, gulf, island, isthmus, mountain, ocean, peninsula, plain, plateau, river, sea, strait, stream, valley

3.05 Use different types of maps (e.g., political, physical, population, resource, and climate), graphs, and charts to interpret geographic information.

3.11 Identify major physical features of the U.S., including: Rivers—Colorado, Mississippi, Ohio, Rio Grande; Mountains—Alaska Range, Appalachian, Rockies; Bodies of Water—Great Lakes, Gulf of Mexico; Desert— Great Basin; Landforms—Grand Canyon, Great Plains

Social Studies Practices

This unit directly addresses all six of the social studies practices. **SSP.01** and **SSP.02** are incorporated by gathering a variety of sources (e.g., maps, photographs, readings) and allowing students to examine those sources to summarize ideas and draw conclusions. **SSP.03** is addressed through the students completing assignments to compare and contrast multiple sources and recognize the differences between multiple sources. When using **SSP.04**, students demonstrate their ability to show their understanding of ideas, distinguish viewpoints, illustrate cause and effect, and predict outcomes through argumentation and producing evidence of learning. For example, students are asked to predict regional differences between American Indian culture areas. Additionally, this can

be seen through the various activities students are asked to complete, including “bell work” and “exit tickets.” **SSP.05** is explored through student understanding of historical empathy (e.g., understanding that there are multiple names for American Indians that are disrespectful) and making connections to the present. Additionally, students will use **SSP.05** to show their historical awareness by recognizing how events were experienced during that time period. Finally, students will develop geographic awareness using **SSP.06**, which includes understanding the relationships between people, resources, and ideas based on geography (i.e., American Indian culture areas) as well as understanding the association between American Indians and their physical environment.

Content Strands

Culture is utilized by examining specific American Indian customs, including housing and clothing. Students should understand that American Indians’ cultures, and customs, were very different from ours.

Geography is utilized through exploring the geographic locations of each of American Indian culture area targeted in the standards (i.e., Northeast, Southeast, and Plains North American Indians). Students should also understand that geography played a large role in how American Indians lived, as well as why they lived where they lived. Students should build on their background knowledge from earlier in the school year when they learned about geography as a whole.

History is utilized through an exploration of the lives of American Indians, their customs, and connections (or non-connections) to today’s world. Teachers may wish to introduce additional resources (such as books or videos) to build students’ knowledge of American Indians. It is important for students to understand that there were people here prior to European exploration and colonization; standard 3.19 builds that base for learning.

A **Tennessee Connection** is drawn through explicit instruction that the Southeast American Indian culture area includes Tennessee. Students will use their knowledge of the state (or city) they live in to help understand the physical landscape and climate in Tennessee and how that affected American Indians who lived in the region.

LESSON 1

Supporting Question(s)

How were American Indians culture areas similar and different?

Vocabulary

- culture
- region
- vegetation (if needed)

Lesson Sequence and Instructional Notes

The teacher may wish to show this video from [Khan Academy on American Indians before contact with Europeans](#) at the beginning of this unit. Prior to this lesson, the teacher should have an anchor chart prepared with the word “Culture” written at the top, which should remain hanging for the duration of the unit.

The teacher will begin class by reminding students that long before Europeans came to America, other people lived here. They were called American Indians. These groups lived in different parts of the country and each group had their own unique cultures.

The teacher should then ask students: “What is culture?” After a brief discussion, the teacher should define the word “culture” and use it in a sentence so the class can come up with a definition. The teacher should ensure that the discussion includes things like housing, clothing, and food while using guiding questions such as “What makes up a group’s culture?” and “What are some examples of cultures around the United States?” The teacher should add the class definition of “culture” to the anchor chart.

Next, the teacher should ask students to think about what a region is (*students should have learned about regions earlier in the year when discussing common terms of maps and globes*). After a brief discussion, students should look through a series of maps ([North America Political Map](#), [Vegetation Regions 1](#), [Vegetation Regions 2](#), [North America \(1783\)](#), [Orographic Chart of North America](#)) and discuss how North America can be divided into different types of regions. The teacher should ask guiding questions such as “How are regions similar and different?” and “Why do people settle in specific regions?”

After examining the maps above, the teacher should tell students that American Indians lived in different regions as well. Students should review this [Smart History map](#) and discuss the different regions in which American Indians lived before discussing the following questions: “Why was each culture area given its name?” and “Why may have American Indians lived in that specific region?” The teacher should focus students’ discussion on the geography that students have already covered (e.g., locations of physical features, types of climates, natural resources). *Although all of the culture areas are important, the teacher should focus discussion on the Northeast, Southeast, and Plains American Indian cultures because they are specifically noted in the standards (standard 3.19).*

As an exit ticket, students should respond to the following prompts:

- List three American Indian culture areas (of North America).
- Describe two ways American Indian cultures were different from each other.
- Select one American Indian culture that you would have wanted to live in and explain why.

The teacher should read through the exit tickets and select responses to use on the following day as part of a warm-up.

LESSON 2

Supporting Question(s)

What types of customs (e.g., clothing and housing) did American Indians have prior to European exploration?

Vocabulary

Teachers may need to review any or all of the words on the [Predict-O-Gram \(Appendix A\)](#). Teachers should review this handout and note vocabulary their students may struggle with.

Lesson Sequence and Instructional Notes

Prior to this lesson, the teacher should have read through the exit tickets from Lesson 1 and selected responses as part of a warm-up activity.

To begin the lesson, the teacher should revisit the anchor chart from Lesson 1 and the [Smart History map](#) and ask students to identify the three main American Indian culture areas they learned about in Lesson 1. Next, the teacher should ask students to turn and talk with their neighbor about the similarities and differences of each of the regions in terms of geographic features. After two to three minutes, the teacher should ask volunteers to share out answers, ensuring that students note the physical features they have learned earlier in the year. The teacher should then read examples from the first prompt on Lesson 1's exit ticket (i.e., Select one American Indian culture that you would have wanted to live in and explain why) without revealing the name of the culture area. Students will guess which culture area the response describes. After several examples, the teacher will tell students they will learn more about the three American Indian culture areas they have been focusing on: the Northeast, the Southeast, and the Plains.

The teacher should hand out the [Predict-O-Gram activity \(Appendix A\)](#), which students will use to make predictions about the three culture areas. The teacher should tell students they will work independently on the Predict-O-Gram and read the instructions aloud to students:

All of the pictures/words in the boxes can be matched with the three American Indian culture areas listed below. Decide if the pictures/words should be matched with the Northeast American Indian culture area, the Southeast American Indian culture area, or the Plains American Indian culture area. Write the words on the lines below (each word will only be used once).

After allowing five minutes for students to complete the worksheet, the teacher should ask students to turn and talk with a neighbor and explain the reasoning behind their predictions to their partner. While students are discussing, they will be able to “change” their predictions.

After an appropriate amount of time, the teacher should direct students to turn over their Predict-O-Gram and read aloud the directions for “Finishing the Story:”

Starting with the following prompt, write a paragraph describing how your life would be different if you lived in America before Europeans arrived. In your paragraph, select one of the American Indian culture

areas (i.e., Northeast, Southeast, or Plains) and use the predicted vocabulary to write your paragraph.

"If I lived in America prior to Europeans coming here, my life would be very different."

Students will write this paragraph individually and it will serve as the end of the day's lesson. Once they have finished, students should turn in their worksheets for teachers to review and place aside (students will revisit it later in the unit).

LESSON 3

Supporting Question(s)

What types of customs (e.g., clothing and housing) did American Indians have prior to European exploration?

Vocabulary

The following words should be addressed during this lesson:

This could be any of the words on [the Posters \(Appendix B\)](#); teachers should be prepared to give brief definitions for any word they feel students may struggle with.

Lesson Sequence and Instructional Notes

This lesson will require students to work in groups to complete a gallery walk; students should be assigned to groups before class begins. *To ensure all students participate fully, the teacher may wish to give students roles within their groups (e.g., writer, reader, leader, speaker).* Prior to the start of this lesson, the teacher should hang six pieces of chart/butcher paper around the room. Each should feature one of the [Posters from Appendix B](#) and [the Accompanying Questions in Appendix C](#) (the questions can be adjusted by the teacher for specific students and classes). Teachers should take care to write the questions with enough space for students to respond underneath and/or beside them.

As a warm-up, each group should be given a several sticky notes, and the teacher will lead the class in a [Sticky Note Storm](#), giving students the following directions: "In two minutes, write down as many examples of where people live (e.g., houses) as you can. Write each example on a separate sticky note, and place it at the center of the table when you are finished. Go!" When time is up, the teacher should ask students to look at the responses at the center of the table and sort the sticky notes into groups based on similarities and differences they see. Once enough time has passed, the teacher should ask each group to think in which type of place to live, American Indians would have lived (e.g., wigwam, teepee). Each group should share out a response. For each response, the teacher should ask students follow up questions like, "Would they have had tall houses/apartments back then?" or "Would they have had access to [example] materials?" (e.g., concrete). Once students have brainstormed about housing, the teacher should have students repeat the above process (including the Sticky Note Storm) for the question, "What types of clothes did they wear?"

Next, the teacher should revisit the anchor chart and ask students how housing and clothing fit into culture. After a brief discussion the teacher should return students' Predict-O-Grams and tell students they will see if the predictions they made about the American Indians were correct by completing a gallery walk:

1. At their first station, each group will read the poster and use the information to answer the guiding questions at their station. *Students can write their answers directly on the chart paper or on sticky notes. Teachers should determine which the reading strategy should be used here (e.g., read aloud). To distinguish between groups' work, the teacher may wish to give each group a differently colored marker or pencil.*

2. After four to six minutes, groups should rotate to the next station. Students should repeat the process above at each station but try not to repeat answers to the guiding questions. *The teacher may wish to instruct groups to discuss previous responses before submitting theirs.*

After groups have visited all of the stations, they should return to their original posters and discuss the answers other groups provided and decide which responses they think are correct. After two to three minutes, the teacher should ask each group to share out the questions and the answers they believe are correct (if the question asked students to draw a picture, the group should show the best representation).

After groups have presented, the teacher should have students review their Predict-O-Grams and correct any predictions that were wrong. *The teacher may wish to allow students to get up and look at posters while they make corrections.*

After students adjust their predictions, the teacher should instruct students to review the paragraph they wrote and revise their work, making annotations or corrections based on the poster activity. The teacher should explain that this revision may just be changing words or it may be replacing portions of their paragraph. The paragraph should be logical and students should think about this process as “revising” and not “rewriting.”

The teacher should keep the chart/butcher paper on the walls for the next day's lesson.

LESSON 4

Supporting Question(s)

What types of customs (e.g., clothing and housing) did American Indians have prior to European exploration?

Vocabulary

The following words should be addressed during this lesson:

- climate

Any of the words on the posters may require instruction; teachers should be prepared to give brief definitions for any word they feel students may struggle with.

Lesson Sequence and Instructional Notes

The teacher should have the posters from Lesson 3 hanging around the room. The teacher should also have four walls/corners labeled with "A," "B," "C," and "D" for a four-corner activity.

As a warm-up, students will use the [Smart History map](#) to identify the three culture areas they have been discussing. The teacher should then pose the question: "What was the climate like in each of these areas?" After students share thoughts, the teacher should point out each the labels in each corner/wall (i.e., A: Plains, B: Northeast, C: Southeast, or D: None of the Above) and explain that they are going to do a four corners activity. The teacher will pose a question and the students will go to the corner that they believe is the correct answer. After choosing a corner, each group will discuss the question. The teacher will call on one member of the group to share their reasoning for why they chose that "corner." The following are examples of questions:

- Where would it be cold in January? A) Plains, B) Northeast C) Southeast D) None of the Above
- Where would it be hot in August? A) Plains B) Northeast C) Southeast D)- None of the Above
- Where would be the best place to grow crops? A) Plains B) Northeast C) Southeast D) None of the Above
- Where could you go to see snow in the winter? A) Plains B) Northeast C) Southeast D) None of the Above
- Where would you see four seasons? A) Plains B) Northeast C) Southeast D) None of the Above
- Where would people need heavy coats? A) Plains B) Northeast C) Southeast D) None of the Above

The teacher should be sure the questions are displayed for this activity. The teacher may wish to include other questions about how different climates and changing seasons impacted clothing and housing in each of the culture areas.

After the activity, the teacher will hand out a [Foldable \(Appendix D\)](#) to facilitate student note-taking. The

teacher should explain how to cut and fold the foldable to make four doors by cutting on the dotted lines. Additionally, the teacher should have students write “Housing,” “Clothing,” and “Other” on the inside of each of the doors tabs. On the outside of each of the doors, the students should write the three culture areas (i.e., Northeast, Southeast, and Plains). The final door can be used to write the students’ name.

Students will use the [Smart History map](#) to identify and color the three focus culture areas (i.e., Northeast, Southeast, and Plains) on their map and complete the key to show where each culture was located. *The teacher may wish to project the map.*

Once students have finished coloring their maps, they will revisit the posters from Lesson 3 to complete their foldable. *Students can complete this individually, in pairs, or in groups. The teacher should decide what would benefit their students most. If students work in groups, the teacher may wish to assign them roles to ensure they are all able to participate fully (e.g., reader, leader, speaker).* A similar procedure to the previous lesson should be used:

1. At their first station, students will re-read the poster and fill out their foldable for housing, clothing, and other (the other can be of the students choosing).
2. After five to seven minutes, students should rotate to the next station and repeat step 1 until each station has been visited. While students are completing this activity, the teacher should monitor the stations and make any clarifications or provide hints if students don't understand or misinterpret what is posted at their station.

After students have revisited all of the posters, they should return to their seats, and use their foldable to complete a wrap-up activity. Students should create three images or symbols, one per culture area, which describe the culture. The teacher should tell students that someone should be able to look at the graphic and know which culture area it represents.

The teacher should review all graphics prior to the next lesson and select examples from each of the culture areas to use in the next lesson's warm-up.

CULMINATING ACTIVITY: WRITING IN SOCIAL STUDIES

Activity Sequence and Instructional Notes

Prior to this lesson, the teacher should have selected graphics that represent each culture area from the exit ticket in Lesson 4.

The teacher will begin the activity by revisiting this [Smart History map](#) and asking students to list some of the geographic challenges faced by each culture area. Following that discussion, the teacher should show the selected graphics for each culture area and have the students guess which culture area each graphic represents. *The student who drew each graphic can provide the answer to the class.*

After the warm-up, the teacher will hand back out the students' Predict-O-Grams and ask students to take out their foldable, a pencil, and a sheet of paper. The teacher should tell students that they are going to use everything they have learned about to answer the essential question: *How does where we live shape how we live?*

Teachers may wish to provide additional prompts to guide students' thinking such as these questions:

- How did location impact how American Indians met their needs for food, clothing, and shelter?
- If you were living in America prior to European arrival, what factors might have influenced your decision to move to a different culture area?

The teacher may wish to show this [Khan Academy about American Indians before contact with Europeans](#) at the end of this unit to summarize learning (this is the same video linked at the beginning of the unit).

The teacher may also wish to add a summative assessment task to the end of the unit

REFERENCESⁱ

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ⁱ Reference to any resource, organization, activity, product, or service does not constitute or imply endorsement by the Tennessee Department of Education.