

# Welcome to Sixth Grade Social Studies!

**Teacher: Mr. Jeff Stephenson**

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Planning Period: 1:45 pm – 2:15 pm

## **Social Studies Class: What will we study this year?**

In Sixth Grade Social Studies, we study World Geography and Ancient History. Geography is the study of the earth, the people who live on the planet, and how those people live. History is the story of how people became who they are today. To complete this study, we will study different parts of the world at different times during the school year. While we study each part of the world, we will study the history, or story, of that area so that we can understand why that region of the world is so important. Each part of the world will be studied as a separate unit.

**The following lists the places we will study. Each place is a different unit of study:**

**Unit 1 – Introduction to World Geography**

**Unit 2 – Sub-Saharan Africa**

**Unit 3 – Southwest Asia and North Africa**

**Unit 4 – South, Southeast, and East Asia**

**Unit 5 – Europe**

**Unit 6 – Australia and Oceania**

**Unit 7 – The Americas**

Each unit will include some enduring understandings, essential questions, learning targets, instructional activities (lessons), and assessments.

**Enduring Understandings** – Enduring Understandings are things that every sixth grader should remember AFTER leaving sixth grade. Parkway teachers want students to understand certain ideas in future years so we focus on those big ideas and organize our courses to stress those ideas. Here are a couple examples of Enduring Understandings:

- Geography shapes how people live and impacts religion, achievements, politics, economics, and society.
- History involves interpretation and historians can and do disagree.

**Essential Questions** – To help students develop an enduring understanding of those key ideas, Parkway teachers created a set of essential questions for each study unit. Teachers ask students to answer the essential questions so that students prove that they understand the important ideas of a study unit. We work on answering essential questions during every lesson because essential questions are almost always test questions. Here are some examples of Essential Questions:

- How does where (and when) you live impact how you live?
- What is geography?
- What is history?
- What do geographers and historians do?

**Learning Targets** – To make it easier to answer the essential questions, Parkway teachers developed learning targets for each unit. Each learning target is designed to help students answer a particular essential question.

**Here are some example learning targets:**

1. I can identify the major physical and political features of the places we are studying.
2. I can compare democracy to another form of government.
3. I can compare the economies of the places we are studying.
4. I can compare and contrast the human characteristics of the places we are studying.

**Instructional Activities (Lessons)** – These are activities we do every day in class. Each activity is designed to help students master a particular learning target which helps students answer an essential question and build an enduring understanding of an important idea.

**Assessment and Grades** - Grades in Social Studies class focus on how well a student knows the information presented in class rather than how many assignments a student completes.

Mr. Stephenson expects each student to work to that student's best ability during class to complete ALL daily classroom assignments on time. While daily assignments do not count for grade points and are not used to calculate a student's grade, completion of these daily assignments DOES appear on Infinite Campus and also prepares the student for the tests and other assessments. Parents and students will notice one of three possible marks for daily work when viewing the Infinite Campus Progress Reports. The three possible marks include the following:

“Turned In” or a checkmark—This means that the work was correctly completed and should help the student pass the test.

“Incomplete” or an I—This means the student turned in the assignment but that the effort or amount of completed answers may not lead to success on the test.

“Missing”—For ungraded work, this mark means that the student did not turn in the assignment and will most likely be unprepared for the test. While these type of assignments will not directly impact a student's grade in a negative or bad way, a number of missing ungraded assignments shows a pattern that will ultimately lead to bad grades.

Grades consist of a couple types of formal assessments. These types of graded assessments include the following:

- Written assignments such as Journal Writes and answers to essay questions.
- Short objective tests at the end of an instructional unit.
- Projects or performance events at the end of an instructional unit.

Absenteeism (not being in class) does not permanently excuse a student from any graded assessment. Therefore, students who miss a graded assignment will need to make up that assignment as soon as possible.

**Schoology: The main resource used in class**

All assignments, weekly checklists, graded assessments, and announcements will be completed and made using Schoology. Please bookmark the Schoology class page and use that resource to find all class work.

**The Class Web Site: A Backup Resource**

Mr. Stephenson includes as much reference material as possible on his web site located at the <http://mrstephenson.info> link. Parents and students should bookmark that website and refer to it often.

**Infinite Campus: How can you know how well you are doing?**

Students may know how well they are doing in class (in other words, their grade) involves Infinite Campus. Parkway provides all students and parents with a secure user id and password to access the Infinite Campus. Please bookmark that site as well and refer to it often.