

## Social Studies

Students explore social studies themes in a two-year rotation up to the eighth grade year. Literacy, science, math, and the arts are integrated into each theme.

In kindergarten through grade five, each year begins with a unit of study that relates to students' lives here and now. In the spring they branch out to a theme that is from long ago or far away. Annual cultural studies give students a foundation for global understanding.

Sixth and seventh graders explore topical themes through the lens of world history, connecting modern issues with their historic roots. In eighth grade, students explore American history. They end the year with a culminating trip to Philadelphia.

Research skills begin in kindergarten with class fact collections. Essay writing is introduced in second grade. Students write research based persuasive essays in grades four through seven. Eighth graders write a thesis on a topic of their choice.

Annual themes are organized around overarching questions throughout the grades:

- How does the environment shape us and how do we shape the environment?
- How are we dependent/interdependent with the people who live near us?  
How are we dependent/interdependent with the people who live far from us?

### Kindergarten and First Grade

**Year 1:** *Homes and Habitats*

*A Spanish Speaking Country*

Big Questions: How does where we live affect how we live?

**Year 2:** *Ourselves, Our Family, and our Community*

*An African Country and Its Culture*

Big Questions: How are we different? How are we the same?

### Second and Third Grade

**Year 1:** *The Hudson River*

*An Asian Country and its Culture*

Big Questions: How does water become the wellspring of life? How and why do people live near water? How do people affect rivers? How do rivers affect people?

**Year 2:** *Our Local Community: Albany or Troy*

*Local native populations and early settlers*

Big Questions: How did people in Albany or Troy live long ago and today? How did the Iroquois live long ago and today?

## **Fourth and Fifth Grade**

**Year 1:** *New York State: Geography and Native American Tribes*  
*The Americas: Aztec, Inca, and Maya*

Big Questions: How do native peoples adapt to their environment?

**Year 2:** *United States: Geography and Immigration*  
*Westward Movement in America*

Big Questions: Where are our origins? Where did we come from? How did we create change? What was its impact?

## **Sixth and Seventh Grade**

Essential Questions: How do our lives differ from those of peoples throughout history? How have innovations and ingenuity of cultures of the past influenced our lives today?

*Archeology as a Tool for Comparing Past and Present*  
*Understanding Medieval Life Through Architecture*  
*Renaissance Europe and its Influence on the Current Day*  
*The Roots of Modern Media*

## **Eighth Grade**

Essential Question: Why and how do people form societies? How do societies resolve conflict?

*The Salem Witch Trials*  
*The Bill of Rights*  
*Controversial Debates in Landmark Supreme Court Cases*  
*Revolutions in America*  
*World War One*  
*The Great Depression*  
*World War Two*  
*A Bipolar World: The Cold War*