

## Saint Thomas Aquinas School

**Grade 6**

**Social Studies Curriculum**

*State the purpose and objectives of this academic area.*

The Social Studies Curriculum for Grade 6 concentrates on world history. Students are given the opportunity to venture to different continents, explore different cultures and learn about the wide variety of lifestyles of the world in which they live. An examination of the world's cultural diversity and its overall impact on the history of the world is a key element of the 6<sup>th</sup> grade Social Studies Curriculum.

**Text:** *World History-Journey Across Time*, Glencoe-McGraw Hill, 2006  
*World Explorer-Geography Tools and Concepts*, Pearson-Prentice Hall, 2003

*Provide individual course outlines or descriptions of programs or activities.*

**Goals:**

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ To emphasize geography's impact on history by focusing in on geography's five fundamental themes: region, human/environment interactions, location, movement and place</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ To give students the opportunity to explore a wide variety of cultures</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ To present each student with an in depth examination of the world's cultures and their impact on the history of the world</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ To provide students with a greater appreciation of the world's cultures and its people</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ To help students understand the connections between the past and the present</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ To provide opportunities for students to express acquired knowledge in a variety of formats</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ To teach students the importance of research and study skills</li> </ul>	

**Themes:**

*Early Civilizations*

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ The First Civilizations</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ The Ancient Israelites</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ Ancient Egypt</li> </ul>	

*The Ancient World*

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ The Ancient Greeks</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ Early India</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ Greek Civilization</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ Early China</li> </ul>

**Themes Continued:**

**New Empires and New Faiths**

◆ The Rise of Rome	◆ The Rise of Christianity
◆ Roman Civilization	◆ Islamic Civilization

**The Middle Ages**

◆ China in the Middle Ages	◆ Medieval Japan
◆ Medieval Africa	◆ Medieval Europe

**Changing World**

◆ The Americas	◆ Enlightenment and Revolution
◆ The Renaissance and Reformation	

**Modern Times**

◆ Industry and Nationalism	◆ World War II and the Cold War
◆ Imperialism and World War II	◆ Building Today's World

Students will view the following video tapes:

- ◆ *The Odyssey of Troy-Ancient Mysteries; New Investigations of the Unsolved*  
Produced by Multimedia Entertainment, Inc. and A& E Television Networks, 1995
- ◆ PBS Home Videos-*Secrets of the Pharaohs* (3 videos in the series) -  
*Lost City of the Pyramids; Unwrapping the Mummy; Tut's Family Cruise*  
Produced by Educational Broadcasting Corporation, 2001
- ◆ *Life, Times and Wonders of Rome and Pompeii-Great Cities of the Ancient World*  
A Questar Vide Presentation, 1990
- ◆ *Feudalism, Lords and Vassals*  
A division of School Specialty, 2002
- ◆ *Knights and Armor-Travel to the World of Excalibur and Camelot*  
A & E Home Video; the History Channel, 1994

Recommended Reading:

- ◆ *Pandora of Athens, 399BC*, New York, NY: Barry Denenberg, Scholastic Inc.
- ◆ *Ancient Rome, 200BC-AD350*, McDougal-Littell, 2002
- ◆ *Daughter of Venice*, Donna Jo Napoli
- ◆ *A Peace Corps Mosaic*, Peace Corps' World Wise Schools, 2000

***What does the department, division or learning area consider its strengths?***

Our brand new textbook, *Journey Across Time*, catches the students' interest with outstanding, colorful photos and clear, easy to read maps, charts and graphs. The subject matter is presented in a way that is appealing to a sixth grader with interesting yet important information. Fun Facts, sections including: primary sources, "the way it was," linking past and present, biography, document-based questions and "you decide" all make each chapter fascinating! Also, its technology provides time-saving software products to creatively help engage students and reduce teacher preparation time. Students go to: history on line @jot.glencoe.com. Also, for more sixth grade strengths see Activities/Projects for Grades 6, 7, and 8.

*What does the department, division or learning area consider its weaknesses and what recommendations might be made regarding ways to improve?*

The content of the 6<sup>th</sup> grade curriculum is extremely comprehensive; there is so much for the students to absorb within ten months. Since the 6<sup>th</sup> graders work on many creative projects and share them with fellow classmates throughout the year, we are really pressed for time. The last unit deals with Modern Times – the history of the world from Industry and Nationalism to the present time. We'll cover this unit in 8<sup>th</sup> grade.

## Saint Thomas Aquinas School

### Grades 7 & 8

### Social Studies Curriculum

*State the purpose and objectives of this academic area.*

American History is everything about the adventures of all Americans-past and present-its people, events, places, documents, art, inventions and literature. Only by learning about the past can we understand what it means to be an American today.

The Grade 7 Social Studies Program covers the history of the United States from the First Americans to the Civil War and its Reconstruction. The Seventh and Eighth Grade Social Studies Program continues to focus on geographic factors: land forms, waterways and natural resources which have shaped the outcome of America's history, as well as the five themes of geography: region, location, movement, place and human environment interactions.

The Grade 8 Social Studies Program covers the history of the United States from the Western Frontier to the present.

**Text:** *The American Journey*, Columbus, Ohio: Glencoe-McGraw-Hill

*Provide individual course outlines or descriptions of programs or activities.*

#### **Goals:**

Grade 7

Students will:

◆ Describe the factors which influence decisions related to production, distribution and consumption of goods and services	◆ Give examples of how technology was a major influence in historical events
◆ Give examples of economic factors influencing current events and pivotal historic moments	◆ Analyze and explain the geographic factors integral to various examples of bio-regions and eco-systems in the areas studied
◆ Give examples of how people have had differing responses to a given set of circumstances, according to their beliefs and cultural traditions	◆ Interpret examples of bias, stereotyping, prejudice and racism contained in printed material and/or customs, institutions, etc.
◆ Articulate the need for government, delineate where the powers of government come from and give examples of how the just use of government power contributes to the common good	◆ Develop knowledge of the chronology of major time periods and significant persons and events in United States History from the colonial period to the end of Reconstruction
◆ Analyze the change from rural/agricultural society to urban/manufacturing society	◆ Identify government strategies which led to solutions consistent with American ideals
◆ Identify the perspectives, motives and actions which contributed to conflict and to cooperation in global relationships	

**Themes:**

**Opportunity**

◆ First Americans	◆ English Settlement
◆ New World	

**Independence**

◆ Colonial Society	◆ Forming a Union
◆ War of Independence	◆ Constitution

**Democracy**

◆ New Government	◆ Age of Jackson
◆ Nationalism	

**Expansion**

◆ Rise of Industry	◆ Westward Movement
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**Division**

◆ Civil War	◆ Rebuilding
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Students will view the following video tapes:

- ◆ *Where America Began-Colonial Williamsburg, Jamestown, Yorktown*, Holiday Home Video
- ◆ *The American Revolution*, A & E Home Video, The History Channel, 1994
- ◆ *The Journals of Lewis and Clark*, Time Life Video, National Broadcasting Video, 1989
- ◆ *The Great Indian Wars 1840-1890*, Dan Dalton Productions, 1991
- ◆ *The Civil War*, Video Clips

Recommended Reading:

- ◆ *The Man Who Was Poe* by Avi
- ◆ *The Fighting Ground* by Avi
- ◆ *The Perilous Journey of the Donner Party* by Marian Calabro
- ◆ *Storm Warriors* by Elisa Lynn Carbone
- ◆ *Brides of Eden: A True Story Imagined* by Linda Crew
- ◆ *April Morning* by Howard Fast
- ◆ *Johnny Tremain* by Esther Forbes

Recommended Reading continued:

- ◆ *Becca’s Story* by James D. Forman
- ◆ *Boston Jane: An Adventure* by Jennifer L. Holm
- ◆ *Rifles for Watie* by Harold Keith
- ◆ *Long Journey Home: Stories from Black History* by Julius Lester
- ◆ *An American Plague: The True and Terrifying Story of the Yellow Fever Epidemic of 1793* by Jim Murphy
- ◆ *The Glory Field* by Walter Dean Myers
- ◆ *Land of Promise* by Joan Lowery Nixon
- ◆ *Adaline Falling Star* by Mary Pope Osborne
- ◆ *A Stitch in Time* by Ann A. Rinaldi
- ◆ *The Killer Angels* by Michael Shaara
- ◆ *The Witch of Blackbird Pond* by Elizabeth George Speare
- ◆ *Uncle Tom’s Cabin* by Harriet Beecher Stowe
- ◆ *Tree by Lean* by Cynthia Voigt
- ◆ *Caleb’s Choice* by G. Wisler
- ◆ *Dragonwings* by Laurence Yep

**Goals:**

Grade 8

Students will:

◆ Describe the economy of war and draw examples from the first half of the twentieth Century	◆ Describe the rise of industrialism at the turn of the century and give examples of technological advances from then to the present
◆ Illustrate various phases of the Labor Movement including the role of women, minorities and immigrants citing examples from modern U.S. Regions	◆ Identify the need for regulation of discoveries, inventions and technological applications to protect consumers and the environment
◆ Describe the impact of pre-war and war economics in various parts of the country	◆ Express the geographic factors influencing issues under discussion
◆ Identify the values of a culture through its traditions, social structures, literature and the arts	◆ Describe the vision and efficacy of several major international political, economic and treaty organizations functioning in modern time
◆ Delineate the branches of our government, their structure, purpose and participants	◆ Cite knowledge of the past in formulating decisions regarding current issues
◆ Describe election and appointment processes	◆ Demonstrate capability in the use of letters, journals, early maps and other resources; audit the credibility of these resources in order to reconstruct the story of the past

**Themes:**

**Growth**

◆ Changing Nation	◆ Progressive Era
◆ Big Business	

**Power**

◆ Expansion	◆ World War I
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**Commitment**

◆ Life in Twenties	◆ World War II
◆ Depression and New Deal	

**Change**

◆ Postwar World	◆ Johnson, Nixon, Carter
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**Challenge**

◆ New Directions	◆ Challenges for America
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Students will view the following video tapes:

- ◆ *World War II-When Lions Roared*, MPI Video, by David Rintels, 1994
- ◆ *Within These Walls, A Visit to the White House*, GM Presentation
- ◆ *Fly Girls*, A Silverline Productions Film for The American Experience, 1999
- ◆ *The Hidden Army-Women in World War II*, produced by OnDeck Home Entertainment, 1995

Recommended Reading:

- ◆ *Nothing But the Truth*, A documentary Novel by Avi
- ◆ *The Life History of a Star* by Kelly Easton
- ◆ *The Diary of a Young Girl* by Anne Frank
- ◆ *Eleanor Roosevelt: A Life of Discovery* by Russell Freedman
- ◆ *Summer of My German Soldier* by Bette Greene
- ◆ *Witness* by Karen Hesse
- ◆ *Soldier Boys* by Dean Hughes
- ◆ *To Kill A Mockingbird* by Harper Lee
- ◆ *Under the Blood-Red Sun* by Graham Salisbury
- ◆ *A Tree Grows in Brooklyn* by Betty Smith
- ◆ *Of Mice and Men* by John Steinbeck
- ◆ *Roll of Thunder, Hear My Cry* by Mildred D. Taylor
- ◆ *The Cay* by Theodore Taylor

## Activities and Projects: Grades 6, 7 and 8

- ◆ Participation in the National Geographic Society Geography Bee
- ◆ Participation in the Peace Corps Program's-World-Wise Schools in which students make global connections by learning about other countries; our correspondence to Peace Corps Volunteers and students in distant villages include, thus far, Senegal, West Africa; Swaziland, South Africa; Chimborazo, Ecuador; and Bishkek, Kyrgyzstan
- ◆ Scholastic News - 6<sup>th</sup> Grade Students read and discuss this outstanding current event magazine
- ◆ Teen Newsweek – 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> Grade Students read and discuss this timely world issues magazine
- ◆ Guest Speakers: prominent people - authors, historians, politicians, priests, missionaries, businessmen and women, artists and many other intelligent leaders/role models within our community and county come to share their life experiences
- ◆ Pro-Active Learning – Our students communicate and correspond with our local and state representatives regarding social and environmental issues, such as; the Alaska drilling, LNG (the Liquefied Natural Gas) Project in Long Island Sound, etc.
- ◆ Mock Trial at the Bridgeport Superior Court – 8<sup>th</sup> Grade Students participate as defendants, jury, reporters with real lawyers and judges to learn how our court system works
- ◆ Mock Political Debates – presidential, senatorial candidates followed by fellow classmates casting their ballots (The Voting Process)
- ◆ Field trips:

### **Connecticut:**

The Fairfield Historical Society and Old Burial Ground (17<sup>th</sup> C.)  
The Westport Country Playhouse  
The State Capital and Legislative Building - Hartford  
The Connecticut Museum of History – Hartford  
The Connecticut Supreme Court – Hartford  
The Mark Twain Museum – Hartford  
Fairfield University's Regina Quick Center  
Sacred Heart University's Edgerton Center for the Performing Arts  
Yale University's Peabody Museum  
The Arena at Harbor Yard – Bridgeport  
The Knights of Columbus Museum – New Haven

### **New York:**

Ellis Island and the Statue of Liberty  
The Intrepid  
Broadway Plays  
Yankee Stadium Tour and Baseball Game  
Immigration/Tenement Museum and Ethnic Neighborhood (Chinese, Italian, Jewish) Tour  
The Renaissance Faire in Sterling Forest, Tuxedo, New York  
The Metropolitan Museum of Art

### **Boston, Massachusetts:**

Quincy Market, The Freedom Trail, Science Museum, The Aquarium,  
Historic Boston Harbor Boat Tour

***What does the department, division or learning area consider its strengths?***

Both *World History-Journey Across Time* and *The American Journey* texts include: high student interest level; excellent historical and contemporary illustrations; explicit graphs, charts and maps; excellent critical thinking questions; embraces significant content areas such as economic literacy, multicultural interdependence, citizenship, government, geographic and historical perspectives.

Technology- Students visit [www.glencoe.com](http://www.glencoe.com) as well as many more outstanding websites for exciting cultural, geographical and historical resources.

Primary Sources- Our many enriching field trips provide us with the opportunity to see and learn about history through examining and experiencing primary sources.

Creative Projects and Activities- Our middle school student's research and present many outstanding projects to their classmates.

The Wealth of Human Resources of the St. Thomas Aquinas School Community provides our students so many enlightening and educational experiences.

Our Excellent Field Trips engage our students to become life-time learners.

***What does the department, division or learning area consider its weaknesses and what recommendations might be made regarding ways to improve?***

Although our 6<sup>th</sup>, 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> grade students are involved in many service projects involving minority groups, our school enrollment is predominantly white/Catholic. A more diverse student population, both ethnically, religiously and racially, would perhaps help our students to better understand, communicate with, and relate to the global village in which we live.

Some recommendations might be:

A Scholarship Program might result in diversity of the student body to bring a broader culture to the benefit of the students

Continue to enhance the Peach Corps' World-wise Program

Involve more students in the National Geographic Society Geography Bee

Cultural/Ethnic Day- Each year St. Thomas Aquinas School might host a Cultural/Ethnic Day when many diverse ethnic groups could be represented with: costumes, foods, traditions, games, languages

Diverse-(Ethnic and Racial) Special Guest Speakers might come to share their expertise and their traditions/culture in relation/comparison to the themes taught.