

# **Eighth Grade**

## **World History and Geography to 1500**

Eighth Grade World History and Geography to 1500 directs students to think critically about the various forces that combined to shape the world today. Emphasis is placed on geographic impact, development of civic knowledge/responsibilities, and emerging economic systems within a chronological context. Critical thinking and analysis are important in this course; consequently, asking questions about societies and comparing and contrasting civilizations over time are essential. Through historical inquiry, students need not focus on world history and geography as endless factual detail; rather, they may gain an understanding and appreciation of history as an exciting story of people much like themselves at other times and places.

### **Early Civilizations to 500 B.C.**

Students will

1. Evaluate the minimum components essential for the development of a civilization.
  - Technology
  - Division of labor
  - Government
  - Calendar
  - Writing
2. Compare the significant features of civilizations that developed in the Tigris-Euphrates, Nile, Indus, and Huang He River valleys.
  - Natural environment
  - Urban development
  - Social hierarchy
  - Written language
  - Ethical and religious belief system
  - Government and military institutions
  - Economic systems

**NOTE:** Efforts have been made to follow the Pinyin method of spelling with Chinese terms.

### **Classical Civilizations: 500 B.C. to 500 A.D.**

3. Compare the development of major world religions, philosophies, and their key tenets.
  - Judaism
  - Hinduism
  - Confucianism and Taoism
  - Christianity
  - Buddhism

4. Analyze the cultural contributions of Classical Greece.
  - Politics  
Examples: polis, democracy
  - Intellectual life  
Examples: Sophists, Socrates, Plato, Aristotle
  - Arts and architecture
  - Science
5. Compare the Hellenic and the Hellenistic world.
  - Role of Alexander the Great
  - Geographic features
  - Political and military factors
  - Intellectual life
  - Cultural interaction and religious diversity
  - Economic features
6. Analyze the key factors in the expansion of the Roman Republic.
  - Influence of geography
  - Organization of the government
  - Plebeians versus patricians
  - Roman army
  - Relations with conquered peoples
7. Evaluate the transformation of Rome from Republic to Empire.
  - Collapse of the Republic
  - Reforms of Augustus
  - Pax Romana
  - Imperialism
  - Economic factors  
Examples: agriculture, trade, manufacturing, taxes
8. Assess the Roman cultural contributions.
  - Roman law and political theory
  - Citizenship and slavery
  - Architecture and engineering
  - Religions
  - Sculpture and painting
  - Literature
  - Latin language
9. Trace important aspects of the diffusion of Christianity.
  - Relationship to Judaism
  - Missionary impulse
  - Organizational development
  - Transition from persecution to acceptance in Roman Empire

- Church doctrine
10. Analyze the reasons for the decline and fall of the Roman Empire.
- Economic and social decline
- Examples: class divisions, alienation, depopulation
- Influence of Christianity
  - Political and military problems
  - External factors
    - Provincial disorder
    - Loss of trade
    - Tribal migrations and attacks
  - Size and diversity
11. Interpret elements of classical civilization in India.
- Religions
  - Arts and literature
  - Philosophies
  - Empires
  - Social structures
- Example: caste system
12. Interpret elements of classical civilization in China.
- Religions
  - Politics
- Examples: Chi'n Dynasty, weapons, military unification, the Great Wall
- Centrality of the family
- Example: Mandate of Heaven
- Zhou and Han Dynasties
  - Inventions
- Examples: paper, gunpowder, porcelain
- Economic impact of the Silk Road and European trade
  - Dynastic transitions

**World Expansion of Agrarian and Commercial Civilizations:  
500 A.D. to 1500 A.D.**

13. Analyze the rise of the Byzantine Empire, its institutions, and its legacy.
- Shift of the Roman Empire from the west to the east
  - Emperors
    - Constantine
    - Justinian
  - Code of Justinian
  - Preservation of heritage of antiquity
  - Art and architecture
- Examples: Hagia Sophia, mosaics, icons

- Establishment of Eastern Orthodox Church
  - Strengths and weaknesses
14. Assess the characteristics and spread of Islamic civilizations.
- Mohammed and the origins of Islam
  - Geography
  - Political/religious diversity
- Examples: Suni, Shia
- Role of women
  - Islamic expansion
  - Arts and literature
  - Science, mathematics, and medicine
  - Preservation and transmittal of ancient Greek and Indian works
  - Invasion of India
15. Evaluate the forces and institutions that shaped the early Middle Ages in Europe.
- Invasions
- Examples: Huns, Franks, Angles, Saxons, Visigoths, Magyars, Vikings, Muslims
- Early medieval church
- Examples: papacy, monasticism
- Military leaders
- Example: Charlemagne
- The Norman Conquest
  - Agricultural methods
  - Manoralism
  - Feudalism
16. Analyze the characteristics of Japan's Classical Age.
- Political
- Examples: feudalism, the Kamokura
- Economic
  - Religious
  - Cultural
17. Analyze the characteristics of the Middle Empire in China.
- Continuity of civilization
  - The great dynasties
  - Golden Age of art and culture
- Examples: painting, porcelain, poetry, Li Po, Tu Fu
- Rise of domestic and foreign trade
  - Mongol contributions
18. Explain the development of the early Russian state.
- Rise of Kiev
  - Conversion to Orthodox Christianity

- Geography and peoples of Central Asia
  - Mongol conquest (Tartar Yoke)
  - Relations with Western Europe
  - Rise of Muscovy
  - Trade system
19. Analyze the forces and institutions that shaped Western Europe in the High Middle Ages (1000-1350 A.D.).
- Growth of trade and towns
  - The Church
  - Scholasticism
  - Crusades
  - Politics
    - France  
Examples: kingship, the Estates, Parliaments, Louis IX, Eleanor of Aquitaine
    - England  
Examples: William the Conqueror, Magna Carta, Model Parliament
    - The Holy Roman Empire  
Example: Frederick Barbarossa
  - Cultures
20. Compare the characteristics of African civilizations.
- Geography
  - Religions  
Examples: Islam, Christianity, indigenous
  - Economics
  - Empires  
Examples: Ghana, Mali, Songhai
  - Cultures
21. Evaluate Pre-Columbian cultures in the Americas.
- Olmecs
  - Mayans
  - Aztecs
  - Incas
  - North Americans
22. Analyze events and factors for change in late medieval civilization (1350-1500).
- European topography
  - Crusades
  - Hundred Years' War
  - Black Death
  - Expansion of agricultural productivity
  - Rise of middle class

- Exploration and world trade
23. Trace the origins of the Italian Renaissance.
- Effects of the Crusades
  - Commercial prosperity
  - Islamic science and culture
  - Political changes
  - Art and architecture
  - Early vernacular literature