

Social Studies Key Themes: Grade 7

To be productive members of society, students must be critical consumers of information they read, hear, and observe and communicate effectively about their ideas. They need to gain knowledge from a wide array of sources and examine and evaluate that information to develop and express an informed opinion, using information gained from the sources and their background knowledge. Students must also make connections between what they learn about the past and the present to understand how and why events happen and people act in certain ways.

Thus, students must:

- Build an understanding of social studies content in the grade-level expectations (GLEs)
 - Examine authentic sources to build knowledge of social studies content
 - Explore meaningful questions about sources and content to build understanding
- Develop and express claims that demonstrate their understanding of content
 - Make connections among ideas, people, and events across time and place
 - Express understanding of content using evidence from authentic sources and outside knowledge

This document has two sections.

1. **Key Themes:** There are seven key themes across all grades. These describe the connections students must make to build and express their understanding of content. They progress from kindergarten to grade 12, as students build a more sophisticated understanding of content. The descriptions in this document are for grade 7.
2. **Sample Assessment Item:** This section compares an old end-of-year assessment item to a new item for grade 7. The new assessment items require students to make connections represented by the key themes to develop and express claims that demonstrate their understanding of GLE content.



Physical and Human Systems

Students in grade 7 interpret maps, charts, and graphs to explain how differences in land use following the American Revolution influenced the development of regional cultural characteristics (i.e., agrarian South and industrial North) and led to sectionalism in the United States. They describe how pioneers settling the West and immigrants coming to America in the 19th century adapted to their new surroundings to expand the growth and influence of the United States. Lastly, students explain how Southern agriculture was affected by Reconstruction.



Migration and Settlement

Students in grade 7 explain the influence of migration and immigration on the United States through 1877. They explain the reasons for westward expansion and its impact on Native Americans. They recognize how push factors, such as the potato famine and outbreak of war, and pull factors, such as job opportunities and the availability of farmland, impacted the movement and settlement of Irish and German immigrants. They also explain the reasons for and reactions to the expansion of slavery in the rural South and the impact of urban migration in the North.



Economics and Trade

Students in grade 7 apply their understanding of economic relationships to describe the development of the United States economy from 1763 through 1877. They explain how land use and specialization in the South and the North led each region to develop different economies (i.e., agriculture and cash crops in the South and industrialization in the North) and how specialization led to economic interdependence between each region. They also explain the reasons for the expansion of slavery in the South and describe how technological innovations (i.e., the cotton gin, the factory system, the sewing machine, and the steamboat) contributed to the development of a national economy.



Politics and Governance

Students in grade 7 evaluate the ideas, principles, and purposes in documents upon which the U.S. government was founded and explain the structure and processes of the U.S. government. They also examine how key people and events (i.e., political parties, special interest groups, social reformers, alliances, and conflicts) influenced foreign and domestic policy during the presidencies of Washington, Adams, Jefferson, Monroe, John Quincy Adams, Jackson, and Lincoln.



Society and Culture

Students in grade 7 explain why social reforms and special interest groups developed in the United States through 1877, and they describe the influence these reforms and groups had on government and the development and expansion of individual rights and freedoms. They explain and make connections among the motivations, goals, and influences of abolitionism, the Second Great Awakening, and the women's rights, labor, and temperance movements. Students also explain the impact that various immigrant groups had on American society and how the regional economies of the United States contributed to differing social characteristics in Antebellum America. They also describe the goals of and reactions to Reconstruction and the resulting impacts on African Americans.



Conflict and Compromise

Students in grade 7 describe the causes, effects, key leaders, and major turning points of the American Revolution, the War of 1812, and the Civil War. Students also explain how conflict and compromise over key issues through 1877 (i.e., proportional representation in Congress, interactions with Native Americans, slavery, the role of the federal government, social reforms, and Reconstruction) led to policy or legislation and/or contributed to the evolution of the United States Constitution through various amendments.

Continuity and Change

Students in grade 7 use a broad variety of primary and secondary sources with varied points of view to examine how key events, people, and ideas developed and changed in U.S. history from 1763-1877. They examine key legislation and court decisions from 1763-1877 to describe how they influenced the course of U.S. history. They explain how technological innovations in agriculture, industry, communication, and transportation led to economic or social changes. Students also describe the long-term and short-term outcomes of Reconstruction, the related legislation and policy, and the impact of Reconstruction on African Americans and the Southern economy. Finally, students make connections between the effects of Reconstruction and later challenges African Americans faced as citizens of the United States.

Old Assessment Item

The American Society for the Promotion of Temperance was formed in 1826 during the Second Great Awakening. Which later constitutional amendment was **most** influenced by the society's beliefs?

- A. Sixteenth Amendment: income tax authorization
- B. Seventeenth Amendment: direct election of senators
- C. Eighteenth Amendment: prohibition of alcohol**
- D. Nineteenth Amendment: women's suffrage

This item assesses GLE 70: Explain the importance of the Second Great Awakening, the ideas of its principal leaders, and how it affected public education, temperance, woman's suffrage, and abolition.

Key Concept

Importance of the ideas and reform leaders of the Second Great Awakening— *e.g., public education, mental health and prisons, temperance, suffrage, religion, abolition*

This item asks students to identify that the temperance movement sought to limit the sale and consumption of alcohol. To prepare for this assessment in the classroom, teachers would need to ensure students are able to recognize the main goal of the temperance movement.

New Assessment Item

Grade 7 Task Set: [Women's Rights Movement](#)

This set assesses GLEs 7.3.3, 7.10.1, and 7.10.2.

Key Themes

- **Social Movements and Reforms:** Students describe the influence of the women's rights movement on U.S. legislation and policy and the expansion of individual rights and freedoms. They also explain the motivations, goals, and influences of the women's rights movement and make connections with other social reforms.
- **Conflict and Compromise:** Students explain how conflict and compromise over key issues through 1877 led to policy or legislation.
- **Continuity and Change:** Students examine key legislation and court decisions to describe how they influenced the course of U.S. history.

This task set asks students to examine a timeline and excerpts from three speeches to explain the purpose, influences on, and goals of the women's rights movement. To prepare for this assessment in the classroom, students would need to examine sources about various social movements and reforms to build their understanding of why the movements and reforms existed and how they changed government, society, and culture. They would also need to make connections among the people, events, and ideas of the various reforms to determine their similarities and differences.