

Grade Four

North American Geography

(with optional standards for one Early Civilization)

In Grade 4, students study the geography and people of the United States today. Students learn geography by addressing standards that emphasize political and physical geography and embed five major concepts: location, place, human interaction with the environment, movement, and regions. In addition, they learn about the geography and people of contemporary Mexico and Canada. Teachers may choose to teach the standards on the geography and social characteristics of the nations in Central America and the Caribbean Islands. Teachers may also choose to have students study in the first half of the school year one early civilization. MA DESE recommends China because it is not studied in Grade 7 and can be easily connected to the English language arts curriculum through its myths, legends, and folktales.

Note: The grade 5 MCAS will cover only the U.S. history, geography, economics, and civics standards, concepts and skills of grades 4 and 5.

Concepts and Skills:

History and Geography

1. Use map and globe skills to determine absolute locations (latitude and longitude) of places studied. (G)
2. Interpret a map using information from its title, compass rose, scale, and legend. (G)
3. Observe and describe national historic sites and describe their function and significance. (H, C)

Civics and Government

4. Give examples of the major rights that immigrants have acquired as citizens of the United States (e.g., the right to vote, and freedom of religion, speech, assembly, and petition). (C)
5. Give examples of the different ways immigrants can become citizens of the United States. (C)

Economics

6. Define and give examples of natural resources in the United States. (E)
7. Give examples of limited and unlimited resources and explain how scarcity compels people and communities to make choices about goods and services, giving up some things to get other things. (E)
8. Give examples of how the interaction of buyers and sellers influences the prices of goods and services in markets. (E)

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The purpose of the Grade 4 curriculum is to give students their first concentrated study of the formative years of North American geography.

I. Regions of the United States of America (SEPTEMBER)

Students will study the regions of the United States. They will identify where the different regions are, describe the major landforms in each region, describe the climates in each region, and learn about each region's resources.

Specific Objectives:

- Identify the major regions of the United States. (4.9)
- Describe the major landforms of each region of the United States. (4.11)
- Describe the climate of each region of the United States (4.11)
- Explain how each region's resources shaped the industries that grew there. (4.11)
- Describe the diverse nature of the American people by identifying the distinctive contributions of the American culture of indigenous people, African Americans, and immigrant groups. (4.15)

TIME FRAME	KEY TOPICS AND CONCEPTS ADDRESSED IN UNIT
SEPTEMBER	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Major Regions of the United States (see Appendix H: Regions and States of the U.S. in the 2003 MA History and Social Science Curriculum Framework, p. 130). • Vocabulary terms: region, landform, mountain, plain, desert, canyon, plateau, boundary, island, harbor, bay, sound, ocean, lake, tributary, river. • Climate: weather, precipitation, temperature, humidity, Equator, elevation tropical, polar, subarctic, temperate. • Resources: natural resource, raw materials, processed, harvested, industry, manufacturing, products, capital resources, agriculture, conserve, renewable resource, recycle, nonrenewable resource, human resources, services.

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II. The Northeast

Students will study the Northeast region of the United States. They will locate and identify its states and major cities, describe the major landforms and bodies of water, climate and vegetation, and natural resources.

Specific Objectives:

- Identify where the Northeast states are located and identify the capital of each state (4.9, 4.10)
- Describe the climate, major physical features, and major natural resources in the Northeast Region. (4.11)
- Identify the three main mountain ranges in the northeastern part of the Appalachian Mountains. (4.11)
- Identify the two main features for which Niagara Falls is known.
- Explain why cranberries and grapes grow well in the region. (4.11)
- Explain why Chesapeake Bay is important to the Northeast, and how it is threatened by pollution. (4.11)
- Describe the diverse nature of the American people by identifying the distinctive contributions of the American culture of indigenous people, African Americans, and immigrant groups for the Northeast. (4.15 A-D)

TIME FRAME	KEY TOPICS AND CONCEPTS ADDRESSED IN UNIT
OCTOBER	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • New England states, capitals, and major cities
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mid-Atlantic states, capitals, and major cities
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Physical landforms, including islands
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bodies of water, including rivers, major lakes, falls, and ponds
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Climate and vegetation regions in the Northeast
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Natural resources of the Northeast • Manufacturing, services, and the economy in the Northeast

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III. The Southeast

Students will study the Southeast Region of the United States. They will identify where the states and capitals are located, as well as major bodies of water. They will learn about the climate, resources, and landforms in the region.

Specific Objectives:

- Identify and describe major landforms in the Southeast (4.10)
- Compare and contrast landform elevations in the Southeast by using an elevation map (4.11)
- Describe how the Barrier Islands were formed (4.12)
- Describe the climate of the Southeast (4.11)
- Examine hurricanes in the Southeast, explain how they form and describe the effects of hurricanes (4.11)
- Identify ways in which resources of the Southeast are used (4.11)
- Identify a renewable and nonrenewable resource that is found in the Southeast (4.11)
- Describe the importance of protecting endangered species, especially in the Everglades National Park (4.12)
- Describe the diverse nature of the American people by identifying the distinctive contributions of the American culture of indigenous people, African Americans, and immigrant groups for the Southeast. (4.15 A-D)

TIME FRAME	KEY TOPICS AND CONCEPTS ADDRESSED IN UNIT
NOVEMBER	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Atlantic Coast/Appalachian states, capitals, and major cities • Southeast & Gulf states, capitals, and major cities
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Physical landforms, including islands • Bodies of water, including rivers, major lakes, falls, and ponds • Climate and vegetation regions in the Southeast
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Natural resources of the Southeast • Manufacturing, services, and the economy in the Southeast

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IV. The Midwest

Students will study the Midwest Region of the United States. They will identify where the states and capitals are located, as well as major bodies of water. They will learn about the climate, resources, and landforms in the region.

Specific Objectives:

- Identify where the Midwest states are located and identify the capital of each state (4.9, 4.10)
- Describe the climate, major physical features, and major natural resources in the Midwest Region. (4.11)
- Explain how the Great Lakes were formed and how they are connected to the Atlantic Ocean. (4.11)
- Describe the landscape and climate of the Badlands million of year ago, and how erosion has changed the Badlands over time. (4.11)
- Explain why the Midwest is an important agricultural region, and how the climate affects different farming methods. (4.11)
- Describe the diverse nature of the American people by identifying the distinctive contributions of the American culture of indigenous people, African Americans, and immigrant groups for the Midwest. (4.15 A-D)

TIME FRAME	KEY TOPICS AND CONCEPTS ADDRESSED IN UNIT
DECEMBER	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Great Lakes states, capitals, and major cities • Plains states, capitals, and major cities
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Physical landforms, including islands • Bodies of water, including rivers, major lakes, falls, and ponds • Climate and vegetation regions in the Midwest
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Natural resources of the Midwest • Manufacturing, services, and the economy in the Midwest

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V. The Southwest

Students will study the Southwest Region of the United States. They will identify where the states and capitals are located, as well as major bodies of water. They will learn about the climate, resources, and landforms in the region.

Specific Objectives:

- Identify where the Southwest states are located and identify the capital of each state. (4.9, 4.10)
- Describe the climate, major physical features, and major natural resources in the Southwest. (4.11)
- Identify and describe the unique features of the Grand Canyon. (4.11)
- Compare and contrast the different climates and vegetation in different regions of the world. (4.8)
- Identify a nonrenewable natural resource of the Southwest. (4.11)
- Describe how the technology of the Southwest has impacted the United States. (4.8)E
- Describe the diverse nature of the American people by identifying the distinctive contributions of the American culture of indigenous people, African Americans, and immigrant groups of the Southwest. (4.15)

TIME FRAME	KEY TOPICS AND CONCEPTS ADDRESSED IN UNIT
JANUARY	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • South Central states, capitals, and major cities • Mountain states, capitals, and major cities • Southwest Desert states, capitals, and major cities
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Physical landforms, including islands • Bodies of water, including rivers, major lakes, falls, and ponds • Climate and vegetation regions in the Southwest
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Natural resources of the Southwest • Manufacturing, services, and the economy in the Southwest

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VI. The West including Alaska and Hawaii

Students will study the West Region of the United States. They will identify where the states and capitals are located, as well as major bodies of water. They will learn about the climate, resources, and landforms in the region.

Specific Objectives:

- Identify where the West states are located and identify the capital of each state (4.9, 4.10)
- Describe the climate, major physical features, and major natural resources in the West Region. (4.11)
- Identify the largest system of mountains in the United States. (4.11)
- Compare and contrast mountain ranges in the West and identify where they are located. (4.11)
- Name the different types of climates in the West and give an example of each. (4.11)
- Identify the resources of the west including agricultural resources and the fishing industry. (4.11)
- Describe the diverse nature of the American people by identifying the distinctive contributions of the American culture of indigenous people, African Americans, and immigrant groups for the West. (4.15 A-D)

TIME FRAME	KEY TOPICS AND CONCEPTS ADDRESSED IN UNIT
FEBRUARY/ MARCH	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pacific states, capitals, and major cities
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Physical landforms, including islands • Bodies of water, including rivers, major lakes, falls, and ponds • Climate and vegetation regions in the West
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Natural resources of the West • Manufacturing, services, and the economy in the West

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VII. Canada (APRIL – MAY)

Students will study Canada and its provinces. They will identify where the provinces and capital cities are located, as well as major bodies of water. They will learn about the climate, resources, physical landforms, and its people and history.

Specific Objectives:

- On a map of North America, locate Canada, its provinces, and major cities. (4.17)
- Describe the climate, major physical characteristics, and major natural resources. (4.18)
- Describe the major ethnic and religious groups of modern Canada. (4.19)
- Identify when Canada became an independent nation and explain how independence was achieved. (4.20)
- Identify the location of at least two Native American tribes in Canada and the Inuit nation and describe their major social features. (4.21)
- Identify the major language groups in Canada, their geographic location, and the relations among them. (4.22)

TIME FRAME	KEY TOPICS AND CONCEPTS ADDRESSED IN UNIT
MARCH/ APRIL	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Canadian Provinces, capital and major cities • Physical landforms, including islands • Climate and vegetation regions • Bodies of water, including major lakes, ponds, falls, and rivers
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Natural resources, manufacturing, and economy of Canada • Government of Canada; British Commonwealth • Peoples of Canada
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Brief history and culture • Involvement in War of 1812 • Quebec; French Canada

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VIII. Mexico (MAY – JUNE)

Students will study Mexico. They will identify where its major cities are located, as well as major bodies of water surrounding Mexico. They will also learn about the climate, resources, physical landforms, and its peoples and history.

Specific Objectives:

- On a map of North America, locate Mexico and its major cities. (4.23)
- Describe the climate, major physical characteristics, and major natural resources of Mexico and explain their relationship to the Mexican economy. (4.24)
- Identify the language, major religion, and peoples of Mexico. (4.25)
- Identify when Mexico became an independent nation and describe how independence was achieved. (4.26)

TIME FRAME	KEY TOPICS AND CONCEPTS ADDRESSED IN UNIT
MAY/JUNE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cities: Mexico City, Cozumel, Chihuahua, Tijuana, Playa del Carmen, Loreto, Acapulco, Mazatlan, Ciudad Juarez, Veracruz, Cabo San Lucas, Oaxaca • Bodies of Water and Rivers: Rio Grande, Gulf of California, Gulf of Mexico, Pacific Ocean, Caribbean Sea • Physical Landforms: Sierra Madre Occidental, Sierra Madre Oriental, Sierra Madre del Sur, Yucatan Peninsula, Baja California • Climate and vegetation regions
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Natural resources, manufacturing, and economy • Government of Mexico
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mayas, Aztecs, Olmec • Colonial Mexico: Hernan Cortes, conquistadors, mestizos, haciendas • Mexican Revolution: Mexican-American War, Texas, Miguel Hidalgo, Benito Juarez • Day of the Dead