



social studies

core concepts



Texas, U.S. & World History
grades 5 & 6



UIL Social Studies Core Concepts

Grades 5 & 6

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This booklet covers the core concepts for the A+ Social Studies Contest. This booklet encapsulates background material and general information about the Texas, U.S. and world. This new *Core Concepts* booklet has been revamped entirely from the original *Notes* in past years. It is an outstanding adjunct to the classroom textbooks and is useful for the UIL contest as well as classroom instruction. Our companion booklet, *Social Studies Focus* for Grade 7 & 8, covers annual focus topics and primary source documents as suggested by UIL.

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~ President Hexco Inc., Linda Tarrant

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GENERAL INFORMATION

Geography Concepts

Geography is the study of the earth. It includes the study of the relationship between the physical earth and people. There are many types of geography: physical, cultural, human and more.

Climate - Climate and physical geography are intertwined and greatly affect each other. Climate affects the human aspects of geography also, such as where and how people live, their diet and shelter options. Climate is a long term reflection of weather patterns including temperature, winds and precipitation.

The Köppen scale is used to classify a region's climate. It was designed by Wladimir Köppen, a German-Russian scientist, to reflect the vegetation and soil of the different regions and to include the climate with flora and fauna of that region. To do this, Köppen used three categories with various options in each category to describe a climate: climate type, seasonal characteristics, such as temperature and rainfall and overall temperature characteristics.

The following are some general descriptions of the categories most commonly used to describe a region's climate:

- **Tropical climates** are usually hot and humid all year. They do not have a dry season and are typically found around the equator. There are a few tropical climates that stay warm all year and have distinctive dry and wet seasons. This type of seasonal change is called a monsoon.
 - **Humid tropical climate** - This includes ample rainfall and is where rainforests grow.
 - **Tropical savannah climate** - Tropical grassy areas with scattered trees are typical of this climate along with a distinct rainy season and dry season.
- **Dry climates** fall into two main categories: semi-arid (steppe) regions which have 14-25" of rain per year and arid, desert regions which receive less than 14" of rain per year.
 - **Desert climate** - The area gets less than 10 inches of rain annually, and few plants grow in this climate, all of which must be drought resistant.
 - **Steppe climate** - This climate is made up of grasslands with scattered trees, but it is still dry, getting between 10 and 20 inches of rain annually
- **Humid climates** are found in the mid-latitudes such as the Pacific or Atlantic coastal regions. The summers are not very warm. In the Pacific Northwest the ocean modifies the climate so winters are relatively mild compared to those of the New England coast. This includes the humid subtropical climates which have mixed forests.
 - **Mediterranean climate** - This includes the west coasts of continents in the mid-latitudes. These areas have dry, warm summers and somewhat wet, mild winters. Rain is between 15 and 20 inches annually.
 - **Humid subtropical climate** - This includes the east coasts of continents in the mid-latitudes. These areas have hot, humid summers and humid, mild winters and rain all year. These coasts are sometimes in the paths of hurricanes and typhoons. Rain is between 20 and 60 inches annually.

relative location - the location of a place as described by the places near it

renewable resources - resources that can be replenished by nature quickly

revolution - the time it takes for Earth to orbit the Sun which is a year or one revolution

rift - long, deep valley with mountains or plateaus on both sides

river - a channel of water that flows across the earth's surface and empties into another body of water

rotation - the spinning motion of the earth, like a top on its axis; the earth takes about 24 hours to rotate one time

rural area - an area with low population density, such as a village or the countryside

satellite - a body orbiting a larger body in a solar system

scale - the size of an area on a map as compared with the area's actual size

sea - a body of salt water that is smaller than an ocean

semiarid - having light rainfall and high evaporation which is suitable for growing short grasses but for limited farming

silt - granular material like finely ground gravel or soil

sleet - mixture of rain and snow that melts somewhat as it falls

smog - air pollutants that cause a haze in the atmosphere; comes from combination of the words *smoke* and *fog*

snow - precipitation in the form of flakes of crystalline water that falls from clouds

solar system - group consisting of the sun and the planets that move around it

solstice - days when the Sun is farthest from Earth; occurs twice a year, once in fall and once in spring

source - the beginning of a river

South Pole - southernmost point of the Earth

squall - a sudden, sharp increase in wind speed usually associated with active weather, such as rain showers or thunderstorms

steppe - a Russian term that is used to describe mid-latitude grasslands from the Ukraine to Kazakhstan; similar to the Great Plains of America

storm - any disturbed state of an environment, usually accompanied by severe weather, wind and rain

strait - a narrow waterway that connects two larger bodies of water

subduction - action of a heavy plate of Earth moving under a lighter one causing trenches

suburban area - a usually residential area close to a city

swamp - a shallow body of water that covers a large area and contains grasses and trees

thunderstorm - type of storm characterized by the presence of lightning and thunder

timberline - a region on a mountain that marks the highest elevation at which trees will grow

tornado - also called twister or cyclone; a violently rotating column of air that is in contact with both the surface of the earth and a cumulonimbus cloud

Great Plains

This region is bordered by the Eastern Woodlands in the east and the Central Rockies in the west. It stretches northward into central Canada and south into central Texas.

- The western part of the **Interior Plains** are vast plains that are part of the Great Plains area which covers land west of the Mississippi to the Rocky Mountains. This area is characterized by rolling hills, major rivers and lakes, including the Great Lakes.
- A large area of flat plains dotted with rolling, hilly areas. Most of the area was covered in prairie grasses both short and tall (4-5 feet) but there were few forests. This region has extreme seasonal temperatures - very hot summers and very cold winters.
- Buffalo thrived on the plains and large herds roamed in the region. Buffalo provided food, clothing and shelter for the native people.
- Before the arrival of horses, many Plains tribes lived fairly settled lives in small villages often near rivers. They lived in round houses of dirt and wood, and most people had small farm patches. Tepees were used when the people were hunting big animals, and dogs were used to carry and move goods.
- Hunting was a way of life, and small game was hunted by individuals with a bow and arrow but buffalo hunting usually required a group effort.
 - The buffalo were chased over a cliff or driven into a gully where they were killed with spears. Three archeological sites that have been studied: Flying W Ranch in Oklahoma, Buffalo in South Dakota and Havre in Montana, which is the oldest buffalo jump dating from 100 BC to 1400 AD.
 - Most hunting was done in the summer and fall. Meat was dried to feed people during the winter months.
- After the arrival of horses in the 1600's, the plains tribes became more mobile since it was easier to move villages and hunt. Their territories got bigger and overlapped with that of other tribes. Horses became a source of wealth.
- Some tribes still had farm patches, but they were not actively tended. The group or band planted seeds in the spring, followed the buffalo and then returned to harvest their crops in the fall. Eventually nearly all the plains tribes became completely nomadic.
- Most of the Northern Plains tribes held the Sun Dance which is a painful test of bravery. It involved self-discipline for boys seeking to become warriors.
- The following is a list of the Great Plains nations from north to south: Blackfoot, Mandan, Cheyenne, Lakota, Arapaho, Kiowa and the Comanche.

Southwest Desert

This region includes southern Colorado, Arizona, New Mexico, southern California, western Texas and the Rio Grande River east to the Gulf of Mexico and northern Mexico.

- The **West** area covers the Rocky Mountains to the Pacific Ocean. The Continental Divide is in the Rockies.
- The Rocky Mountains in this area are dominated by steppe climates. Temperatures and snow vary greatly.

- The **Berlin Wall** was built in 1961 to divide East Berlin from West Berlin. It was not taken down until 1989.
- **Indira Gandhi** became prime minister in India, and she ruled until she was assassinated in 1984. She was the only woman to hold this office in India.
- A Czech reform movement began in 1968, which was called **Prague Spring** and was intended for political liberalization of Czechoslovakia during the period of domination by the Soviet Union.
- In 1971 East Pakistan became an independent country with a new name, **Bangladesh**.
- The Arab-Israeli **Yom Kippur war** was waged in 1973. Egypt and Syria with support from nine other nations attacked Israel. Russia supplied the Arabs while the U.S. supplied Israel.
- **Margaret Thatcher** became British Prime Minister. She was the only woman to have held that position. She was termed the "Iron Lady" by a Soviet journalist due to her uncompromising politics and leadership style.
- Zimbabwe continued declining. Farms owned by whites were seized, but the land redistribution policy failed.
- Between 1980 and 1990 Iran and Iraq were at war. Iraq used chemical warfare against Iran and Kurds.
- Student protestors were quelled by the Chinese military when they demonstrated in what came to be termed the **Tiananmen Square Massacre**. Estimates of those massacred are between hundreds and thousands.
- The Berlin Wall was taken down, and this led to reunification of Germany.
- Iraq invaded **Kuwait** in 1990, which was a threat to the Saudi oilfields. The Iraqis set fire to Kuwait oil wells.
- The **Soviet Union** disintegrated, resulting in the independence of twelve republics and creation of the **Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS)**; all of the former Soviet states except Georgia joined.
- **Nelson Mandela** was released from prison after 27 years. The apartheid policies of South Africa were dismantled which had supported racial segregation in the country. He served as president.
- The **European Union (EU)** was formed in 1993 by the **Maastricht Treaty** with 12 member states. The number of participants has increased to 28 member by 2014. A common Euro currency was adopted in 2002.
- Civil war was waged in **Rwanda**. The Hutus massacred 800,000 Tutsis, but the Tutsis finally won control.

2000 to Present

- Israeli/Palestinian violence increased for a long period.
- NATO added seven nations, all of which were former Soviet nations: Bulgaria, Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Romania, Slovakia and Slovenia.
- An earthquake in the Indian Ocean reached 9.3 on the Richter scale and triggered a tsunami that affected coastlines from Indonesia to Africa. Nearly 300,000 people were killed, and just as many were left homeless.
- Terrorists attacked commuter trains in Madrid Spain, killing 191 and injuring over 1800 people.
- **North Korea** announced that it had nuclear weapons in 2005.

This period saw the **Mexican Revolution** end with Mexico gaining independence of Mexico from Spain and Texas becoming more populated with settlers from the U.S. and Europe who did not want to be under the control of Mexico. Towns were expanding, and events occurred that ultimately led to the Texas Revolution.

1817-1820

Galveston island was occupied by **Jean Laffite**, and pirates used it as a base.

1829

The U.S. offered to buy Texas from Mexico. They were turned down. Shortly after, the **Law of April 6, 1830** was enacted by Mexico to stop American immigration to Texas. This was a precursor to revolution six years later. The next step toward the revolution was in the form of the **Turtle Bayou Resolutions** signed by Texans that suggested independence from Mexico. For the first time, the **Lone Star Flag** was flown.

1833 - The first state constitution was drafted by a convention of Texans, and, at this time, Santa Anna was president of Mexico, and **Stephen F. Austin** visited him in Mexico City and proposed separation of Texas and Coahuila, which was a combined state in Mexico at this time.

1835-1836

The **Texas Revolution** started with armed conflict between the Texians and Mexican forces at the **Battle of Gonzales**. Early successes included this battle, the **Battle of Goliad** and the **Siege of Béxar**. The **Texas Rangers** were organized during this period to protect colonists from Indian raids, and the Texas Navy was created. The **Battle of the Alamo** was fought with Texians under **William Travis** and **James Bowie** against the Mexicans under **Santa Anna**. Casualties numbered at just under 200, with one courier escaping. **Sam Houston** was then appointed as commander-in-chief of Texas Army and led the Texian forces at the **Battle of San Jacinto** against the Mexican army again under Santa Anna. This resulted in a surrender by Mexican forces after an 18-minute surprise attack. The **Treaty of Velasco** peace agreement was signed by Santa Anna and President **David Burnet**. Shortly after this battle, Texians met and signed the **Texas Declaration of Independence** at Washington-on-the-Brazos on March 2, 1836. The **Constitution of Republic of Texas** was written and the First Congress met at Columbia with Sam Houston becoming president.

1837-1839

The capital of Texas was relocated to Houston, and the **Republic of Texas** was recognized by the U.S. and then by France, England, the Netherlands and Belgium. **Mirabeau B. Lamar** was then elected president of Texas; the Lone Star Flag was adopted by the **Republic of Texas**. The capital moved to Austin.

1840-1845

There was Indian unrest and attacks on settlers through this period culminating in the defeat of the Comanches at the **Battle of Plum Creek**. After this they were forced further west. The state was continuing to grow and organize. **Anson Jones** became the last president of Republic of Texas, and the

- **Secession** - This is the action taken by the southern states in 1861 separating them from the U.S. It was started by South Carolina, and then Mississippi, Florida, Alabama, Georgia, Louisiana and Texas followed within the next two months. Virginia, Arkansas, Tennessee and North Carolina seceded and joined the Confederacy shortly afterward.
- **Siege of Béxar** - This occurred in 1835, and it was the first major campaign of the Texas Revolution. It continued from October to early December with the army of Texian volunteers holding siege to Mexican Army in San Antonio de Béxar led by General Cos. Cos' surrender left most of Texas under control of Texian Army.
- **Spindletop** - Established in 1901 Spindletop was a salt dome oil field in Beaumont. It tripled the U.S. oil production overnight and marked the beginning of the modern petroleum industry and of the Oil Age.
- **Telegraph and Texas Register** - Active between 1835 to 1877, this newspaper was begun by Gail Borden, Jr., Thomas H. Borden and Joseph Baker. It circulated a copy of Constitution of Republic of Texas. It was later just the *Telegraph*.
- **Texas A&M** - Established in 1876 as a coeducational public research university located in College Station, this school was named Agricultural and Mechanical College of Texas. It was the first public institution of higher education in Texas. It is home of the Texas Aggies and has a Corp of Cadets. It is abbreviated as TAMU currently.
- **Texas City Disaster** - This was the worst industrial accident in U.S. history to that time. It occurred in 1947 when a French ship carrying ammonium nitrate exploded in the harbor. Another ship exploded the following day. The incidents ended with almost 600 dead and at least 4,000 injured. This disaster caused 15-foot tidal waves.
- **Texas Constitution** - This document describes the structure and function of the Texas government. The current constitution was ratified in 1786. There were six previous constitutions: Coahuila y Tejas, 1836 Constitution of Republic of Texas and state constitutions of 1845, 1861, 1866 and 1869.
- **Texas Declaration of Independence** - Framed and issued by the Convention of 1836 at Washington-on-the-Brazos, the Texas Declaration of Independence was written by George C. Childress, James Gaines, Edward Conrad, Collin McKinney and Bailey Hardeman who were all appointed by Richard Ellis, president of convention. It was finished one day after their appointment.
- **Texas Declaration of Secession** - Texas was one of seven states that declared secession from the Union with the Declaration of the Causes which Impel the State of Texas to Secede from the Federal Union. This was completed before Lincoln took office.
- **Texas Instruments** - Headquartered in Dallas, Texas, this company originally sold seismographic data to the petroleum industry. This technology was used by the Navy tracking submarines in World War II. The company focused on defense technologies after the war and gradually moved into the consumer market with the development of transistors and transistor radios. It developed integrated chips and then calculators and changed computers.
- **Texas Our Texas** - The official state song was written in 1924 by William J. Marsh.
- **Texas Rangers** - Established unofficially in 1823 and officially in 1835, this law enforcement agency had statewide jurisdiction. Its purpose was to investigate crimes ranging from murder to

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