



social studies

core concepts



Texas, U.S. & World History
grades 7 & 8



UIL Social Studies Core Concepts

Grades 7 & 8

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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.
- **Dry climates** fall into two main categories: semi-arid (steppe) regions which have 14-25" of rain per year the arid/desert regions which receive less than 14" of rain per year.
- **Humid climates** are found in the mid-latitudes such as the Pacific or Atlantic coastal regions. The summers do not get very warm. In the Pacific Northwest the ocean modifies the climate so winter's are relatively mild compared to those of the New England coast.
- **Continental climates** are best noted for the large temperature spreads between summer and winter. Rainfall is adequate for growing crops, but the season may be limited by the onset of cold winter temperatures. The central regions of the U.S. and Russia are examples of typical continental climates.
- **Polar climates**, as expected, are found in the regions within the Arctic and Antarctic circles. There is a very limited period in which temperatures are above freezing.
- **Highland climates** were added later to Köppen's original scale to reflect the affects of elevation on climate. For instance, there is snow on the Andes mountains near the equator due to the extreme elevation. (Temperatures drop 2-3 degrees for every 1000' of elevation)

natural rights - based on John Locke's philosophy that everyone is born with certain rights that can not justly be taken away by man; natural rights have become synonymous with "inalienable" rights and include the rights to "life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness," among others

oligarchy - government by a select few; usually emerges when the majority in a democracy fails to participate

Parliament - legislative body of the British government

partisan politics - two opposing sides of an issue stick to their own party's direction and refuse to compromise; partisan politics is often associated with political gridlock

Patriot - colonists who supported the American Revolution against the British

petition - a written request signed by many people demanding an action from an authority or government

plaintiff - person who initiates legal action against another person or entity

platform - a set of causes and stances on political issues which form the basis of a candidate's philosophy

political party - an organization of people with common governmental goals who work together to achieve those goals; not every group is a political party

politics - the concept that one individual or group of individuals can influence others in civic or governmental matters

poll - the place where votes are cast and registered, or a survey of the public

poll tax - tax that had to be paid before a person could vote

Preamble - introductory statement of the Constitution that defined the intentions of the Founding Fathers

prohibition - also known as Dry Laws; refers to laws which prohibit sale and consumption of alcohol within a specific jurisdiction

ratify - approve or confirm a bill or document

representative democracy - citizens elect representatives to vote on the issues

representative government - type of democracy in which officials elected by the people make laws and govern the land

republic - representative democracy in which people elect representatives who act on their behalf when making decisions about laws and policies for the nation or state, such as the U.S.

Republican Party - U.S. party favoring more limited government with individuals working for their own future and exercising self reliance

right wing - usually associated with Republican views, conservative, prefer small governments

royal charter - type of contract issued by the Crown to a person or organization to create a city, business or other entity under specific rules set by the Crown

Secession - attempt by southern states in 1861 to create Confederate Nation separate from U.S.; started by South Carolina (12/20/1861), then Mississippi, Florida, AL, Georgia, Louisiana and Texas (1/1/1861) within two months, then Virginia, Arkansas, Tennessee, North Carolina (5/20/1861)

sectionalism - defined as loyalty to interests of one's own region or section of the country, not a nation as a whole

Senate - the upper house of a bicameral legislature, with the corresponding lower house often called the House of Representatives

separation of powers - model for the government of a country or state which is divided into branches with separate and independent powers, as the Executive, Legislative and Judicial branches of the U.S. government

slavery - system under which people are treated as property to be bought and sold and are forced to work without pay as occurred in the colonies

socialism - form of government between democracy and communism; individuality is restricted; private property limited; production and distribution of goods done by a group or government

southern colonies - group of colonies primarily invested in agriculture, such as the Carolinas, Virginia, Georgia and sometimes Maryland

states' rights - political powers reserved for the U.S. state governments rather than the federal government

suffrage - right to vote gained through democratic process

tariff - trade barrier; amount added to the price of a competitor's product as a type of tax on imports to encourage people to buy products manufactured in their own country

TEXAS

Geography of Texas - The geography of Texas is quite diverse. The state occupies about 7% of the total water and land area of the U.S. The longest straight distance is from the northwest corner of the panhandle to the Rio Grande river below Brownsville, and that is just over 800 miles. Going east to west from Orange to El Paso is 762 miles.

Regions of Texas - There are four basic regions of Texas that have similar characteristics.

- **Coastal Plains** - This region encompasses the South Texas and Gulf Coast Plains, the Piney Woods, the Post Oak Belt and Blackland Prairie. It is the largest region of Texas.
 - Cities in this region include Dallas, Waco and Austin on the western edge, Houston, Galveston and Corpus Christi on the coast and Brownsville and Laredo on the south and west.
 - The physical geography includes the Balcones Escarpment which forms the northwest border. The region to the south and east is relatively flat and forested. The region becomes drier to the south. The Rio Grande River forms the southern border and the Red River forms the northern border.
 - Landmarks include South Padre Island, Johnson Space Center and the Big Thicket National Preserve
 - Resources and industry in the region include the following:
 - * Piney Woods - lumber
 - * Gulf Coast - oil processing and tourism
 - * Post Oak - oil, gas and lignite
 - * South Texas Plains - farming of citrus and vegetables and cattle ranching (the King Ranch is located in the Rio Grande Valley)
 - * Blackland Prairie - limestone and gravel, farming (cotton, corn and sorghum) and ranching
- **Central Plains** - This region includes the East and West Cross Timbers, the Grand Prairie and the Rolling Plains.
 - Cities found here include Wichita Falls and Abilene in the Rolling Plains, Fort Worth on the Grand Prairie and Denton and Arlington in the Eastern Cross Timbers area.
 - The physical geography of the region includes the Red River to the north, the Colorado River to the south, the Caprock Escarpment in the west and the Coastal Plains to the east. The Grand Prairie, is a fairly level grassy plains while the Cross Timbers was once heavily forested, though much has been cleared for farming over the years. The Rolling Plains is a rolling, rocky terrain that is slightly drier than the other areas.
 - Landmarks include the uncut parts of the Cross Timbers area and Dinosaur Valley State Park.
 - Resources and industry found in the region include the following:
 - * Grand Prairie - livestock, cotton and corn, limestone and gravel
 - * Cross Timbers - agriculture hay, peaches, peanuts, wheat and sorghum, cattle, sheep and goats as well as mining for oil, gas, stone and gravel
 - * Rolling Plains - oil and gas, wheat, cotton and sorghum, raising cattle, meat-packing and building aircraft

Concepts in Texas Government - Texas is a republic where citizens elect representatives to create the laws. Texas has had eight constitutions. The first was in 1824 when it was a part of the Republic of Mexico. The next was when it was part of Coahuila y Tejas. In 1836, the Republic of Texas developed its own constitution, and this changed in 1845 when it became part of the Union. Again it changed when Texas seceded to join the Confederacy and again at the end of the Civil War when it rejoined the Union. The current constitution was crafted in 1876 with 17 articles.

Pattern of Government - The government of Texas is patterned after the U.S. national government. This government has separation of powers that is controlled by the following three branches:

- **Executive Branch** - This carries out the decisions of the legislative branch through the governor and his office to govern the state.
- **Legislative Branch** - This bicameral body creates legislation and laws. It consists of the House of Representatives and Senate with elected members.
- **Judicial Branch** - This ensures laws are legal according to the state constitution and organizes the system of courts and punishes lawbreakers.

Texas Leaders - The following are historical people who have played a part in the history of Texas.

- The Texas Republic (1836-1845)
 - **Sam Houston** - He was first president and reelected as third president by defeating David Burnet.
 - **Mirabeau Lamar** - Lamar was the second president.
 - **Anson Jones** - Jones was the last president of the Republic, and he was supported by Houston.
- State of Texas in 1845
 - **James Pinckney Henderson** - Henderson served as first governor of the State of Texas
 - **John Hemphill** - Hemphill served as first Chief Justice of Texas Supreme Court.
 - **Sam Houston** and **Thomas Jefferson Rusk** - These were the first U.S. senators from Texas, and they were appointed by lawmakers.
 - **David Kaufman** and **Timothy Pillsbury** - These were the first members of the U.S. House, and they were elected by the voters.
- Important Tejano leaders
 - **José Antonio Navarro** - After fighting on the Texas side in the Revolution to gain independence from Mexico, Navarro was one of three Mexican-Texans to sign the Texas Declaration of Independence. He assisted in writing the Texas State Constitution and was the only native Texan at the constitutional convention. He also served in the Texas Senate.
 - **Juan Seguín** - Seguín assisted his father in bringing Austin's colonists to Texas. He used his ability to read and write to keep Texans informed prior to the Revolution and fought in the Revolution. He was Mayor of San Antonio in 1841.
 - **Lorenzo de Zavala** - Born in Mexico, de Zavala supported democracy. He had a land grant in Texas, and he eventually fought for Texas independence. He also was one of three Mexicans to sign Texas Declaration of Independence, and he became the first vice-president of the Texas Republic and assisted in writing the constitution.
- Current Texas officials are listed at <http://www.sos.state.tx.us/elections/voter/elected.shtml>, including the governor who heads the state government, lieutenant governor, who presides over the Senate, the attorney general, who is the head lawyer in the state, and the comptroller who oversees tax collecting and money disbursing. Other officials, such as the secretary of state who is the chief election officer of the state and the Commissioner of Education or many others at <http://www.govspot.com/state/tx.htm>.

Texas State Symbols - The following list are the official symbols approved by the legislature for the State of Texas.

Bird - mockingbird	Gem - Texas blue topaz	Shell - lightning whelk
Butterfly - monarch	Hat - cowboy hat	Shrub - crepe myrtle, purple sage
Dinosaur - brachiosaur sauropod	Mammal, small - nine-banded armadillo	Sport - rodeo
Dog - Blue Lacy	Mammal, flying - Mexican free-tailed bat (a.k.a. Austonian bridge bat)	Stone - petrified palm
Fabric/Fiber - cotton	Mammal, large - longhorn	Tree - pecan
Fish - Guadalupe bass	Pastry - strudel, sopapilla	Vegetable - Texas 1015 Onion
Flower - bluebonnet	Reptile - Texas horned lizard	Vehicle - chuck wagon
Folk Dance - square dance		
Fruit - Texas red grapefruit		

Texas Timeline

225 to 65 million BC - During this period at least 16 types of dinosaurs roamed Texas.

Around 11,000-8000 BC the first immigrants arrived in the region. Artifacts and bones have been found of mammoths, horses, camels, ancient bison, giant short-faced bears and giant armadillos from prehistoric periods at Lubbock Lake Landmark Site.

- There is evidence of distinctive rock art painted on cave walls and other rock surfaces left by lower-Pecos River area people from around 4000 BC.
- Presence of Indians in Texas dates to around 2300 BC.

c. 1500 BC to c. 1500 AD - The first people were migrating to Texas and starting settlements during this period.

- c. 1500 BC - Corn was raised by farmers near Presidio in La Junta de los Ríos, which means *meeting of the rivers*. This was probably the oldest continuously cultivated farmland in Texas.
- 800 AD - 1500 AD - The Buried City is a pre-Columbian site on Wolf Creek in the Panhandle. This was a hunting and farming community with stone dwellings.
- c. 1400 - The beginning of the Caddo Confederacy in East Texas was during this period. Their society was based on agriculture, and they lived in very large communities.

c. 1500 AD to 1800 AD - Explorers and Missionaries - Europeans explored and settled the Texas area, starting with the Spanish conquistadors. Horses were brought by the conquistadors during the early part of this period, and many were ultimately left and taken by the Indians for their own use. The missionaries for the Catholic church came to establish missions in Texas, though many were established and then moved to safer places.

1519 - Pineda, Alonso Alvarez de - (?-1520) He was from Spain and a map-maker who had the task of charting the Gulf Coast of what is now Texas. He was one of the first Europeans to reach Texas. He claimed Texas for Spain and mapped what is now Corpus Christi Bay.

1527 - Cabeza de Vaca, Álvar Núñez - (1490-1557) A Spanish explorer, his group shipwrecked near Galveston and became stranded. The survivors left the coast and traveled inland to trade with the Indians and explore Texas searching for a route to Mexico, where they hoped to reach Mexico City and the Spanish officials who lived there.

Narváez, Pánfilo de - (1470-1528) He was also from Spain and landed with 250-300 men near present-day Tampa Bay, Florida. He claimed the land for Spain, but was then abandoned by the ship's captain. They used handmade rafts to go across the Gulf of Mexico with Cabeza de Vaca and Estavanico, trying to find a Spanish settlement that would help them. Just two rafts reached Galveston Island. They reported many deaths over the winter. Only four survivors finally reached Mexico.

UNITED STATES

Early American Cultures - The earliest cultures in the U.S. were Native Americans.

Mound Builders - The Adena, Hopewell and Mississippian peoples were all mound-building cultures. They lived in the Ohio and Mississippi River valleys and northern Georgia. They were sun worshipers who built organized, well-laid out settlements. Some of their large mounds were built in the shapes of serpents and other animals. The Cahokia site in Illinois is the largest mound-builder site with more than 100 mounds and was once populated by some 25,000 people. The Natchez Indians of lower Mississippi may have been one of the last survivors of this culture, but they disappeared in the 1600s.

Anasazi - These were the ancestors of today's Pueblo, Hopi and Zuni peoples. Anasazi is a Navajo word meaning "people who came before them as an ancient enemy," or "stranger." The Anasazi people were not one specific tribe, and they lived primarily in the Four Corners region which included parts of Colorado, New Mexico, Arizona and Utah. Their three main settlements were Mesa Verde, Chaco Canyon and Kayenta.

- **c. 490 AD** - The first permanent settlements were built. There was more rainfall at this time so farming was easier and more productive. Corn was a major crop and ground in a metate which was a type of stone bowl.
- **c. 1200 AD** - The cliff dwellings were built at Mesa Verde in Colorado. This may have been done to improve their defenses.
- **c. 1300 AD** - The Anasazi culture disappeared as these people moved away from the cliffs in small groups. They became the ancestors of today's Pueblo Indians.

Cultural Regions of the U.S. - These are varied areas of the U.S. that have unique, common characteristics and consequently somewhat common lifestyles.

Eastern Woodlands - This region stretches from the east coast of the U.S. to the Mississippi River and from southeast Canada to the Gulf of Mexico. It also includes parts of Arkansas, Missouri and eastern Texas.

- Characteristics of this region included fertile soil for farming, plenty of game for hunting and berries, nuts and fruits could be gathered from the forests.
- Many shelters were built of wood because of the forests, and the Iroquois processed maple sap from some of the trees into syrup.
- The region has many rivers which made travel by water easy. Canoes were used for travel. Iroquois canoes were made of birch tree bark.
- The Iroquois League of New York lived in this region and had five united tribes: the Mohawk, Oneida, Onondaga, Cayuga and Seneca. A sixth tribe, the Tuscarora, joined later. Many of these people lived in wooden long-houses that could hold up to 12 families.
- Other tribes in this area included the Narragansett, Delaware, Cherokee, Shawnee, Apalachee, Illinois, Ojibwa and Natchez. Many settlements or towns in this region were very organized, and most had central gathering places, similar to a town square.
- Wampum consisted of white or purple shell beads, but some beads were dyed red. They were originally used in the northeast. The beads were woven into patterns and the designs had meaning. Wampum necklaces, bracelets and belts were used as gifts to honor or comfort someone, or as a signal for war. Later, it served as a type of money between Native Americans and Europeans and the traditional belts became longer and wider.
- As the Europeans moved east, many of the native people who originally lived in the woodlands moved west, on to the Great Plains.

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