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5th Grade5th Grade Social  
Studies Curriculum

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## 5th Grade Social Studies Curriculum



The school shapes its curriculum to address state standards in each subject area. It seeks to meet those standards by developing active, project-based learning experiences that are developmentally-appropriate, meaningful, and of interest to the students and that attend to all aspects - social/emotional as well as cognitive - of children's growth. To plan for these projects, two different kinds of teacher groups meet regularly:

- **Discipline-based cross-grade teams**, made up of one teacher from each grade in the school, which monitor both the content and pedagogy for each grade, making sure to weave state standards into the work;
- **Grade-level teams** in which teachers of each grade plan the overarching structure of their year's curriculum. Each grade-level team creates integrated, extended studies that embed the state standards in a way that incorporates the school's larger goals.

Both of these teams meet regularly to review what teachers have done in their classrooms, to examine students' group responses and individual work, and to make adjustments to their teaching based on their collective reflections. Through these different structures, the teachers seek to design learning experiences responsive to the students' needs and that have coherence within and across grades.

As part of their work in these teams, teachers at the school also strive to integrate their teaching and provide connections across different subject areas. For example, at the same time that Andrews' students were working on the Colonial Perspectives they were also reading historical fiction (of the same colonial time period) and studying persuasive writing, both of which contributed greatly to the Colonial Perspectives unit. Andrews and Falk talk about the overlap of the social studies unit with other subjects (watch video).

### YEAR-LONG SCOPE

The Social Studies projects for the year:

1. Unit: The Structure of Current Government on City/State/National Levels. With reference to the election year (2004).
2. Unit: New Amsterdam, culminating in a class book.
3. Unit: **Colonial Perspectives**, featured on this website.

**STANDARDS ADDRESSED BY UNIT** (see NY State Standards Website)

**1. Students will:** use a variety of intellectual skills to demonstrate their understanding of major ideas, eras, themes, developments, and turning points in the history of the United States and New York.

#### KEY IDEA I

- know the roots of American culture, its development from many different traditions, and **the ways many people from a variety of groups and backgrounds played a role in creating it.**
- **understand the basic ideals of American democracy** as explained in the **Declaration of Independence** and the Constitution and other important documents.
- explain those values, practices, and traditions that unite all Americans.

#### KEY IDEA II

- gather and organize information about the traditions transmitted by various groups living in their neighborhood and community.
- recognize how traditions and practices were passed from one generation to the next.
- **distinguish between near and distant past** and interpret simple

*"At the beginning of the year we did a study of New Amsterdam, and we wrote a book together about different parts of life in New Amsterdam. Each kid wrote a section of the book and it was part of a bigger nonfiction study. That was a lot of content for life in NY a long time ago. When that was finished, we started the discussion of how NY changed when the British took over. So they have some sense of some of the things that changed. We've looked at maps of how NY started changing when the British took over, and we've gone downtown and we've walked around the perimeter of New Amsterdam and also colonial New York. While we were down there we looked at some of the buildings from colonial time." Andrews*

Andrews and Falk discuss the connections between the social studies unit and other subjects (watch video).

*"As a team we spent several days planning out the year for reading, writing and social studies, looking at the things we wanted to do and at the ways that they could fit together that made sense." Andrews*

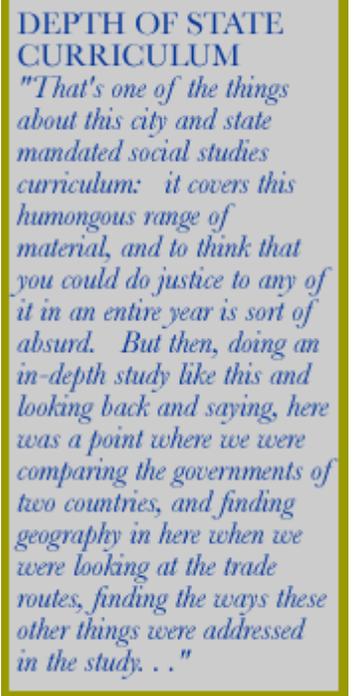
timelines.

### KEY IDEA III

- gather and organize information about the **important accomplishments of individuals and groups, including Native American Indians, living in their neighborhoods and communities**
- classify information by type of activity: social, **political**, economic, technological, scientific, cultural, or religious
- **identify individuals** who have helped to strengthen democracy in the United States and throughout the world

### KEY IDEA IV

- **consider different interpretations of key events and/or issues in history and understand the differences in these accounts**
- explore different experiences, beliefs, motives, and traditions of people living in their neighborhoods, communities, and State
- **view historic events through the eyes of those who were there** , as shown in their art, writings, music, and artifacts.



More: watch video clip of Andrews and Falk's conversation.