

Grade 8: Global Studies



Grade eight features geography as the lead discipline with a strong secondary emphasis on contemporary world history. Content drawn from citizenship and government, and economics, enriches the study of world regional geography, and further develops the interdisciplinary “Studies” approach. The Global Studies benchmarks pertain to four themes (listed below), offering students additional opportunities for integrated learning experiences.

Students in Global Studies explore the regions of the world using geographic information from print and electronic sources. They analyze important trends in the modern world such as demographic change, shifting trade patterns, and intensified cultural interactions due to globalization. Students participate in civic discussion on contemporary issues, conduct historical inquiry and study events over the last half century that have shaped the contemporary world. They analyze connections between revolutions, independence movements and social transformations, and understand reasons for the creation of modern nation states. They learn that governments are based on different political philosophies and serve various purposes. By learning economic principles of trade and the factors that affect economic growth, students understand why there are different standards of living in countries around the world.

Note: The geography benchmarks in grade eight are sequenced by region. However, the Global Studies benchmarks may be arranged in any order for instruction. Benchmarks from all four strands (disciplines) can be integrated into one seamless course arranged according to region, chronology, theme or other organizing framework determined by the school district.

The following regions are addressed by the geography benchmarks:

1. North America
2. Europe and Russia
3. Southwest Asia and North Africa
4. East Asia and Southeast Asia
5. South Asia and Central Asia
6. Africa South of the Sahara
7. Australia/Oceania

Each Global Studies benchmark relates to one of four themes (or a Skills category):

1. Cultural Characteristics, Technology, and Ideas
2. Economic Development and Trade
3. Population and Migration
4. Human Interaction with the Environment
5. (Skills such as civic skills, economic reasoning skills, geographic inquiry and geospatial technology skills, historical inquiry)

Minnesota K-12 Academic Standards in Social Studies

Gr.	Strand	Sub-strand	Standard Understand that...	Code	Benchmark
8	1. Citizenship and Government	1. Civic Skills	1. Democratic government depends on informed and engaged citizens who exhibit civic skills and values, practice civic discourse, vote and participate in elections, apply inquiry and analysis skills and take action to solve problems and shape public policy.	8.1.1.1.1	<p>Exhibit civic skills including participating in civic discussion on issues in the contemporary world, demonstrating respect for the opinions of people or groups who have different perspectives, and reaching consensus.</p> <p><i>For example:</i> Civic discourse skills—speaking, listening, respecting diverse viewpoints, evaluating arguments. Issues in the contemporary world might include participation in international treaty organizations, positive discrimination/affirmative action, environmental issues.</p>
			12. International political and economic institutions influence world affairs and United States foreign policy.	8.1.5.12.1	<p>Explain why governments belong to different types of economic alliances and international and regional organizations.</p> <p><i>For example:</i> United Nations, World Trade Organization, Arab League, African Union, European Union, North Atlantic Treaty Organization, Organization of American States.</p>
	1. Citizenship and Government	5. Relationships of the United States to other nations and organizations	13. Governments are based on different political philosophies and are established to serve various purposes.	8.1.5.13.1	<p>Explain how different types of governments reflect historically and culturally specific understandings of the relationships between the individual, government and society.</p> <p><i>For example:</i> The rise of Confucianism reflected an emphasis on social harmony, the rise of dictatorships in Europe reflected an emphasis on stability, and the rise of theocracies in contemporary Iran reflects an emphasis on the primacy of religious values.</p>

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8	2. Economics	1. Economic Reasoning Skills	1. People make informed economic choices by identifying their goals, interpreting and applying data, considering the short- and long-run costs and benefits of alternative choices and revising their goals based on their analysis.	8.2.1.1.1	Apply reasoned decision-making techniques in making choices; explain why different governments faced with the same alternatives might make different choices. <i>For example:</i> Techniques—PACED decision-making process (Problem, Alternative, Criteria, Evaluation, Decision) , benefit-cost analysis, marginal analysis, consideration of sunk costs, results of behavioral economics.
		3. Fundamental Concepts	4. Economic systems differ in the ways that they address the three basic economic issues of allocation, production and distribution to meet society's broad economic goals.	8.2.3.4.1	Identify factors which affect economic growth (percentage changes in Gross Domestic Product—GDP) and lead to a different standard of living in different countries. <i>For example:</i> Factors—investment in physical capital, use of natural resources, application of new technologies, education and training, political stability.
				8.2.3.4.2	Identify characteristics of command, mixed, and market-based (capitalist) economies; classify the economic systems of countries in a given region.

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8	2. Economics	5. Macro-economics	12. International trade, exchange rates and international institutions affect individuals, organizations and governments throughout the world.	8.2.5.12.1	<p>Explain why trade is mutually beneficial to countries; define and apply absolute and comparative advantage with respect to international trade.</p> <p><i>For example:</i> Absolute advantage—using fewer resources to produce a good (based on differences in productivity). Comparative advantage—giving up fewer other goods to produce a good (based on differences in opportunity costs). A worker in Country A can produce two rugs or four pizzas in one day, while a worker in Country B can only produce one rug or one half of a pizza. Country A has an absolute advantage in producing both rugs and pizzas (workers can produce more of both). However, Country B has a comparative advantage in producing rugs (one rug costs one half of a pizza in Country B, while in Country A one rug costs two pizzas). Both countries would be better off if Country A specialized in producing pizzas and Country B specialized in producing rugs and they traded at a rate of one rug for one pizza.</p>

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8	3. Geography	1. Geospatial Skills	1. People use geographic representations and geospatial technologies to acquire, process and report information within a spatial context.	8.3.1.1.1	<p>Obtain and analyze geographic information from a variety of print and electronic sources to investigate places or answer specific geographic questions; provide rationale for its use.</p> <p><i>For example:</i> Sources—Geographic Information Systems (GIS), online atlases and databases, Google Earth or similar programs, maps, aerial photos and other images. Geographic questions—Where are we? What is this location like? What are the characteristics of this location? How has this place been affected by the movement of people, goods and ideas? How do people modify the environment to fit their needs? How do people organize locations into regions? How is this place similar to or different from other places? Questions might also relate to urban development, environmental concerns, transportation issues, flood control.</p>
				8.3.1.1.2	<p>Create and use various kinds of maps, including overlaying thematic maps, of places in the world; incorporate the “TODALSS” map basics, as well as points, lines and colored areas to display spatial information.</p> <p><i>For example:</i> “TODALSS” map basics—title, orientation, date, author, legend/ key, source, scale. Spatial information—cities, roads, boundaries, bodies of water, regions.</p>

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8	3. Geography	1. Geospatial Skills	2. Geographic inquiry is a process in which people ask geographic questions and gather, organize and analyze information to solve problems and plan for the future.	8.3.1.2.1	<p>Formulate questions about topics in geography; pose possible answers; use geospatial technology to analyze problems and make decisions within a spatial context.</p> <p><i>For example:</i> Questions about geographic issues might relate to urban development, environmental concerns, transportation issues, flood control. Geospatial technology—Geographic Information Systems (GIS), online atlases and databases, Google Earth or similar programs.</p>
		2. Places and Regions	3. Places have physical characteristics (such as climate, topography and vegetation) and human characteristics (such as culture, population, political and economic systems).	8.3.2.3.1	<p>Use appropriate geographic tools to analyze and explain the distribution of physical and human characteristics of places.</p> <p><i>For example:</i> Physical characteristics—landforms (Rocky Mountains, Mount Everest), ecosystems (forest), bodies of water (Hudson Bay, Indian Ocean, Amazon River), soil, vegetation, weather and climate. Human characteristics—structures (Great Wall of China, Eiffel Tower), bridges (Golden Gate Bridge), canals (Erie Canal), cities, political boundaries, population distribution, settlement patterns, language, ethnicity, nationality, religious beliefs.</p>

Minnesota K-12 Academic Standards in Social Studies

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8	3. Geography	3. Human Systems	5. The characteristics, distribution and migration of human populations on the earth's surface influence human systems (cultural, economic and political systems).	8.3.3.5.1	Describe the locations of human populations and the cultural characteristics of the United States and Canada. <i>For example:</i> Locations of human populations—density and distribution of population, patterns of human settlement, location of major urban centers, dynamics of population growth, migration, refugees, rural to urban movement, suburbanization, migration of labor. Cultural characteristics—patterns of government, international relations, colonialism, patterns of language, patterns of religion, distribution of major cultural groups and minority groups, significant current changes in culture and economy.
			6. Geographic factors influence the distribution, functions, growth and patterns of cities and human settlements.	8.3.3.6.1	Describe how the physical and environmental features of the United States and Canada affect human activity and settlement. <i>For example:</i> Physical and environmental features—Climate, landforms, distribution of resources, waterways, ecosystems.
		4. Human Environment Interaction	10. The meaning, use, distribution and importance of resources changes over time.	8.3.3.10.1	Explain how the changing patterns of industrialization and trade between the United States, and Canada or Mexico, have resulted in close connections between the countries in terms of manufacturing, energy and finance. <i>For example:</i> Trade patterns between Minnesota and Mexico, North American Free Trade Agreement, trade patterns between Minnesota and Canada, the building of the Great Lakes Seaway, the manufacturing of automobiles and other products in the Great Lakes Industrial Region, the development of the Canadian oil and gas fields and the pipelines connecting them to markets in the United States.

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8	3. Geography	4. Human Environment Interaction	10. The meaning, use, distribution and importance of resources changes over time.	8.3.3.10.2	Describe the impact of comparative advantage, the international division of labor, and de-industrialization on manufacturing regions and commercial districts within urban areas in the United States and Canada. <i>For example:</i> Decline of the Midwest as an industrial region because of the outsourcing of manufacturing, the rise of export focused garment manufacturing in China, Southeast Asia and elsewhere, the development of call centers and computer technology support services in India.
		3. Human Systems	5. The characteristics, distribution and migration of human populations on the earth's surface influence human systems (cultural, economic and political systems).	8.3.3.5.2	Describe the locations of human populations and the cultural characteristics of Latin America, including how the contemporary pattern of cities resulted from a combination of pre-European contact, colonial, and industrial urban societies. <i>For example:</i> Mexico City (site of former Aztec Capital), Brasilia (twentieth century planned city).
			6. Geographic factors influence the distribution, functions, growth and patterns of cities and human settlements.	8.3.3.6.2	Describe how the physical and environmental features of Latin America affect human activity and settlement.
		4. Human Environment Interaction	10. The meaning, use, distribution and importance of resources changes over time.	8.3.3.10.3	Describe the changing role of Latin America in global trade networks.

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8	3. Geography	3. Human Systems	5. The characteristics, distribution and migration of human populations on the earth's surface influence human systems (cultural, economic and political systems).	8.3.3.5.3	Describe the locations of human populations and the cultural characteristics of Europe and Russia, including the role of migration patterns, and the impact of aging population and other effects of demographic transition. <i>For example:</i> Demographic transition caused by industrialization, warfare and European immigration.
			6. Geographic factors influence the distribution, functions, growth and patterns of cities and human settlements.	8.3.3.6.3	Describe how the physical and environmental features of Europe and Russia affect human activity and settlement.
		4. Human Environment Interaction	10. The meaning, use, distribution and importance of resources changes over time.	8.3.3.10.4	Describe the role of Europe in the global economy today.
		3. Human Systems	5. The characteristics, distribution and migration of human populations on the earth's surface influence human systems (cultural, economic and political systems).	8.3.3.5.4	Describe the locations of human populations and the cultural characteristics of Southwest Asia and North Africa.
			6. Geographic factors influence the distribution, functions, growth and patterns of cities and human settlements.	8.3.3.6.4	Describe how the physical and environmental features of Southwest Asia and North Africa affect human activity and settlement.

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8	3. Geography	3. Human Systems	8. Processes of cooperation and conflict among people influence the division and control of Earth's surface.	8.3.3.8.1	Describe the impact of nationalist movements in the twentieth century on contemporary geopolitics in Southwest Asia and North Africa. <i>For example:</i> Turkish War of Independence, Israeli and Palestinian territorial dispute, various nationalist parties, "Arab Spring".
		4. Human Environment Interaction	10. The meaning, use, distribution and importance of resources changes over time.	8.3.3.10.5	Describe how the distribution and development of oil and water resources influence the economy and societies of Southwest Asia and North Africa.
		3. Human Systems	5. The characteristics, distribution and migration of human populations on the earth's surface influence human systems (cultural, economic and political systems).	8.3.3.5.5	Describe the locations of human populations and the cultural characteristics of East Asia and Southeast Asia, including how the demographic transition has influenced the region's population, economy and culture. <i>For example:</i> The aging population of Japan, population policies of China and Japan, rural to urban migration in China, movement of Chinese and South Asian workers into Southeast Asia, migration of Hmong into Southeast Asia.
			6. Geographic factors influence the distribution, functions, growth and patterns of cities and human settlements.	8.3.3.6.5	Describe how the physical and environmental features of East Asia and Southeast Asia affect human activity and settlement.
		4. Human Environment Interaction	10. The meaning, use, distribution and importance of resources changes over time.	8.3.3.10.6	Identify the characteristics of a market economy that exist in contemporary China; describe how China's changing economy has impacted the United States and the global economic system since 1970.

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8	3. Geography	3. Human Systems	5. The characteristics, distribution and migration of human populations on the earth's surface influence human systems (cultural, economic and political systems).	8.3.3.5.6	Describe the locations of human populations and the cultural characteristics of South Asia and Central Asia, including causes for the differences in population density in the region, and implications of population growth in South Asia on the future world population. <i>For example:</i> Relative stability of steppe nomads (herders) over time in Central Asia, intensive agricultural development and demographic transition in South Asia.
			6. Geographic factors influence the distribution, functions, growth and patterns of cities and human settlements.	8.3.3.6.6	Describe how the physical and environmental features of South Asia and Central Asia affect human activity and settlement.
		4. Human Environment Interaction	10. The meaning, use, distribution and importance of resources changes over time.	8.3.3.10.7	Analyze the role of comparative advantage in the rise of the Indian market economy in the global economic system. <i>For example:</i> Large number of educated speakers of English able to work in call centers, development of manufacturing based on local capital, labor and markets, development of high-tech industry, international finance.
		3. Human Systems	5. The characteristics, distribution and migration of human populations on the earth's surface influence human systems (cultural, economic and political systems).	8.3.3.5.7	Describe the locations of human populations and the cultural characteristics of Africa South of the Sahara, including the causes and effects of the demographic transition since 1945. <i>For example:</i> Industrialization of South Africa, rural to urban migration, the AIDS epidemic, transnational migration.

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8	3. Geography	3. Human Systems	6. Geographic factors influence the distribution, functions, growth and patterns of cities and human settlements.	8.3.3.6.7	Describe how the physical and environmental features of Africa South of the Sahara affect human activity and settlement.
			7. The characteristics, distribution and complexity of the earth's cultures influence human systems (social, economic and political systems).	8.3.3.7.1	Describe independence and nationalist movements in Sub-Saharan Africa and Asia, including India's independence movement. <i>For example:</i> Creation of South Sudan, attempted Biafran independence movement, separation of Singapore from Malaysia, separation of Bangladesh from Pakistan.
			5. The characteristics, distribution and migration of human populations on the earth's surface influence human systems (cultural, economic and political systems).	8.3.3.5.8	Describe the locations of human populations and the cultural characteristics of Australia/ Oceania.
			6. Geographic factors influence the distribution, functions, growth and patterns of cities and human settlements.	8.3.2.6.8	Describe how the physical and environmental features of Australia/ Oceania affect human activity and settlement, including how the human populations have adapted to and changed the landscape differently over time. <i>For example:</i> Aboriginal peoples, gold rush, opal mining, expansion of commercial agriculture, development of the Outback.

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8	4. History	1. Historical Thinking Skills	2. Historical inquiry is a process in which multiple sources and different kinds of historical evidence are analyzed to draw conclusions about how and why things happened in the past.	8.4.1.2.1	Pose questions about a topic in world history; gather and organize a variety of primary and secondary sources related to the questions; analyze sources for credibility and bias; suggest possible answers and write a thesis statement; use sources to draw conclusions and support the thesis; and present supported findings and cite sources.
		3. World History	13. Post- World War II political reorganization produced the Cold War balance of power and new alliances that were based on competing economic and political doctrines. (The World After World War II: 1950-1989)	8.4.3.13.1	Analyze connections between revolutions, independence movements and social transformations during the Cold War era. (The World After World War II: 1950-1989) <i>For example:</i> Revolutions—Latin America, Iran; independence movements in Africa, Southeast Asia; social transformations—demographic changes, urbanization, Westernization.
				8.4.3.13.2	Explain the major differences in the political and economic ideologies and values of the Western democracies and the Soviet bloc. (The World After World War II: 1950-1989)
				8.4.3.13.3	Describe political challenges and struggles of newly independent countries during the Cold War era. (The World After World War II: 1950-1989) <i>For example:</i> Ghana (1957), Uganda (1962), Algeria (1962), Belize (1945), Mozambique (1975), Cambodia (1953), Indonesia (1949), Philippines (1946).

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8	4. History	3. World History	14. Globalization, the spread of capitalism and the end of the Cold War have shaped a contemporary world still characterized by rapid technological change, dramatic increases in global population and economic growth coupled with persistent economic and social disparities and cultural conflict. (The New Global Era: 1989 to Present)	8.4.3.14.1	Describe causes of economic imbalances and social inequalities among the world's peoples in the post-colonial world and efforts made to close those gaps. (The New Global Era: 1989 to Present) <i>For example:</i> Causes of imbalances—political conflicts, natural disasters, the economic legacy of colonialism, access to health care, technology, education. Efforts made to close the gaps—human rights organizations, United Nations Millennium goals.
				8.4.3.14.2	Compare and contrast the development of diasporic communities throughout the world due to regional conflicts, changing international labor demands and environmental factors. (The New Global Era: 1989 to Present) <i>For example:</i> Diasporic communities such as those originating from the Horn of Africa, Latin America, West Africa, Southeast Asia, India.
				8.4.3.14.3	Describe varieties of religious beliefs and practices in the contemporary world including Shamanism/Animism, Hinduism, Buddhism, Judaism, Christianity and Islam. (The New Global Era: 1989 to Present)
				8.4.3.14.4	Analyze how Pacific Rim countries have achieved economic growth in recent decades. (The New Global Era: 1989 to Present) <i>For example:</i> Pacific Rim Countries—Four Tigers (South Korea, Singapore, Taiwan, Hong Kong), Japan, China.

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8	4. History	3. World History	14. Globalization, the spread of capitalism and the end of the Cold War have shaped a contemporary world still characterized by rapid technological change, dramatic increases in global population and economic growth coupled with persistent economic and social disparities and cultural conflict. (The New Global Era: 1989 to Present)	8.4.3.14.5	Assess the state of human rights around the world as described in the 1948 <i>Universal Declaration of Human Rights</i> . (The New Global Era: 1989 to Present)
				8.4.3.14.6	Describe how movements and social conditions have affected the lives of women in different parts of the world. (The New Global Era: 1989 to Present) <i>For example:</i> Social status, education, economic opportunity, political and civil rights.
				8.4.3.14.7	Assess the influence of television, the Internet and other media on cultural identity and social and political movements. (The New Global Era: 1989 to Present) <i>For example:</i> Social media, cell phones, blogs, government censorship. Social and political movements such as “Arab Spring”.
				8.4.3.14.8	Describe how groups are reviving and maintaining their traditional cultures, identities and distinctiveness in the context of increasing globalization. (The New Global Era: 1989 to Present) <i>For example:</i> Revitalizing a dying language, resisting western influence.