

Grade 4: Geography of North America

Grade four departs from the approach in the primary years (an approach that placed equal emphasis on each of the social studies disciplines) to a more discipline-centered approach. A “lead discipline” is featured in each of grades four through eight. In grade four, the lead discipline is geography, focusing on political geography and the cultural landscape of North America. Students master the understandings that lay the geographical foundation for the interdisciplinary Minnesota, United States, and Global Studies courses to follow in the middle grades. They create and use various kinds of maps to identify the physical and human characteristics of places, examine regions in different locations and time periods, and analyze patterns and trends in the United States, Mexico and Canada. They learn about tribal government and develop a better understanding of the multiple players involved in the United States government (political leaders and the public) and the economy (buyers and sellers in a market). Students practice a reasoned decision-making process to make choices—an important building block for their understanding of personal finance that will be developed in later grades.

Grade	Strand	Substrand	Standard Understand that...	Code	Benchmark
4	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.	4.1.1.1.1	Describe how people take action to influence a decision on a specific issue; explain how local, state, national or tribal governments have addressed that issue. <i>For example:</i> Ways people take action—write a letter, make phone calls, create an advertisement or web page, attend a meeting.
4	1. Citizenship and Government	4. Governmental Institutions and Political Processes	6. The United States government has specific functions that are determined by the way that power is delegated and controlled among various bodies: the three levels (federal, state, local) and the three branches (legislative, executive, judicial) of government.	4.1.4.6.1	Describe tribal government and some of the services it provides; distinguish between United States and tribal forms of government. <i>For example:</i> Services provided by tribal governments—schools, hunting and fishing regulations.
4	1. Citizenship and Government	4. Governmental Institutions and Political Processes	6. The United States government has specific functions that are determined by the way that power is delegated and controlled among various bodies: the three levels (federal, state, local) and the three branches (legislative, executive, judicial) of government.	4.1.4.6.2	Identify the major roles and responsibilities of elected and appointed leaders in the community, state and nation; name some current leaders who function in these roles and how they are selected. <i>For example:</i> Mayor, city council member, state senator, governor.

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4	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.	4.2.1.1.1	Apply a reasoned decision-making process to make a choice. <i>For example:</i> Processes—a decision tree or PACED decision-making process (Problem, Alternative, Criteria, Evaluation, Decision). A choice—evaluating the benefits and costs of buying a new game.
4	2. Economics	3. Fundamental Concepts	3. Because of scarcity individuals, organizations and governments must evaluate trade-offs, make choices and incur opportunity costs.	4.2.3.3.1	Define the productivity of a resource and describe ways to increase it. <i>For example:</i> Productivity equals the amount of output divided by the amount of input (resource). Things that can increase productivity—division of labor, specialization, improvements in technology (the way things are made). The productivity of a corn farmer (resource) has been improved by the use of specialized equipment, development of new varieties of seeds and fertilizers and improved farming techniques.
4	2. Economics	4. Microeconomic Concepts	5. Individuals, businesses and governments interact and exchange goods, services and resources in different ways and for different reasons; interactions between buyers and sellers in a market determines the price and quantity exchanged of a good, service or resource.	4.2.4.5.1	Describe a market as any place or manner in which buyers and sellers interact to make exchanges; describe prices as payments of money for items exchanged in markets. <i>For example:</i> Markets—mall stores, online shopping, mail orders, garage sales, employment center. Prices—\$40 for a video game, \$15 for one hour of a worker's labor.

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4	3. Geography	1. Geospatial Skills	1. People use geographic representations and geospatial technologies to acquire, process and report information within a spatial context.	4.3.1.1.1	<p>Create and use various kinds of maps, including overlaying thematic maps, of places in the United States, and also Canada or Mexico; incorporate the "TODALS" map basics, as well as points, lines and colored areas to display spatial information.</p> <p><i>For example:</i> "TODALS" map basics—title, orientation, date, author, legend/key, and scale. Spatial information—cities, roads, boundaries, bodies of water, regions.</p>
4	3. Geography	1. Geospatial skills	1. People use geographic representations and geospatial technologies to acquire, process and report information within a spatial context.	4.3.1.1.2	<p>Use latitude and longitude on maps and globes to locate places in the United States, and also Canada or Mexico.</p>
4	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.	4.3.1.2.1	<p>Choose the most appropriate data from maps, charts, and graphs in an atlas to answer specific questions about geographic issues in the United States, and also Canada or Mexico.</p> <p><i>For example:</i> How has human activity had an impact on the environment? Which region has the largest population? Where are the manufacturing centers of a country? Which languages are spoken in different places? Other questions might relate to environmental concerns, transportation issues, flood control.</p>

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4	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.	4.3.1.2.2	Use photographs or satellite-produced images to interpret spatial information about the United States, and also Canada or Mexico.
4	3. Geography	2. Places and Regions	3. Places have physical characteristics (such as climate, topography vegetation) and human characteristics (such as culture, population, political and economic systems).	4.3.2.3.1	Locate and identify the physical and human characteristics of places in the United States, and also Canada or Mexico. <i>For example:</i> Physical characteristics—landforms (Rocky Mountains), ecosystems (forest), bodies of water (Mississippi River, Hudson Bay), soil, vegetation, weather and climate. Human characteristics— structures (Statue of Liberty), bridges (Golden Gate Bridge), canals (Erie Canal), cities, political boundaries, population distribution, settlement patterns, language, ethnicity, nationality, religious beliefs.
4	3. Geography	2. Places and Regions	4. People construct regions to identify, organize and interpret areas of the Earth's surface, which simplifies the earth's complexity.	4.3.2.4.1	Name and locate states and territories, major cities and state capitals in the United States.
4	3. Geography	2. Places and Regions	4. People construct regions to identify, organize and interpret areas of the Earth's surface, which simplifies the earth's complexity.	4.3.2.4.2	Name and locate countries neighboring the United States and their major cities. <i>For example:</i> Countries neighboring the United States—Canada, Mexico, Cuba, Russia; Major cities—Toronto, Montreal, Winnipeg, Vancouver, Mexico City, Havana.

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4	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).	4.3.3.5.1	Use data to analyze and explain the changing distribution of population in the United States and Canada over the last century.
4	3. Geography	3. Human Systems	6. Geographic factors influence the distribution, functions, growth and patterns of cities and human settlements.	4.3.3.6.1	Explain how geographic factors affect population distribution and the growth of cities in the United States and Canada. <i>For example:</i> Geographic factors—climate, landforms, availability of natural resources.
4	3. Geography	4. Human Environment Interaction	9. The environment influences human actions; and humans both adapt to and change, the environment.	4.3.4.9.1	Explain how humans adapt to and/or modify the physical environment and how they are in turn affected by these adaptations and modifications. <i>For example:</i> Humans cut down a forest to clear land for farming, which leads to soil erosion. Consequently, humans have to use more fertilizer to supplement the nutrients in the soil.
4	3. Geography	4. Human Environment Interaction	10. The meaning, use, distribution and importance of resources changes over time.	4.3.4.10.1	Describe how the location of resources and the distribution of people and their various economic activities has created different regions in the United States and Canada.
4	3. Geography	4. Human Environment Interaction	10. The meaning, use, distribution and importance of resources changes over time.	4.3.4.10.2	Analyze the impact of geographic factors on the development of modern agricultural regions in Minnesota and the United States. <i>For example:</i> Agricultural regions—"Corn Belt," "Dairy Belt," crop regions.

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4	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.	4.4.1.2.1	Use maps to compare and contrast a particular region in the United States, and also Canada or Mexico, at different points in time. <i>For example:</i> The United States, Canada, or Mexico in 1800 versus 1900; population centers over time; natural resource use over time.
4	4. History	2. Peoples, Cultures, and Change Over Time	4. The differences and similarities of cultures around the world are attributable to their diverse origins and histories, and interactions with other cultures throughout time.	4.4.2.4.1	Identify and locate on a map or globe the origins of peoples in the local community and state; create a timeline of when different groups arrived; describe why and how they came.