



Human Geography 7

The HCPS Office of Social Studies will build empowered and informed citizens who think critically, advocate locally, impact globally, and innovate by examining the lessons of the past and applying them to today.

Course Overview

Human Geography 7 deepens students' understanding of how people, places, and environments are interconnected by extending the geographic tools, concepts, and inquiry skills introduced in Grade 6. Using an inquiry–design, case study approach, students investigate compelling geographic questions that emphasize global patterns, regional interactions, and their historical roots. Students engage in increasingly complex analyses of human systems, including political, economic, and cultural structures, and examine how power, resources, and movement shape societies over time. Students analyze how humans increasingly adapt to, depend on, and transform their environments, while also considering the long-term consequences of these interactions. Human Geography 7 strengthens disciplinary literacy and civic reasoning skills while establishing the global and geographic context necessary for success in Grade 8 US History & future Social Studies coursework.

Place & Region

Students will determine how the physical and human characteristics of a place impact internal and external power relationships by evaluating trade, economics, social structures, belief systems, and internal/external causes of decline were impacted by the specific location of Pre-Columbian civilizations in the Americas; the Tokugawa Shogunate in Japan; Apartheid South Africa; and the modern Middle East.



Movement of Humans

This unit examines how human movement creates change through a study of the development of Dar Al Islam from 600–1100 CE; Mongol expansion from 1100 – 1400 CE; the partition of India between 1940–1971 CE; and an examination of 21st century patterns of migration around the world. Students will consider how territorial expansion strengthens or weakens cultural exchange, how movement creates power, how borders shape people's lives, and evaluates whether migration is inevitable in today's world.

Movement of Pathogens & Ideas

Students investigate how the movement of pathogens and ideas drives innovation, generates fear, and facilitates change. Topics of representative case studies include how religious systems move and spread; how the Bubonic Plague (1340–1350 CE) caused people to unite; how post-WWII decolonization efforts were sparked by the movement of ideas; and how human systems have responded to modern pandemics (1980 to today).



Regional Case Study of Geographic Thinking

The culmination of Human Geography 6–7 is a bridge unit into Grade 8 US History. Students employ their learning to determine how geographic understandings explain the history of the Americas beginning with First American Nations (10,000 BCE – 1607 CE), Colonial–Native Interactions (1490–1763 CE), the introduction of the Transatlantic Slave Trade (1500–1808 CE), and the continued story of indigenous people in the Americas today.

Every student **CAN** *see themselves*
IN THEIR LEARNING AND CAN
celebrate **WHAT THEY SEE.**



Unit 1: Place and Region

In this unit, students explore how place and region shape power, identity, and human systems by examining how geography influences internal and external relationships over time. Through case studies of Pre-Columbian civilizations in the Americas, the Tokugawa Shogunate in Japan, Apartheid South Africa, and the modern Middle East, students analyze how physical location and regional characteristics affect trade, economics, social structures, belief systems, and patterns of conflict and decline. This unit strengthens students' ability to connect geographic context to historical and contemporary outcomes, reinforcing how place and region help explain continuity and change in human societies.

Enduring Understandings:

The physical and human characteristics of a location are defined and redefined by internal and external factors.

Essential Question:

How do the physical and human characteristics of a place impact internal and external power relationships?

Acquisition:

- Students will analyze the local and regional growth connections and decline of Pre-Columbian civilizations.
- Students will analyze how Japan's physical and human characteristics impacted regional and power relationships under the Tokugawa Shogunate.
- Students will analyze how South Africa's physical and human characteristics impacted regional power relationships that led to the defeat of Apartheid.
- Students will explore the local, regional, and global relationships that have defined the Middle East as a place and region.

Experience 1: Re-Columbian Civilizations in the Americas (250 – 1600 CE)

- Essential Question: Does where you live determine how you live?
- Main Ideas:
 - How did geographic features impact the trade, economics, and settlement patterns of the Mayan, Aztec, and Incan civilizations?
 - What were the social structures and belief systems of the Maya, Aztec, and Incan civilizations?
 - What were the internal and external causes for the decline of the Maya, Aztec, and Incan civilizations?

Experience 2: Tokugawa Shogunate (1600 – 1868 CE)

- Essential Question: How do geographic features influence the distribution of power?
- Main Ideas:
 - What were the physical and human characteristics and how did these characteristics of Japan influence the development of Japanese feudalism?
 - How effective were the tools and methods used to unify, stabilize, and centralize life under the Tokugawa Shogunate?
 - What is the myth of Japanese isolationism under the Tokugawa Shogunate, and how can it be evaluated?
 - How effective was the Tokugawa Shogunate in resisting Western imperialism?

Experience 3: South African Apartheid (1948 – 1994 CE)

- Essential Question: How can place be manipulated to define human relationships?
- Main Ideas:
 - How did Dutch and British colonialism influence the creation of South African Apartheid?
 - What were the political, economic, and social elements of the system of Apartheid?
 - What role did individual leaders, organizations, violent and non-violent strategies, and international pressure play in defeating Apartheid?
 - How effective was the Truth and Reconciliation Commission in redressing legacies of social injustice?

Experience 4: The Middle East/Jerusalem (1900 CE- Today)

- Essential Question: Who defines place?
- Main Ideas:
 - What is the significance of the Holy Land to Christians, Muslims, and Jews?
 - What was the impact of physical geography, nationalism, World War I and II, actions of international organizations, the Holocaust, and the founding of Israel on Jerusalem?
 - How effective are regional conflicts, violence, and peace negotiations on the settlement of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict?
 - How do ongoing attempts at cooperation and peace continue to define and redefine Jerusalem as a place?

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Unit 2: Movement of Humans

In this unit, students investigate how the movement of humans drives change by shaping cultural exchange, power, and patterns of settlement across time and space. Through case studies including the development of Dar al-Islam, Mongol expansion, the partition of India, and 21st-century global migration, students analyze how migration, conquest, and border formation influence societies and individual lives. This unit helps students understand movement as a powerful geographic force and encourages them to evaluate whether migration is an inevitable feature of the modern world.

Enduring Understandings:

Human movement facilitates the exchange of religious, cultural, and material goods which can create conflict and transformation.

Humans develop spatial interactions, land use and settlement patterns and create political structures that generate stability, promote conflict, cause rebellion, and connect and divide people across multiple scales

Essential Question:

How does human movement create change?

Acquisition:

- Students will analyze how the expansion of Islam impacted regional political, economic, and cultural transformation.
- Students will evaluate how the local and regional expansion of the Mongol Empire facilitated the exchange, generated conflict, and created transformation.
- Students will analyze the causes and consequences of the regional refugee crisis created by the partition of India.
- Students will assess the causes and consequences of contemporary global and local migrations.

Experience 1: The Development of the Muslim World (Dar Al Islam) (600 – 1100 CE)

- Essential Question: Does territorial expansion strengthen or weaken cultural exchange?
- Main Ideas:
 - What role did Muslim missionaries, merchants, and military conquests play in the spread of Islamic culture and religion?
 - What were the Islamic influences on culture throughout Asia, North Africa, and Europe?
 - What leadership decisions were made in response to ruling over diverse non-Muslim populations?

Experience 2: Mongol Expansion (1100 – 1400 CE)

- Essential Question: Can movement create power?
- Main Ideas:
 - How did leadership, advanced warfare and nomadic pastoralism help the Mongol Empire gain power and expand?
 - How did Mongol expansion impact the conquered societies?
 - How did territorial expansion increase Mongol contact with Africa, Asia, and Europe?

Experience 3: Partition of India (1940 – 1971 CE)

- Essential Question: How do borders shape people's lives?
- Main Ideas:
 - What were the factors that contributed to the drawing of borders in the partition of India?
 - How did the establishment of East Pakistan, India, and West Pakistan lead to mass refugee migration?
 - What were the short- and long-term impacts of the partition of India?

Experience 4: 21st Century Migrations (2000 CE – Today)

- Essential Question: Is migration inevitable?
- Main Ideas:
 - What are the differences and similarities between immigrants and emigrants, as well as refugees, labor migrants, displaced persons, forced migrants, and other 21st century migrants?
 - How do climate change, food insecurity, population growth, environmental degradation, armed conflict, and other factors impact 21st century migration patterns in and between Asia, Africa, Oceania, Europe, and the Americas?
 - What are the range of responses to address 21st century migration patterns?

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Unit 3: Movement of Pathogens & Ideas

In this unit, students examine how the movement of pathogens and ideas acts as a catalyst for innovation, fear, cooperation, and societal change across time and space.

Through case studies including the spread of religious belief systems, the Bubonic Plague, post–World War II decolonization, and modern pandemics, students analyze how ideas and diseases move through human networks and reshape political, economic, and social systems. This unit emphasizes how human responses to these movements reveal the interconnected nature of the modern world and the adaptive capacity of societies.

Enduring Understandings:

The movement of pathogens and ideas drives innovation, generates fear, and facilitates change.

Essential Question:

How can the movement of ideas and the spread of disease create change?

Acquisition:

- Students will evaluate the global movement of religion and its impacts.
- Students will assess the effects of the Bubonic Plague on regional and local communities.
- Students will evaluate the local and global movement of democratic ideals and its impact on colonial empires.
- Students will explore the local and global impacts of pandemics.

Experience 1: Movement of Faith (600 BCE – 1000 CE)

- Essential Question: How do religious systems move and spread?
- Main Ideas:
 - What are similarities and differences between Judaism, Christianity, Hinduism, Buddhism, Sikhism, and Islam?
 - How do trade, war, and other factors facilitate the spread of religions?
 - How have religions influenced human communities and the formation of societies and empires?

Experience 2: Bubonic Plague (1340 – 1350 CE)

- Essential Question: Does the spread of disease cause people to unite?
- Main Ideas:
 - What was the geographic spread of the Bubonic Plague spread and what were the mechanisms that facilitated the spread of it in Asia and Europe?
 - How were contemporary reactions to the Bubonic Plague influenced by social and cultural values, and beliefs.
 - What was the plague's short- and long-term impact on population, antisemitism, feudalism, and the role of the Church in Europe?

Experience 3: Decline of Empires (1945 – 1997 CE)

- Essential Question: How can the movement of ideas lead to change?
- Main Ideas:
 - How did World War Two and the United Nations serve as a catalyst for decolonization and national sovereignty?
 - What role did individual leaders, movements, and strategies play in defeating colonial rule in Asia, Africa, and the Middle East?
 - To what extent did the long-term consequences (boundary disputes, civil war, economic underdevelopment, rise of dictators) of colonialism have on the development of newly formed states in Africa, Asia, and the Middle East?
 - What progress has been made by former-colonial states in the 21st century?

Experience 4: Pandemics (1980 CE – Today)

- Essential Question: Can human systems prevent the movement of disease?
- Main Ideas:
 - What were the origin, scope, and statistical trends related to the global spread of avian and other zoonotic influenza, AIDS, Zika, and COVID-19 in Asia, Africa, Europe, Oceania, and the Americas?
 - What is the role of multinational companies, governments, and non-governmental organizations in addressing the public health crises associated with the global spread of disease?
 - How did the responses to and impact of the global spread of disease in Asia, Africa, Europe, Oceania, and the Americas differ?

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Unit 4: Regional Case Study of Geographic Thinking

In this culminating 7th grade project-based learning (PBL) unit, students synthesize their geographic learning to explain how enduring geographic understandings shape the history of the Americas. Through an investigation of First American Nations, Colonial–Native interactions, the transatlantic slave trade, and the continued experiences of Indigenous peoples, students apply concepts of place, region, movement, human systems, and human–environment interaction to historical and contemporary contexts. Serving as a bridge to Grade 8 U.S. History, this unit challenges students to use geographic reasoning, evidence, and inquiry to demonstrate how geography provides essential context for understanding the American past and present.

Enduring Understandings:

Geography can explain political, economic, and social patterns of settlement and interaction.

Essential Question:

How do geographic understandings explain the history of the Americas?

Acquisition:

- Students will analyze how geographic understandings explain the local and regional settlement and interaction of the indigenous people of North America.
- Students will analyze the regional and global consequences of the Transatlantic Slave Trade.
- Students will examine how regional interaction between European settlers and native populations altered the Americas.
- Students will examine how American Indian nations responded to European settler colonization.

Experience 1: Transatlantic Slave Trade (1500 – 1808 CE)

- Essential Question: How was culture created, preserved, and destroyed in the Transatlantic Slave Trade?
- Main Ideas:
 - What was the nature of slavery around the world prior to the European settlement of North America?
 - What was the process and experience of the Transatlantic slave trade?
 - What was the rationale for the transition to chattel slavery and what is its relationship to the concept of race as a social construct?
 - What were the short- and long-term effects of chattel slavery on the social, political, and economic life in colonial North America?
 - What were the shifts in human systems and place created by the cultural contributions of enslaved Africans and free Black populations in North America?

Experience 2: First American Nations (10,000 BCE – 1607 CE)

- Essential Question: How and why do cultural ideas, practices, and innovations change or disappear over time?
- Main Ideas:
 - How did human responses to the natural environment create the early complex societies in North America?
 - How did the urban centers in Chaco Canyon and Cahokia facilitate the movement of goods and ideas across long distances and connected peoples from diverse regions?
 - What role did human systems play in the development of early complex societies in North America?

Experience 3: Colonial & Native Interactions (1490 – 1763 CE)

- Essential Question: What creates conflict and cooperation among and between groups of humans?
- Main Ideas:
 - What were the motivations for European exploration and colonialism in the Americas?
 - How did Indigenous and European approaches to land use differ and how were treaties used to designate and deny sovereignty?
 - What was the impact of trade, labor systems, and disease on the Indigenous nations and the European colonizers?
 - How effective were the Indigenous responses and resistance to European colonization?
 - What were the causes and consequences of the French and Indian War on American Indian alliances, British colonial policies, and American colonists?

Experience 4: American Indians Today (2010s CE – Present)

- Essential Question: Who are American Indians today?
- Main Ideas:
 - What does demographic data say about contemporary American Indian communities?
 - What is the role of native sovereignty in contemporary law?
 - How has native culture among identified tribes persisted and evolved over time?
 - What are the contributions made by American Indians to the political and economic issues of the day?

All HCPS Social Studies Curricula are built to align with the Maryland State Social Studies Standards and MSDE State Frameworks. Information on the standards and frameworks can be found on the MSDE website (<https://marylandpublicschools.org>).