History and Social Studies: People, Evidence and Change

Eight sequential multi-age lessons with instruction, practice and an end-of-course check. Teach one lesson over two or more sessions: read and discuss, complete the selected activity, then review with the parent. Choose the level by demonstrated readiness rather than age. Beginning learners may answer orally or draw; older learners should explain evidence and use sources. Print from the browser or copy into a notebook. Keep student records private.

Scripture study: Read Proverbs 2:1–6 in context as a family and discuss the pursuit of wisdom. Academic claims in this course are evaluated using the relevant evidence and sources; a moral application does not replace investigation. This initial course is not a full-year grade-specific curriculum or a claim that every state standard is covered.

Lesson 1: What is history?

Learn: History is the study of people and change over time using evidence. A primary source is direct evidence created by someone close to an event, such as a letter or photograph; a secondary source analyzes or interprets evidence. The same source may be primary for one question and secondary for another. Sources can be incomplete or reflect a particular perspective.

Check understanding: Name a possible primary source and explain why it may not tell the whole story.

Choose a level: Foundations: Put morning, afternoon, and evening in order. Builders: Make a three-event timeline of fictional events with dates. Advancing: Identify a source’s creator, date, audience, and limitation.

Record: Write, draw or dictate your response. Save evidence privately and ask an adult to review it.

Lesson 2: Places and maps

Learn: Maps represent places and can show physical features, such as rivers and mountains, and human-made features, such as roads. A map key explains symbols; a compass rose shows directions; a scale connects map distance to ground distance. Maps are made for purposes and cannot include every detail.

Check understanding: How does a map key help? Name one physical and one human-made feature.

Choose a level: Foundations: Draw a room and mark a door. Builders: Draw a map with a title, key and compass. Advancing: With a scale of 1 cm to 5 km, calculate the distance for 4 cm and explain a limitation.

Record: Write, draw or dictate your response. Save evidence privately and ask an adult to review it.

Lesson 3: Indigenous nations and communities

Learn: Indigenous peoples lived in the lands now called Alabama long before statehood. The histories and present-day communities of the Cherokee, Chickasaw, Choctaw, Muscogee and other peoples are distinct. Native nations are living communities, not only figures in the past. Historians use archaeology, oral traditions, documents and Native perspectives while examining each source carefully.

Check understanding: Why is it inaccurate to describe all Indigenous nations as one identical group? Why consult Native perspectives?

Choose a level: Foundations: Explain that communities have different traditions and histories. Builders: Find a current tribal government source with an adult and record one supported fact. Advancing: Compare two sources and explain how their perspectives and dates affect interpretation.

Record: Write, draw or dictate your response. Save evidence privately and ask an adult to review it.

Lesson 4: Colonial America and independence

Learn: European colonization changed lands, economies and societies already home to Indigenous nations. African people were forcibly brought to North America and enslaved. The Continental Congress adopted the Declaration of Independence in 1776. Its stated ideals were not equally applied: slavery continued, women generally lacked political equality, and Indigenous nations faced dispossession.

Check understanding: What happened in 1776? Explain one gap between stated ideals and lived reality.

Choose a level: Foundations: Place 1776 before 1819 on a timeline. Builders: Explain one stated ideal and one group denied equal treatment. Advancing: Use the National Archives Declaration page to identify a claim, its context and a limitation of the document.

Record: Write, draw or dictate your response. Save evidence privately and ask an adult to review it.

Lesson 5: Alabama statehood and change

Learn: Alabama became the 22nd U.S. state on December 14, 1819. Statehood did not begin the history of the land or its people. In the nineteenth century, cotton cultivation expanded with the exploitation of enslaved labor, and federal and state policies forced many Indigenous people from their homelands. These events had different effects on different communities.

Check understanding: When did Alabama become a state? Why does Alabama history not begin in 1819?

Choose a level: Foundations: Place 1776 and 1819 in order. Builders: Write two sentences about people who lived in the region before statehood. Advancing: Investigate one documented removal policy or testimony using a reliable primary source and record author, date and limitations.

Record: Write, draw or dictate your response. Save evidence privately and ask an adult to review it.

Lesson 6: Civil War and emancipation

Learn: The U.S. Civil War lasted from 1861 to 1865. Slavery was central to the conflict and to the secession of Southern states. Ratified in 1865, the Thirteenth Amendment prohibited slavery and involuntary servitude except as punishment for crime following conviction. Emancipation did not end discrimination or immediately secure equal rights.

Check understanding: What years did the Civil War span? What exception appears in the Thirteenth Amendment?

Choose a level: Foundations: Put 1861, 1865 and 1965 in order. Builders: Explain the difference between emancipation and equal treatment. Advancing: Read the amendment at the National Archives, identify its exception, and discuss why a later law might still be needed.

Record: Write, draw or dictate your response. Save evidence privately and ask an adult to review it.

Lesson 7: Civil rights and voting

Learn: The Fourteenth Amendment was ratified in 1868 and includes citizenship and equal-protection provisions. A century later, civil-rights organizers challenged segregation and barriers to voting. The Voting Rights Act of 1965 addressed discriminatory voting practices. Legal texts and people’s experiences are both important evidence, and laws can be interpreted and changed over time.

Check understanding: What did the Voting Rights Act address? Why examine both a law and testimony?

Choose a level: Foundations: Identify one example of treating people fairly. Builders: Create a timeline with 1865, 1868 and 1965 using the lesson. Advancing: Use the National Archives source to identify one provision or historical fact and cite it accurately.

Record: Write, draw or dictate your response. Save evidence privately and ask an adult to review it.

Lesson 8: Government and responsible inquiry

Learn: The United States Constitution establishes a federal system with legislative, executive and judicial branches. Government authority is divided among federal, state and local levels. A claim about a rule should be checked against a current authoritative source, because rules can change. Responsible inquiry considers evidence, competing views and who is affected.

Check understanding: Name the three branches. Why check the current source before relying on a rule?

Choose a level: Foundations: Name one community helper and what the person does. Builders: Match making laws, carrying out laws and interpreting laws to the branches. Advancing: Find an official local-government source and compare a stated responsibility with evidence of how it is carried out.

Record: Write, draw or dictate your response. Save evidence privately and ask an adult to review it.

Independent Course Check

Answer without the parent guide when ready. Draw or dictate if appropriate, and tell the parent what support was needed.

1. Give one primary source and one limitation.

2. Place 1776, 1819, 1865 and 1965 in order.

3. Explain why Indigenous history did not begin with Alabama statehood.

4. Describe the 13th Amendment’s exception.

5. Name the three branches of U.S. government.

After the check, use the separate parent guide and answer key.

Sources and Further Study

Alabama official course of study | Primary source and background | Primary source and background

Alabama materials are benchmarks for planning. Families in other states should check their own requirements. The individual standards have not been fully crosswalked for this course.

Academy home.