

Summary: The World at Your Fingertips

Learning About the World

Social studies is a way to learn about the world. It includes information from geography, history, economics, government, and culture.

History is a record of the past. Historians use newspapers, letters, journals, and other documents to find out about the past. Geography is the study of people, places, and the environment. Geography focuses on five themes: location, region, place, movement, and human-environment interaction.

Government, Economics, and Culture

The government is made up of people in a society who have the power to make laws. These people also make sure that laws are followed and they settle disagreements about them. In a limited government, everyone, including those in charge, must obey the laws. Democracy is a form of limited government. Rulers in an unlimited government have total control. They can disobey the law.

A citizen is a legal member of a country. Citizens have rights and responsibilities. If you are born in a country, you are a citizen of that country. If you move to a country, you must meet certain requirements to become a citizen.

Economics is the study of how people manage their resources by producing, exchanging, and using goods and services. People's desires are unlimited. Resources to satisfy those desires are limited. The conflict between the unlimited desires and limited resources is called scarcity. In a command economy, the government makes decisions about products. In a market economy, the businesses decide.

Culture is the beliefs, customs, laws, art, and ways of living that are shared by a group of people. Religion and a shared language are parts of most cultures. Music, dance, literature, the visual arts, and technology are also important. Food, clothing, technology, beliefs, and languages shared by a culture are culture traits. The culture traits of people shape their way of life.

Before You Read

Find and underline each vocabulary word.

history *noun*, a record of the past

geography *noun*, the study of people, places, and the environment

government *noun*, the people and groups within a society that have the authority to make laws

citizen *noun*, a legal member of a country

economics *noun*, the study of how people manage their resources by producing, exchanging, and using goods and services

scarcity *noun*, the conflict between people's desires and their limited resources

culture *noun*, beliefs, customs, laws, art, and ways of living that a group of people share

After You Read

REVIEW Explain the difference between the study of history and geography. Highlight the sentences that tell the difference between the study of history and geography.

REVIEW How does a market economy differ from a command economy? Underline the sentences that tell how a market economy differs from a command economy.