



K-6 Social Studies Program

CREATING A SKILL-FULL SOCIAL STUDIES CURRICULUM

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The development of reflective and knowledgeable thinkers and decision makers is a key goal of social studies instruction. Traditionally, educators approached thinking in terms of a hierarchy of skills in which young students master basic skills before progressing to “higher-order” skills such as analysis and interpretation. However, recent research indicates that these so-called higher-order skills are crucial to successful learning at even the earliest ages.

A critical aspect of the research on learning is that knowledge and skills must be developed together, and not as isolated elements. The dual agenda of knowledge and skills is an important part of the entire social studies curriculum. “Thinking” should never be isolated from content.

Map skills, visual learning skills, research skills, social skills, communication skills and citizenship skills are integrated throughout the text and activities of *We The People*, so that students recognize and use these tools in the context of acquiring and processing social studies information. Teachers can develop specific skills through the *Workbook for Reading and Review* that teach students not just how to use a skill but also how to identify situations in which it would be useful. Activities throughout the program provide natural opportunities to assess students’ mastery of important skills.

A Thoughtful Skills Program:

- teaches students how to acquire, think about, and communicate information
- gives students useful tools for learning
- provokes thinking
- is age appropriate
- builds skills developmentally
- makes skills relevant to learning
- stimulates students to learn more
- is considerate of teacher’s goals and needs

