

Kindergarten Frameworks for the Georgia Standards of Excellence in Social Studies

The following instructional plan is part of a GaDOE collection of Unit Frameworks, Performance Tasks, examples of Student Work, and Teacher Commentary for the Kindergarten Social Studies Course.

Kindergarten - Unit One - Connecting Themes	
Elaborated Unit Focus	This unit introduces the Connecting Themes used during the Kindergarten year. Teachers can use the themes to help support the beginning of the year work students are already doing. The activities below are designed in this vein; however, teachers may have plans already in place that can just as easily tie into the Connecting Themes. As each school and classroom have their own set of traditions, expectations, procedures, etc., teachers will want to adapt any selected activities to make sure they benefit the development of students' role in their classroom community.
Connection to Connecting Theme/Enduring Understandings	This unit introduces each Connecting Theme, allowing the themes to become a support structure for the content that students learn throughout the rest of the Kindergarten year.
GSE for Social Studies (standards and elements)	n/a
Connection to Literacy Standards for Social Studies (reading and/or writing)	n/a
Connection to Social Studies Matrices (information processing and/or map and globe skills)	n/a

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Essential Questions and Related Supporting/Guiding Questions	
Culture	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. How can we create a positive culture in our classroom? <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. What makes our classroom a comfortable place to be? b. Why do we behave in certain ways in our classroom? c. How is our classroom different from other places where we spend time?
Individuals, Groups, Institutions	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 2. How can our class help make our school a positive place to learn? <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. What is your role in your family? How is it similar to and different from your role in our classroom? b. What is our class's role in our school? c. How do our choices as students affect our school? How do our choices as a class affect our school?
Location	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 3. How does where we live affect how we live? <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. What things change based upon where we live? b. What things stay the same no matter where we live? c. How is your community different from other places?
Scarcity	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 4. Why do we have to make choices? <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. What are some examples of times when you have had to make a choice? b. What do you think about when making a choice? c. What do you do if you make a poor choice?
Time, Change, and Continuity	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 5. What makes this school year special? <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. How is Kindergarten different from preschool/Pre-K? b. How will school change as you get older? c. How is school today different from school in the past?

Sample Instructional Activities/Assessments

Defining Our Classroom Culture: Creating a Classroom Culture Chart

1. Write the word “culture” on a large piece of paper. Explain to students that you will be working together to learn what the word means and how it relates to your classroom.
2. Explain that culture is a word that we use to describe what a group of people thinks is important, and that it includes all sorts of things: what we create, how we make choices, how we want to feel, etc. Use examples that are significant in your school and community.
3. Help students discuss (to the best of their ability) what they think the culture of their classroom should be. Should it include reading, writing, time spent outside? Should it include being respectful to each other and making choices that take into account the feelings of others? Should it include trying to be positive about situations where students don’t get their way? What are some things that happen in your class on a regular basis that help give your classroom a particular feeling? Is there a class pet, mascot, or special signal? Is there a physical/visual aspect of the classroom that makes it different from others?
4. Have each student select one aspect of classroom culture to illustrate and include on the classroom culture chart. Depending on the group, it may be appropriate to have each student decide on a unique aspect of culture in advance, or it may be better to just let students choose and illustrate on their own. (This may result in ten illustrations of only one component, which may be perfectly fine depending on the group of students.) Students can illustrate on pre-cut pieces of paper or sticky notes. Encourage them to show what they’re illustrating in such a way that someone walking by can figure out what it shows.
5. Have students place their illustrations on the chart, and add labels as needed.
6. Guide students in a brief conversation about how all of their illustrations come together to show an overall picture of what the class’s culture includes.
7. Display the classroom culture chart on the classroom door or outside the classroom so that other people in the building can see what your students think is significant about your class/classroom.

GSE Standards and Elements	n/a
Literacy Standards Social Studies Matrices Enduring Understanding(s)	EU: Culture

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Creating a New Student Handbook

1. Working together, students will create a pictorial handbook that both introduces them to their new classroom, school, and community members, and can serve as an introduction for new students who join the class during the course of the year.
2. Teachers will want to pre-determine what should be included. Possibilities include:
 - *Pictures of students engaged in classroom and school procedures (how to enter the building, how to leave the classroom, how to store supplies, where to find specific class materials, restroom and water fountain locations, etc.)
 - *Pictures of important people in the school building (specials teachers, administrators, custodians, media specialist, etc.)
 - *Pictures of important places in the school building (gym, cafeteria, media center, nurse’s office, etc)
3. Take students on a tour of the school to collect pictures of identified items. Depending on available technology, students may take pictures themselves, or the teacher may just ask students to politely indicate when they think a picture would be appropriate.
4. Print pictures on single sheets of paper.
5. Allow students to label photographs, add additional details through illustration, etc. on a chosen page.
6. Compile the pages into a book (sheet protectors in a binder, or simply stapled together) and place the book with other reference books for students to use when they need a review of procedures, or to help introduce a new classmate to how things work in the classroom/school.

GSE Standards and Elements	n/a
Literacy Standards Social Studies Matrices Enduring Understanding(s)	EU: Culture

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Part of a Group	
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. This is meant as a very simple getting-to-know-you activity that also makes students aware of their roles as members of groups that they choose to join. Obviously, most Kindergarteners will have little say in their group memberships, but they can still appreciate the differences in behavior required by certain groups based on type, location, activity level, etc. 2. Using a sheet of chart paper or an interactive whiteboard, have students brainstorm groups to which they belong. For most classes, it will help if the teacher shares groups to which s/he belongs first: part of a family; member of the school’s faculty; community organization; neighborhood association; sports team; religious organization; alumni group; etc. After sharing a particular type of group, have students share similar groups to which they or their families belong. List groups, and allow students to add a quick sketch of themselves doing what they enjoy most with one group. 3. Help students see commonalities among groups, and have them share what they like to do as part of these groups. Do they have responsibilities? Are they similar to or different from responsibilities they have at school? 4. As a conclusion, have students stand in front of their classmates and act out an activity they enjoy with a group. Have the rest of the class attempt to guess what the featured student is pantomiming. Ask students to share what clues they saw in the pantomime that let them make their guesses. If students are not quite ready to do this, or unwilling to pantomime, the teacher can pantomime some of the activities mentioned by students for the class to guess. 	
GSE Standards and Elements	n/a
Literacy Standards Social Studies Matrices Enduring Understanding(s)	EU: Individuals, Groups, Institutions

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Finding My Place

1. Students will use the “Finding My Place” graphic organizer to share the roles that they perform at home and at school. Make sure each student has a copy of the organizer and crayons/markers/colored pencils. Students can complete the organizer in writing or by illustrating, depending on their individual ability and teacher preference. The goal is for students to think about the importance of their role as individuals and members of groups, not to assess their literacy.
2. Walk students through each quadrant of the organizer, one at a time. Depending upon the group, it may be helpful to model ways to ‘answer’ each section, by using an enlarged version on a piece of chart paper or on an interactive whiteboard.
3. In the first quadrant, have students share their jobs/role at home. Do they have chores? How do they help their parents/guardians? How do they work with their siblings? As always, be sensitive to students’ individual family situations and be sure to find ways to support answers for students living with relatives, in shelter or migrant situations, etc.
4. In the second quadrant, have students identify roles they have in the classroom. They are learners, readers, writers, historians, etc., but what other roles do they fill? Friend? Gardener? Leader?
5. In the third quadrant, have students share the role of their class within the school community. How does the class help the school as a whole? Are there specific jobs for the Kindergarteners? Do they serve as reading or math buddies for older students? Do they assist with maintenance tasks like wiping lunch tables or picking up trash on the playground?
6. Once these three are completed, help students discuss the ways that they as individuals affect larger groups (their families, their classroom), and how they as a class group affect an institution (their school). Whether or not you introduce those specific terms will depend on the readiness of your class and its facility with English and new vocabulary, but all students can begin to see the ways in which they interact as part of larger groups.
7. Finally, have students identify their favorite role (daughter/son, sibling, learner, etc.) and draw a picture showing themselves portraying that role in the fourth quadrant.

GSE Standards and Elements	n/a
Literacy Standards Social Studies Matrices Enduring Understanding(s)	EU: Individuals, Groups, Institutions

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FINDING MY PLACE

<p>My role in my family:</p>	<p>My role in my classroom:</p>
<p>My classroom's role in our school:</p>	<p>My favorite role:</p>

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Here and There: Comparing the Weather

1. Use a trade book (such as On the Same Day in March) to introduce the idea that weather varies on a given day based on location, among other factors.
2. Help students see that the weather they're experiencing is different from what people in another city, state, or country are experiencing simultaneously.
3. Guide the class in making predictions about what the weather would be like in a place further north and a place further south. Would temperatures be colder or warmer? Would precipitation be the same, or different? Why?
4. Show students a globe, and ask them to select several locations to compare the current weather. You might solicit locations of relatives, places in the news, etc., based on your individual class.
5. Use weather websites to identify the current temperature and weather conditions in those places. Have students compare and contrast those conditions to the weather students are currently experiencing.
6. If desired, this data could be recorded on a piece of chart paper and used to compare weather later in the year. How does the time of year affect students' weather conditions? How does it affect other places in the world? For example, would weather change noticeably in Antarctica or Brazil, or does it remain largely constant?

GSE Standards and Elements	n/a
Literacy Standards Social Studies Matrices Enduring Understanding(s)	EU: Location

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Where Does THAT Happen?	
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. As a quick introduction to the idea of location, help students understand the basic concept that location affects possible activities. 2. Have students generate a brainstormed list of activities they like to do. 3. Ask students to think about whether those activities can happen anywhere, or if they are tied to a specific location or type of location. For example, where can students read? Where can they ride bikes or scooters? 4. If students mostly generate indoor activities, encourage them to think of outdoor activities they enjoy, or would like to try, and where those activities can take place. If possible, identify potential locations on a map. If students like to swim, could that happen at places other than a pool? Other than the beach? If students like to play running games, could those happen in a city? 5. With all situations, try to have students give evidence for their answers. If they say that a specific activity could happen anywhere, ask how they know this to be true. If they claim that an activity can happen only at a particular house, why do they think that it couldn't happen elsewhere? 	
GSE Standards and Elements	n/a
Literacy Standards Social Studies Matrices Enduring Understanding(s)	EU: Location

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Making Choices

1. Prior to beginning this activity, the teacher will want to collect multiples of items between which students can make a choice. Possibilities include:
 - a. different colors of markers.
 - b. different types of picture books.
 - c. several kinds of fruit.
 - d. assorted drinking cups.
 - e. different playground balls.
2. During a review of classroom rules, guide students in recalling that most rules and procedures boil down to whether or not students can make the choice to respect themselves and others. Some choices are harder to make than others, and this activity will help students remember that just as they can make simple choices, they are also capable of making more difficult ones, as well.
3. Show students one set of similar items, and ask for volunteers to share which item they would pick, given the choice. The student should share why s/he would make that choice. (Some students may need reminders that these choices are theoretical, and that they will not necessarily be keeping or using the items used for the lesson.)
4. Allow several students to share alternative answers - always asking for reasoning behind their choices - before moving on to the next set of items.
5. Once students have made their choices from the items shown, explain that just as students were able to choose between “fun” things, they can also choose their behaviors in such a way that they are following classroom and school rules.
6. Have students give examples of positive choices they can make by following rules and procedures, and the reasons that doing so helps them respect themselves and others. It is more helpful for students to focus on positive choices than to address negative consequences.
Note: For students with impulse control difficulties or in other situations where positive choices are hard to make, be respectful of students’ abilities while encouraging their growth in this area.

GSE Standards and Elements	n/a
Literacy Standards Social Studies Matrices Enduring Understanding(s)	EU: Scarcity; Individuals, Groups, Institutions

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What is Scarcity?

1. Before class begins, write the word SCARCITY in fancy script, decorate the page, and roll it up like a scroll.
2. Tell students that they will learn a word that they will need from Kindergarten until they graduate from high school, and that it's a word that will affect the rest of their lives. Show students the scroll, and tell them that it contains the word.
3. Ask a volunteer to unroll the scroll, and show it to the class. Tell them what the word is, how to pronounce it correctly, and share that they will be learning about it throughout the year.
4. To introduce the term, sing "Oh, Scarcity," which can be found at the Indiana Council for Economics Education site here: <http://www.kidseconposters.com/singalongs/oh-scarcity/>. Project the lyrics, or write them on a sheet of chart paper. It may also be helpful to give students (even non-readers) their own copy of the lyrics to use to follow along. (These can be collected and reused each time you sing the song.)
5. If time and student interest permit, have students think of things that are scarce in their school or classroom. (In reality, almost everything could be considered scarce, particularly depending on the situation, but at this point students just need an introduction to the idea that they cannot have all of their wants - or possibly their needs - at the instant that they want them. For more background, visit ICEE's overview here: <http://www.kidseconposters.com/posters/the-basics/scarcity/?query=category.eq.The%20Basics&back=posters.>)

Note: The term scarcity does not appear in the Kindergarten standards, but it is a Connecting Theme used in every grade through high school. Teaching the basic idea of scarcity aligns with SSKE4, and using the term becomes fairly simple using the song as an introduction. However, if students are struggling to remember the word, keep in mind that they will continue to encounter it throughout their school careers.

GSE Standards and Elements	n/a
Literacy Standards Social Studies Matrices Enduring Understanding(s)	EU: Scarcity

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Last Year, This Year, Next Year	
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Guide students in a quick discussion of the idea that their classroom/learning environment changes over time, but that components of it stay the same. 2. Ask students to identify the various places where they learned last year (Pre-K classroom in the same school or a different one, day care, home). Have them share some of their favorite things about those places. List/draw them on the board. 3. Have students identify things/activities in their current classroom that are the same as what they experienced last year. There will almost certainly be some constants: art supplies, books, classmates/friends, everyday items like chairs and tables. 4. Have students create their own graphic organizer to show what has stayed the same. Help them fold a piece of paper in half, and trace the crease to create a two-sided chart. Label one side “last year” and one side “this year.” (Teachers may need to do this writing for students.) 5. Then, have students draw their learning environment from last year and this year on the appropriate sides. Have them use the lists/illustrations generated earlier to help, and encourage them to show things that have stayed the same, even if those things look slightly different. These can be displayed, or simply shared with a partner. 6. In conclusion, ask students to predict what they think will remain the same as they continue in elementary school, and what they think will change. 	
GSE Standards and Elements	n/a
Literacy Standards Social Studies Matrices Enduring Understanding(s)	EU: Time, Change, and Continuity

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Past, Present, Future	
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Use the images in the attached PowerPoint presentation to show students images of schools and school children from the past. (All images were taken from the Vanishing Georgia Archive, which can be searched here to add images from your own community: http://dlg.galileo.usg.edu/vanga/?Welcome.) 2. Ask students to identify what is the same and different from their own school experiences. Guide them to look at and consider buildings, landscapes, cars/other forms of transportation, school furniture, clothing, visible school supplies - or lack thereof, and whatever else strikes their interest. 3. When possible, the date of the image is included on each slide. Help students understand an approximate idea of how long ago they were taken - when students' grandparents were young, or longer ago than that. Put the pictures in context with the age of their school building, if possible. At this point in the year, few Kindergarteners will have a strong grasp on this sort of chronology, but introducing the idea will begin to help them put things in order in their minds. 4. Finally, have students make some basic predictions about what schools and classrooms will look like in the future. What will change, and what will stay the same? You can frame the conversation in terms of what students expect their grandchildren might see in a classroom? Is there anything from the images in the slideshow that students think future students will recognize? Why or why not? 	
GSE Standards and Elements	n/a
Literacy Standards Social Studies Matrices Enduring Understanding(s)	EU: Time, Change, and Continuity