

Fourth Grade Standards: SOCIAL STUDIES

*Note: This information has been adapted from the 2020 Colorado State Standards as presented on the Colorado Department of Education (CDE) website. It is *not* an exhaustive or detailed list. All standards mentioned represent skills grade-level students should have mastered by the end of the grade-level year. If you desire further information, please visit the Standards page on the CDE website: <https://www.cde.state.co.us/standardsandinstruction/standards>

This document provides tiered support in addressing the academic standards. Families can choose to approach their curriculum selection and content-area instruction in one or all of three categories: a general **Overview** of expectations and “social studies” behaviors, **Learning Objectives** (a “fly by” glance of concepts a student masters throughout the school year) and **Guiding Questions** and **Specific Skills** (expanded ideas to guide and explain the learning objectives). As you consider lesson planning for each grade level, use the “Overview” and “Learning Objectives” checklists to help you plan out your year. (Note that specific time periods/social studies content to cover is not explicitly stated (except for some guidelines pertaining to Colorado history). Therefore, we highly recommend using the Core Knowledge Sequence ([click here](#)) to help you in your planning.) Start with the end in mind: If my child needs to know how to _____ by the end of the school year, what learning activities can be implemented to introduce and then reinforce the concepts? Think next about smaller steps in learning that your child needs to master in order to reach that end goal. Also keep in mind that most objectives are not learned in isolation, meaning learning objectives are often combined. You don’t need to ensure your child has mastered learning objective #1 before moving on to the next. Combining two or more objectives in a week’s lesson plan can make for more creative and integrated learning. If you are using a reputable and research-based curriculum, then your child will most likely be working his/her way through these learning objectives in a well-paced and consistent manner. (A brief sampling of solid curriculum options can be found on the CSP website under “Homeschool Resources.”)

Overview

Expectations for 4th Grade Students:

- **History:** Explain the role of individuals, diverse cultural groups, and ideas in the historical development of Colorado; organize and sequence events in Colorado history in chronological order; recognize the connections between important Colorado events and important events in the history of the United States.
- **Geography:** Use maps to ask and answer questions about the geography of Colorado and to understand the interactions between humans and their environment.
- **Economics:** Explain the relationship between choice and “opportunity cost” (the value of something that you give up when choosing something else). **Personal Financial Literacy:** Define positive and negative incentives.
- **Civics:** Discuss multiple perspectives on an issue; explain the formation and structure of Colorado state government (General Assembly, Judicial, and Executive branches).

Throughout 4th Grade You May Find Students:

- Using primary and secondary sources such as artifacts, documents, photos, and newspaper articles to examine cause and effect relationships among events in Colorado’s history; explaining the role of individuals and groups in the development of Colorado (trappers, traders, miners); exploring examples of conflict and cooperation between the diverse cultures in Colorado.
- Using map keys, symbols, and legends to show how Colorado cities, towns, and neighborhoods were settled, and how they have developed and changed over time; exploring the connections between Colorado’s physical resources (mountains, plains) and why diverse populations have chosen to live here.
- Describing unique products and services provided in Colorado; exploring the connections between Colorado’s physical resources and what is produced and provided in the state.

- Discussing the work of the three branches of Colorado’s state government; explaining the types of services state government provides and how those are funded; examining multiple perspectives on a Colorado issue (use of water) in order to consider possible solutions that could benefit the most people.

Learning Objectives

History:

1. Understand the nature of historical knowledge as a process of inquiry that examines and analyzes how history is viewed, constructed, and interpreted.
2. Analyze historical time periods and patterns of continuity and change, through multiple perspectives, within and among cultures and societies.

Geography:

3. Apply geographic representations and perspectives to analyze human movement, spatial patterns, systems, and the connections and relationships among them.
4. Examine the characteristics of places and regions, and the changing nature among geographic and human interactions.

Economics:

5. Understand the allocation of scarce resources in societies through analysis of individual choice, market interaction, and public policy.
6. Apply economic reasoning skills to make informed personal financial decisions.

Civics:

7. Express an understanding of how civic participation affects policy by applying the rights and responsibilities of a citizen.
8. Analyze the origins, structures, and functions of governments to evaluate the impact on citizens and the global society.

Guiding Questions and Specific Skills

History

1. Understand the nature of historical knowledge as a process of inquiry that examines and analyzes how history is viewed, constructed, and interpreted.
 - A. Guiding Questions
 - How have past events influenced present-day Colorado and the Rocky Mountain region?
 - Why is it important to know the sequence of events and people in Colorado history?
 - How can primary sources help us learn about the past or create more questions about our state’s history?
 - What social and economic decisions caused people to locate in various regions of Colorado?
 - B. Specific Skills
 - Analyze primary and secondary sources from multiple points of view to develop an understanding of the history of Colorado.
 - Draw inferences about Colorado history from primary sources such as journals, diaries, maps, etc.

- Identify cause-and-effect relationships using primary sources to understand the history of Colorado's development.
- Explain, through multiple perspectives, the cause-and-effect relationships in the human interactions among people and cultures that have lived in or migrated to Colorado. For example: American Indians, Spanish explorers, trappers/traders, and settlers after westward expansion.
- Identify and describe how major political and cultural groups have affected the development of the region.
- Identify and explain the perspectives of the various groups important in Colorado history when exploring the development of the state.
- Understand that historical thinkers recognize important events in Colorado and can put them in chronological order to understand cause and effect such as migration west and clashes with Native Americans, discovery of gold and the Gold Rush, the growth of cities and towns and the development of law, the development of the state Constitution, and the prohibition of slavery.

2. Analyze historical time periods and patterns of continuity and change, through multiple perspectives, within and among cultures and societies.

A. Guiding Questions

- In what ways have geographic, economic, cultural, and technological changes influenced Colorado today?
- Why did people of various cultures migrate to and settle in Colorado?
- To what extent have unity and diversity shaped Colorado?
- How have various individuals, groups, and ideas affected the development of Colorado?

B. Specific Skills

- Conceptualize the historical eras, individuals, groups, ideas, and themes in Colorado history and their relationship to key events in the United States within the same historical period.
- Construct a timeline of the major events in Colorado history.
- Explain the relationship between major events in Colorado history and events in United States history during the same era.
- Describe both past and present interactions among the people and cultures in Colorado. For example: American Indians, Spanish explorers, trappers/traders, and settlers after westward expansion.
- Describe the impact of various technological developments. For example: changes in mining technologies, transportation, early 20th century industrial developments, and mid- to late-20th century nuclear, and computer technologies.
- Recognize and describe cause-and-effect relationships within Colorado history and draw conclusions about how various events and people affected the development of the state.
- Conduct short research projects that build knowledge through investigation of different aspects of a topic.

Geography

1. Apply geographic representations and perspectives to analyze human movement, spatial patterns, systems, and the connections and relationships among them.

C. Guiding Questions

- Which geographic tools are best to locate information about a place?
- Why did settlements and large cities develop where they did in Colorado?

- How are the regions of Colorado defined by geography?
- How does the physical location of Colorado affect its relationship with other regions of the United States and the world?

D. Specific Skills

- Use geographic tools to research and answer questions about Colorado geography.
- Answer questions about Colorado regions using maps and other geographic tools.
- Use geographic grids to locate places on and answer questions about maps and images of Colorado.
- Create and investigate geographic questions about Colorado in relation to other places.
- Illustrate, using geographic tools, how places in Colorado have changed and developed over time due to human activity.
- Describe similarities and differences between the physical geography of Colorado and its neighboring states.

2. Examine the characteristics of places and regions, and the changing nature among geographic and human interactions.

A. Guiding Questions

- What physical characteristics led various cultural groups to select the places they did for settlement in Colorado?
- How did Colorado settlers alter their environment to facilitate communication and transportation?
- How does the physical environment affect human activity?
- How does human activity affect the environment?

B. Specific Skills

- Understand that connections are developed within and across human and physical systems.
- Describe how the physical environment provides opportunities for and places constraints on human activities.
- Explain how physical environments influenced and limited immigration into the state.
- Analyze how people use geographic factors in creating settlements and have adapted to and modified the local physical environment.
- Describe how places in Colorado are connected by movement of goods, services, and technology.
- Define the problems faced by people in Colorado because of the physical environment they encountered.
- Understand that geographic thinkers can describe how environmental and cultural characteristics influence population distribution in specific places or regions in Colorado.
- Understand that geographic thinkers explain how cultural and environmental characteristics affect the distribution and movement of people, goods, and ideas.
- Understand that geographic thinkers explain how human settlements and movements relate to the locations and use of various natural resources.

Economics

1. Understand the allocation of scarce resources in societies through analysis of individual choice, market interaction, and public policy.

A. Guiding Questions

- Why are different goods and services important at different times in Colorado's history?

- How have science and technology changed the economy of Colorado?
- How have natural, human, and capital resources had both positive and negative impacts on the development of Colorado?
- How can you explain why people or communities make the decisions that they do?

B. Specific Skills

- Define positive and negative economic incentives and describe how people typically respond when given positive or negative incentives.
- In a given situation, create a plan of appropriate incentives to achieve a desired result. For example: offering a prize to the person who picks up the most trash on the playground.
- Give examples of the kinds of goods and services produced in Colorado in different historical periods and their connection to economic incentives.
- Explain how productive resources (natural, human, and capital) have influenced the types of goods produced and services provided in Colorado.
- Understand that economic thinkers use both positive and negative incentives to affect behavior. For example, the tourism industry uses incentives to attract tourists and government agencies use tickets to discourage speeding and fines for not following regulations.

2. Apply economic reasoning skills to make informed personal financial decisions.

A. Guiding Questions

- What different ways does an individual have to get information when deciding between purchase options?
- How do you know when a good decision has been made about a purchase?
- How do you know when a bad decision has been made about a purchase?

B. Specific Skills

- Define choice and opportunity cost.
- Determine the relationship between long-term goals and opportunity cost.
- Analyze scenarios of choices including opportunity cost, such as how to spend allowance money or purchase school supplies.

Civics

1. Express an understanding of how civic participation affects policy by applying the rights and responsibilities of a citizen.

A. Guiding Questions

- How can government answer questions about issues in a state in various ways?
- How do diverse opinions enrich a community?
- How does an individual's experience and background influence perception of an issue?
- Why is it important to research issues and engage in civil debates?

B. Specific Skills

- Use appropriate sources to identify, investigate, and analyze multiple perspectives on civic issues.
- Give examples of issues faced by the state of Colorado and develop possible solutions.
- Provide supportive arguments for both sides of a current public policy debate.
- Discuss how various individuals and groups influence the way an issue affecting the state is viewed and resolved.

- Participate in social or community activities.
- Realize that civic-minded individuals understand that virtues, such as honesty, mutual respect, cooperation, and attentiveness to multiple perspectives, should be used when they interact with each other on public matters.

2. Analyze the origins, structures, and functions of governments to evaluate the impact on citizens and the global society.

A. Guiding Questions

- What would state government look like if one of the branches had more power than the others?
- What would Colorado be like without a state government?
- To what extent were various individuals and organizations in the state important in the development of Colorado's government?

B. Specific Skills

- Understand the origins, structures, and functions of the Colorado government.
- Explain the historical foundation and events that led to the Colorado Constitution and the formation of the three branches of Colorado government.
- Identify and explain a variety of roles leaders, citizens, and others play in state government.
- Identify and explain the services state government provides and how those services are funded.
- Describe how the decisions of the state government affect local government and interact with federal law.
- Describe how a citizen might engage in state government to demonstrate their rights or initiate change.