

UNIT 2 ADDENDUM

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UNIT SYNOPSIS

PURPOSE: Why study medieval European communities?

The Middle Ages, or medieval period, was a time of dramatic change in Europe, and its legacy in popular culture has grown to be, perhaps, even more dramatic than was life at the time. Today, we often think of idyllic images of knights, nobles, and royalty ensconced safe and happy behind high castle walls. But life for people in medieval European communities often fell far short of the “storybook” history we are told through legends and fairy tales. In this unit, you will introduce your students to the study of communities long ago while revealing the fascinating reality of life within and beyond the walls of medieval castles.

This unit first orients your students to the Middle Ages by posing a question that is likely to make this nearly thousand-year-old world come alive: “What were castles like in the Middle Ages, and why did people build them?” Students will step into this world of kings, castles, and conflicts, and they will study how castles became the super fortresses of a new millennium. But castles were not just designed to protect against attack: They were also homes and thriving communities. As students continue to explore the Middle Ages, they will learn to distinguish fact from fiction in stories of knights and princesses, and they will develop complex ideas about what life was really like for every member of feudal society in the Middle Ages. Because a time and place so far away from students’ present reality can be challenging for six- and seven-year old’s to imagine, a core part of



Image depicting a cross-section of a European castle during the Middle Ages.

this unit is driven by high-quality historical literature with beautiful illustrations and immersive project work that helps bring this far-gone world to life.

Medieval European society also provides your first graders an accessible entry point into the historical study of communities long ago. The structure of a powerful monarch atop the social pyramid and the reciprocal relationships between lords, knights, merchants, and peasants below help students begin to conceptualize social structures—and social inequality. This example also helps students understand the role that different members of a community play and how each relies on the others.

You will introduce and reinforce important ideas about the Middle Ages and the roles of different members in feudal society through whole-class Read Aloud books that build content knowledge throughout the unit. We ask students to convey their understanding of the Middle Ages through fun yet robust project work, such as designing their own castles!

Connection to Scope And Sequence: Our Grade 1 curriculum shifts its focus backwards in time, moving from the kindergarten studies of self and family to a first grade focus on communities throughout history. In kindergarten, students investigated present-day families and neighborhoods around the world. This year, your first graders will embark on a true historical inquiry by looking at communities from the past, the people who lived there, and our connections to these communities today.

This first content-driven unit introduces your year-long investigation of communities across time through the study of the Middle Ages and feudal European communities. Lavinia Partners who use our complete Grades K–5 Insight Social Studies™ curriculum can connect this study back to students’ previous studies of families and neighborhoods from around the world, which will prepare your students to consider how these community structures came to be.

Following this unit, your students will continue their studies of historical communities in two more Insight Social Studies™ content-driven units on Indigenous American communities of North and Central America as well as on Mexican communities past and present. By the end of this sequence, your first graders will be able to explain the characteristics of a cultural community and explain the ways in which communities today are a product of the past by tracing the European communities they study in this unit to the Americas they study in the next and, finally, through the emergence of modern Mexico, a nation formed by the world-historic encounter between European colonial powers and Mesoamerican people. This knowledge provides an essential foundation from which to understand the diversity and cultural heritage in communities within the United States, the Insight Social Studies™ focus for second grade.

Goals: Throughout this unit, students will develop a deep understanding of the European Middle Ages and the people who lived during this time period. They will develop an understanding of the most important characteristics of the Middle Ages with a special focus on feudal communities, including life within a castle and the unique role each member of the feudal system played in the broader medieval community.

Standards-Based Historical Content Knowledge and Essential Questions: This unit develops students’ understanding of standards-based concepts listed below. These Essential Questions and key ideas are based on the National Standards for History listed in Appendix A, and they are foundational understandings that will prepare your students for their historical studies in the rest of first grade and beyond. This unit focuses on inspiring a passion for studying the history of people and places long, long ago. Students must begin to imagine times and places entirely different from their own world to develop into knowledgeable young historians. Returning often to the following key ideas and Essential Questions as well as understanding how each lesson introduces or deepens students’ understanding of these ideas will help you keep instruction focused on the most important standards in this unit.

- **What were castles like in the Middle Ages, and why did people build them?** The Middle Ages is also considered the “Age of Castles” because over 12,000 castles had been built across Europe by the end of the period. While these defensive structures were first built out of earth and wood, these early castles failed to serve their primary function: protecting the nobility from attack. The stone castles that we are most familiar with today were erected as a solution to the failure of early wooden castles. These massive stone fortresses took decades and thousands of people to create and, once built, served both the practical purpose of protecting the manor as well as providing a home for lords and ladies and all those who worked there. Castles themselves were extraordinarily diverse, shaped by the resources at their liege’s disposal, and included much more than the central keep and outer walls: Everything that served to protect the lord and his property were part of the castle superstructure.
- **What was life really like in the Middle Ages?** Life in the Middle Ages was not exactly like the stories about knights and princesses we read today. Castle communities and the medieval towns that surrounded them were organized into a hierarchical social structure known today as the feudal system. At the top of this structure were the monarchs, whose lives in the castle keep were not nearly as glamorous as the popular representation. While knights, lords, and ladies dominate our literary and cultural imagination, most people were at the bottom of the feudal pyramid working as peasants and serfs. Life was often harder for everyone than fairy tales might lead one to believe, including for the monarchs and for the nobility. Life was especially hard for the people at the bottom of the feudal system.
- **Who lived in medieval European communities? What role did each person play in the community?** Medieval European communities were much more diverse than a simple division between the haves and have-nots. There were distinct feudal social classes that came between the highest class, the monarch, and the lowest class, the peasantry; and these classes often held their power and privilege over the lowest classes through exchanges made with people wealthier and more powerful than themselves. The land-holding nobility were granted fiefs, or kingdoms, by the ruling monarch in exchange for their loyalty and commitment to the defense of the kingdom, placing them higher than most others in the feudal order. The knights, who came next in the feudal pecking order, swore oaths of loyalty to these lords and ladies of the nobility, pledging to fight under their banner in battle in exchange for parcels of this land, a valuable commodity that gave knights more power than other skilled professionals in medieval society. The merchants and craftsmen followed knights in feudal society. These skilled professionals were separated from the laboring classes of peasants and serfs due to their specialized skills and the higher wages paid for their labor. The lower classes, like peasants and serfs, worked under the protection of the knights and nobility, and, in the case of peasants, were given land to work on for a livelihood. In this way, every

member of the feudal system had a unique role and, though some were more powerful than others, everyone contributed to the broader medieval community through these reciprocal relationships.

CONTENT STANDARDS

Below are the standards **taught** and **assessed** in this unit.

Unit Standards (UCLA National Standards)

- **Standard 1A:** The student understands family life now and in the recent past; family life in various places long ago.
- **Standard 7A:** The student understands the cultures and historical developments of selected societies in such places as Africa, the Americas, Asia, and Europe.

Texas Alignment (TEKS)

Geography

- 1.4: The student understands the purpose of geographic tools, including maps and globes.
- (A) create and use simple maps such as maps of the home, classroom, school, and community; and
 - (B) identify and describe how geographic location influences the human characteristics of place such as shelter, clothing, food, and activities.
- 1.5: The student understands physical and human characteristics of place to better understand their community and the world around them.
- (A) identify and describe the physical characteristics of place such as landforms, bodies of water, Earth's resources, and weather; and
 - (B) identify and describe how geographic location influences the human characteristics of place such as shelter, clothing, food, and activities.

Economics:

- 1.7: The student understands the concepts of goods and services.
- (A) identify examples of goods and services in the home, school, and community;
 - (B) identify ways people exchange goods and services;
 - (C) identify the role of markets in the exchange of goods and services.
- 1.9: The student understands the value of work. The student is expected to:
- (A) describe the tools of various jobs and the characteristics of a job well performed; and
 - (B) describe how various jobs contribute to the production of goods and services.

Government:

- 1.11: The student understands the role of authority figures and public officials.
- (A) identify the responsibilities of authority figures in the home, school, and community;
 - (B) identify and describe the roles of public officials in the community, state, and nation.

Citizenship:

- 1.12: The student understands characteristic of good citizenship as exemplified by historical figures and other individuals
- (A) identify characteristics of good citizenship, including truthfulness, justice, equality, respect for oneself and others, responsibility in daily life, and participation in government by educating oneself about the issues, respectfully holding public officials to their word, and voting;
- 1.13: The student understands important symbols, customs, and celebrations that represent American beliefs and principles that contribute to our national identity. The student is expected to:
- (D) explain and practice voting as a way of making choices and decisions;

Culture:

- 1.14: The student understands the importance of family and community beliefs, language, and traditions.
- (A) describe and explain the importance of beliefs, language, and traditions of families and communities; and
 - (B) explain the way folktales and legends reflect beliefs, language, and traditions of communities.

Social Studies Skills:

- 1.16: The student applies critical-thinking skills to organize and use information acquired from a variety of valid sources, including technology.

- (A) gather information about a topic using a variety of valid oral and visual sources such as interviews, music, pictures, symbols, and artifacts with adult assistance; and
- (B) sequence and categorize information.

1.17: The student communicates in oral, visual, and written forms.

- (A) use a simple timeline to distinguish among past, present, and future;
- (C) express ideas orally based on knowledge and experiences;
- (D) create and interpret visual and written material; and
- (E) use social studies terminology correctly.

1.18: The student uses problem-solving and decision-making skills, working independently and with others. The student is expected to use problem-solving and decision-making processes to identify a problem, gather information, list and consider options, consider advantages and disadvantages, choose and implement a solution, and evaluate the effectiveness of the solution.

Louisiana Alignment (Louisiana Student Standards)

History:

- 1.1 - Create a chronological sequence of events using appropriate vocabulary
- 1.2 - Differentiate between primary and secondary sources
- 1.3 - Select and use appropriate evidence from primary and secondary sources to support claims
- 1.4 - Construct and express claims that are supported with relevant evidence from primary and/or secondary sources, content knowledge, and clear reasoning
- 1.6 - Describe how past events can affect the present
- 1.7 - Compare the lives of Louisianans today in urban, suburban, and rural parishes
- 1.8 - Identify examples of Louisiana's culture
- 1.9 - Identify cultural groups that influenced Louisiana

Civics:

- 1.10 - Describe the purpose of the state government of Louisiana
- 1.13 - Describe examples of rules and laws in Louisiana
- 1.14 - Describe civic virtues including voting, running for office, serving on committees, and volunteering
- 1.15 - Describe the importance of fairness, responsibility, respect, and hard work

Economics:

- 1.17 - Differentiate between producers and consumers
- 1.18 - Identify examples of an economic cost or benefit of a decision or event
- 1.20 - Explain why and how goods and services are produced and traded
- 1.21 - Describe how scarcity requires people to make choices

Geography:

- 1.24 - Create and use maps or models with cardinal directions, keys, and scale
- 1.25 - Identify where Louisiana is within the United States and on the globe
- 1.26 - Differentiate between the town, parish, state, and country in which the student lives on a political map
- 1.31 - Explain how and why people and goods move from place to place

Florida Alignment (NGSSS)

American History:

Historical Inquiry and Analysis: SS.1.A:

- SS.1.A.1.1 - Develop an understanding of a primary source.
- SS.1.A.1.2 - Understand how to use the media center/other sources to find answers to questions about a historical topic.

Historical Knowledge: SS.1.A.2

- SS.1.A.2.1 – understand history tells the story of people and events of other times and places
- SS.1.A.2.2 – compare life now with life in the past
- SS.1.A.2.4 - Identify people from the past who have shown character ideals and principles including honesty, courage, and responsibility.
- SS.1.A.2.5 – distinguish between historical fact and fiction using various materials

Chronological Thinking: SS.1.A.3

- SS.1.A.3.1 – use terms related to time and sequentially order events that have occurred in school, home, or community

Civics and Government:

Foundations of Government, Law, and the American Political System: SS.1.C.1

- SS.1.CG.1.2 - Describe how the absence of rules and laws impacts individuals and the community

Structure and Functions of Government: SS.1.C.3

- SS.1.CG.3.2 - Explain responsible ways for individuals and groups to make decisions

Geography:

The World In Spatial Terms: SS.1.G.1

- SS.1.G.1.2 - Identify key elements (compass rose, cardinal directions, title, key/legend with symbols) of maps and globes .
- SS.1.G.1.3 –Construct a basic map using key elements including cardinal directions and map symbols.
- SS.1.G.1.4 - Identify a variety of physical features using a map and globe.
- SS.1.G.1.5 - Locate on maps and globes the student's local community, Florida, the Atlantic Ocean, and the Gulf of Mexico

Economics:

Beginning Economics: SS.1.E.1

- SS.1.E.1.1 - Recognize that money is a method of exchanging goods and services.
- SS.1.E.1.2 - Define opportunity costs as giving up one thing for another
- SS.1.E.1.3 - Distinguish between examples of goods and services.
- SS.1.E.1.4 - Distinguish people as buyers, sellers, and producers of goods and services.
- SS.1.E.1.6 - Identify that people need to make choices because of scarce resources.

ROADMAP

Below is the recommended sequence of instruction for this unit.

At a Glance Unit 1: Early & Medieval African Communities								
Day	Lesson	Type	Day	Lesson	Type	Day	Lesson	Type
1	1	Read Aloud	16	9	Content Booster C	31	17	Content Booster F
2	1	Read Aloud	17	9	Content Booster C	32	17	Content Booster F
3	2	Content Booster A	18	10	Read Aloud	33	18	Read Aloud
4	2	Content Booster A	19	10	Read Aloud	34	18	Read Aloud
5	3	Read Aloud	20	11	Content Booster D	35		Review
6	3	Read Aloud	21	11	Content Booster D	36		Assessment
7	4	Content Booster B	22	12	Read Aloud	37		Flex Day 1
8	4	Content Booster B	23	12	Read Aloud	38		Flex Day 2
9	5	Read Aloud	24	13	Content Booster E	39		Flex Day 3
10	5	Read Aloud	25	13	Content Booster E	40		Flex Day 4
11	6	Project: Castle Model	26	14	Project: Flipped Fairytale	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use and move flex days around as needed! • Reference your Scope and Sequence for scanning deadline! 		
12	7	Project: Castle Model	27	14	Project: Flipped Fairytale			
13	7	Project: Castle Model	28	15	Project: Flipped Fairytale			
14	8	Read Aloud	29	16	Read Aloud			
15	8	Read Aloud	30	16	Read Aloud			