

Social Studies Key Themes: Grade 3

To be productive members of society, students must be critical consumers of information they read, hear, and observe and communicate effectively about their ideas. They need to gain knowledge from a wide array of sources and examine and evaluate that information to develop and express an informed opinion, using information gained from the sources and their background knowledge. Students must also make connections between what they learn about the past and the present to understand how and why events happen and people act in certain ways.

Thus, students must:

- Build an understanding of social studies content in the grade-level expectations (GLEs)
 - Examine authentic sources to build knowledge of social studies content
 - Explore meaningful questions about sources and content to build understanding
- Develop and express claims that demonstrate their understanding of content
 - Make connections among ideas, people, and events across time and place
 - Express understanding of content using evidence from authentic sources and outside knowledge

This document has two sections.

1. **Key Themes:** There are seven key themes across all grades. These describe the connections students must make to build and express their understanding of content. They progress from kindergarten to grade 12, as students build a more sophisticated understanding of content. The descriptions in this document are for grade 3.
2. **Sample Assessment Item:** This section compares an old end-of-year assessment item to a new item for grade 3. The new assessment items require students to make connections represented by the key themes to develop and express claims that demonstrate their understanding of GLE content.



Physical and Human Systems

Students in grade 3 use the features of maps and globes to identify locations and characteristics of a place, such as the physical features and regional characteristics. They also explain that the regions of Louisiana developed based on how climate, location, and natural resources both influenced where people settled and how they used the land and adapted to the environment. Lastly, students describe how coastal erosion/loss of wetlands, river changes, and flooding can result from human factors and invasive species.



Migration and Settlement

Students in grade 3 recognize that many factors influence the movement and settlement of people, such as physical features, climate, and gaining land or seeking opportunities through exploration. They also explain how migration and settlement of Native Americans, French, Acadians/Cajuns, and Spanish helped to create Louisiana's culture.



Economics and Trade

Students in grade 3 define basic economic terminology and explain how people work to earn and save income and contribute to a larger economy. They also understand and describe the relationships among economic factors and how those impact and are impacted by consumer decisions (i.e., the relationships among scarcity and choice, surplus and shortage, supply and demand, and opportunity cost and their impact on the selling price of goods and services, how competition is gained through comparative shopping, and the concepts of economic specialization and interdependence). Lastly, students recognize that Louisiana is part of a bigger economy and differentiate between imports and exports in Louisiana.



Politics and Governance

Students in grade 3 describe the structures of state and local government (i.e., powers and responsibilities) and compare how officials are elected at the state and national levels. They also recognize the purpose and role of state and local governments in meeting the needs of society (i.e., to make laws, provide protection, build roads and bridges, and use taxes to pay for public services).



Society and Culture

Students in grade 3 explain how historic and cultural elements are represented in different ways through symbols, landmarks, food, language, traditions, and festivals/celebrations. They also describe the impact of different groups on Louisiana's culture (i.e., Creoles, Cajuns, Native Americans, French, and Spanish) and how technology helped to spread Louisiana's culture.



Conflict and Compromise

Students in grade 3 describe the qualities of a good leader and citizen. They explain the relationship among rules and laws of a community and rights and responsibilities of citizens to demonstrate their understanding of the role an individual plays in a larger community and what happens when citizens do not uphold their rights and responsibilities. They also explain how citizens can help their urban, suburban, or rural communities by solving a local issue.



Continuity and Change

Students in grade 3 demonstrate with timelines and using sequencing vocabulary how change can be shown over time. They also describe the impacts of technological innovations on family life and the regions and culture of Louisiana. Lastly, students summarize how Louisiana developed over time from Native American civilizations through exploration, colonization, and the Louisiana Purchase to statehood.

Old Assessment Item

Why was the Louisiana Purchase of 1803 an important event in Louisiana's history?

- A. It made Louisiana a part of the United States.
- B. It made New Orleans the capital of Louisiana.
- C. It made the Mississippi River flow through Louisiana.
- D. It made French the most common language in the United States.

This item assesses GLE 54: Describe the importance of events and ideas significant to Louisiana's development.

Key Concept

Important events in and ideas significant to Louisiana's development—*e.g., cultural influence of various ethnic groups (Creoles and Cajuns, American Indians, African Americans, French, Spanish), reforms of Huey P. Long, Louisiana Purchase, statehood, Battle of New Orleans, the development of New Orleans and its role as a major port*

This item asks students to identify the importance of the Louisiana Purchase. Students would need to know what the Louisiana Purchase was and when it happened to answer this question. To prepare for this assessment in the classroom, teachers would need to cover the Louisiana Purchase and help students recall facts about the event.

New Assessment Item

Grade 3 Item Set: [Louisiana Purchase](#)

This set assesses GLE 3.2.1: Explain how major explorers and leaders contributed to the early development of Louisiana.

Related Themes

- **Physical and Human Systems:** Students use maps and demonstrate an understanding between geography and human settlement, including identifying why the Louisiana Territory was an important piece of land based on its natural resources.
- **Migration and Settlement:** Students apply their understanding of how gaining land and access to a port was a key factor in the movement and settlement of people during the time of the Louisiana Purchase.
- **Continuity and Change:** Students explain how Louisiana developed over time through the Louisiana Purchase.

This item set asks students to examine a map and a timeline to apply their understanding of how major explorers and leaders contributed to the development of Louisiana through the Louisiana Purchase. To prepare for this assessment in the classroom, students would need to examine sources about the Louisiana Territory to build their understanding of why the Louisiana Territory was an important piece of land. They would also need to draw conclusions about and make connections between the people and events leading up to the Louisiana Purchase.