

6A – Empires

MCCC Unit 6, lesson 4 on Imperialism, Unit 7 Lessons 1-3 about Governments

6th Grade Social Studies Network – 2015-6

Part A of Unit 6 – Political Geography

GLCEs: 6G221 Human characteristics, 6G4 Ways of dividing land, 6G432 Patterns of settlement, 6G433 Migration, 6G442 Cooperation and conflict; 6C111 purposes of government in different countries

Note: The materials about governments in Lessons 1-3 of MCCC Unit 7 seem qualitatively more complex and detailed than other MCCC Lessons. Moreover, they do not directly address the Michigan GLCEs for 6th grade world geography, although teachers might find them useful to meet civics GLCEs in some schools.

In this Part, we focus on several broad issues of political organization in the context of historic changes in environmental conditions, human definitions of resources, and trade connections.

1. Review Activity: What is a Resource? (2-10 minutes, depending on questions asked about maps)

Mild climate; flooding rivers make soft, workable soil; irrigation increases productivity; access to key metals and other substances (e.g. frankincense, silk); favorable location for trade

6th 5Ay World Domestication Hearth Areas

BI1 World Economic Geology clickable map

2. Scaffolding Activities: Really Basic Climate Map; Introducing the GeoHistoGram (5-10 min each)

BI1 World clickable population map 8x14

6th 4D GeoHistoGram Basics

3. Activity: The Top 12 – great empires in the past (Their legacies still have influence today.)

This map activity serves as a kind of end-of-course summary of major placenames and environments around the world. Students view maps that show the starting points and largest extent of a handful of key empires in the past. (20-60 minutes, depending on whether you have readings, videos, or just capsule descriptions of the characteristics of the area where the empire was prominent):

- Egypt – Old Kingdom, Middle Kingdom, New Kingdom, etc.
- Persian Empire – expansion after 2500 years of urban growth and decline in Mesopotamia
- Mauryan Empire – the first group to rule most of densely populated South Asia
- Han Dynasty – farmers on floodplains help build the core identity of modern China
- Roman Empire – traders cross the Mediterranean Sea (“Mare Nostrum”) and beyond
- Islamic Caliphates – missionaries and traders cross deserts and the bays of the Indian Ocean
- Vikings – traders and raiders use longboats on northern European waterways
- Mongols – Central Asian grassland nomads conquer the world’s largest empire
- Ghana/Mali/Songhai – kingdoms arise in the African savanna between rainforest and desert
- Aztec and Inca – mountain-based empires in the Americas
- European colonial empires – 2 percent of the world claims “ownership” of more than 75 percent
- Soviet Union – command economy in the cold forests and tundras of northern Eurasia

6th 6A World Empires matching activity

6th 6Ax World Empires List

www.geacron.com

Readings/videos about empires, chosen to support literacy/history objectives

4. Supplementary Activity: The Fall of Rome (5-??, depending on whether you simply note the variety of theories or explore their links with political ideologies today)

Theories about the Fall of Rome form the basis for several modern political ideologies about the role of immigration, trade, religion, taxation, the military, diplomacy, palace intrigue, and moral decay.

6th 6Az 50 Suggested Reasons for the Fall of the Roman Empire

<http://www.history.com/news/history-lists/8-reasons-why-rome-fell>

<http://www.usu.edu/markdamen/1320hist&civ/chapters/08romfal.htm>

Pages from MCCC

SuppMaterials.SS060604 word cards

Takehome: At certain times in history, people in specific places in the world had ideas and tools (e.g., cement, irrigation, metalworking, longships, etc.) that allowed a few people (often slaves!) to produce enough food and other goods to support a much larger number of people. These other people, in turn, could do other things, like form governments, run schools, do science, create art, and make military forces powerful enough to conquer other territory. The resulting empires were based in specific places but claimed jurisdiction over large areas. To address issues in the world today, citizens should understand the processes that permitted the growth of key empires in the past, the forces that contributed to their decline, and the legacies that influence life today. These understandings are cumulative – they don’t just magically happen in one course. The goal in this Part of a 6th grade class is to provide a solid geographic foundation for learning more about key empires in future geography, history, and civics classes.