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Read for

CONTENT



Social Studies

U.S. History • World History • Civics

Mike Baron



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Introduction

Social studies offers students a chance to look at the connections among the peoples and nations of the world, the effect of science and technology on society, and the ways to practice good citizenship. Social studies is a very important subject for young learners. Not only are many questions answered about our society and history, but the very idea of learning to question is taught and valued.

In the social studies, students must read to learn. The complex nature of geography, history, economics, government, and technology subjects can put struggling readers at a big disadvantage. ***Read For Content: Social Studies*** approaches the challenge of concept-explaining, expository text with short and manageable stories. The 120 single-page stories cover the subjects of U.S. History, World History, and Civics. Each selection is a simply written, curriculum-based social studies story that will help students navigate through the facts and conclusions that are common to social studies reading.

Strategies to aide struggling readers

Social studies material confronts readers with densely factual material. Different reading strategies can be used with the stories to meet the challenge presented by difficult subject-specific vocabulary and complex concepts.

Look for specific information

Use the multiple-choice review questions as a research tool. Teach students to recognize and pull out significant facts from the material while finding the correct answers.

Define subject-specific vocabulary words

Use the “Key Terms” definition list to locate and explain important challenge words within a story. Find other words in the story that may not be described by the story content. Consider why the words are important for telling the story.

Focus on main ideas

Use the section headings and story titles to make predictions about the content. Before reading the story, discuss the “Think About It” review question to create a personal interest in the story topic.

Know the difference between facts, opinions, and conclusions

Use the fact-or-opinion review exercise to help the student distinguish facts from opinions. Find conclusion and summaries in the stories that reflect the authors’ interpretation of the facts.

Readability and grade levels

This book is for adolescent readers who are likely to struggle with standard social studies content. The stories are short and consist of basic text with no tables, figures, lists, or footnotes. For social studies, however, making a story shorter does not necessarily mean that it is easier to understand. The concepts of “easier” and “harder” must be considered in relation to complex and interrelated text content – there is a limit to how much can be simplified or omitted while still providing an adequate explanation of a topic.

Readability formulas analyze a passage of text and provide an estimate of the reading skill required to read it. Grade level readability scores are based on factors such as word length (number of syllables), sentence length, and frequency of difficult words. Two common readability formulas used to analyze upper elementary and secondary reading material are the Flesch-Kincaid and Dale-Chall formulas. Flesch-Kincaid grade rankings are determined by calculating the number of words, sentences, and syllables in a story – but not individual word difficulty. The Dale-Chall system calculates the grade level based on sentence length plus the number and frequency of difficult words, using a list of 3000 “familiar” words as a basis for determining difficult words.

The contextual nature of social studies content makes it difficult to replace long words with short words, or difficult words with simple words. While a lower grade level calculation might be achieved, removing certain subject-specific words is editorially difficult if not impossible. For example, it would be hard to write a story about the U.S. Constitution without using the word “constitution” at least once!

The Dale-Chall formula anticipates this problem by allowing person names, place names, and proper nouns to be treated separately by the readability processing (a computerized calculation process).

For example, consider the two readability scores for *Mexican Border and Immigration Issues* (U.S. History, page 19):

Flesch-Kincaid grade level score: 7.2

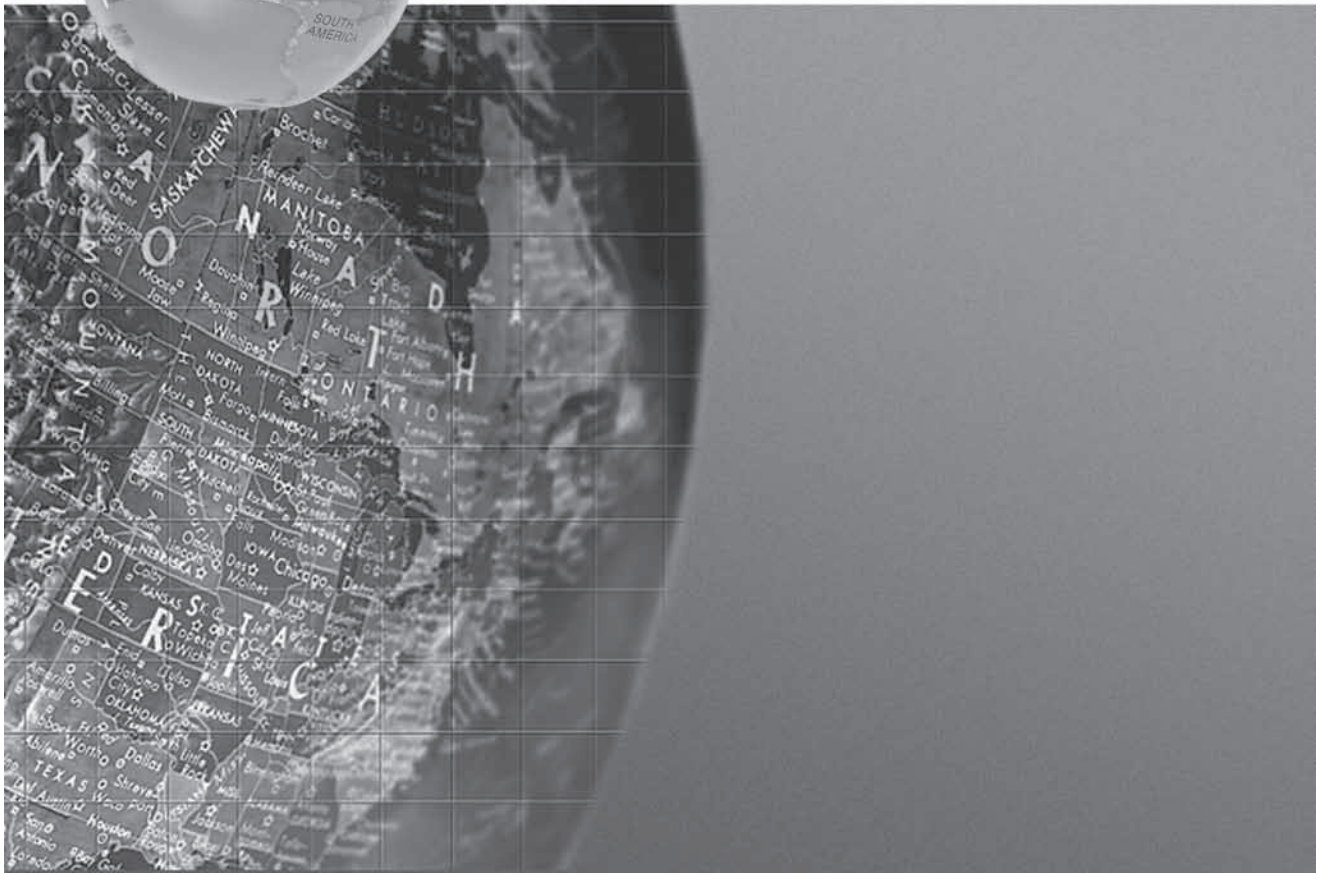
Dale-Chall score grade level score: 5.6

As a 325 word story consisting of 27 sentences and 55 words of 3 or more syllables, the Flesch-Kincaid formula rates the story as grade 7 difficulty. The Dale-Chall rating, which allows proper nouns to be removed from its list of difficult words, resulted in a grade level of 5.6 (grade 5/6).

A chart showing Flesch-Kincaid and Dale-Chall readability scores for all 120 stories is provided on page 267.



U.S. History



Uncle Sam Trades with His Neighbors



President Calvin Coolidge said, “The chief business of the American people is business.” We live in a capitalist society. Capital is money. Americans trade money for goods and services. We trade person to person, city to city, and state to state. Americans trade with countries all over the world.

Countries are like homes. They must protect themselves from unwanted visitors. Countries ban imported goods for all sorts of reasons. Some goods may pose health dangers. Others might contain diseased animals. Mostly, countries ban goods to protect their businesses from competition. The United States thrives on competition.

The U.S., Canada, and Mexico belong to a special club. It’s called the North American Free Trade Agreement. Members can trade freely without a lot of hassle. But not everyone is happy. Some people think we buy too much from other countries. Some think we should tighten our borders.

Some countries won’t trade with us. North Korea and Iran won’t buy American goods. But we continue to trade with Iran because we need their oil. The European Union wants to compete with us. Fair competition is good for everyone. America seeks fair competition without losing control of its borders.

American trade practices are always changing. Our government often changes policy to help American business. Other countries do the same. That’s why the way we trade with other countries is always changing.

Uncle Sam Trades with His Neighbors

1. What is capital?

- a. Washington, D.C.
- b. A type of building
- c. Money
- d. A fish

2. Who belongs to the North American Free Trade Agreement?

- a. North Korea
- b. Eastern Europe
- c. Western Europe
- d. The U.S., Canada, and Mexico

3. The American economy thrives on:

- a. Competition
- b. Pork belly futures
- c. The stock market
- d. Taxes

4. Who refuses to buy American goods?

- a. France
- b. North Korea and Iran
- c. Canada
- d. Mexico

Fact or Opinion?

5. Which statement is an OPINION – not a FACT?

- a. Americans trade with countries all over the world.
- b. Fair competition is always good for everyone.
- c. North Korea and Iran won't buy American goods.
- d. Americans trade money for goods and services.

Think About It!

What things that you buy come from other countries?

Key Terms

Goods and Services:

things produced by an economy. Some goods are food and clothes; services include doctors and merchants.

Competition: rivalry between two or more persons or groups

Trade: a purchase or sale, a business transaction

Capital: money owned by a business or person

Import: bring from another country

Canada: A Bilingual Country

Canada is the second-largest country in the world. Both English and French explorers discovered Canada. Because of these two nationalities, Canada speaks two languages. Most of its provinces speak English. Most of the Quebec Province speaks French. Acadia is part of French-speaking Quebec. Acadians who moved to Louisiana became known as “Cajuns.”

The French and English fought several wars for control of Canada. The first, in 1689, was known as King William’s War. It went on for ten years. Finally, they signed a treaty that said things would go on as before. The French-speaking areas would still speak French. The English-speaking provinces would speak English.

Throughout the 1800s, England and France continued to fight over Canada. They were locked in a worldwide struggle. The English owned the Hudson Bay Company. The French owned New France. It was New France that eventually became Quebec Province.

Problems between the English and French still exist. Today, some citizens of Quebec would like to secede from Canada. Many French Canadians would like to have their own country. Quebec passed a law making French their official language. But the majority of Canadians are still English speaking.

Quebec regularly holds a provincial vote on whether to withdraw from Canada. The last time was in 1995. Quebec voted to remain part of Canada. The vote was very close. Next time, it could be different. They may vote to form their own country.

Canada



Canada: A Bilingual Country

1. What is the second-largest country in the world?

- a. The United States
- b. Mexico
- c. Canada
- d. Russia

2. Who fought over Canada in the 1800s?

- a. The U.S. and Mexico
- b. England and France
- c. Russia and Turkey
- d. China and Russia

3. Which province has French as the official language?

- a. Quebec
- b. Alberta
- c. British Columbia
- d. Hudson Bay

4. Which Canadian province might become an independent country?

- a. Alberta
- b. British Columbia
- c. Quebec
- d. Amsterdam

Fact or Opinion?

5. Which statement is an OPINION – not a FACT?

- a. Most people in Canada are friendly.
- b. King William's War went on for ten years.
- c. Canada is the second-largest country in the world.
- d. Acadia is part of French-speaking Quebec.

Think About It!

If you lived in Quebec, would you want to stay part of Canada?

Key Terms

English: language that came from England

French: language that came from France

Nationalities: the status of belonging to a specific nation

Secede: to withdraw or pull out

Province: the area occupied by one part of a nation, like a state

Treaty: an agreement between nations

Panama Canal History

“A man, a plan, a canal, Panama!” This palindrome is about the vital role President Theodore Roosevelt played in building the Panama Canal.

Interest in a short route between the Atlantic and Pacific Oceans began with Spanish explorers. The Spanish government wanted to build a canal in the 1530s. But the task was too great for the technology of the time. In the 19th century, Spanish colonies revolted. After that, Spain no longer controlled Panama.

In 1889, the United States Congress created a Panama Canal Commission. After the Canal Commission recommended a route through Nicaragua, Panama offered the U.S. a ten-mile-wide strip of land to build the canal. Panama was chosen, and construction on the canal began in 1905.

The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers supervised the project. They had



to remove 175 million cubic yards of earth. Mosquitoes created a problem for workers in Panama, since they spread malaria. The U.S. Army had to learn how to keep mosquitoes away from the workers.

The canal opened in 1914, a year ahead of schedule. In 1977, President Jimmy Carter agreed to turn over control of the canal to Panama. In 2000, Panama took control of the canal and agreed to let the U.S. keep using it.

Panama Canal History

1. Where did interest in a canal across Central America begin?

- a. With Spanish explorers
- b. With the Colombians
- c. With the Americans
- d. With the Nicaraguans

2. Who supervised the building of the Suez Canal?

- a. John Henry
- b. The Egyptians
- c. Ferdinand Marie de Lesseps
- d. The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers

3. Why did the Panama Canal Commission choose Panama?

- a. It was the shortest route
- b. It was free of disease
- c. Panama offered free parking
- d. Panama offered a ten-mile-wide land strip

4. Who returned control of the canal to Panama?

- a. President Roosevelt
- b. President Carter
- c. Ferdinand Marie de Lesseps
- d. The French

Fact or Opinion?

5. Which statement is an OPINION – not a FACT?

- a. Construction on the canal began in 1905.
- b. The Panama Canal Commission was created in 1889.
- c. 175 million cubic yards of earth were removed to make the canal.
- d. Everyone knows that the biggest canal-building problem was mosquitoes.

Think About It!

Was the United States right or wrong to return the canal to Panama?

Key Terms

Palindrome: a word or sentence that reads the same backwards.

Route: a line of travel

Revolted: Turned against

Malaria: a disease characterized by chills, sweating, and fever, most often spread by mosquitoes

Cuban Missile Crisis



Cuba is the largest Caribbean island and is 90 miles south of Florida. It was originally inhabited by people known as the Taino and Ciboney. Soon after the explorer Christopher Columbus visited the island in 1492, it became a Spanish colony.

In 1952, former President Fulgencio Batista, supported by the army, seized power. The Batista government was supported by the United States.

In 1959, a young lawyer, Fidel Castro, called for revolution. He had tried before and failed. This time he succeeded. Castro declared Cuba a communist country. In 1960, John F. Kennedy was elected president of the United States. In 1961, the U.S. supported an invasion of Cuba at the Bay of Pigs to remove Castro from power. The invasion failed, and Castro continued to be the leader of Cuba.

In the fall of 1962, the U.S. discovered Soviet-supplied missiles in Cuba. They appeared in photos taken by spy planes. The missiles could easily strike Florida. President Kennedy ordered a naval blockade of Cuba. Nothing could get in or out.

Nikolai Khrushchev was the Soviet premier. It had been his idea to install the missiles. President Kennedy said that an attack of the U.S. from Cuba would be regarded as an attack by the Soviet Union. He threatened the Soviet Union with nuclear bombs. The world was close to nuclear war.

President Kennedy went on television to explain what he'd done. People in the U.S. were very afraid of nuclear war. On October 28, 1962, Khrushchev agreed to remove all the missiles. In return, the U.S. agreed not to invade Cuba. Today, the U.S. government still does not recognize the government of Cuba.

Cuban Missile Crisis

1. Where is Cuba?

- a. Soviet Union
- b. 90 miles south of Florida
- c. South America
- d. Texas

2. Who declared Cuba a communist country?

- a. John F. Kennedy
- b. Joseph Stalin
- c. Fidel Castro
- d. George W. Bush

3. How did the U.S. learn about Soviet missiles in Cuba?

- a. A spy
- b. A Cuban defector
- c. On television
- d. Photos taken by spy planes

4. Whose idea was it to put missiles in Cuba?

- a. Nikolai Khrushchev
- b. Fidel Castro
- c. John F. Kennedy
- d. Britney Spears

Fact or Opinion?

5. Which statement is an OPINION – not a FACT?

- a. Cuba is the largest Caribbean island.
- b. In 1960, John F. Kennedy was elected president of the United States.
- c. Most Cubans believe that communism is best for Cuba.
- d. In 1961, the U.S. supported an invasion of Cuba.

Think About It!

Should the United States government talk with the leaders in Cuba?

Key Terms

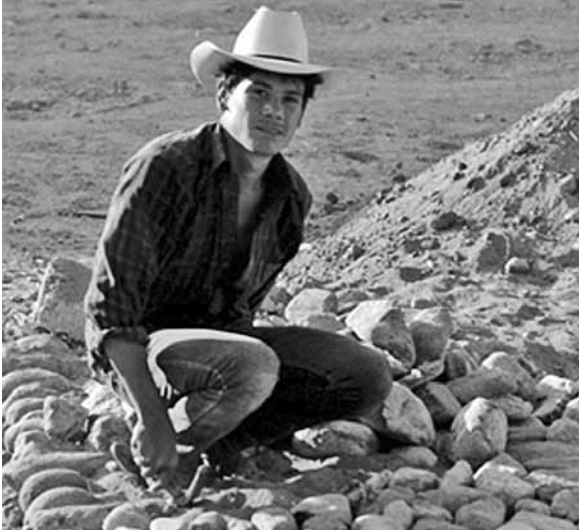
Communist: a believer in Marx and Lenin, "From each according to his ability, to each according to his needs"

Blockade: stopping supplies from reaching an enemy

Elected: chosen by the most votes

Invasion: to take over as an enemy

Mexican Border and Immigration Issues



The border between the U.S. and Mexico is 1,951 miles long. It is one of the longest borders in the world. Until recently, our relations with Mexico have been friendly. But now, some Americans believe too many Mexicans are entering the U.S. illegally. As a result, some Americans want to build a fence between the U.S. and Mexico.

In 1840, the U.S. was much smaller than today. Texas claimed independence from both the U.S. and Mexico. Spain claimed large parts of the American southwest. In 1845, the U.S. declared Texas was an American state. This caused war to break out between Mexico and the U.S. in 1846. The U.S. won a very short war and forced Mexico to sign the Treaty of Guadalupe. Mexico was paid \$15 million, for which

the U.S. got California, New Mexico, and Texas. Some Mexicans believe they should get these states back. Some Americans agree with them.

Because the U.S. has a stronger economy than Mexico, it's easier to find better-paying jobs here. For that reason, Mexicans have long come across the U.S. borders both legally and illegally to find work. The department of Immigration and Naturalization estimates seven million Mexicans are in the U.S. illegally. They are usually referred to as "illegal immigrants." But America already accepts around two million new legal immigrants each year. That is more than the rest of the world combined.

People in the U.S. can't agree what to do about this, and it has become a very hot political issue. Illegal workers do not pay taxes, and this makes the cost of social services higher.

President George W. Bush supports the plan to build a 700-mile fence along the border with Mexico. Some parts of the border have fences now. There are also proposals to give amnesty to illegal immigrants already here. That means they can become citizens even though they are here illegally. Other plans call for sending them back to Mexico.

Mexico Border and Immigration Issues

1. How long is the border between the U.S. and Mexico?

- a. Five feet
- b. 1,951 miles
- c. The length of three football fields
- d. Twelve kilometers

2. Who won the Mexican/American war?

- a. France
- b. Bolivia
- c. California
- d. The U.S.

3. What treaty did the U.S. force Mexico to sign?

- a. Treaty of Guadalupe
- b. Treaty of France
- c. Treaty of New Calidonia
- d. Treaty of Juicyfruit

4. What president supports the plan to build a 700-mile border fence?

- a. President Fox
- b. President Bush
- c. President Washington
- d. President Carter

Fact or Opinion?

5. Which statement is an OPINION – not a FACT?

- a. The border between the U.S. and Mexico is 1,951 miles long.
- b. In 1840, the U.S. was much smaller than today.
- c. In 1845, the U.S. declared Texas was an American state.
- d. All Mexicans think they should get Texas back.

Think About It!

Should the United States build a fence on the border with Mexico?

Key Terms

Independence:

freedom from the control of others

Illegal immigrants:

people who have moved to the U.S. without permission

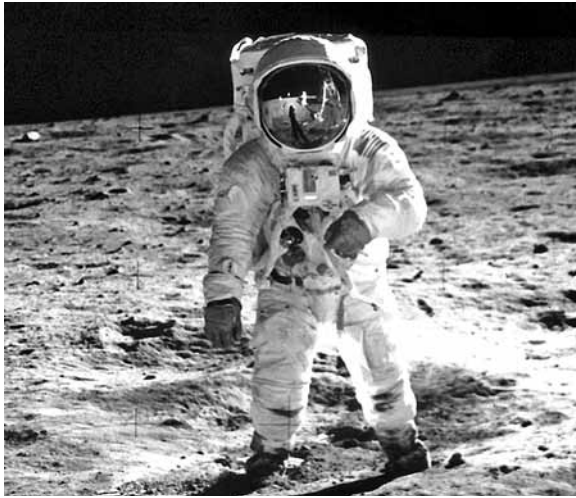
Amnesty: a general

pardon for offenses against the government

Border: the line that

separates one country, state, or province from another

Race to the Moon



Man has always dreamed of going into space. Science fiction writer Jules Verne wrote *From the Earth to the Moon* over a hundred years ago. The possibility of space travel has fueled our fiction ever since.

During World War II, the first progress was made. German scientists developed rockets. After the war, some German scientists came to the U.S. Others went to the Soviet Union. At the time, the U.S. and the Soviet Union were in a cold war. This means that the two countries competed everywhere but in open combat.

In 1957, the Soviets stunned the world by launching the Sputnik satellite. The ability to launch rockets into space made people

think that rocket attacks on earth would soon to be possible. The U.S. was jolted into action. In 1958, the government created NASA, which is the name for the National Aeronautics and Space Administration. Then President John F. Kennedy promised to put an American on the moon.

In 1961, Alan Shepherd became the first American in space. In 1962, John Glenn became the first American to orbit the earth. In 1969, astronauts Neil Armstrong and Edwin “Buzz” Aldrin became the first men on the moon. No other country has put people on the moon.

These days Russia cooperates with the U.S. on an international space station. Construction on it began in 1998. The U.S. has tested space weapons. A satellite in orbit can hit any place on earth. Space exploration is military as well as peaceful. Now NASA plans to send six people to Mars. They hope to do it by the year 2030.

Race to the Moon

1. What Russian satellite was launched in 1957?

- a. Peanut
- b. Boris
- c. Sputnik
- d. Red Rocket

2. Who promised to put an American on the moon?

- a. Harry Potter
- b. Jules Verne
- c. Nikolai Khrushchev
- d. John F. Kennedy

3. Who were the first men on the moon?

- a. Neil Armstrong and Edwin "Buzz" Aldrin
- b. John F. Kennedy and Nikolai Khrushchev
- c. Jules Verne and H.G. Wells
- d. Adam Sandler and Ben Stiller

4. Who plans to send people to Mars?

- a. NASA
- b. The Soviet Union
- c. Cuba
- d. France

Fact or Opinion?

5. Which statement is an OPINION – not a FACT?

- a. American astronauts are always better than Russian ones.
- b. Jules Verne wrote *From the Earth to the Moon*.
- c. In 1961, Alan Shepherd became the first American in space.
- d. The U.S. has tested space weapons.

Think About It!

Is the U.S. space exploration program a good thing to spend tax money on?

Key Terms

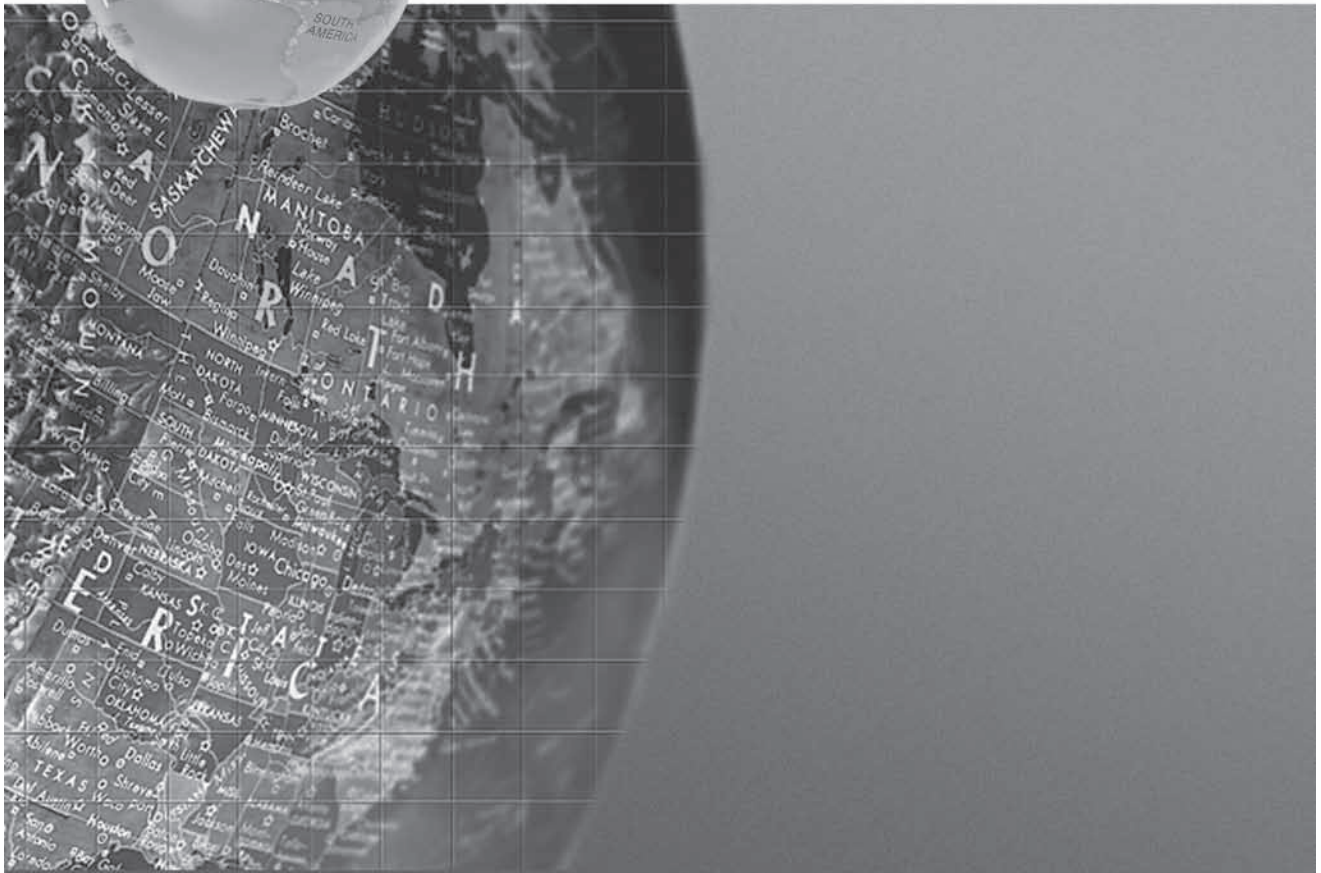
Orbit: travel in circles

Satellite: a device designed to be launched into orbit around the earth

Exploration: the investigation of unknown regions



World History



The Dinosaur Age



Dinosaurs were the ancestors of today's reptiles and probably of birds as well. They lived in the Mesozoic era, which lasted from 225 million to 60 million years ago. Then they suddenly became extinct. We have learned about dinosaurs by examining fossils, skeletons, footprints, and eggs.

They ranged in size from about that of a chicken, to monsters such as the *Brontosaurus* which weighed up to thirty-eight tons. The *Brontosaurus* had to eat half a ton of vegetation every day just to stay alive! Dinosaurs emerged when the world was mostly tropical and there were no glaciers. Their population grew rapidly because they found plenty to eat and no serious competition.

About 180 million years ago, the oceans retreated rapidly then surged forth again. They left behind "bone beds," literally strata of drowned dinosaurs that were unable to reach dry ground. Survivors broke into two branches: lizard-hipped and bird-hipped. The lizard-hipped gave birth to carnivores like *Tyrannosaurus rex*. The bird-hipped gave birth to vegetarians like the *Ichthyornis*.

Many biologists believe that all birds are descended from dinosaurs. The Cretaceous period began 145 million years ago. It was marked by increased ocean activity and the breaking up of the continents. Groups of dinosaurs drifted away from one another, which may have led to breeding problems.

By the end of the Cretaceous period, there were no more dinosaurs. We still aren't sure what wiped them out. One theory has the Earth being hit by a comet, which caused global dust storms that continued for years. Another says there was a major climate change. We may never know.

The Dinosaur Age

1. When did the dinosaurs live?

- a. Bronze Age
- b. Mesozoic era
- c. Precambrian era
- d. Renaissance period

2. How much food did a *Brontosaurus* eat every day?

- a. Twenty thousand Big Macs
- b. An entire cow
- c. Half ton of vegetation
- d. Five hundred pounds of fish

3. What two branches of dinosaurs developed about 180 million years ago:

- a. Democrat and Republican
- b. Ground dwellers and tree dwellers
- c. Lizard-hipped and bird-hipped
- d. Male and female

4. When did the Cretaceous period begin?

- a. 1 B.C.
- b. Yesterday
- b. 90 million years ago
- d. 145 million years ago

Fact or Opinion?

5. Which statement is an OPINION – not a FACT?

- a. Dinosaurs were the ancestors of today's reptiles.
- b. The Cretaceous period began 145 million years ago.
- c. Dinosaurs lived in the Mesozoic era.
- d. It's obvious that dinosaurs were killed by a comet.

Think about it!

How would your life be different if dinosaurs were still on the planet?

Key Terms

Paleontology: study of fossil remains

Ancestors: persons from whom one is descended

Extinct: no longer in existence

Strata: a layer of material

The Stone Age



The Stone Age refers to the Paleolithic, Mesolithic, and Neolithic periods. The suffix “lithic” means stone, and also refers to stone artifacts, spearheads and arrowheads in particular. These periods are called the Stone Age because they happened before man had learned how to master metal. Most utensils were made of wood and stone.

The Stone Age began 650,000 years ago in the Middle and Far East. It lasted until about 6000 B.C. The Stone Age in the Americas began when the first human beings arrived, as much as 100,000 years ago. It ended there about 2500 B.C.

The Paleolithic period began 650,000 years ago when humans first began using rocks for tools. At first, single tools such as chipped

rocks were used for everything. As time passed, people created a wide variety of tools for many purposes. The Neanderthals lived 150,000 years ago and used stone and bone implements. Toward the end of the Paleolithic, advanced societies were making needles and harpoons out of bone.

In Europe, Cro-Magnon cave paintings pointed to increasingly sophisticated societies. After 8000 B.C., there was a major change in weather. Warmer weather made it easier to gather food. This period is known as the Mesolithic.

The Neolithic period was the last part of the Stone Age. Farms and villages began to appear during this time. Neolithic people learned to grow corn, beans, squash, and other plants. The Neolithic period ended when the use of metal tools started the Bronze Age.

The Stone Age

1. Lithic means:

- a. Iron
- b. Type of wood
- c. Stone
- d. Mythic times

2. The Stone Age in the Americas began:

- a. A million years ago
- b. Two million years ago
- c. 100,000 years ago
- d. 650,000 years ago

3. Who lived 150,000 years ago and used stone and bone implements?

- a. Cro-Magnon
- b. Cretans
- c. Atlanteans
- d. Neanderthals

4. What appeared first among Neolithic cultures?

- a. Books
- b. Musical instruments
- c. Sophisticated stone tools
- d. Ham and eggs

Fact or Opinion?

5. Which statement is an OPINION – not a FACT?

- a. The Stone Age began 650,000 years ago.
- b. Neolithic people must have liked eating corn.
- c. The Paleolithic period began 650,000 years ago..
- d. The Neolithic period was the last part of the Stone Age.

Think About It!

What kinds of tools could you make from rocks and stones?

Key Terms

Utensil: any tool or bowl used in a kitchen

Sophisticated: worldly-wise, complex