



PRIMARY SOURCE

Straight from the Source: Close Readings for Elementary Social Studies

TOPICS FOR GRADES 2-5

FOR GRADE TWO

Second graders study world and U.S. geography and where Americans came from. They explore the movement of peoples and their cultural traditions. These sources for grade 2 address people, immigration stories, and important customs and achievements that have come to us from around the world.

Latino Migrations: Sharing Cultures, Sharing Countries

Sources: A narrative poem in the voice of a Dominican boy and an accompanying informational text explaining the transnational lives and cultures of many Latinos in the U.S. Extension sources include other Latino narrative poems, maps, an autobiographical story from a migrant child, and Latin American folk arts.

Music Migrates from Africa

Sources: Informational text about xylophones and banjos, two instruments popular in Africa that enslaved peoples later re-created in the Americas and made part of the American musical tradition. Extension sources include video demonstrations and curricula on other instruments with African roots.

A Chinese-American Architect

Source: Child-friendly biographical text about I.M. Pei, an immigrant from China who changed world architecture and designed landmarks of Boston. Extension sources include images and video of gardens that influenced Pei in China, images of his famous buildings.

FOR GRADE THREE

Third graders learn about the history and geography of Massachusetts, including studies of Native Peoples, Pilgrims, Puritans and Africans. They also begin to explore the American Revolution through events, locations and individuals in Massachusetts. These sources reflect these key topics and include diverse voices among the prominent citizens.

Wampanoag Appeal to Colonists for Land Rights

Source: Excerpts from 18th century Mashpee Wampanoag Petition for Land Rights, outlining Wampanoag claims to the land and their desire for just treatment by the English colonists. Extension sources include maps, the original petition written in the Wampanoag language, and context about a subsequent petition.

Puritan Packing List

Source: The Reverend Francis Higginson's 1630 "List of Needful Things to Bring to New England," for Puritans intending to make the journey. Extension sources include images depicting various items on the list.

Puritan School Lesson for Children

Source: Excerpt from the *New England Primer*, a popular 17th century textbook for children in the Massachusetts Bay Colony; the focus of the lesson is children's obligations, or "promises." Extension sources include Anne Bradstreet's poem "In Reference to her Children" (1659), today's Pledge of Allegiance.

Biography of a Young African-American Author

Source: Biographical text about Phillis Wheatley, an enslaved West African girl who became an accomplished poet and free woman in 18th century Massachusetts. Extension sources include portrait of Wheatley, guidelines for teaching children about slavery, Wheatley poem, and public memorial to her in Boston.

A Child Learns a Trade in Colonial Boston

Source: Excerpts from Ben Franklin's *Autobiography*. Extension sources include interactive map of colonial trades, children's biographies, sources on the history of child labor and children's rights.

The Midnight Ride: Start of the American Revolution

Source: Excerpts from Paul Revere's account of his Midnight Ride of April 19, 1775. Extension sources include facsimile of Revere's letter, map, field trip sites in Boston (or websites to visit), artist's portrait of Revere.

Wampanoag Trade and Subsistence

Source: Excerpt from Pilgrim Edward Winslow's 1622 account "A Journey to Packanokik, the Habitation of the Great King Massasoit" describing his group's encounters with Wampanoag people engaged in their day-to-day activities. Extension sources include exhibits of Wampanoag artifacts online, colonial corn meal recipes, and a modern map showing Winslow's route.

Jessie Little Doe Baird, Reviver of the Wampanoag Language

Source: Transcript of part of a 2012 WGBH interview with Jessie Little Doe Baird, founder of the Wampanoag Language Reclamation Project. Extension sources include a map of present-day names of Wampanoag sites, a page from John Eliot's 17th century Wampanoag-language Bible, and an interactive map of Native American language revitalization efforts.

FOR GRADE FOUR

Fourth graders study the geography and people of North America through the concepts of location, place, human-environment interactions, movement, and regions. Included are Native Peoples of North America and early European exploration. These sources introduce US geography as a whole and feature the geographic concepts applied to particular regions and their people.

Christopher Columbus's First Encounter

Source: Excerpts from Columbus' letter describing his first voyage (1493) – what he found, his encounters with native people, and his motives for the journey. Extension sources include an interactive map of world explorers, two historic paintings, and a modern Native American poem relating to the topic.

U.S. Regions: An Invitation to Explore the United States

Source: Excerpts from Walt Whitman poem that catalogues the various geographic and cultural features of the United States as a way of inviting Americans to explore the majestic country. Extension sources include contemporary (19th century) and current-day U.S. maps, artistic and literary connections.

Understanding Who We Are through the U.S. Census

Sources: Text and infographics developed from 2010 U.S. Census Bureau Data addressing how the census works, world regions and countries of origin, languages spoken, and the U.S. population size in comparison with other nations. Extension sources include overlay maps, Census interactive map, graphics creation programs.

The Northeast: Urbanization

Source: Historical newspaper article on early 20th century skyscrapers, offering insight into how the changing landscapes of cities were portrayed by the press. Extension sources include a population density map, photographs and films of skyscrapers and their construction.

The Northeast: Lowell and the Textile Industry

Source: Excerpt from "Seeds of Industry," a guidebook for the Lowell National Historical Park, describing the relationship between the waterfalls, mills, and the textile mills. Extension sources include a chart showing textile production in late 19th century Massachusetts, two 1850 maps of Lowell, and photos and architectural drawings of the mills, canals, locks and Pawtucket Falls.

The Northeast: Highways Map of Massachusetts

Source: National Highways Map of Massachusetts of 1914, with proposed highways crisscrossing the state; introduces map features, Massachusetts geography within New England, towns and cities, and trends of growth within the state. Extension sources include 19th century railroad and township map and current highways maps of Massachusetts.

The Northeast: The MLK Jr. National Memorial

Source: Barack Obama's 2011 "Remarks at a Dedication Ceremony for the Martin Luther King, Jr., National Memorial." Extension sources include a video of the same speech, pictures of the MLK,

Jr. monument, map of other monuments and memorials on the National Mall, and a video of a historian's perspective on the memorial.

The West: Jefferson's Instructions to Meriwether Lewis

Source: Thomas Jefferson's 1803 letter to Captain Meriwether Lewis outlining his goals for westward exploration. Extension sources include journal records and hand-drawn maps created by the Corps of Discovery.

The West: The Life of a Chinese Immigrant

Source: Excerpts from a magazine account of a Chinese immigrant's reasons for coming to California in the early 20th century, his work in the West, and the geographic, political, and economic conditions he faced. Extension sources include images of Chinese railway workers, map of Gold Rush sea routes, a packet ship ad, historic painting, and a Certificate of Residence.

The West: Agriculture and Migration through a Child's Eyes

Source: Excerpts from the autobiography of Cesar Chavez describing his family's move to California and subsequent migrations for work in the fertile fields and orchards of the Central Valley. Extension sources include photos of 1930s migrant workers and an interactive agricultural almanac.

The Southwest: Significance of the Grand Canyon to Native Peoples

Source: Excerpts from Grand Canyon National Park's Cultural Landscape Report detailing the role of the Grand Canyon and Colorado River in the traditions, religions and myths of several Native American peoples, as well as their uses of the land and natural resources. Extension sources include a historic painting, photographs from a reservation today, and a NOVA video.

FOR GRADE FIVE

Fifth graders learn about the history of the colonies, the early Republic, the expansion of the United States, slavery and the legacy of the Civil War, and the Civil Rights Movement of the mid-20th century. The sources below illuminate these topics through primary sources that highlight the varied perspectives of the peoples who lived through these events. The final source, originally written for 5th grade social studies, now better supports the 5th grade ELA (Literature) curriculum.

Sugar Production: Engine of the Slave Trade

Source: Two 18th century descriptions of harsh labor conditions on Caribbean sugar plantations by European observers. Extension sources include a gallery of scenes from Caribbean and Louisiana sugar plantations and a children's book on how sugar changed the world.

Laws Preventing the Education of Slaves

Sources: Excerpts from two legal codes from South Carolina and Virginia (18th and 19th centuries) describing prohibitions and punishments for teaching slaves to read or write. Extension sources include similar slave codes from New York, and a grade-level adapted excerpt from Frederick Douglass' autobiography where he describes his efforts to learn to read, and who taught him.

The Traumatic Experience of a Slave Auction

Source: Excerpt from Solomon Northup’s memoir *Twelve Years a Slave*. Extension sources include a broadside advertisement for a slave auction, image of a packed slave ship, bill of sale for a slave mother and child.

Colonists Protest the Stamp Act

Source: Partisan newspaper account of a Stamp Act protest by Boston’s Sons of Liberty describing events and attitudes a decade before Independence. Extension sources include zoomable maps of Boston where events occurred, and a letter by the Loyalist governor of Massachusetts about a Stamp Act riot.

The Colonies Cut Off Trade with Britain

Source: Alexander Hamilton’s “A Full Vindication of the Acts of Congress” (1774), a political article defending the positions of the First Continental Congress. Extension sources include an opposing perspective by Samuel Seabury, 1767 newspaper verse “An Address to the Ladies,” and contemporary documents on the First Continental Congress and non-consumption and non-importation policies.

Abigail Adams on Human Nature and Governance

Source: Excerpts of letter from Abigail Adams to John Adams expressing her beliefs and concerns about governance as the Second Continental Congress met. Extension sources include another letter by Abigail Adams, a public memorial to her, an interactive version of a historical painting, and a Thomas Jefferson quotation.

The Bill of Rights: The Essentials for Fifth Grade

Source: The Bill of Rights (1791), excerpted and adapted in language for grade-level accessibility while preserving the core meaning of the amendments. Extension sources include videos with background information, original draft of the Bill, final (high-resolution) image of the Bill, examples of the rights in practice.

Origin Myth of the Inca (supports ELA – Literature standards)

Source: Excerpts from and analysis of an Incan origin myth, as recalled and written by a Spanish-Incan of the 17th century. Extension sources include an interactive map of the Inca Empire, photographs of places and landscapes from the story, and a 16th century European drawing of Cusco.