

GLOSSARY OF TERMS
SOCIAL STUDIES GRADE AND COURSE-LEVEL EXPECTATIONS

Missouri Department of Elementary and Secondary Education

October 2008

This Glossary of Terms provides definitions and elaborations for terms used in the Social Studies Grade-Level and Course-Level Expectations. Glossary terms in bold face type correspond to those appearing in bold face type in the Expectations. The Glossary includes additional terms to clarify important concepts in Social Studies that were added for End-of-Course tests. These additional terms do not appear in bold.

Absolute location	“Absolute location” pertains to identifying where a place is on the surface of the earth using some arbitrary, mathematical grid system, such as latitude and longitude. One can use absolute location to identify where a place is anywhere on the earth, even on the ocean.
Assimilation	Process by which minority group gradually adopts the culture of the majority group
Barter	“Barter” is the direct trading of goods and services without the use of money.
Bureaucracy	Government department and agencies of non-elected officials
Business cycles	“Business cycles” are short-term fluctuations in business activity; that is, a period of economic growth in real GDP followed by a period of decline in real GDP – a recession or depression – followed by a period of economic growth, and so on. See “Gross Domestic Product (GDP).”
Capital resources	“Capital resources,” often called capital goods, refers to goods used to produce other goods and services. Capital resources may be buildings, equipment, machinery, tools, ports, and dams, provided that those items are used to produce other goods and services.
Columbian Exchange	“Columbian Exchange” refers to the major changes worldwide of flora, fauna, ways of thinking, and technologies that followed from the voyages of Columbus and other Europeans to the Americas.
Common good	“Common good” refers to some program or action that is of benefit to society as a whole. Laws to set up parks, public schools, and public libraries are passed to promote the common good.
Comparative advantage	A person or nation has a comparative advantage in the production of a good or service if that person or nation can produce the good or service at a lower opportunity cost than that of other person or nation.
Constituent	People represented by an elected official
Consumer	“Consumers” are people who buy goods and services to satisfy their wants.
Consumption	“Consumption” may be defined as the use of goods and services by consumers, businesses, or governments.
Cost-benefit analysis	“Cost-benefit analysis” refers to an appraisal of whether the benefits of carrying out a project or decision outweigh the costs of carrying out the project or decision.
Cotton belt	Southern region in the United States where most of the cotton is grown

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Deficit spending	Government spending more money than it receives in a fiscal year
Demand	“Demand” refers to the different quantities of a resource, good, or service that will be purchased at various prices during a given period of time. According to the law of demand, the lower the price of a good or service, the more of it will be purchased, whereas the higher the price, the less of it that will be purchased.
Democracy	A democracy is a system of government in which rule is by the people, either as a direct democracy where the people make their own laws or as a representative democracy, a republic, in which laws are made by the people’s representatives.
Demographics	“Demographics” refers to population statistics, changes, and trends based on various measures of fertility (adding to a population), mortality (subtracting from a population), and migration (redistribution of a population).
Deregulation	Reduction or removal of federal rules on business and industry
Direct democracy	system in which government held by the people is directly exercised by them
Economic Goals	“Economic goals” may be defined as important societal goals that pertain to economics, such as economic choice, security, growth, equality, and efficiency.
Ecosystem	“Ecosystem” is a term that means the same thing as an “ecological system.” Such a system is formed by the interaction of all living organisms (plants, animals, people) with each other and with the physical and chemical factors in the environment in which they live. They may vary in size from a pond, to a stand of giant redwoods, to a huge continent-wide belt like the tundra or the Sahara Desert, to the entire planet.
Environment	Human use of the environment is synonymous with how people use their surroundings.
European Union	An organization that unites many European nations for political, social, and economic goals such as free trade and military cooperation
Factors of production	“Factors of production” are the inputs into the production process: land (natural resources), labor (human resources), and capital. “Human resources” and “capital resources” are defined elsewhere in the glossary.
Federalism	“Federalism” refers to a political system in which a national government shares powers with state or provincial governments. Each level of government has definite powers and each level of government may act directly on individuals within its jurisdiction. In the United States federal system some powers are given to the federal government, some are given to the state government, some powers are shared, and some powers are given to neither government.
Fiscal policy	“Fiscal policy” refers to those government decisions taken with regard to taxing and spending money that are made in order to achieve economic goals.
Gilded Age	Period of rapid wealth accumulation by entrepreneurs from approximately the 1870s-1890s

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Hooverilles	Communities of hastily built makeshift shelters often constructed by people evicted during the Great Depression which were derisively named after President Herbert Hoover
Human characteristics of a place	The “human characteristics of a place” pertain to those features of a place that are the result of human activity. Places vary in the nature of their populations, their population densities, the ethnic makeup of the people, the languages most commonly found, the dominant religions, and the forms of economic, social, and political organization.
Human resources	“Human resources” refers to the quantity and quality of human effort directed to the production of goods and services. One type of human resource is an entrepreneur. An entrepreneur is a person who assumes the risk of organizing productive resources to produce goods and services.
Individuals from Missouri who have made contributions to our state and national heritage	In that part of the Grade 4 assessment that pertains to Standard 2, the benchmark statements indicate that students should know about individuals from Missouri who have made contributions to our state and national heritage. The intent is that students know about a variety of people who have made such contributions – people who lived in different time periods, who came from different cultural backgrounds, and who contributed in different ways (e.g., in exploration and community building, in business and trades, in politics, in education, in the sciences, and so on). The Department of Elementary and Secondary Education has not produced an official list of such people because it is more important that teachers and students decide for themselves which people would be most important. Consequently, assessment items developed for the Missouri Assessment Program in social studies will be designed to allow students to show what they have learned rather than to assess students’ memorization of trivia. A useful fourth grade source for teachers to use to find such people is the textbook <i>Missouri: Then and Now</i> , which was written by Perry Candles and William Foley.
Inflation	“Inflation” may be defined as a rise in the general level of prices in an economy.
Interdependent	People are interdependent when they rely upon each other to meet their needs. For example, people in rural areas are dependent upon industrial areas to obtain the farm machinery they need, and people who live in industrial areas depend upon rural areas to obtain the food they need.
Interest Group	An organization supporting a social, economic, or political goal(s) by attempts to influence the political process

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Investment	“Investment” refers to the use of resources by businesses, individuals, or government to increase productive capacity by developing new technology, obtaining new capital resources, or improving the skills of the work force. Examples are as follows: A restaurant buys new stoves in which to bake bread; an individual buys tools to make some repairs; and a school buys new computers and textbooks.
Laissez faire	“Laissez faire” pertains to the practice of letting people do as they please without interference or direction. Laissez faire in an economy refers to letting owners of businesses or industries fix the rules of competition or the conditions of labor as they please without government regulation or control. Laissez faire as a leadership style pertains to a type of leadership where the leader lets those under his authority do as they please without his interference.
Limited government	“Limited government” may be defined as a government whose powers are limited through constitutionally – imposed restrictions.
Location	“Location” refers to the position of some place or region on the surface of the earth. See absolute location and relative location.
Majority rule	“Majority rule” refers to a pattern of decision making where decisions are made by vote and a decision requires the support of more than half of those voting.
Manifest Destiny	A belief and policy held and implemented in the last half of the 19 th century that claimed the United States had a right to expand its sovereignty on the North American continent
Market economy	A market economy is an economy in which the major decisions about production and distribution of goods and services are made in a decentralized manner by individual households and business firms following their own self interest.
Mental maps	“Mental maps” refers to the mental images or conceptions a person has of an area, including his or her knowledge of features and spatial relationships. One person’s mental map may be more accurate and complete than another person’s. People in the United States often have an image of the world with the United States in the center of a flat map, whereas, people in china often have an image of the world with China in the center of a flat map.
Monetary policy	“Monetary policy” pertains to those actions taken in an economy to control the total money supply in order to promote economic growth or price stability. Monetary policy in the United States is exercised by the Federal Reserve Bank. It strives to exercise control of the money supply by changing reserve requirements in member banks, by changing discount rates (the rate of interest at which it loans its money to member banks), and by buying and selling government securities.
Money	“Money” is anything that people generally accept as a medium of exchange with which to buy goods and services, that serves as a standard of value and that has a store of value.

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Nativism	Political movement characterized by anti-immigrant sentiment favoring the interests of native-born people over foreign-born people
National debt	The sum of deficit spending over time
Natural resources	“Natural resources” are those “gifts of nature” – e.g., land, trees, water, fish, petroleum, mineral deposits, fertile soils, and favorable climatic conditions for growing crops – that are used to produce goods and services.
Opportunity cost	“Opportunity cost” is the most important alternative that is given up as a result of a specific economic decision. The opportunity cost of purchasing an automobile for an eighteen-year-old buy may be that he cannot afford to go to college.
Place	“Place,” as the term is used by geographers, pertains to those physical characteristics and human characteristics that may be used to describe an area.
Physical characteristics of a place	The “physical characteristics of a place” pertain to such features as landforms, water bodies, climate, soils, natural vegetation, and animal life, which have resulted from geological, hydrological, atmospheric, and biological processes.
Popular sovereignty	Under “popular sovereignty,” the power to govern belongs to the people. The people, in turn, entrust that power to the government, which is under their control.
Primary sources	“Primary sources” pertain to sources that are firsthand that may be used by historians in trying to reconstruct and interpret the past. Examples of primary sources are original documents (photocopies are often considered primary sources too), eye witness accounts of an event, perhaps found in a diary, documents, photographs of people, texts of speeches, etc. Just because a source is a primary source, however, does not mean that it is to be taken to be fully true. A person who observed an event and who describes it may perceive it inaccurately because of his personal frame of reference. For example, in the history of this nation in the years before the Civil War, two people may observe the sale of a slave and describe it in very different ways. One person may be a slave owner; the other person a slave about to be sold. Historians examine primary sources, just as attorneys examine witnesses.
Private goods	“Private goods” may be defined as those goods that producers can withhold from consumers who refuse to pay for them, where the consumption of the product or service by one person reduces its usefulness to others. One example is a hamburger. See also “public goods.”
Producers	“Producers” are people who combine resources to make goods and services.
Production	“Production” refers to the activity of combining resources to make goods and services.
Productivity	“Productivity” is defined as the quantity of goods and services produced by an individual, a company, a sector of the economy, or an economy in a given amount of time.

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Profit	“Profit” is the difference between the total revenue and the total cost of a business.
Profit motive	“Profit motive” pertains to a person’s motivation to make a profit, to earn money as an entrepreneur.
Progressives	Early 20 th century reformers seeking to return the government to the people and correcting injustices
Public goods	“Public goods” are goods or services that cannot be withheld from customers who refuse to pay for them (non-exclusion), where the consumption of products or services by one person does not reduce its usefulness to others. Examples include national defense, street lighting, flood control, public safety, and fire protection in a crowded neighborhood. See also “private goods.”
Radicals	Group(s) favoring fundamental changes from present
Region	“Region” may be defined as an area that displays unity in terms of one or more selected criteria. Regions may be defined by political boundaries (Kansas City, Osage County, Missouri, Canada, etc.), types of terrain (plains, mountainous, etc.), how land is used (business district, ranch, cotton-producing region, etc.), rainfall (desert, rain forest, etc), soil type (sandy, rocky, clay, etc.), dominant religion of the people.
Relative location	“Relative location” pertains to identifying where a place is by explaining where it is in relation to some known places. For example, St. Louis is located a short distance south of the junction of the Missouri and Mississippi rivers.
Representative democracy	system in which government held by people is exercised by elected representatives
Republic	A republic is a political system in which the people exercise their political power through elected representatives and in which there are no inherited public offices.
Responsibility	“Responsibility” pertains to a people’s duties or obligations. In a society where citizens have rights, there is a responsibility, for example, to respect the rights of others.
Rights	A major responsibility of a democratic government is to protect the rights of its citizens. The rights of citizens are identified in the Declaration of Independence and the United States Constitution, including the Bill of Rights. The personal rights include freedom of conscience and religion, freedom of expression and association, freedom of movement and residence, and privacy. Political rights include the right to vote, petition, assembly, and freedom of press. Economic rights include the right to own personal property, to choose one’s work, to change employment, to join a union, and to establish a business. Other examples of such rights could be listed. Few rights are absolute, because they may conflict with each other or come into conflict with the common good in specific cases.
Rule of law	“Rule of law” refers to the principle that everyone, even political leaders, must follow the law.

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Rust belt	Region in the northeast and Midwest where heavy industry and population has declined since the 1970s
Saving	“Saving” may be defined as a decision to withhold a portion of current income from consumption. Saving from the individual’s point of view represents income not spent, which may be placed in savings deposits in banks, making it possible for those banks to make loans to those who wish to buy capital goods or other resources.
Scarcity	“Scarcity” is a term referring to the condition where people cannot have all the goods and services that they want. It results from the imbalance between the relatively unlimited wants and limited resources. Scarcity is found in all societies.
Secondary sources	“Secondary sources” pertain to those sources that historians use to interpret and reconstruct the past that are the interpretations of events and developments that are not first-hand observations. Secondary sources, which may be histories and history textbooks, are constructed by historians who have used primary sources and/or secondary sources in the process.
Separation of powers	“Separation of powers” refers to the division of powers among different branches of government within a political system.
Sources of wealth	”Wealth” is the state of having money and/or property. Sources of wealth are earnings from wages, salaries, interest, rent, income, and profit from inheritances.
Stagflation	An economic condition of slow economic growth marked by both inflation and high unemployment
Stalemate	A political situation in which further action is deadlocked
Steel Belt	Region in United States where most of the heavy industry was once located
Suburbia	Residential towns that grow on the outskirts of major cities
Sun Belt	Region in the southeast and southwest which experienced heavy population and business growth since the 1970s
Supply	“Supply” refers to the different quantities of a resource, good, or service that will be offered for sale at various possible prices during a specified time period. According to the law of supply, the higher the price of an item, the more of it that is likely to be offered for sale.
Taxes	“Taxes” are those required payments make to governments by individuals and businesses.

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