

Welcome to Geography for Life

Instructors:

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Prep Periods: 7th

Course Description:

Geography for Life offers a vast array of skills and knowledge that helps prepare students for a successful life in today's world. Some of these useful skills include: reading/making maps, interpreting graphs/charts, writing to express a point of view, and organizing and presenting data. Students will undertake an in depth study of the world's major geographic regions (*i.e., Africa, Europe, Asia, etc.*). For each region, we will explore the cultural, religious, economic, and political characteristics that make that region unique. Students will also discover how each region interacts with and depends on the other regions. A brief outline of our 1st quarter schedule is as follows:

First Quarter:

Unit 1: The Five Themes of Geography – An Introduction

Unit 2: Maps and How to Use Them

- Map parts
- How to read a map
- -Types of map projections and uses of each

Unit 3: N. America: United States and Canada (*each region will have same basic outline*)

- Maps: Physical and Political
- Physical geography and climate regions
- History and culture
- Current issues – political, environmental, cultural.

Unit 4: Earth in Space and Physical Geography

- Weather patterns, climates, and vegetation
- Land forms, water features, natural resources

We will be using the standards based grading system most of you were introduced to last year at CMMS

Standards Based Grading is the practice of basing a student's grade on whether or not they have mastered a particular standard or learning goal (for example: can they explain the different forms of government or, can they analyze a primary and secondary source on the same topic). Usually, grades are taken from an average percentage earned from assignments, quizzes, participation etc. So, a student may not be able to demonstrate that they have mastered any of the learning goals all year but still leave with a good grade because they turned in all of the homework and perhaps some extra credit. We want student's grades to reflect what they have learned. In other words: instead of your grade being a weighted average of assignments, tests, and participation, your grade will be

based on your assessment scores. For each test (assessment), your score will correlate with a 0, 1, 2, 3, or 4 (just like Utah's CRT tests that you take at the end of the year). Not all assessments will be a traditional test format, they can be projects, presentations, or something you create (graph, chart, map, or diagram).

What do the numbers mean?

4= Above Mastery- you have gone above what the standard has asked you to do (think of this as your extra credit- to get the 4--or A if you will-- you have to go above and beyond)

3=Mastery- you have done what the standard has asked you to do

2=Approaching Mastery-You are almost there! You have done most of what the standard has asked but are missing some part

1= Below Mastery- We still have some work to do. You haven't done what the standard has asked

If it helps, think of each number as a letter grade (4=A, 3=B, 2=C-, 1=F, and 0=F). Also, in skyward these numbers may look a different to fit the traditional grading scale see below. A 4 will be entered as a 4 in skyward, however a 3 will be entered as a 3.4, a 2 will be a 2.8 and a 1 will be entered as a 1 or 1.5. Students may also receive a 0/Incomplete if the assessment is not attempted or needs to redo the assessment completely. All 1s and 0s must be retaken in remediation time or on student's time before/after school. Assessment scores will be averaged and the percentage they fall into will fit the corresponding letter grade below, so check skyward often.

Traditional Grading Scale (Skyward):

100%-93% = A 92%-90% = A- 89%-87% = B+ 86%-83% = B 82%-80% = B-
79%-77% = C+ 76%-73% = C 72%-70% = C- 69%-67% = D+ 66%-63% = D
62%-60% = D- below 59% = F

The Purpose of Grading:

The purpose of grading is to communicate with students and parents about the achievement and mastery of specific learning goals. It identifies students' levels of progress with regard to those goals, areas of strength, and areas where additional time and effort are needed.

Standards Based Assessments (100% of grade)

Your grade will be based on assessment of the learning goal/objective. Assessments do not exclusively mean tests as in the past. For example if the learning objective states "Students will be able to explain the differences between major types of map projections", the assessment may be a group presentation on the topic where they explain a use of a certain map projection and take a point of view. Based on a rubric of 4-1 they will be graded on how well the demonstrated mastery for this learning objective. Assessments can also be something the student creates like a population pyramid, climate graph, map, or diagram of some sort. Assessments are not always paper based tests.

Late/Absent Work:

Late and absent work should be handed directly to me, never hand work in to a substitute, never have a friend turn it in for you. This will insure awareness that the work was turned in and avoid complications of **“lost work”** throughout the year. If you are absent or would like to know what is coming up in class be sure to check the class website as well as skyward, big projects and tests will be posted ahead of time and the class blog is updated weekly. If you are ever absent please talk to me during passing periods, before or after school and not during the class period. Many times in class assignments will have to be completed before an assessment can be taken or retaken.

Retakes/Remedial Work

Retakes will be allowed for all map quizzes and unit assessments given in class. Retakes will be on the student’s time either before or after school on a discussed date. We also may be adding time during the school year specifically to retake tests and makeup work/assignments. If a student does not show mastery on an assessment they may be asked to complete remedial work before retaking the assessment or redo work to relearn the objective being assessed. For unit assessments makeups may be assigned, however many of these fall at the end of quarter where a shorter window of opportunity for a retake exists (**Be mindful of time frames**).

Class Expectations

Students will follow the school COLTS rules in and outside of the classroom. These are posted in around the school as well as each classroom. Students will be on time, come prepared, listen to directions, be respectful to everyone in the room and contribute to a safe learning environment. With this class in particular students must be aware when learning about other cultures to be sensitive to ideas and beliefs that are different from their own. Students will also follow the class and behavior standards on the rubric we have attached, we have created a 4,3,2,1 rubric to show what this looks like in class. This will be tied to the student’s citizenship grade for our class.

Class Supplies:

A set of colored pencils will be a necessity for this class, as we will be creating maps, charts and diagrams all year long. A durable eraser will also help a great deal with making our maps and other projects if you do not want to wear out the one on your pencil and should be brought to class (especially on mapping days). If these supplies cannot be obtained for any reason I would ask that the student meet with one of us before or after school and we will make sure they have the desired materials.

Parents:

If you ever have any questions email is the best way of getting in contact with me as I check it multiple times a day. I will get back to you as soon as possible; Parents will receive notice from the school if your student is at risk of failure 2 weeks before the end of each quarter, monitoring resources such as skyward and class blogs/websites will ensure you know what your student is doing and how well they are doing as we move through the curriculum.

Let’s have a great year!!!