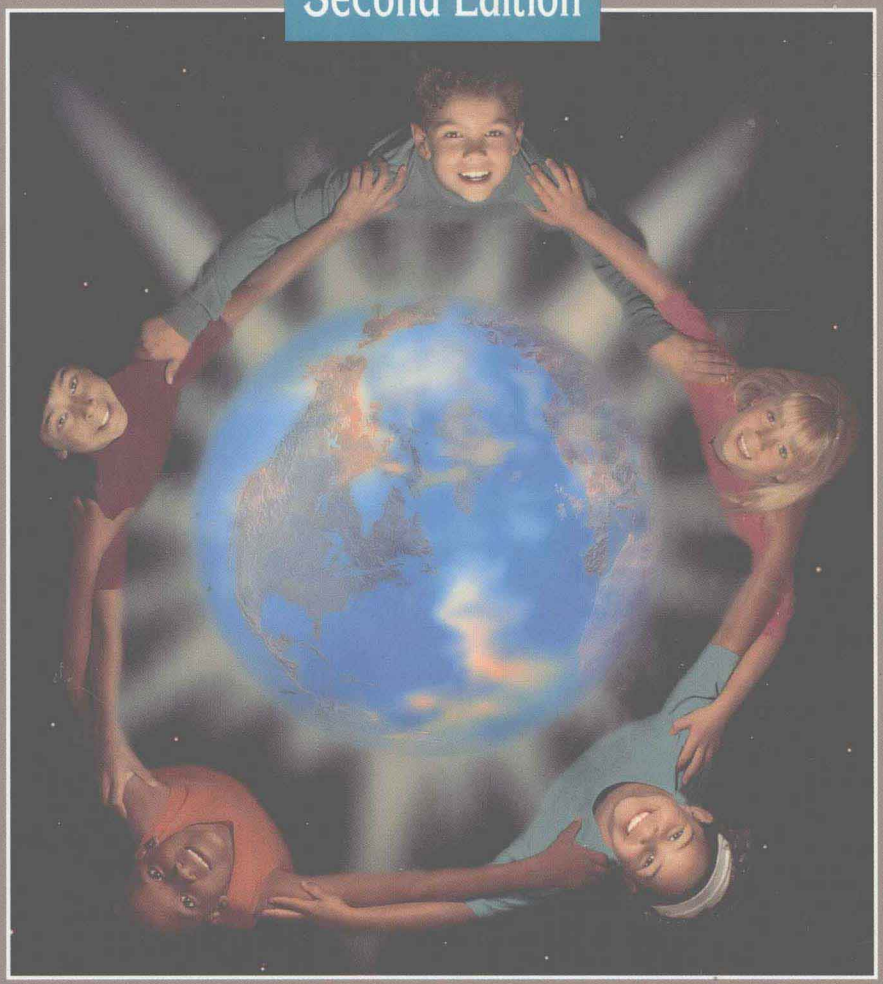
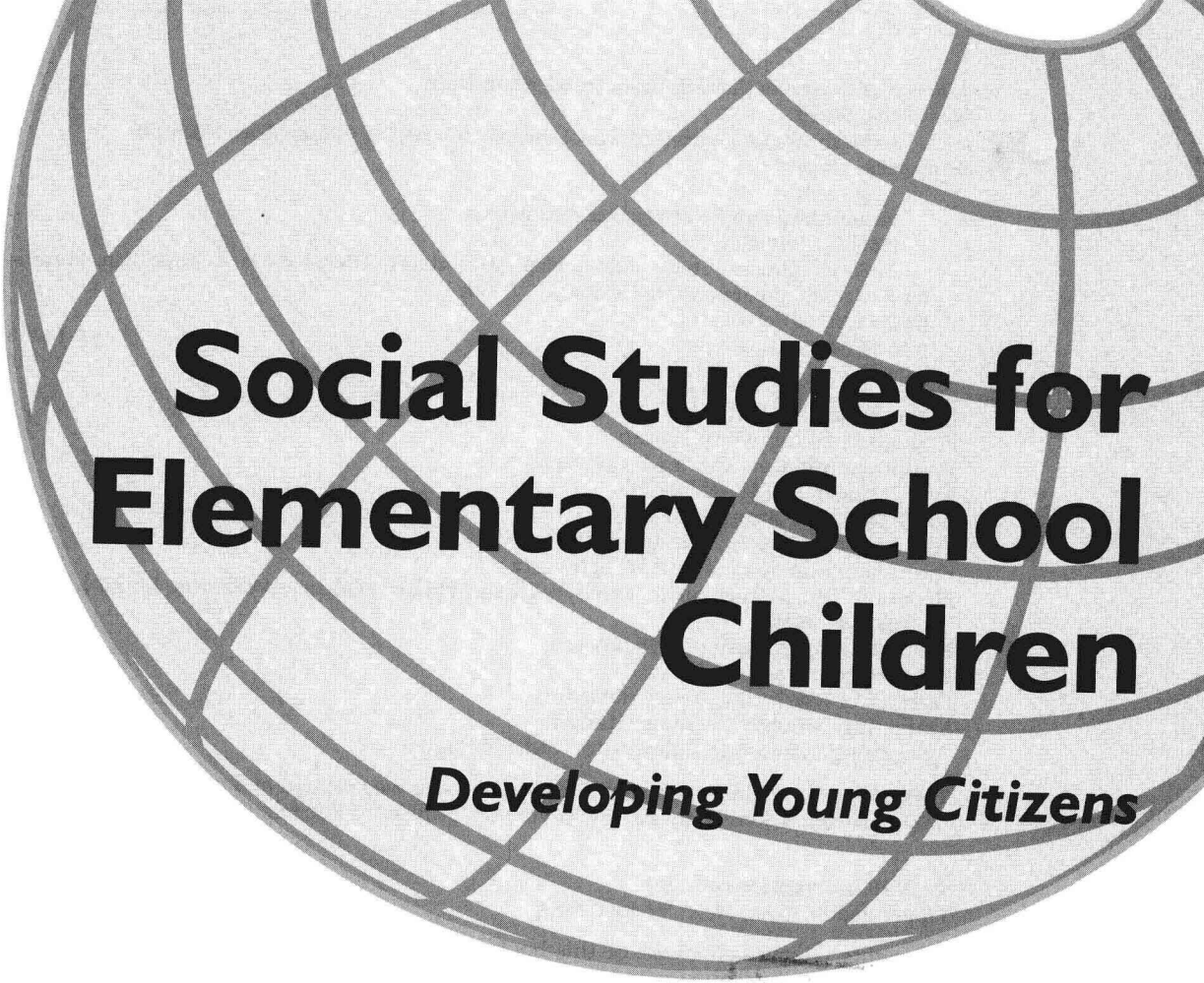
Social Studies for Elementary School Children

Developing Young Citizens

Second Edition



Peter H. Martorella



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Preface

In constructing this text, my intent was to tap three bountiful wellsprings of information: teacher craft wisdom, research findings relative to instruction, and well grounded theories. Each of these streams affords both neophytes and experienced teachers abundant insights into how effective social studies instruction can be nurtured and sustained.

Craft wisdom is that residual base of rich, informed, and practical knowledge that effective teachers have shared for centuries, often through oral rather than written histories. It embodies the lode of stories and case studies that experienced successful teachers have passed along about "things that worked well for me" and "the pitfalls I have learned to avoid." Craft wisdom also includes the identification of instructional materials and resources that have been tested under real classroom conditions and found to be exemplary.

Such practitioner craft wisdom often is buttressed neither by theory nor research—much like aspects of folk medicine. Instead, it derives its credibility and permanency from the number of iterations of success that teachers have encountered in applying it. Teachers are not always sure why something worked or whether others will have similar success under different classroom conditions. What they can affirm are consistent positive results.

Research and *theory*, in turn, offer complementary insights into how teachers might most effectively teach social studies. These represent the accumulations of scholars' tested conclusions under controlled conditions and in varied settings over time. They also include scholars' hypotheses and reflective deductions undergirded by logic and evidence.

Properly focused, research and theory can yield practical applications and identify areas that require attention in our social studies classes. Researchers and theorists also can aid us in designing and selecting materials and texts that engage students and stimulate reflection. Additionally, they can provide us with models for analyzing our teaching behaviors and generating new instructional strategies.

Old friends comparing the first edition with the second will find its foundational themes intact and its point of view burnished. To wit, as a central thesis, I contend a well-balanced social studies program consists of matters of the head, the hand, and the heart. Following on this metaphor, I continue to hold that the

fundamental purpose of the social studies should be *the development of reflective, competent, and concerned citizens.* I also reassert the importance of theory, research, and craft wisdom as beacons for effective social studies teaching. In this context, throughout the text, constructivist approaches that engage students in meaningful activities are emphasized.

Features of This Text

This book was designed to assist preservice and inservice elementary and middle grades teachers in becoming more effective teachers of social studies. The text is meant to be used in a variety of settings, such as group activities and workshops. Toward these ends, several steps have been taken to make it readable and understandable to audiences with different levels of experiences and needs.

Each chapter has a detailed outline on the opening page to serve as an advance organizer. Also, throughout the text, key terms appear in bold face in the text and in color in the margin to alert the reader to their importance. At the end of each chapter, two types of activities are suggested to apply and extend learning: those to be completed individually and others to be done in groups.

Numerous field-tested lessons and activities are sprinkled throughout the text. These are borrowed from a variety of sources and reflect a combination of craft wisdom, research, and theory. They cover the primary, intermediate, and middle grades. For easy reference, a list of these lessons and activities appears at the end of the Contents.

Organization

Chapter 1 offers an overview of the foundations of the social studies curriculum and advances a perspective on what exemplary social studies teaching entails. Chapters 2 and 3 explore the sources of the social studies curriculum, the relationship of the social sciences to the social studies, and alternative views concerning what the social studies curriculum should be.

Planning and instructional strategies constitute the core of the book and the focus of Chapters 4 through 8. In Chapter 9 I address the urgent and complex issue of how to prepare children to live in a global and culturally diverse world. Chapter 10 is devoted to strategies for aiding students in comprehending, communicating, and remembering social studies subject matter. Finally, Chapters 11 through 13 consider, respectively, ways to enrich classroom activities through technology, assist students with special needs, and assess the outcomes of social studies instruction.

New to This Edition

There are notable changes small and large in this revision. In order to more adequately address emerging issues concerning national curriculum standards and multicultural education, Chapters 3 and 9 have been modified. In Chapter 12,

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the focus on the reading–writing–listening–social studies connection and the integration of children's literature into the social studies curriculum has been sharpened. Similarly, the discussions of portfolios and authentic assessments in Chapter 13 have undergone changes. Also, the discussion of learning styles in Chapter 12 has been updated to reflect the latest work of Howard Gardner and his associates.

The most dramatic change in this new edition deals with technology applications in the social studies—a fast-moving target. Chapter 11 has been extensively updated, but with the discomforting awareness that the swiftness of new advances in computer-based technologies will outpace our capacity to keep the reader current.

To further heighten the technology strand in the book, two actions were taken. At relevant points throughout the text, examples of social studies software are cited. Also, in those sections of the text that call for the use of a computer to illustrate a point, an icon will appear in the margin as shown here.

Like its predecessor, this text ultimately must contend with a host of others in the marketplace of ideas, staking out its own claims to uniqueness, credibility, utility, and significance. In that arena, I believe the new book is well armed.

Acknowledgments

The second edition of this text has been greatly enriched by the array of insights that readers gleaned from the first edition and shared with me. The meanings they derived from interacting with my text and the life they breathed into the skeleton of ideas I presented were a delight to experience. I thank and salute them for their contributions. I also thank those who reviewed the first edition and offered suggestions for improvement in the second: Gloria Alter, Northern Illinois University; Thomas B. Goodkind, University of Connecticut; Edith Guyton, Georgia State University; Kathleen Naylor, University of Arizona; and Jesse Palmer, University of Southern Mississippi.

Brief Contents

Chapter 1 Learning and Teaching Social Studies 1

2 The Sources of Subject Matter and Instructional Resources for the Social Studies 19

3 Alternative Scope and Sequence Patterns in the Social Studies 47

4 Planning for Social Studies Instruction 81

5 Engaging Students in Learning Through Small Groups, Questions, Role-Playing, and Simulations 115

6 Aiding Children in Developing and Applying Concepts, Generalizations, and Hypotheses 152

7 Aiding Students in Developing Effective Citizenship Competencies 187

8 Aiding Students in Developing and Acting on Social Concern 225

9 Preparing Children to Live in a Global and Culturally Diverse World 253

10 Comprehending, Communicating, and Remembering Subject Matter 285

11 Harnessing Technology to the Social Studies Curriculum 315

12 Adapting Social Studies Instruction to Individual Needs 347

13 Evaluating and Assessing Student Learning 381

Contents

Chapter 1

Learning and Teaching Social Studies 1

The Origins and Evolution of the Social Studies 2
The 1916 Report of the Committee on the Social Studies • The New Social Studies • Social Studies on the Edge of the 21st Century

Alternative Definitions of the Social Studies 6
A Working Definition of the Social Studies

Social Studies and Citizenship Education 7
The Context of Citizenship Education

Alternative Perspectives on Citizenship Education 8
Classifying Alternative Perspectives

The Enduring Goal of the Social Studies Curriculum: Reflective, Competent, and Concerned Citizens 9
The Nature of the Effective Citizen

The Exemplary Social Studies Teacher 12
Characteristics of Exemplary Social Studies Teachers

Group Activities • *Individual Activities* • *References*

Chapter 2

The Sources of Subject Matter and Instructional Resources for the Social Studies 19

Knowledge Construction and Subject Matter 20
Schemata and Prior Knowledge in Social Studies Instruction • Selecting Social Studies Subject Matter

The Social Studies and the Social Sciences 21
Geography • History • Economics • Political Science • Anthropology • Sociology • Psychology

Other Sources of Subject Matter for the Social Studies 29
Interdisciplinary Studies

The School and the Community as Sources of Social Data 30
Using Community Resource Persons Effectively • Fieldwork in the Community • Collecting Oral Histories • Conducting Surveys and Interviews • Community Service Projects

Organizational Resources for Social Studies Instruction 41
Professional Journals • Professional Development Through the Internet

Group Activities • *Individual Activities* • *References*

Chapter 3

Alternative Scope and Sequence Patterns in the Social Studies 47

Existing Social Studies Scope and Sequence Patterns 48
The Curriculum Pattern in the Elementary Grades • The Curriculum Pattern in the Middle and Secondary Grades • The Dominance of Traditional Scope and Sequence Patterns

Basal Textbooks and the Social Studies Curriculum 50
Use of Basal Texts in the Social Studies • Selection and Adoption of Basal Textbooks • Criticisms of Basal Textbooks • Implications of State Adoption Policies

Alternative Social Studies Scope and Sequence Patterns 58
The California Model • The National Council for Geographic Education/Association of American Geographers Model • The National Council for the Social Studies Scope and Sequence Initiatives

Selecting a Scope and Sequence Pattern 66
National Standards

Group Activities • *Individual Activities* • *References*

Chapter 4

Planning for Social Studies Instruction 81

Basic Issues in Planning Social Studies Instruction 83
Identifying a Purpose for Citizenship Education

Social Studies Goals for Instruction 84
Identifying and Stating Goals

Social Studies Objectives for Instruction 85
Identifying and Stating Objectives

Organizing Subject Matter into Units 87
Unit Planning • Computer-Based and Traditional Sources of Units • Resource Units and Teaching Units • Creating Units • Formats for Unit Planning

Organizing Subject Matter into Lessons 95
Lesson Plans • Computer-Based and Traditional Sources of Lesson Plans • Formats and Procedures for Lesson Planning • Balance in Instructional Planning • Developmental Considerations in Instructional Planning • Variety in Instructional Planning • Allocation of Time in Planning • Scheduling Social Studies Instruction

Guidelines for Social Studies Program Development 110

Group Activities • *Individual Activities* • *References*

Chapter 5

Engaging Students in Learning Through Small Groups, Questions, Role-Playing, and Simulations 115

Grouping Students for Learning 116

Planning for Small-Group Work • Multipurpose Small-Group Techniques • Cooperative Learning Group Techniques • Cooperative Learning and Student Achievement

Using Structured Questions to Aid Learning 129

Patterns of Effective Questioning • Effective Use of Time • Selection of Questions • Effective Sequencing of Questions • The Taba Questioning Strategies

Engaging Students in Role-Playing and Simulations 136

The Nature of Role-Playing • Role-Playing and Puppetry • The Nature of Simulations • Guidelines for Developing and Conducting Simulations

Group Activities • *Individual Activities* • *References*

Chapter 6

Aiding Children in Developing and Applying Concepts, Generalizations, and Hypotheses 152

Concepts in the Social Studies Curriculum 154

Personal and Public Dimensions of Concepts • Misconceptions and Stereotypes • Concepts in Social Studies Texts and Materials • The Process of Learning a New Concept • Sources of Difficulty in Concept Learning

Instructional Strategies for Concept Learning 159

Concept Analyses • Assessing Concept Learning • Instructional Model for Teaching Concepts • Discovery and Expository Approaches in Teaching Concepts • Concept Hierarchies • Concept Teaching Materials and Activities

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Facts, Generalizations, and Hypotheses in the Social Studies Curriculum 168
The Nature of Facts • The Nature of Generalizations • The Nature of Hypotheses

Instructional Strategies for Developing Generalizations 172
Expository and Discovery Approaches for Teaching Generalizations • Using Data Retrieval Charts

The Reflective Citizen and Problem Solving 175
Uses of the Term *Problem* in Instruction • Instructional Strategies for Problem Solving • Problem Springboards

Answer Key: Concept Learning Exercise

Group Activities • *Individual Activities* • *References*

Chapter 7

Aiding Students in Developing Effective Citizenship Competencies 187

The Nature of Citizenship Skills 188
Skills Lists for the Social Studies Curriculum, K–12

Social Skills 188
Socially Competent Children • Conflict Resolution Skills

Research and Analysis Skills 195
Identifying and Using Reference Sources • Interpreting and Comparing Data • Processing Information From Pictures

Chronology Skills 206
Activities Using Time Lines • Other Chronology Activities

Spatial Skills 210
The Impact of Spatial Perspectives • Maps and Globes as Spatial Tools • Integrating Maps and Globes Into All Social Studies Instruction • Introducing Maps and Globes • Key Spatial Concepts • Using Travel Maps

Group Activities • *Individual Activities* • *References*

Chapter 8

Aiding Students in Developing and Acting on Social Concern 225

Social Concern and Citizenship Education 226
The Morally Mature Citizen

The Dimensions of Social Concern 227
The Nature of Beliefs • The Nature of Attitudes • The Nature of Values • The Nature of Value Judgments

Instructional Strategies for Examining Beliefs, Attitudes, and Values 231
Strategies for Analyzing Attitudes • Strategies for Analyzing Values

Instructional Strategies for Promoting Ethical Growth 238
Moral Dilemmas • The Moral Development Theories of Jean Piaget and Lawrence Kohlberg • Alternative Strategies for Moral Education in Public Schools

Social Issues as a Curricular Focus 245
Social Issues and Controversy • Guidelines for Handling Discussions of Controversial Issues • Academic Freedom in the Classroom

Group Activities • *Individual Activities* • *References*

Chapter 9

Preparing Children to Live in a Global and Culturally Diverse World 253

Balancing National and Global Concerns 254
Global Education in an Interconnected World

Multicultural Education 258
Emerging Issues in Multicultural Education • Multicultural Perspectives in Instruction • Designing Strategies for Multicultural Education • Guidelines for Selecting Appropriate Curriculum Materials for Multicultural Education • Resources for Multicultural Education

Gender Issues and Sex-Role Stereotypes 270
Women's Perspectives in History

Social Consciousness and Social Action 271
Social Service Projects

Current Affairs 275
Introducing Young Children to Current Affairs • Strategies for Analyzing Current Affairs • Using Newspapers and Print Materials • Using Technology in Teaching Current Affairs • Guidelines for Developing Current Affairs Activities
Group Activities • *Individual Activities* • *References*

Chapter 10
Comprehending, Communicating, and Remembering Subject Matter 285
Comprehending Social Studies Subject Matter 286
Building on Existing Knowledge in Reading • Strategies for Improving Reading Comprehension • The Reading–Social Studies Connection
Reading and Social Studies Text Materials 292
Reading Children's Literature • Reading Newspapers and Periodicals • Integrated Curriculum • Visual Literacy • Metaphors and Other Figures of Speech
Communicating Social Studies Subject Matter 305
Listening and Speaking • Integrating Writing Into the Social Studies Curriculum • Word Processing Tools in Writing
Remembering Social Studies Subject Matter 309
First-Letter Technique • Keyword Technique • Imagery Technique
Group Activities • *Individual Activities* • *References*

Chapter 11
Harnessing Technology to the Social Studies Curriculum 315
Infusing Microcomputer Applications Into the Social Studies Curriculum 317
Telecommunications and Emerging Technologies 318
The Internet • The World Wide Web and Web Search Agents • Online Databases • Resources for Social Studies Teachers and

Students Available Over the Internet • Electronic Mail and Newsgroups • Two-Way Videoconferencing Over the Internet

Identifying and Evaluating Appropriate Social Studies Software 329
Simulation Software • Database and Spreadsheet Software • Using Groups with Computer-Based Instruction

Interactive Multimedia in Social Studies Instruction 332
CD-ROM Software

Distance Learning 337

Using Videotape and Television in Social Studies Instruction 338
Cable Programming • Teacher- and Student-Made Video Materials

Using Traditional Media Effectively 340

Technologies in the 21st Century: The Challenge of the Future 341

Group Activities • *Individual Activities* • *References*

Chapter 12

Adapting Social Studies Instruction to Individual Needs 347

Matching Social Studies Instruction to Students' Developing Capabilities 349
The Nature of Concrete Social Studies Activities • Symbolic, Iconic, and Enactive Social Studies Activities • Constructivist Perspectives on Social and Cognitive Growth

Individualized Instruction and Individual Differences 351
Individual Differences Among Students

Organizing the Classroom for Individualized Social Studies Instruction 352
Computers • Multilevel Reading Materials • Learning Contracts • Learning Centers • Using Jackdaws and Teacher-Made Materials for Individualizing Instruction

Individual Styles of Thinking and Learning 360
Matching Thinking Styles to Instruction • Measures of Thinking Style • Matching Learning Styles to Instruction • Measures of Learning Styles

Individualization and Cultural Diversity 366

Equity for Those With Disabilities 367
Public Law 94-142 • Mainstreaming and Inclusion • Strategies for Mainstreaming Students for Social Studies Instruction

Equity for the Gifted 373
Societal Perspectives on the Gifted • Identifying the Gifted • Approaches to Gifted Education • Gifted Students in Social Studies Classes
Group Activities • *Individual Activities* • *References*

Chapter 13

Evaluating and Assessing Student Learning 381

The Dimensions of Evaluation 383
Grades, Assessments, and Standards
The Use and Misuse of Tests 384
Norm-Referenced Tests • Criterion-Referenced Tests • The National Assessment of Educational Progress • National Standards and National Testing
Performance Assessments 387
Social Studies Performance Assessments and Portfolios
Teacher-Made Paper-and-Pencil Tests 391
Posttests and Pretests • Constructing Essay Test Items • Constructing Objective Test Items • Test Software
Evaluating Reflection, Competence, and Concern 395
Assessing Reflection • Assessing Competence • Assessing Concern
A Framework for Evaluating the Outcomes of Social Studies Instruction 402
Matching Evaluation and Instructional Goals and Objectives
Group Activities • *Individual Activities* • *References*

Index 408

Lessons and Activities

Primary Grades

Native American cultures 31
Clothes tell stories 97
Puppet activity: Name calling 141
Teaching the concept "globe" 163
Creating a concept bulletin board dealing with "transportation" 166
Creating a data retrieval chart related to changing lifestyles 175
Conflict-resolution strategy 194
Ordering events in chronological sequence 207
Making a body map 215
Self-concepts: Self statements 232
Attitudes toward school 233
Navajo cultural perspective 265
Assessment item: Sorting events in chronological order 390

Intermediate Grades

Comparing the city, suburb, and country 102
Constructing a sociogram 118
Group decision making: Reducing crime 120
Composite reports and data-retrieval charts: Status of women 122
Jigsaw II cooperative learning: Branches of the government 126
Simulation dealing with refugee issues 144
Simulation dealing with environmental issues 146
Teaching generalizations related to the environment 172
Creating a personal time-line 209
Introducing grid systems 218
Expressing beliefs and attitudes 235
Role-play enactment: Refugees fleeing 238
Moral dilemma involving issue of fairness 244
Using a graphic organizer to study Japan 291
Using webbing in studying biographies: Martin Luther King, Jr. 297
Creating and analyzing a computer database 321
Contract for the "Save the Environment" learning center 354
Assessment item: Historical diary entry 389

Middle Grades

Women of the American Revolution 90
Geography of petroleum 96
Supply and demand 103
Group decision making: How local government can help reduce crime 121
Problem-solving activity dealing with Abraham Lincoln 179
Using reference skills to identify an unknown country 198

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