An Alignment of Common Core ELA and National Geography Standards

For the complete educator guide with media resources, visit: http://www.nationalgeographic.org/media/common-core-ela-geography-connections/

This guide, now in its final version (v.2), is an alignment of the Common Core English Language Arts & Literacy in History/Social Studies, Science, and Technical Subjects to the Geography for Life: National Geography Standards, Second Edition.

The Common Core State Standards Initiative, led by the Council of Chief State School Officers (CCSSO) and the National Governors Association (NGA), has created K-12 fundamental goals that focus on the development of critical knowledge, skills, and dispositions that students need to be successful in the 21st century. The Common Core State Standards for English Language Arts & Literacy in History/Social Studies, Science, and Technical Subjects were designed to provide educators with a clear understanding of what students should learn. The Geography For Life: National Geography Standards, updated in 2012, also provide educators with a guide for teaching the concepts, skills, practices, and components necessary for a geographically literate student in the 21st century. Both sets of standards were designed to support a well-rounded education that is focused on critical thinking skills and the knowledge necessary for a 21st century student that prepares them for college, career, and ultimately their adult civic life.
This guide is the result of a partnership between National Geographic Education, the National Geographic Network of Alliances for Geographic Education, and the National Council for Geographic Education (NCGE). The purpose of the guide is to highlight those areas that are ripe for integration and provide the opportunity for more in-depth learning.

This guide was created for dual purposes. The first purpose of the guide is to show where the two sets of documents present areas for strengthened learning opportunities in the classroom. It was designed to be a tool for use by curriculum specialists, department chairs, and other educators who develop curriculum at the state and local level in language arts, social studies, science, and technical subjects. This document is not intended to be curriculum; however, models and exemplar activities can be found throughout the guide. The second purpose of the guide is to highlight those areas where direct concept and skill instruction must take place. Not all areas of a discipline or concept can or should be integrated. Each grade level shows where opportunities for integration are and where they are not. Ultimately it is intended to support educators in making informed curricular choices.

Geography uses multiple forms of visual representations of information with varying levels of complexity. The range of geographic text includes maps, pictures (static or animated), graphs, charts, and geo-spatial representations of information. A literate individual in the 21st century must know more than the basic skills of reading and writing. Essential to the ability to analyze and synthesize information is the ability to transfer understanding between the disciplines via a cross-cutting taxonomic vocabulary. In addition, educators can use the essential elements in geography to strengthen the understanding of the text features of nonfiction.

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