

Winter Recess Activities for Social Studies, Grades 6-8



**Miami-Dade County Public Schools
Department of Social Sciences**

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Winter Recess Activities Social Studies, Grades 6-8

The student activities in this packet are designed to reinforce major social studies concepts and skills, while also being fun and interesting. The activities are differentiated by grade level: K-2, 3-5, 6-8, and 9-12. It is also hoped that these activities will encourage family interaction over the winter break. Please note that elementary-level activities will require greater parent/family supervision or assistance.

If you are in need of additional information about the Winter Recess Activities for Social Studies, please contact the Department of Social Sciences, at 305-995-1982.

Winter Recess Activities
Social Studies
Middle School – Grades 6-8

Objectives

- Apply basic map and globe skills including cardinal and intermediate directions, determining distance using scale, interpreting map projections, interpreting legends and symbols, calculating time zones, and determining absolute locations using longitude and latitude.
- Describe significant contributions made by civilizations in a region; e.g., social, political, economic, arts/humanities, religions, philosophy, technology.
- Obtain appropriate information about local, state, and national issues.
- Identify a community problem and propose a solution to it.
- Define the term imports and give examples of where products are coming from to the United States.
- Describe the role of political parties in the democratic process.
- Discuss ways by which citizens exercise their political rights.
- Review major democratic principles and concepts outlined in the U.S. Constitution.
- Cite examples throughout United States history of actions taken by people to bring about changes in their community, state, and nation and discuss the effectiveness of these actions.

Activities

- Using available resources, including the Internet, find and discuss the definition of culture. Draw or find a picture to illustrate each of the following 5 institutions found in each culture: family, religion, education, government, and economics.
- Christmas is one of the most important holidays/celebrations in the Christian religion. Each major world religion has several important holidays/celebrations throughout the year. Research each of the following major religions (Judaism, Islam, Christianity, Buddhism, and Hinduism) and identify their most important religious celebrations. Make a chart listing each major religion, the celebration/holiday, a brief description of the celebration/holiday's purpose, and a brief description of how each celebration/holiday is celebrated. After you have finished your chart, pick two religions and write a five paragraph essay comparing and contrasting their major celebrations/holidays.
- Select ten (10) products that you find in your home. These products can be appliances, electronic equipment, clothing, food, etc. Make a three-column chart with the following headings: **Product**, **Made In**, and **Distance from Miami**. List each product on your chart and the country in which the product was manufactured. Find a world map with a scale and measure the distance from where each product was produced to Miami, Florida. For example, if the product is produced in China, measure the distance from Miami to China with a ruler, write down the distance, and then refer to the scale on the map you are using and calculate the distance accordingly. Record the distance on the chart.

- Draw a two-column chart and label the columns “credits” and “debits”. Define and discuss both. Students should chart their family’s household income and expenditures for a two-week period. List the date and identify the source of each entry. Create a circle graph indicating (1) the amount of money spent on goods as opposed to services, (2) a circle graph comparing income to expenditure, and (3) a circle graph that provides percentages of expenditures on specific goods (examples: fast food, CDs). Write a paragraph explaining the insights they gained by charting family income and expenditures.
- Pick an important figure from U.S. history. The person can be from any time period. Write a short report about why this person is significant to our nation by describing his/her contributions to society. Explain why you feel it is important for people to know about this particular person’s contribution to history.
- Municipal (city/town) governments set money aside to be able to respond to natural disasters such as hurricanes, floods, and tornadoes. Research how much money is allocated to respond to natural disasters in Miami-Dade County. Now, research other cities such as New York, Chicago, and Los Angeles to find out what their allocation is for emergency management for natural disasters. Record your findings on a chart. Write a brief essay comparing and contrasting your findings.
- Draw a map of an imaginary theme park called “Water Wonderland.” All the attractions in this park are based on activities that are associated with a water sports and activities, including swimming, water slides, surfing, water skiing. Label your map and use all of the major components that are typically found on a map such as a compass rose, scale, legend, and any symbols that one might find on a map of an amusement park.
- Write a letter to the mayor of your city that explains your holiday “wish list” for things that you want to see improved in your city, especially those projects that would make your city more “green.” You should not only list and describe the improvement you are suggesting, but also give the mayor suggested solutions to these problems.
- Research your favorite NBA basketball team’s schedule for the 2011-2012 season. Find a map of the United States. On the map, plot the different cities (away games) where your team will be playing. Place the name of the city next to each point that you place on the map and the date that the game is played or will be played. Pick 5 of the locations and pretend that you are going to attend each of these away games. Calculate the distance you will have to travel to attend each away game. Write a fictional journal entry describing what it was like traveling to one of the away games and the things that you were able to see and experience on your trip.
- Research the concept of “separation of church and state” derived from the First Amendment to the U.S. Constitution. Explain what is meant by the phrase

“separation of church and state.” Explain how this concept affects how “winter holidays” are celebrated in schools.

- Study the Bill of Rights, the first 10 amendments to the U.S. Constitution. Develop an illustration for one or more of the 10 amendments in the Bill of Rights using original drawings or by cutting pictures from magazines, etc.
- Find a current events news article that relates to one of the rights in the Bill of Rights, and write a paragraph to explain how the Bill of Rights relates to the current event.
- Research and analyze the viewpoints of the Republican and Democratic parties. Compare these views to other American political parties, such as the Tea Party movement. Create a new political party which reflects your own viewpoints and platform. Develop a political symbol and a platform of the 5 most important positions you wish to promote (i.e., the party’s platform). Develop a poster that includes the new political symbol and the platform.

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