



# What is a Society?

## A Unit Plan for Social Studies 9

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E110.1

Teaching Materials  
from the  
Stewart Resources Centre





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## **UNIT OVERVIEW**

This unit introduces the Social Studies IN (Interactions and Interdependence of Nations) goal at the Grade 9 level and covers one of the four outcomes in this goal area. Students work in a variety of small learning groups throughout this short, two- to three-week unit.

### **Essential Understandings**

- Societies are communities, nations, or broad groupings of people having common traditions, institutions, and collective activities and interests.
- Societies develop to meet the needs of their members/constituents.
- Colonizers held ethnocentric views of the societies they colonized.

### **Essential Questions**

- How might we determine whether a group of people is a society?
- How might we determine the connections between the needs members of a community had and the institutions that developed to meet these needs?
- How might we challenge ethnocentric perspectives based on what we now know?

### **Outcomes and Indicators\***

Outcome IN9.1: Explain what constitutes a society.

Students will be able to:

- a. **Relate** the functions and services of institutions in the community (e.g., schools, churches, local governments, parents, Elders, traditional knowledge keepers) to the needs of the people in that community. (Understanding level)
- b. **Investigate** the roles of individuals in the institutions of the local community, including the expectations attached to those roles (e.g., school: student, principal, teacher, caretaker, secretary; hospital: doctor, nurse, traditional healer, receptionist, paramedic, medical technician, patient). (Analyzing level)
- c. **Research** a list of characteristics and attributes that formulate a definition of a society. (Understanding level)
- d. **Compare** two different societies studied including the attributes of leaders, the roles of various individuals, cultural traditions and ceremonies, and means of sustenance. (Analyzing level)
- e. **Apply** the definition of society to one of the civilizations studied, and detail ways in which the civilization meets the criteria to be considered a society (e.g., How can Mesopotamia be called a society according to the formulated definition? Would Aboriginal groupings of the plains and woodlands in North America meet the criteria?). (Applying level)

- f. **Investigate** diverse historical views regarding the terms 'primitive' and 'civilized', and analyze the effect of the perceptions of the concepts on ethnocentrism in colonizers. (Analyzing level)
- g. **Analyse** the effects of ethnocentrism on indigenous peoples. (Analyzing level)

\*All outcomes and indicators throughout this document are excerpted from the Saskatchewan Ministry of Education's *Social studies 9* curricula.

A glossary of terms used in this unit is provided in Appendix B.



## **ASSESSMENT EVIDENCE**

### **Performance Task**

A new community has been found in Central America. Your job is to determine whether or not this new community can be classified as a society. You may present your findings in a written format, a representation, or an oral format. Your response must include a rationale for your decision. (Analyzing level) (See Appendix E for complete performance task description.)

**Criteria** (See Appendix A for completed rubric)

- Understands and explains the attributes and characteristics of a society. (Understanding)
- Can differentiate between the elements of a society and those that are not elements of a society. (Analyzing)
- Determines evidence and draws conclusions about a society. (Analyzing)

### **Other Assessments**

- Exit slips for preassessment
  - You can find an exit slip strategy guide at:  
<http://www.readwritethink.org/professional-development/strategy-guides/exit-slips-30760.html>
- I used to think and now I think exit slip
  - More information on the many uses of exit slips is available at:  
<http://www.ascd.org/publications/educational-leadership/oct12/vol70/num02/The-Many-Uses-of-Exit-Slips.aspx>
- Responses to essential questions
- Functions and services of a community presentations
- Role investigations
- Response journals
- Identification of characteristics of a society in a given society
- Word webs
  - Learn more about word webs at: <http://www.nea.org/tools/word-webs.html>
- Discussions
- Venn diagram
  - Find a Venn diagram handout and teaching ideas at:  
<http://www.readwritethink.org/classroom-resources/printouts/venn-diagram-circles-c-30196.html#teaching>

## **LEARNING ACTIVITY**

### **Indicator**

IN9.1c - Research a list of characteristics and attributes that formulate a definition of a society. (Understanding level)

### **Activity Part 1**

- Preassessment: Prior to the start of the unit, ask students to respond to a prompt on an exit slip: What does the word *society* mean to you? If you lived in an ideal society, what might it look, sound, and feel like? The teacher can use the student responses to identify areas of knowledge and lack of knowledge.
- Divide students into working groups (let's call this the A grouping) of three or four to create a representation of an ideal society on chart paper (using own definitions) in small groups. They will present their representations plus a rationale to the class.
- Ask students to develop a definition of a society based on the presentations.
- Ask students to look up definitions of a society online and to compare these to those created earlier. Note: A definition is provided in the glossary (see Appendix B).

### **Assessment** (formative)

Students complete "I used to think and now I think" exit slip on the definition of a society. Note and record what students know and don't know for future lessons.



## **Essential Questions**

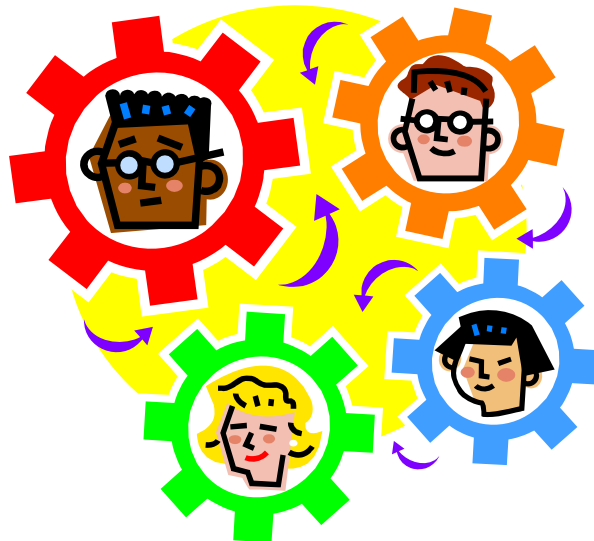
- How might we determine whether a group of people is a society?
- How might we determine the connections between the needs members of a community had and the institutions that developed to meet these needs?
- How might we challenge ethnocentric perspectives based on what we know now?

## **Activity Part 2**

- Write the essential questions on chart paper and ask students in their small groups (still the A grouping) to respond to each one. Based on their responses, ask them to develop a list of questions they need to answer in order to support them in finding the answers to the essential questions.
- Provide students with the performance task (see Appendix E) and assessment criteria (see Appendix A). Provide them with support in making meaning of both of these and encourage students to think about this summative assessment throughout the unit.
- As a class, create a list of questions to guide the unit.

## **Assessment** (formative)

Observe responses to essential questions.





## **Indicator**

IN9.1a - Relate the functions and services of institutions in the community (e.g., schools, churches, local governments, parents, Elders, traditional knowledge keepers) to the needs of the people in that community. (Understanding level)

## **Activity Part 3**

- Divide students into new small groups (B grouping) to identify the functions and services of a community – their own community, one much smaller, one much larger and more diverse, and one reserve community.
- Groups will be given different communities for this task – one community per group. Brainstorm, prior to beginning, ways in which groups might collect their information. (Use directories, conversations with individuals living in these communities, and online resources such as Tourism Saskatchewan’s *Saskatchewan Discovery Guide*.)
- Groups will present their information to the large group. Students will make notes using a notes sheet provided by the teacher (see Appendix C).
- Guide the students in a discussion about the ways in which communities either meet the needs of the people in that community, or don’t meet the needs of the people in that community. What alternatives exist? What are “essential” services? What do newcomers to an area need to know in order to make sound decisions about living in that community?

## **Assessment** (formative)

To what extent are students able to relate the functions and services of institutions in a community to the needs of the people in that community? To what extent can students observe and explain what they are noticing? Do some students need additional supports and, if so, which supports might be needed? (See student notes on Appendix C handout.)



## Indicator

IN9.1b - Investigate the roles of individuals in the institutions of the local community, including the expectations attached to those roles (e.g., school: student, principal, teacher, caretaker, secretary; hospital: doctor, nurse, traditional healer, receptionist, paramedic, medical technician, patient). (Analyzing level)

## Activity Part 4

- With students in B groups, provide them with the indicator for this lesson and ask them to brainstorm a list of roles from institutions in their community they would be most interested in investigating and the questions they would like to ask these individuals.
- Ask groups to choose the role they would most like to investigate.
- If possible, invite the individuals associated with these roles to come and present to the class. If not, support students in making appointments with these individuals for an interview about their roles.
- Ask the groups to do initial research online to deepen their understanding of these roles and to help them identify additional questions.
- Identify roles for the members of each group (Questioner, Note-Taker, Appointment-Maker, Organizer).
- Create a generic sheet students can use for this task.
- Once material has been collected, teach students how to categorize, to identify main points, and to draw conclusions from their responses.
- Ask students to create a response to essential question 2 in their journals using the information collected.

## Assessment (formative)

Can students develop appropriate questions? Do students understand the term *investigate* and are they able to carry out their roles in this task? To what extent can they draw conclusions from the material they gather? These skills will be necessary for their summative assessment, so some students may need additional practice opportunities.



## **Indicator**

IN9.1e - Apply the definition of society to one of the civilizations studied, and detail ways in which the civilization meets the criteria to be considered a society (e.g., How can Mesopotamia be called a society according to the formulated definition? Would Aboriginal groupings of the plains and woodlands in North America meet the criteria?). (Applying level)

IN9.1d – Compare . . . societies studied including the attributes of leaders, the roles of various individuals, cultural traditions and ceremonies, and means of sustenance. (Analyzing level)

## **Activity Part 5**

- Create new groupings of students (C groups). Provide a list of possible societies students can use for this task and ask students to choose one. These will probably depend upon the available resources (see Resources at the end of this document).
- Remind students of the definition of a society discussed earlier in the unit.
- Co-construct a checklist that can be used by students for this task.
- Support students in distributing the task among members of the group.
- Ask students to consider the ways in which the society they are studying meets or does not meet the criteria for a society.
- Students will share their information with the class, including a conclusion regarding whether their society meets or does not meet the criteria of the definition.

## **Assessment** (formative)

Provide feedback for students on their ability to apply the definition of a society to the society they studied, based on their use of the checklist (see Appendix D) and their sharing of information with the class. The assessment rubric (Appendix A) can also be used as this is the same rubric used for the performance task. If necessary, students can redo their work in order to meet the criteria.



## **Indicator**

IN9.1f - Investigate diverse historical views regarding the terms 'primitive' and 'civilized', and analyze the effect of the perceptions of the concepts on ethnocentrism in colonizers. (Analyzing level)

### **Activity Part 6**

- Move students back to their A groupings. Ask students to create word webs for the words *primitive*, *civilized*, and *ethnocentrism* without using dictionaries or online resources. In respect to ethnocentrism, ask students to break the word in two parts (*ethno* and *centrism*) and to consider what other words might be like these two.
- Ask students to share their information and then use a dictionary or online resource to find definitions of these terms. Pooling this information, develop definitions that provide a good understanding of each term (see Appendix B for glossary).
- Provide a selection of materials that describe the arrival of colonizers to early Canada and their impact. Ensure these materials have a current perspective of colonization (do not describe the land as empty of residents/inhabitants and clearly indicate that First Nations and Métis peoples were removed from their lands). Ask students to read this material and to consider ways in which the terminology from this indicator might affect the perceptions of both colonizers and colonized.
- Some possible resources are listed in the Resources for Social Studies 9 attached to the online curriculum. A reading by the teacher from *The Orenda* by Joseph Boyden to describe the perspective of the Jesuits to the First Nations people can also add to the discussion.
- Initiate a discussion to synthesize new learnings.

### **Assessment** (formative)

To what extent can students connect the definitions of terms in this indicator to the settlement of early Canada? To what extent can students understand the effect of words such as these on present-day situations?



## **Indicator**

IN9.1g – Analyse the effects of ethnocentrism on indigenous peoples. (Analyzing level)

### **Activity Part 7**

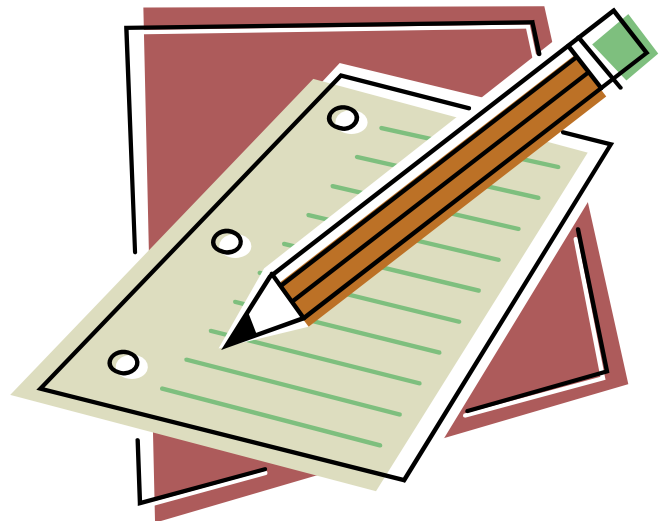
- In C groupings, ask students to develop a Venn diagram. Based on the last lesson, identify the effects of ethnocentrism on settlers in one circle and the effects of ethnocentrism on Indigenous peoples in the other.
- In the central area, determine if there are any common areas.
- Return to the essential questions created at the beginning of this unit and the questions for inquiry identified by the students.
- Ask students to work in pairs to respond to the questions and to identify any for which they do not yet have answers.
- As a class, see if the questions can be answered and, if not, determine how these answers might be found and who will do what.

### **Assessment** (formative)

Ask students to respond in their response journals to the essential questions and to new understandings they have developed. Provide feedback for students prior to their summative task.

### **FINAL ASSESSMENT**

Using their learning materials, students will complete the summative task (see Appendix E) individually.



## **RESOURCES**

### **Resources Used for This Unit**

**Contact the STF's Stewart Resources Centre to borrow any of these print resources.**

Boyden, J. (2013). *The Orenda*. Toronto, ON: Hamish Hamilton.

Bumsted, J. M. (2004). *The peoples of Canada: A pre-Confederation history* (2nd ed.). Toronto, ON: Oxford University Press.

Cardinal, H., & Hildebrandt, W. (2000). *Treaty elders of Saskatchewan*. Calgary, AB: University of Calgary Press.

Civilized. (2014a). In *Dictionary.com*. Retrieved from <http://dictionary.reference.com/browse/civilized?s=t>

Civilized. (2014b). In *Merriam-Webster online*. Retrieved from <http://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/civilized>

Civilized. (2014c). In *The free dictionary*. Retrieved from <http://www.thefreedictionary.com/civilized>

Frideres, J. S. (1998). *Aboriginal peoples in Canada: Contemporary conflicts*. Scarborough, ON: Prentice-Hall.

Hayden, M., Delainey, W. P., Farmer, D. L., & Johns, M. L. (1992). *Roots of society*. Scarborough, ON: Prentice-Hall Canada.

Kainai Board of Education, Métis Nation of Alberta, Northland School Division, & Tribal Chiefs Institute of Treaty Six. (2004). *Aboriginal perspectives: Aboriginal studies 10*. Edmonton, AB: Duval House.

Primitive. (2014a). In *Dictionary.com*. Retrieved from <http://dictionary.reference.com/browse/primitive?s=t>

Primitive. (2014b). In *Merriam-Webster online*. Retrieved from <http://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/primitive?show=0&t=1408023798>

Reed, K. (2011). *Aboriginal peoples in Canada*. Don Mills, ON: Pearson.

*Revised Bloom's taxonomy of cognitive levels [revised]*. (n.d.). Retrieved from <http://faculty.chass.ncsu.edu/slatta/hi216/learning/bloom.htm>

Saskatchewan Ministry of Education. (2009). *Social studies 9*. Retrieved from [https://www.edonline.sk.ca/bbcswebdav/library/curricula/English/Social\\_Studies/Social\\_Studies\\_Education\\_9\\_2009.pdf](https://www.edonline.sk.ca/bbcswebdav/library/curricula/English/Social_Studies/Social_Studies_Education_9_2009.pdf)

Saskatchewan Ministry of Education. (2012a). *Social studies: Additional learning resources 9*. Retrieved from [https://www.edonline.sk.ca/bbcswebdav/library/Curriculum%20Website/Social%20Studies/Resources/Core/ss\\_9\\_core\\_resources.pdf](https://www.edonline.sk.ca/bbcswebdav/library/Curriculum%20Website/Social%20Studies/Resources/Core/ss_9_core_resources.pdf)

Saskatchewan Ministry of Education. (2012b). *Social studies: Core learning resources 9*. Retrieved from [https://www.edonline.sk.ca/bbcswebdav/library/Curriculum%20Website/Social%20Studies/Resources/Core/ss\\_9\\_core\\_resources.pdf](https://www.edonline.sk.ca/bbcswebdav/library/Curriculum%20Website/Social%20Studies/Resources/Core/ss_9_core_resources.pdf)

Tourism Saskatchewan Canada. (2014). *Saskatchewan discovery guide*. Retrieved from <http://discovery-guide.sasktourism.com/app.php?RelId=6.1.3.4>

# APPENDICES



## APPENDIX A

### Assessment Rubric

<b>Criteria</b>	<b>Level Four</b>	<b>Level Three</b>	<b>Level Two</b>	<b>Level One</b>
Understands and explains the attributes and characteristics of a society.	In-depth understanding and explanation of the attributes and characteristics of a society.	Understands and explains the attributes and characteristics of a society.	Partially understands and explains the attributes and characteristics of a society.	Vague understanding of the attributes and characteristics of a society.
Can differentiate between the elements of a society and those that are not elements of a society.	Insightful differentiation between elements and non-elements of a society.	Can differentiate between the elements of a society and those that are not elements of a society.	Partial differentiation between elements and non-elements of a society.	Inaccurate differentiation between elements and non-elements of a society.
Determines evidence and draws conclusions about a society.	Compelling evidence and support for conclusions about a society.	Determines evidence and draws conclusions about a society.	Simplistic evidence and support for conclusions.	Weak evidence and support for conclusions.

## APPENDIX B

### Glossary

#### **Civilization**

“The word ‘civilization’ comes from the Latin word *civis*, meaning ‘inhabitant of a city’” (Hayden, Delainey, Farmer, & Johns, 1992, p. 40).

#### **Civilized**

“Having an advanced or humane culture. Polite, well-bred, refined.” (Dictionary.com)

“Having a highly developed society and culture. Showing evidence of moral and intellectual advancement; humane, ethical, and reasonable.” (Thefreedictionary.com)

“Marked by well-organized laws and rules about how people behave with each other. The condition that exists when people have developed effective ways of organizing a society and care about art, science, etc.” (Merriam-Webster dictionary.com).

#### **Colonization**

“is when one country takes political and economic control of another, while also attempting to impose its culture on the indigenous people. Often by importing settlers to the colonized country” (Kainai Board of Education, Métis Nation of Alberta, Northland School Division, & Tribal Chiefs Institute of Treaty Six, 2004, p. 134).

“The colonization process can be considered in seven parts. The first concerns the incursion of the colonizing group into a geographic area. This usually takes the form of forced-voluntary entry; acting in its own interests, the colonizing group forces its way into an area. In Canada, both French and English settlement followed this pattern. . . . The second attribute of colonization is its destructive effect on the social and cultural structures of the indigenous group. In Canada’s case, White colonizers destroyed the Aboriginals’ political, economic, kinship and, in most cases, religious systems. The values and norms of Aboriginal peoples were either ignored or violated. . . . The third and fourth aspects of colonization are the interrelated processes of external political control and Aboriginal economic dependence. In the standard practice of colonization, the mother country sends out representatives through which it indirectly rules the conquered land. . . . The last two aspects of colonization relate to social interactions between Aboriginals and Whites and refer to racism and the establishment of a colour-line. Racism is a belief in the genetic superiority of the colonizing Whites and the inferiority of the colonized Aboriginals. . . . The ultimate consequence of colonization is to weaken the resistance of the colonized Aboriginals to the point at which they can be controlled” (Frideres, 1998, pp. 2-5).

#### **Ethnocentrism**

Europeans “thought First Nations had little to offer them beyond furs and fresh meat. In their view, Europe represented the modern, technologically advanced and superior world of countries, cities, capitalism, and Christianity. This false sense of superiority prevented

them from seeing that much of their knowledge and experience was useless in their new surroundings” (Kainai Board of Education et al., 2004, p. 140).

“From the start, the newcomers to North America were convinced that they were superior to the indigenous inhabitants by virtue of their technology, their emerging capitalistic economic order, their new political organization into nation-states, and especially their Christian system of values and beliefs. This conviction was to a considerable extent unwarranted” (Bumsted, 2003, p. 32).

Ethnocentrism “is the belief that one culture’s way of doing things is normal and correct, and that it should set the standard for other cultures. In the past, many groups have been ethnocentric, including those who came to settle in North America” (Hayden et al., 1992, p. 231).

### **Primitive**

“of or pertaining to a preliterate or tribal people having cultural or physical similarities with their early ancestors. No longer in technical use (Anthropology). Being the first or earliest of the kind or in existence, especially in the early age of the world” (Dictionary.com).

“of, belonging to, or seeming to come from an early time in the very ancient past, not having a written language, advanced technology, etc. very simple and basic : made or done in a way that is not modern and that does not show much skill” (Merriam-Webster dictionary).

“Much of Canadian history pertaining to First Nations depicts them as ‘heathen, savage, primitive peoples’” (Cardinal & Hildebrandt, 2000, p. 3).

### **Society**

“is a structured community of people bound together by similar traditions, institutions, or nationality” (Saskatchewan Ministry of Education, 2009, p. 28).

# APPENDIX C

## Functions and Services of a Community Data

Community Name:			
Group Members:			
Services identified:	<table border="1"><thead><tr><th>Service</th><th>Function</th></tr></thead><tbody></tbody></table>	Service	Function
Service	Function		
Institutions identified:	<table border="1"><thead><tr><th>Institution</th><th>Function</th></tr></thead><tbody></tbody></table>	Institution	Function
Institution	Function		
Gaps or problems identified:			

## APPENDIX D

### Society Checklist

Criteria	Details
A group of people with interpersonal relationships	
Sharing the same geographical or social territory or area	
Follow the same political authority (laws)	
Have a distinctive culture	
Have a set of identifiable values	
A variety of institutions exist for the benefit of members of the community	
Community members have ways of supporting each other in times of need	

## **APPENDIX E**

### **Performance Task**

A new community has been found in Central America and its description is below. Your job is to determine whether or not this new community can be classified as a society. You may present your findings in a written format, in a representation, or in an oral format. Your response must include a rationale for your decision.

This group of recently identified people lives by hunting and gathering. Food is found through the daily collection of wild plants and the hunting of wild animals. The group needs to move around constantly in search of food. As a result, they do not build permanent houses or villages, but temporary homes and buildings are constructed and taken down when the group moves. Clothing is created from animal skins and wool. Wool and skins are dyed using natural pigments. The family forms the main social unit with most members of the group being related by birth or marriage.

Although people view themselves as equal and make decisions by consensus, some natural leaders have emerged who provide guidance when decisions become difficult, such as when resources become limited and a move appears necessary. Also, it is clear that people have different roles within the group, and these are not determined by gender but rather by ability and skill level. The group eats together and food is prepared by specific group members for the whole community. No one goes without food. Education is carried out by those with specific skills and abilities using modeling and practice as the mode of instruction. Medicine is practiced by those with the skills of identifying specific medicines in plants, and those having specialized knowledge of certain practices.