

6th Grade Social Studies - Chapters 1-5 Vocabulary Words – Study for Semester Test

history	the study of the past
culture	the knowledge, beliefs, customs, and values of a group of people
archaeology	the study of the past based on what people left behind
fossil	a part or imprint of something that was once alive
geography	the study of Earth's physical and cultural features
landforms	the natural features of the land's surface
climate	the average weather conditions in a certain area over a long period of time
environment	all the living and nonliving things that affect life in an area
artifact	an object created and used by humans
primary source	an account of an event by someone who took part in or witnessed the event
secondary source	information gathered by someone who did not take part in or witness an event
region	an area with one or more features that make it different from surrounding areas

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resources	the materials found on Earth that people need and value
prehistory	the time before there was writing
hominid	an early ancestor of humans
ancestor	a relative who lived in the past
tool	an object that has been modified to help a person accomplish a task
Paleolithic Era	the first part of the Stone Age; when people first used stone tools
society	a community of people who share a common culture
hunter-gatherers	people who hunt animals and gather wild plants, seeds, fruits, and nuts to survive
migrate	to move to a new place
ice ages	long periods of freezing weather
land bridge	a strip of land connecting two continents
Mesolithic Era	the middle part of the Stone Age; marked by the creation of smaller and more complex tools

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Neolithic Era	the New Stone Age; when people learned to make fire and tools such as saws and drills
domestication	the process of changing plants and animals to make them more useful to humans
agriculture	farming
megalith	a huge stone monument
Fertile Crescent	an area of rich farmland in Southwest Asia where the first civilizations began
silt	a mixture of fertile soil and tiny rocks that can make land ideal for farming
irrigation	a way of supplying water to an area of land
canal	a human-made waterway
surplus	more of something than is needed
division of labor	an arrangement in which each worker specializes in a particular task or job
rural	a countryside area
urban	a city area

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city-state	a political unit consisting of a city and its surrounding countryside
empire	land with different territories and peoples under a single rule
polytheism	the worship of many gods
priest	a person who performs religious ceremonies
social hierarchy	the division of society by rank or class
cuneiform	the world's first system of writing; developed in Sumer
pictograph	a picture symbol
scribe	a writer
epics	long poems that tell the stories of heroes
architecture	the science of building
ziggurat	a pyramid-shaped temple in Sumer
Hammurabi	a Babylonian king who made a code of 282 laws

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monarch	a ruler of a kingdom or empire
chariot	a wheeled, horse-drawn cart used in battle
Nebuchadnezzar	a famous Chaldean king who rebuilt Babylon into a beautiful city
alphabet	a set of letters that can be combined to form words
cataract	a set of rapids along a river, such as those along the Nile in Egypt
delta	a triangle-shaped area of land made from soil deposited by a river
Menes	an Egyptian ruler who united Upper Egypt and Lower Egypt; considered by historians to be Egypt's first pharaoh
pharaoh	the title used by the rulers of Egypt
dynasty	a series of rulers from the same family
Old Kingdom	the period from about 2700 to 2200 BC in Egyptian history that began shortly after Egypt was unified
Khufu	a famous pharaoh of the Old Kingdom who ruled in the 2500s BC; best known for the Great Pyramid near Giza that was built as his burial
noble	a rich and powerful person

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afterlife	life after death
mummy	a specially treated body wrapped in cloth for preservation
elite	people of wealth and power
pyramid	a huge triangular tomb built by the Egyptians and other peoples
engineering	the application of scientific knowledge for practical purposes
Middle Kingdom	the period of Egyptian history from about 2050 to 1750 BC; marked by order and stability
New Kingdom	the period from about 1550 to 1050 BC in Egyptian history when Egypt reached the height of its power and glory
trade route	a path followed by traders
Queen Hatshepsut	an Egyptian queen who worked to increase Egyptian trade; known for the many impressive monuments and temples built during her reign
Ramses the Great	an Egyptian pharaoh who fought the Hittites in the 1200s BC, defended Egypt from invaders, and strengthened Egypt's western frontier
hieroglyphics	the ancient Egyptian writing system that used picture symbols
papyrus	a long-lasting, paper-like material made from reeds that the ancient Egyptians used to write on

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Rosetta Stone	a huge stone slab inscribed with hieroglyphics, Greek, and a later form of Egyptian that allowed historians to understand Egyptian writing
sphinx	an imaginary creature with a human head and the body of a lion that was often shown on Egyptian statues
obelisk	a tall, pointed, four-sided pillar in ancient Egypt
King Tutankhamen	an Egyptian pharaoh whose tomb filled with treasures was discovered by archaeologists in 1922
Piankhi	a very religious Kushite king who believed he was supported by the gods; conquered many Egyptian cities and extended the Kushite empire
trade network	a system of people in different lands who trade goods back and forth
merchant	trader
exports	items sent to other regions for trade
imports	goods brought in from other regions
Queen Shanakhdakheto	a Kushite queen who may have been the first woman to rule Kush by herself
King Ezana	a king of Aksum who destroyed Meröe and conquered the kingdom of Kush in AD 350
subcontinent	a large landmass that is smaller than a continent, such as India

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monsoon	a seasonal wind pattern that causes wet and dry seasons
Sanskrit	the most important language of ancient India
caste system	the division of Indian society into groups based on rank, wealth, or occupation
Hinduism	the main religion of India; it teaches that everything is part of a universal spirit called Brahman
reincarnation	a Hindu and Buddhist belief that souls are born and reborn many times, each time into a new body
karma	in Buddhism and Hinduism, the effects that good or bad actions have on a person's soul
Jainism	an Indian religion based on the teachings of Mahavira that teaches all life is sacred
nonviolence	the avoidance of violent actions
fasting	going without food for a period of time
meditation	deep breathing and thought that focuses the mind on spiritual ideas
the Buddha	the founder of Buddhism; also known as the "Enlightened One"
Buddhism	a religion based on the teachings of the Buddha that developed in India in the 500s BC

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nirvana	in Buddhism, a state of perfect peace
missionary	someone who works to spread religious beliefs
Candragupta Maurya	a military leader who seized control of India and founded the Mauryan Empire in the 320s BC
Asoka	a Mauryan emperor who converted to Buddhism after extending Mauryan rule over most of India
Candra Gupta II	an Indian emperor who took the throne in AD 375; during his rule, Gupta society reached its high point
metallurgy	the science of working with metals
alloy	a mixture of two or more metals
Hindu-Arabic numerals	the number system we use today; it was created by Indian scholars during the Gupta dynasty
inoculation	injecting a person with a small dose of a virus to help build up defenses to a disease
astronomy	the study of stars and planets