

**Robert C. Parker School**  
**Social Studies**  
**Kindergarten - Grade 5**

The social studies program in grades K – 5 incorporates history, geography, cultural studies, and citizenship as the students begin to develop an understanding of the world around them. Students explore social studies themes in a two-year rotation. Literacy, science, math, and the arts are integrated into each theme.

Each year begins with a unit of study that relates to students' lives here and now. The spring theme relates to long ago or far away. Annual cultural studies give students a foundation for global understanding.

Research skills begin in kindergarten with class fact-collections and simple reports. Essay writing is introduced in second grade. Students write persuasive essays in grades four and five.

Themes are organized around overarching questions throughout the grades:

- How does the environment shape us and how do we shape the environment?
- How are we dependent and interdependent with the people who live near us?  
How are we dependent and interdependent with the people who live far from us?

**K-1 Class**

**Year 1:** *Homes and Habitats - Fall*

*A Spanish Speaking Country and its Animals and Habitats - Spring*

Big Questions: How does where we live affect how we live?

**Year 2:** *Ourselves, Our Family, and our Community - Fall*

*An African Country and Its Culture - Spring*

Big Questions: How are we different? How are we the same?

**2-3 Class**

**Year 1:** *The Hudson River - Fall*

*India and the Ganges River- Spring*

Big Questions: How does water become the wellspring of life? How and why do people live near water? How do people affect rivers? How do rivers affect people?

**Year 2:** *Geologic Time/local dinosaurs - Fall*

*China - Spring*

Big Questions: How did people live long ago and today? What was life like on this planet before humans arrived? What life forms existed? How do we know? What innovations came from China? Why? How is China important in the world?

#### **4-5 Class**

**Year 1:** *New York State: Geography and Native American Tribes - Fall*  
*The Americas: Aztec, Inca, and Maya - Spring*

Big Questions: How do native peoples adapt to their environment?

**Year 2:** *NY State: Government; United States: Geography, Government, and Immigration - Fall*  
*Westward Movement in America - Spring*

Big Questions: Where are our origins? Where did we come from? How did we create change? What was its impact?