



**Review of *Longman Social Studies***  
**Authors: LeeAnn Lawlor and Julie Mariscal**  
White Plains, NY, Pearson Longman 2006

Reviewed by Dan Fichtner, P.H. D, UCLA Extension TESOL Program, President Elect CATESOL

### **Overview**

The audience for this text is beginning ELs and struggling readers; the purpose is to be a bridge to mainstream or SDAIE/SIOP Social Studies classes. It introduces key social studies vocabulary, terms and concepts, as well as the academic language required for success in later social science classes. Reading strategies are also taught, practiced, and assessed.

Best practices for ELs are integrated into the text and its teacher's guide:

- Scaffolding is accomplished with repetition and the use of maps, time lines, graphs, etc.
- Academic language is focused on since it is required for success in high stakes testing, the academic classroom and learning in general.

Besides an introduction to social studies and the five themes of geography, there are seven units that concisely survey important historical periods from ancient to modern times. These include Early Civilizations, The Classical World, Middle Ages, Renaissance, Early United States, A New Nation, and The Modern World. Throughout these units, students learn to read for meaning and they develop short essay writing skills. The student textbook workbook and teacher's guide all help to accomplish the goals of Longman Social Studies.

### **Evaluation**

Lawlor and Mariscal, the authors of this text, have met their stated purpose – that being to prepare beginning English learners and struggling readers to cross the bridge to more rigorous social studies content by learning the academic language and skills needed to succeed in such courses. Moreover, they give students exposure to the major themes and periods of history. This can only help prepare them for their future courses.

The introduction of the text gives an overview of social studies and what is involved in the learning of it; this overview is quite manageable for a beginning English learner or struggling reader to master. The teacher's guide quite explicitly helps the novice teacher highlight learning from the pages of the text. Page 3 of the teacher's guide covers the five themes of geography, pages 7 – 11 in the text. Explicit instructions prompt the teacher and guide both teacher and student through the pages with

example questions and directions. For example, the students read silently page 7 of the text and then are asked questions by the teacher who points to the text.

## **The Five Themes of Geography**

Learning about geography can be a huge task. The task can be easier if you study themes of geography. A theme is a main idea that can help you understand information. There are five themes of geography.

### **1. Location**

This theme answers the question, "Where is it?"  
Location tells you where an area is. (Page 7 Student Text)

After students have read this, the teacher asks: What can be a huge task? What can make the task easier... (Page 3 of Teacher's Guide)

After all five themes are covered in this manner, icons in the text and teacher's guide indicate there is review work on this particular material in the workbook.

Given this treatment throughout the program, students will be able to master the content, skills and vocabulary necessary to enter mainstream social studies classes.

As mentioned previously, in addition to the introduction, there are seven units that continue to follow the "best practices" of teaching ELs. They are planned, or "laid out for learning." Vocabulary is pre taught and key words highlighted in the "Before You Read" section. Each unit teaches and reinforces social studies skills and the use of visuals for learning. Within the unit "Language Tips", "Connect to Today", "More About It," and "Before You Go On" activities help to motivate students to practice higher order thinking with the material. Students are continually required to read and focus on what they are learning. Metacognitive strategies abound in the text. The lessons follow the CALLA method, developed by researcher/educator Anna Uhl Chamot.

### **Assessment**

The introduction and review of information in this program are exemplary. I know of no other program that handles social studies content so well for Beginning English learners and struggling readers. While this is so, the suggested assessments truly take into account the lack of language skills that beginning ELs and struggling readers have. Each lesson has a "Review and Practice" section, as well as corresponding sections in the workbook. Every unit also has a unit review. In these activities, students are required to fill in blanks or answer in very short sentences: All review activities match the language abilities of beginning ELs and are quite doable by them. There are realistic and high expectations for them. Each unit review also has applications of the social studies skills learned, an extension project and suggested readings at a level that the target students can access. A unit review also includes a "Writing Skills" section that begins with making a plan and ends up in Unit 7 with "Edit and Publish a Three-Paragraph Essay." The use of graphic organizers throughout this text helps in this

endeavor.

The glossary and section on "Understanding The Past Tense" at the back of the book do much to make this program an excellent choice for beginning ELs and struggling readers. The explicit and easily understood definitions of social studies terms and the direct instruction on past tense using themes from the social sciences make this program one that stands out from the others. Each and every feature of the text benefits the beginning EL and struggling reader.

*Longman Social Studies* benefits both the teacher and students because of its instructional style and manner of assessment. The comprehensive overview of historical periods, coupled with its development of English language skills, make it a content-based ELD program worthy of use in any ELD program in the U.S.

*Longman Social Studies* has applied the theory and methods of Second Language Acquisition to the teaching of social studies in the U.S. It has taken the best practices of ELD/ESL and used them quite effectively in the content areas of world history and U.S. history.

As Lawlor and Mariscal stated in their letter to the students, "This book will help you be successful in your other social studies classes." (Page 1 student text).

It is worth remembering that with this text, beginning English Learners and struggling readers are attaining content knowledge in social studies, the ability to read history in comprehensible language and digestible chunks and opportunities to demonstrate their knowledge in a manner befitting their linguistic ability. It is a program well worth considering for your comprehensive ELD program. It will breed success in the students. This success will be motivating and breed further academic success. And this is what education is supposed to do - benefit the students. •

Dan Fichtner has over 37 years of teaching experience. He has taught an array of subject areas including science, math, social sciences, drama, foreign language, and ESL/ELD. Dan has also helped develop programs and materials for English Language Learners. He is currently a teacher trainer at UCLA's Education Extension TESOL Program. After teaching in Japan, Dan worked on his doctorate in International Education and Crosscultural Communication. Now retired Dan spends his time training teacher's at UCLA's Education Extension TESOL Program and the South Bay's BTSA Program.