Social Studies Handbook

Our Land and Regions

Geography – the study of Earth

Reading maps helps us learn about world, past and present

Compass rose – symbol that shows directions

Map key – helps interpret symbols

Latitude: Longitude:

-Run east and west -Run north and south

-Measure north and south -Measure east and west

-Equator 0° -Prime Meridian 0°

Political map – location of state or national borders and capital cities

Relief map – uses color and shading to show high or low places

Region – area that shares physical or human characteristics

Historical map – includes dates and shows locations of events from the past

Our Market Economy

Economics – study of production, distribution, and consumption of goods and services

Consumers – people who buy goods and services

Demand – consumers’ desire to buy something

Supply – Amount of goods or services available

EXAMPLE:

-Black Friday

-prices of goods go down, so demand to get them goes up

-crowds and sold-out items are common on that day, but not other times

Free Market Economy:

-Private people own factories, businesses, and stores – NOT the gov’t

-Private people make decisions about what to produce and what price to charge

Competition – struggle among producers for consumers’ money

Opportunity cost – what you give up to get what you want

Bank account – place to put money for safety and to earn interest

-Banks use deposited money to make loans for other customers

-Interest – a small fee charged on borrowed money

Credit cards

-Allows consumers to buy things with the promise that the money will be paid back

-If late with payment, charged interest

Trade agreement – makes it easier to import and export goods

Participating in Our Government

Constitution – written plan for gov’t

Separation of Powers – each branch of gov’t has its own responsibilities and powers

Checks and Balances – each branch of gov’t can limit the power of the other branches

Branch Responsibilities:

Executive:

-make sure laws are carried out

-command armed forces

Legislative:

-make laws

-establish taxes

Judicial:

-interpret laws

-decide if laws follow Constitution

Amendment – a change to the Constitution

Writing Constitution:

-Founders relied on English law such as Magna Carta and English Bill of Rights

-Because of this, the Bill of Rights protects free speech, freedom of religion, and other important rights

Process for amending Constitution:

1. 2/3 of Congress must vote for change

2. 3/4 of states must approve change

Example amendments:

-1870 – all men can vote, regardless of race

-1920 – voting rights to women

Federalism – Constitution divides power between the national and state gov’ts

Popular sovereignty – the citizens have the right to choose what kind of gov’t they have

Civic Responsibilities:

-Obey laws

-Pay taxes

-Vote

-Stay informed