

Dear Families,

Ascend takes pride in its Liberal Arts program, at the center of which is our rich literacy-based reading platform, Literature Circle. Each day, our scholars come together to immerse themselves in animated literature-based discussions. Our texts are purposefully selected, not only as a tool for teaching scholars how to read, but to help scholars make sense of their world. By exploring text selections based on world history and geography content, in a variety of reading genres, such as fables, myth, legends, poetry and various nonfiction texts, scholars develop an understanding of their own culture and history as well as that of others around the world. Literature Circle creates an amazing opportunity for scholars to engage in dialogue around topics concerning ethics, community, respect, and other multicultural themes, such as diversity, empathy and values.

During Literature Circle and Read Aloud, scholars strengthen reading skills such as comparing and contrasting different topics or characters. They analyze a text to determine its deepest meaning and relevance, and they form good habits of discussion. This practice will help to create scholars that are truly knowledgeable about a broad range of topics, who can express themselves articulately, and who are passionate about their rights and responsibility as citizens at home, and around the world.

We want you to know what your scholar is reading and learning at school. Therefore, we are providing this overview of the topics and content your scholar will read and think about as she or he applies increasingly rigorous reading skills and strategies. Additionally, we invite you to read books at home with your scholars on these topics. Some books might be appropriate for scholars to read on their own and others are ideal for reading along with your scholar.

Come join us in the discovery of our history and how it impacts the way we live today.

North America: Past and Present		
Unit	Descriptions	Suggested books for home library
My World and My Community	This unit introduces scholars to the world we live in; from the global overview of planet Earth, to local Brooklyn communities in New York City. Scholars learn what a community is, and important information about their local community. Additionally, scholars learn to identify, interpret and use maps and globes. This unit sets scholars up with the foundational knowledge to engage with many of the historical and content rich literature that they will read throughout the year.	<i>Where do I live?</i> Neil Chesanow; <i>Me on the Map</i> by Joan Sweeney; <i>Map Keys</i> (Rookie Read-About Geography) by Rebecca Olien; <i>Living in Suburban Communities</i> (First Step Nonfiction: Communities) by Kristen Sterling; <i>Living in Rural Communities</i> (First Step Nonfiction): by Kristen Sterling; <i>Places in My Community</i> (My World); Bobbie Kalman; <i>Continents in My World</i> by Ella Cane; <i>B Is for Brooklyn</i> by Selina Alko;
Short Stories	In this short unit, the Native American folktale How Chipmunk Got His Stripes introduces scholars to the genre and story elements of folktales. It also provides the opportunity for scholars to reflect on their own values. Over the course of several lessons, scholars will listen to and discuss the folktale. They will analyze the literary elements of plot, character, setting, and events. Scholars will practice retelling the major events and key details in sequence. Finally, as scholars learn the important elements of the genre, they will develop an understanding of how readers determine the central message (moral or lesson) of a folktale.	<i>Aesop's Fables</i> Pinkney; <i>Aesop's Fables</i> Beverly Naidoo, <i>The Ant and the Grasshopper</i> Rebecca Emberley; <i>How the Leopard Got His Claws</i> Chinua Achebe; <i>The Lion and the Mouse</i> Bernadette Watts; <i>Little Cloud and Lady Wind</i> Toni Morrison and Slade Morrison; <i>The Tortoise and the Hare</i> Janet Stevens; <i>Town Mouse, Country Mouse</i> Jan Brett; <i>The Wise Fool: Fables from the Islamic World</i> Shahrukh Husain and Micha Archer;
Native American Peoples, Past and Present	The Native Americans domain introduces scholars to the broad concept that indigenous people lived on the continents of North and South America long before European explorers visited and settled in this area. Scholars will learn that there were many, many different tribes of Native Americans, and that each tribe had its own way of	<i>The Girl Who Helped Thunder and Other Native American Folktales</i> (Folktales of the World) by James Bruchac and Joseph Bruchac Ph.D. <i>The Very First Americans</i> (All Aboard Books) by Cara Ashrose; <i>The Girl Who Loved Wild Horses</i> by Paul Globe;

	eating, dressing, and living, depending on where they lived. Scholars will learn about three tribes in particular: the Lakota Sioux of the Great Plains region, and the Wampanoag and the Lenape, both of the Eastern Woodlands region. They will begin to understand how geographical factors influenced the lifestyles of the different groups and that each Native American group has its own distinctive culture.	
Kings and Queens	In the Kings and Queens domain, scholars will listen to read-alouds about kings, queens, and royal families. Both the fiction and nonfiction selections will build scholars' understanding of the responsibilities, lifestyle, and customs associated with royalty throughout history. This domain will also reinforce basic geography concepts, including the locations of the different continents as well as cardinal directions.	<i>King Midas and the Golden Touch, The Princess and the Pea, Cinderella, and Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs</i> and other wonderful fairy tales and stories.
Columbus and the Pilgrims	During scholars' study of Columbus and the Pilgrims, they will be introduced to the first voyage of Columbus, and the voyage of the Pilgrims some 128 years later. Scholars will learn about the similarities between the voyages of Columbus and the Pilgrims and about the interactions between Europeans and Native Americans. Moreover, scholars will be able to describe the journey of the <i>Mayflower</i> and the lives of the Pilgrims in their first year in America. By the end of the unit, scholars would have learned about many important events and ideas regarding the founding of the United States.	<i>Christopher Columbus</i> by Mary Dodson Wade; <i>Me on the Map</i> by Joan Sweeney; <i>Picture Book of Christopher Columbus</i> by David A. Adler
Colonial Towns and Townspeople	The last of the subjects under this domain introduces scholars to the lives of the Africans who were brought to the colonies during the period of exploration and settlement. Scholars will learn that these Africans were brought to the colonies by force. They will understand the point of view of the enslaved people and discuss the big ideas around freedom and equality.	<i>Clothes in Colonial America</i> by Mark Thomas; <i>Colonial Times from A to Z</i> by Bobbie Kalman; <i>OxCart Man</i> by Donald Hall, <i>If You Lived When There Was Slavery In America</i> by Anne Kamma; <i>African-Americans in the Colonies (We the People: Exploration and Colonization)</i> by Jean K. Williams

A More Perfect Union	A More Perfect Union is set in the time period after the 13 colonies had declared their freedom from England and had become an independent nation. Through multiple close reads of the narrative nonfiction book <i>A More Perfect Union: The Story of Our Constitution</i> by Betsy Maestro and Giulio Maestro, scholars will listen to, discuss, write and draw about the individuals, events, and ideas that contributed to the creation of the United States Constitution. Scholars will analyze and describe illustrations to gain a deeper understanding about the text and life in the 1780s. They will define and explain new vocabulary associated with the Constitution and America's history. Scholars will also build an understanding that the principles created during this time period continue to be the foundation for our government and our rights today.	
Presidents Past and Present	This domain explores the lives and legacies of five famous presidents and introduces scholars to several national symbols, including the American flag, the Statue of Liberty, the White House, and Mount Rushmore. Scholars begin by hearing about the branches of the government, what a president is, what a president does, and how a person becomes president. By the end of this domain, scholars will be able to make a comparison between a king and a president.	<i>President's Day</i> by Anne Rockwell; <i>A Picture Book of Abraham Lincoln</i> by David Adler; <i>A Picture Book of George Washington</i> by David Adler; <i>A Picture Book of Thomas Jefferson</i> by David Adler; <i>Our American Flag</i> by Mary Firestone; <i>The Liberty Bell</i> by Lloyd G. Douglas; <i>Mount Rushmore (Pull Ahead Books)</i> by Judith Jango-Cohen; <i>The White House</i> by Karen Latchana Kenney; <i>U. S. Symbols (First Step Nonfiction)</i> by Ann-Marie Kishel

Additional Resources:

<http://www.ducksters.com/>: Kid-friendly explanations of many Social Studies topics.

<http://www.mrdonn.org/>: A site with Social Studies content for teachers (and parents), as well as children.

<http://www.timeforkids.com/around-the-world/>: A section of the Time for Kids website that has lots of pictures and descriptions about countries and cultures around the world.

<http://www.thehomeschoolmom.com/homeschooling-in-new-york/field-trips/>: Long list of trips in and around NYC that are related to much of our social studies content.

<http://www.brainpopjr.com/>: Site with mostly paid (\$10/month or \$99/year), but some free content. Includes videos and written material. Available in Spanish.

<http://discoverykids.com/category/history/>: The section of the Discovery Kids website devoted to Social Studies and global history.

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/history/forkids/>: Interactive history for children.

<http://www.mrdowling.com/>: Global history for children.