

Name of unit: “Communities – Staying the Same and Constantly Changing”: A study of past, present and future cities	
Grade level: 4 th - 6 th grade	Length of unit: 6 – 8 weeks
Developer: Mark Baker Curriculum Director of the American International School of Johannesburg	
Core Standards: Standard 3 and 6 (Governance and Citizenship)	
Core Benchmarks: 3f – Describe and explain various types and patterns of settlement and land use and reasons why particular locations are used for certain human activities. 4g - Understand similarities and differences in the ways groups and cultures meet human needs and concerns. 6b – Describe how governments meet needs and wants of individuals and society. 7b – Explain relationships between the locations of resources and patterns of population distribution. 7f– Describe how trade affects the way people earn their living 7g – Describe changes in the division of labor from hunting and gathering societies to farming communities to urban societies.	
Core topics and/or themes: Standard 3 topics – natural and human resources, migration, trade routes, exploration, and settlement patterns. Standard 6 topics – group dynamics, power and authority, rights and responsibilities	
Supporting benchmarks: 1a – Use key concepts such as chronology, causality, and conflict to identify patterns of historical change. 2c – Explain the major ways groups, societies, and nations interact with one another. 3e – Describe geographic factors that influence human migration. 6d – Explain the organization and major responsibilities of the various levels of governments. 6g – Identify and describe means by which citizens can monitor and influence actions of their government. 7h – Describe economic causes of human migration. 8c – Identify ways that tools and techniques can have both positive and negative effects.	
Content Topics: Select 5 – 10 cities around the world (Beijing, London, Bangkok, New York, Mexico City, etc.) and compare how they have evolved over the centuries	
Driving questions: Are cities across the ages more similar or different? What factors led to the recent development of “mega-cities”? What problems or issues found in medieval communities still exist in their modern counterparts?	
Culminating assessment (attach scoring rubric) A simulation involving a municipal dilemma will be developed (the need for a new landfill, decision on whether to develop an industrial park, an influx of refugees, traffic congestion and pollution). Students will develop potential solutions to the issue and then write an essay on which solution best addresses the situation and the concerns of the various interest groups involved. Students will then be grouped into consulting firms and make presentation to the city council (a group of parent or older student volunteers) who will make a decision about which course of action they will take to address the situation.	

Unit Overviews (2 choices)

Cities Past and Present

The students will use the various social studies disciplines to compare a European medieval community to modern cities. The students will compare such societal components as governing structures, economic systems, and employment opportunities, use of technology, cultural aspects, and important institutions of the community. The students will also learn about the lifestyles of different socio-economic groups (nobles, craftsmen, and “commoners”/laborers) found in a typical manor or urban area. They will learn about the daily routines of different levels of the medieval society such as diet, medical care, housing, holidays, education, and recreation. Students will gain awareness about the poor living conditions and the tremendous amount of time people had to spend each day taking care of their most basic needs.

Students will also compare medieval and modern commerce practices and learn how money has assisted economic development and trade. Students will learn about how difficult and dangerous it was to travel during the Middle Ages and how this inhibited the exchange of goods and ideas. Students will examine what was happening in other societies in different regions of the world during the Middle Ages to determine if they possessed any resources, tools, products, technical advancements, or societal structures that were more advanced than their counterparts in Europe.

Students should be involved in a variety of simulations that compare how situations were addressed in medieval times and how they are handled today. Such incidents as an outbreak of a disease, criminal acts, helping the less fortunate, disagreement with government policy, job training and opportunities, money lending, and settling conflicts with other communities can assist students in gaining appreciation for modern societal structures, governing procedures, and technical advancements.

The unit will also examine the factors that caused the European crusades into the Middle East and how these conflicts exposed European communities to new ideas, products, and technology that led to the European Renaissance.

The students will learn that many present-day societies tend to more resemble medieval communities than modern ones. Students will analyze what factors affect how “developed” a society or city becomes.

Examining Our Host City

(I have used my school’s host city – Johannesburg as an example of how this unit would be developed) - The students will study how Johannesburg came into existence, grew, and changed in the last +/- 120 years. Students will gain an awareness of the enormous amount of resources a city requires in order to function (water, sewage, electricity, streets, police officers and vehicles, etc.). The students will also learn about how the city collects revenue to pay for these services and goods.

The students will examine the early days of Johannesburg and analyze why people were initially attracted to come and live here, and why they decided to stay. In connection, they will study the location where the first town buildings were erected – what were their function and are there any

traces of them today? They will also understand how getting control of an area creates conflict (in this case between the indigenous tribes, Afrikaans, and British).

The students will also examine some of the issues and difficulties the city has encountered in its history (e.g. forced removal of people from Sophiatown, the development of townships, natural calamities, etc.), and how the city addressed these problems.

Students will use a variety of resources to examine different aspects of daily life in Johannesburg during three or four selected eras (1890's, 1920's, 1950's and 1990's) and will identify how the city and its citizens have changed over the decades. Students will investigate different elements of community development:

- *The characteristics of different neighborhoods (dominant ethnic group, architectural features, economic factors);*
- *Where city services were and are located (hospitals, police and fire stations);*
- *Recreational areas (libraries, parks, restaurants) and when they were established;*
- *The location of industries and what they produced;*
- *Transportation networks (major roads, public transportation);*
- *Shopping areas;*
- *Family life style (employment options, entertainment, transportation, schools, etc.);*
- *Cultural developments (what area museums exhibit, city monuments, festivals and holidays).*

Students will create a variety of maps that present different information about the city.

Students will analyze why the city has evolved the way it has (why more neighborhoods developed north of the city instead of south, how people used to go to individual shops along a street to buy goods and they now go to shopping malls, how changes in transportation allowed people to travel farther and faster, how smaller communities were annexed into Johannesburg as the metropolitan grew).

A special emphasis will be placed on mining because of its importance to Johannesburg's development. Students will compare current mining operations (identifying the location of the resources, extracting methods, refining procedures, tools and technology used, working conditions, etc.) with those used in the past.

Additional Instructional activities (time needed, resources, interim assessments)

Cities over the Centuries – students (individually or in small groups) select different major cities around the world and trace major events across the centuries. Identify structures that were created during each century that still exist today.

Similarities and Differences – students will examine the attributes of the world's largest 10 (15, 20, 25) cities and determine what they have in common (located by rivers, located by the ocean, latitude, geographical conditions) and research the causes that led to their growth.

Choosing a Community (what influences people) – Students will generate a list of positive and negative conditions that exist in cities. They will then develop a survey instrument to determine which of these factors positively or negatively influence people’s decision to move to that city.

City Expo – students will be given a situation (hosting the Olympics, setting up a manufacturing plant in a developing country, having to be transferred to an Asia, South America, Africa city etc.) and related criteria. They will then select a city and develop a presentation why the city they represent is the most appropriate in meeting the established criteria. Other students and/or parents will attend the expo and using class developed criteria, select the city they believe is the best match for the situation.

“Sim City” Computer Program – Students will be given a set of parameters and then use the program to create a city that optimally meets the parameters (taxation levels, zoning requirements, community needs and wants, etc.).