



PEELING A STANDARD

A new set of standards places a new set of demands on educators. Use this strategy to help teams and teachers better understand how curriculum content standards and the cumulative progress indicators are used to make instructional and assessment decisions. Teachers can identify essential learnings (content and skills) for their own level by examining the strands within content standards and the cumulative progress indicators for each strand for the grade levels below and above their current grade level. When teachers know what students are expected to know and be able to do in order to demonstrate cumulative progress indicators, they can focus instruction and assessment on essential learnings. In the sample standard outlined here, a team of 3rd-grade teachers addressing a geography standard studies the 2nd- and 4th-grade cumulative progress indicators for that standard to identify prior and future student learning. With this knowledge, they can identify key learnings to include in their 3rd-grade curriculum to ensure that students are able to demonstrate the 4th-grade cumulative progress indicators by the end of 4th grade.

GRADE LEVEL: 3rd
CONTENT: GEOGRAPHY

STANDARD 6.6 (Geography)
 All students will apply knowledge of spatial relationships and other geographic skills to understand human behavior in relation to the physical and cultural environment.

DESCRIPTIVE STATEMENT: The study of geography is based on the principle that thinking in and understanding spatial terms will enable students to understand the many relationships of place, people, and environments. By taking an active, questioning approach to the world around them, students learn to devise their own worldview. As students engage in critical thinking to interpret patterns in the evolution of significant historic events and the movement of human populations on the Earth’s surface, their understanding of geography, history, economics, and civics deepens. Furthermore, the use of geographic tools and technology assists students in understanding the reasons for, and the economic, political, and social consequences of, human impact on the environment in different areas of the world.

Strands	2nd-grade cumulative progress indicators	4th-grade cumulative progress indicators	3rd-grade essential learnings (content and skills)
A World in spatial terms	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Explain the spatial concepts of location, distance, and direction, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The location of school, home, neighborhood, community, state, and country; • The relative location of the community and places within it; • The location of continents and oceans. 2. Explain that the globe is a model of Earth and maps are representations of local and distant places. 3. Demonstrate basic globe and map skills. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Use physical and political maps to identify locations and spatial relationships of places within local and nearby communities. 2. Describe and demonstrate different ways to measure distance (e.g. miles, kilometers, time). 3. Estimate distances between two places on a map using a scale of miles. 4. Identify the major cities of the state, the United States, and the world. 5. Identify the major countries, continents, bodies of water, and mountain ranges of the world. 6. Locate time zones, latitude, longitude, and the global grid. 	
B Places and regions	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Describe the physical features of places and regions on a simple scale. 2. Describe the physical and human characteristics of places. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Identify the physical and human characteristics of places and regions in the state and the United States (e.g. landforms, climate, vegetation, housing). 2. Explain changes in places and regions over time and the consequences of those changes. 3. Describe the geography of the state. 4. Discuss factors involved in the development of cities (e.g. transportation, food, marketplace, religion, military protection). 	
C Physical systems	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Recognize that the relationship of Earth to the sun affects weather conditions, climate, and seasons. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Describe the basic components of the Earth's physical systems, including landforms, water, erosion, weather, and climate and discuss their impact on human development. 	
D Human systems	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Identify the types of transportation used to move goods and people. 2. Identify the modes of communication used to transmit ideas. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Describe the development of transportation and communication networks in the state and the United States. 2. Identify the distribution and characteristics of populations for different regions of the state and the United States. 	
E Environment and society	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Describe the role of resources such as air, land, water, and plants in everyday life. 2. Describe the impact of weather on everyday life. 3. Act on small-scale, personalized environmental issues such as littering and recycling, and explain why such actions are important. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Differentiate between living and nonliving natural resources. 2. Explain the nature, characteristics, and distribution of renewable and nonrenewable resources. 	

Source: Killion, J. (2006). *Collaborative professional learning in school and beyond: A tool kit for New Jersey educators*. Oxford, OH: New Jersey Department of Education & NSDC.