

Understanding Society

India and Beyond

**Social Science Textbook for
Grade 9 | Part 1**



0908

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NCERT

**राष्ट्रीय शैक्षिक अनुसंधान और प्रशिक्षण परिषद्
NATIONAL COUNCIL OF EDUCATIONAL RESEARCH AND TRAINING**

0908 – UNDERSTANDING SOCIETY: INDIA AND BEYOND
Social Science Textbook for Grade 9 Part 1

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Foreword

The National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 envisions an education system that is firmly rooted in India's civilisational wisdom, values, and ethical traditions. The rich intellectual heritage simultaneously enables learners to engage meaningfully with the complexities and possibilities of a rapidly changing world. The National Curriculum Framework for School Education (NCF-SE) 2023 provides concrete expression to this vision by laying out a coherent curricular pathway across stages of schooling that nurtures critical thinking, creativity, and sensitivity, along with the values and dispositions that are needed for responsible citizenship in an interconnected global society.

Learners have progressed through the Foundational, Preparatory, and Middle Stages, where their inherent potential has been nurtured holistically. Now, they enter the Secondary Stage with enhanced capacity for reflection, reasoning, enquiry, and self-expression. Spanning across Grades 9 to 12, also known as the adolescent stage, it marks a crucial period in the intellectual and personal growth of the students. It prepares them to engage with abstract ideas, complex social realities, ethical dilemmas, and the expanding universe of knowledge, while deepening their understanding of the self and the world around them.

The NCF-SE 2023 recommends that the curriculum for Grades 9–10 equips students with the skills that are needed to grow as they advance in their lives. Students can use these skills for reasoning, argumentation, and effective communication. It endeavours to enhance their analytical and descriptive capabilities to prepare them for the challenges and opportunities that await them. A diverse curriculum, covering ten subjects: three languages—including at least two languages native to India—Science, Mathematics, Social Sciences, Art Education, Physical Education and Well-being, Individuals in Society/Environmental Education, and Vocational Education, promotes their holistic development.

As envisaged in the NCF-SE 2023, the Secondary Stage provides learners with opportunities to engage more deeply with the study of society and develop the ability to analyse social processes, interpret diverse perspectives, and reflect on issues that shape their lives. Social Science learning at this stage is expected to cultivate analytical and discursive abilities, encourage critical inquiry, promote intercultural understanding, and enable learners to participate with confidence and responsibility in civic and social life. It is in this spirit that *Understanding Society: India and Beyond*, the Grade 9 Social Science textbook for the Secondary Stage, has been conceptualised and developed.



The textbook presents a range of themes and perspectives that reflect the socio-cultural and geographical diversity of India and the wider world, enabling learners to relate their lived experiences to broader social realities. The content has been carefully selected to engage students with questions related to society, governance, environment, culture, economy, and human relationships. This approach aims to encourage learners to think critically and empathetically about the world they inhabit. At the same time, the textbook draws upon India's intellectual and cultural traditions, weaving into its elements of Indian Knowledge Systems and our shared heritage, while meaningfully connecting them with contemporary concerns and experiences.

While *Understanding Society: India and Beyond* serves as a central learning resource, it also invites students to engage with a broader world of books, media, digital archives, libraries, and community knowledge. The role of teachers, parents, and school libraries is, therefore, pivotal in nurturing a rich culture of reading, dialogue, and independent exploration at this stage. The textbook integrates technology through the use of QR codes in each unit, which provide additional reading material and resources.

The National Council of Educational Research and Training acknowledges with deep appreciation the contributions of the Textbook Development Team, subject experts, pedagogues, practising teachers, reviewers, and all others who have supported the development of this textbook. We hope that *Understanding Society: India and Beyond* will inspire learners to think deeply, communicate confidently, and participate thoughtfully in the intellectual and social life of our nation and the world. We also warmly welcome suggestions and feedback from all its users for further improvement in the subsequent editions.

DINESH PRASAD SAKLANI

Director

National Council of Educational
Research and Training

June 2026
New Delhi



A Note for the Teacher

The secondary stage marks an important phase in the intellectual, emotional, and social development of learners. Students entering Grade 9 are made capable of abstract thinking, evidence-based reasoning, reflection, and independent inquiry. Aligned with the vision of the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 and the National Curriculum Framework for School Education (NCF-SE) 2023, this textbook seeks to nurture informed, responsible, and reflective citizens. The focus is on developing the competencies required to engage thoughtfully with the world.

Social Science in Grade 9 brings together the disciplines of History, Geography, Political Science, and Economics. While each discipline offers its own lens for understanding society, learners may be guided to recognise the connections among them. Historical developments influence political institutions; geographical conditions shape economic activities; economic processes affect social relations; and political decisions impact both people and the environment. Such an integrated understanding enables students to appreciate the interconnectedness of human societies.

The textbook has been designed to support inquiry-based and experiential learning. Illustrations, maps, infographics, timelines, and other visual materials have been carefully selected to support understanding of concepts. Each section has been designed to build competencies, such as critical thinking, communication, collaboration, and ethical reasoning. The section 'Your journey through the textbook' illustrates the various pedagogical tools that have been used in this textbook.

This textbook also gives ample opportunities to teachers to play a crucial role in creating learning environments where students actively participate in the construction of knowledge. Students may be given opportunities to examine sources, interpret maps and visual data, identify patterns, analyse causes and consequences, and draw comparisons and conclusions based on evidence. In this process, a variety of resources such as primary sources and other credible resources can serve as valuable pedagogical tools that connect classroom learning with contemporary realities.

Emphasise the development of critical thinking. Encourage learners to evaluate evidence, appreciate multiple perspectives, and understand that many social issues require careful analysis rather than simple answers. Such skills are increasingly important in a world where information is abundant but not always accurate.

Ultimately, the study of Social Science at this stage helps learners develop a nuanced understanding of society, appreciate multiple perspectives, and recognise their role as active participants in a democratic and interconnected world.



Letter to the Student

Dear Student,

Welcome to Grade 9. This is an important stage in your learning journey, where you will explore ideas with greater depth, curiosity, and independence. As you grow in understanding and awareness, you will also develop the ability to think critically, ask thoughtful questions, and connect your learning to the world around you. The knowledge and experiences you gain at this stage will help shape your perspectives and prepare you to participate thoughtfully and responsibly in society.

In the middle stage (Grades 6–8), you explored Social Science through five broad themes—India and the World: Land and the People; Tapestry of the Past; Our Cultural Heritage and Knowledge Traditions; Governance and Democracy; and Economic Life Around Us. These themes helped you discover new ideas and reflect on important questions about society and human life. From exploring how geographical features have shaped civilisations to understanding how the past influences our identities, and from recognising the importance of responsible citizenship to examining the economic life of a large country like India, you explored important aspects of human society.

Building on these experiences, Social Science in Grade 9 will help you develop a deeper understanding of society through its four core disciplines: Geography, History, Political Science, and Economics. While each discipline focuses on a distinct aspect of human life and society, together they will help you understand the interconnected nature of the world around you.

This textbook emphasises meaningful learning, critical thinking, and the real-life application of knowledge. You will be encouraged to ask questions, analyse information, examine multiple perspectives, and form reasoned conclusions. Activities, projects, discussions, and inquiry-based tasks are included to help you learn through exploration and experience, both individually and collaboratively.

Illustrations, maps, charts, tables, and other visual materials have been carefully selected to support understanding and interpretation. Each section has been designed to build competencies such as critical thinking, communication, collaboration, and ethical reasoning.

As you explore society in greater depth, this journey will help you understand how the past, present, and future are interconnected and how each shapes the lives we lead today. It will also encourage you to



recognise your role as an informed, empathetic, and responsible citizen, rooted in constitutional values such as democracy, justice, equality, and respect for diversity.

We hope this book inspires curiosity, confidence, and a lifelong love for learning, and helps you understand the world and your role in shaping a better future.

With best wishes for a meaningful learning journey.

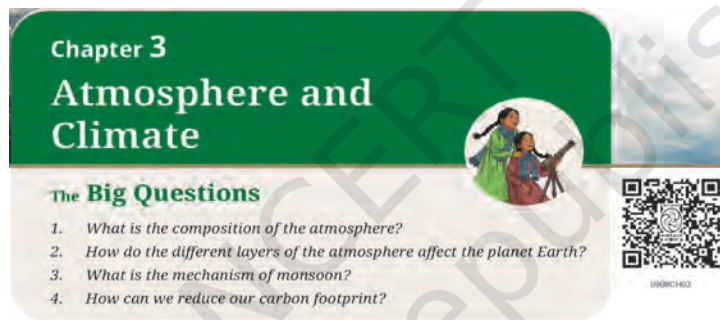
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Your Journey through This Book

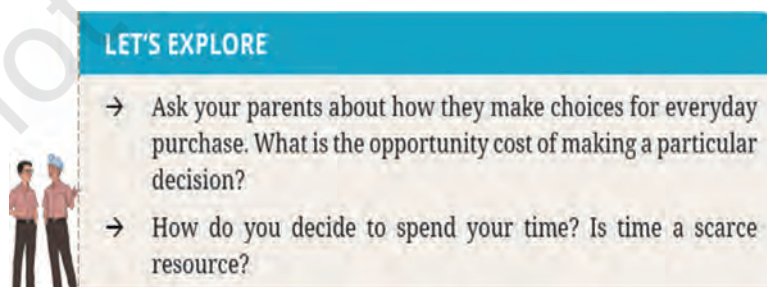
This new textbook offers many features that we hope you will find both engaging and enjoyable. As you explore the book, you will come across carefully chosen illustrations, including photographs, maps, diagrams, and infographics that support and enrich your understanding. These visuals are meant to help you observe closely, think critically, and connect ideas more clearly.

Each section in the chapter is designed to encourage inquiry, discussion, and reflection. Your teacher will guide you in using the textbook effectively and help you make the most of the learning opportunities it offers. Let us take you on a brief tour of the book and its key features.

1. Each chapter begins with 'The Big Questions' for giving you an idea of what you are going to learn in chapters.



2. Besides 'The Big Questions', you will find a QR code that links to videos, puzzles, games, stories, and other interactive content related to the chapter. Scan it (with an adult's help if needed) and explore the material to deepen your understanding.
3. As we move through the chapter, you will find some sections called 'Let's Explore'. These sections include engaging activities and questions designed to deepen your understanding, encourage curiosity, and help you learn through exploration and experience.



4. Definitions of technical and difficult terms are given in margins to aid your learning.
5. 'Think About It' sections in each chapter propose activities, in-text exercises, and questions that invite deeper reflection. These will encourage you to connect concepts with your own experiences and present-day concerns.



Fig. 4.29. An illustration from the Papyrus of Ani

THINK ABOUT IT

Why do you think there is a scale with a heart on one side and a feather on the other? What can this papyrus tell us about early Egyptian beliefs?



6. 'Don't Miss Out' highlights and lesser-known facts that spark curiosity and interest. It encourages you to pause, explore further, and enjoy discovering beyond the main narrative.

DON'T MISS OUT

Every year, 25th January is celebrated as National Voters' Day, and there is a voter's pledge that goes as follows —

"WE, THE CITIZENS OF INDIA, HAVING ABIDING FAITH IN DEMOCRACY, HEREBY PLEDGE TO UPHOLD THE DEMOCRATIC TRADITIONS OF OUR COUNTRY AND THE DIGNITY OF FREE, FAIR AND PEACEFUL ELECTIONS, AND TO VOTE IN EVERY ELECTION FEARLESSLY AND WITHOUT BEING INFLUENCED BY CONSIDERATIONS OF RELIGION, RACE, CASTE, COMMUNITY, LANGUAGE OR ANY INDUCEMENT".

7. 'Let's Recall' revisits important ideas and concepts that you have already studied in earlier grades or chapters. It helps you recall prior knowledge and connect it with new ideas and learning in the chapter.

LET'S RECALL

How is nitrogen useful for plants? Remember that you learnt this in the chapter 'The Invisible Living World: Beyond Our Naked Eyes', in your Grade 8 Science textbook.



8. 'Let's Map' uses maps and visuals to locate important places, regions, and events discussed in the chapter. It helps you to strengthen spatial understanding and connect events with geography.

Note: All maps used in the textbook may be treated as approximate and not exact.

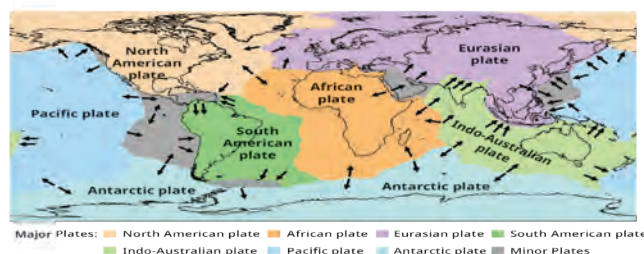


Fig. 2.3. World map showing major plates and their direction of movement

LET'S MAP

Pick any two plates from the map above and complete the table given below.

Name of the plate	Continents	Ocean

9. 'Let's Analyse' encourages you to examine events, ideas, and sources more closely. It helps to develop critical thinking by asking why and how, not just what happened.

LET'S ANALYSE



Using data from table 9.3, plot the demand and supply curve at the three prices, i.e., ₹40, ₹100 and ₹150. Identify and mark excess demand and supply on the graph. Think about how equilibrium could be reached in these scenarios.

10. 'Timelines' present events in a sequential order to help you understand when they occurred and how they are connected. They help you see patterns of change and continuity over time.

Note: Dates are generally subject to revision based on new findings. All timelines displayed in this book are based on accurate radiocarbon dates.



Fig. 4.18. Timeline showing Harappan Civilisation

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11. At the end of every chapter, “Before we move on” summarises the core ideas and key learnings explored in the chapter. This is followed by a range of exercises, questions, and projects that encourage reflection, application, and deeper understanding.

Your teacher will guide you through this journey of learning, and we encourage you to discuss and try some activities with your parents or guardians. Exploring together can make the experience even more meaningful and fun.

We hope you enjoy this journey through the textbook and discover new ideas along the way.

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A Note on the Pronunciation of Sanskrit Words

Since this textbook is in English, we use the Roman alphabet. But we will also encounter some words in Sanskrit and other Indian languages. The Roman alphabet cannot make their pronunciation clear without some additional marks or signs, such as dashes, dots or accents, called 'diacritical marks' or simply 'diacritics'. You can ignore all these marks if you wish, as their standard spelling and their spelling with diacritics will generally be the same. However, as we are using only a few simple marks, you will find it easy to get used to them. You will also find that they help you pronounce Sanskrit and other Indian language words correctly.

For those who wish to know the precise correspondence between the Devanāgarī alphabet and the Roman script in our system, the tables of letters are as follows:

Transliteration Table

Common Indian Language Alphabet—Devanāgarī to Roman script

Vowels	अ	a	आ	ā	इ	i	ई	ī	उ	u	ऊ	ū
	ऋ	ṛi	ॠ	ṛi	ए	e	ऐ	ai	ओ	o	औ	au
Consonants	क	ka	ख	kha	ग	ga	घ	gha	ङ	ṅa		
	च	cha	छ	chha	ज	ja	झ	jha	ञ	ña		
	ट	ṭa	ठ	ṭha	ड	ḍa	ढ	ḍha	ण	ṇa		
	त	ta	थ	tha	द	da	ध	dha	न	na		
	प	pa	फ	pha	ब	ba	भ	bha	म	ma		
	य	ya	र	ra	ल	la	व	va				
	श	śha	ष	ṣha	स	sa	ह	ha	ळ	ḷa		
	अं	aṁ	अः	aḥ								

Conjunct Consonants – a few examples based on the first table

क्ष	kṣha	त्र	tra	ज्ञ	jña	श्र	śhra	र्ण	rṇa	न्ध	ndhya	च्छ	chchha
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- Sanskrit has clear rules regarding where to use **anusvāra (bindu – अं = ṁ)**—(the pure nasalised consonant)—and where to use a nasal pañchamākṣhara (ṅ, ñ, ṇ, n, m).

- Accordingly, during transliteration, wherever there is rule or option of pañchamākṣhara, only the pañchamākṣhara would be used.

E.g.: • पञ्चाङ्ग = *pañchāṅga*

Not – पंचांग = *pañchāṅga*

• सङ्ख्या/संख्या = *saṅkhyā*

Not – *saṅkhyā*

- In places other than the above, anusvāra would be used.

E.g.: • अंश = *aṁśha*,

Not – *aṁśha*

- In Hindi and other Indian languages too, the same above rule will apply.

E.g.: • कंगन ⇒ कङ्गन = *kaṅgan*

Not – *kaṁgan*

- The rule of 'schwa-deletion' (or syncope) found in many contemporary Northern, Western and Eastern Indian languages like Hindi, etc., needs to be followed, wherein, many-a-times the last and sometimes a middle 'a' gets deleted.

E.g.: • तबला = *tablā*

Not – *tabalā*

- However, there is strictly no schwa-deletion in original Sanskrit words.

E.g.: • राम = *Rāma*

Not – राम् = *Rām*, nor – रामा = *Rāmā*

• योग = *Yoga*

Not – योग् = *Yog*, nor – योगा = *Yogā*

[A short, crisp and constricted 'अ' 'a' should be pronounced at the end of these Sanskrit words.]

- English spelling of words found in the Indian constitution, laws, names of government schemes or contemporary persons, places, languages, brands, etc. should be retained as they are. Here, many original Sanskrit words have been standardised in their Hindiised forms, with schwa-deletion applied. The spellings of such names in respective languages should be adhered to. However, where appropriate, diacritic markings can optionally be used without changing the standard spelling.

E.g.: • भारत = *Bharat or Bhārat*

Not – *Bhārata*

• जल जीवन मिशन = *Jal Jeevan Mission*

Not – *Jala-Jīvana Mission*

• रबीन्द्रनाथ ठाकुर = *Rabindranath Tagore*

Not – *Rabīndranāth Ṭhākur*

THE CONSTITUTION OF INDIA

PREAMBLE

WE, THE PEOPLE OF INDIA, having solemnly resolved to constitute India into a ¹**[SOVEREIGN SOCIALIST SECULAR DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC]** and to secure to all its citizens :

JUSTICE, social, economic and political;

LIBERTY of thought, expression, belief, faith and worship;

EQUALITY of status and of opportunity; and to promote among them all

FRATERNITY assuring the dignity of the individual and the ²[unity and integrity of the Nation];

IN OUR CONSTITUENT ASSEMBLY this twenty-sixth day of November, 1949 do **HEREBY ADOPT, ENACT AND GIVE TO OURSELVES THIS CONSTITUTION.**

1. Subs. by the Constitution (Forty-second Amendment) Act, 1976, Sec.2, for "Sovereign Democratic Republic" (w.e.f. 3.1.1977)

2. Subs. by the Constitution (Forty-second Amendment) Act, 1976, Sec.2, for "Unity of the Nation" (w.e.f. 3.1.1977)

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CONSTITUTION OF INDIA

Part III (Articles 12 – 35)

(Subject to certain conditions, some exceptions
and reasonable restrictions)

guarantees these

Fundamental Rights

Right to Equality

- before law and equal protection of laws;
- irrespective of religion, race, caste, sex or place of birth;
- of opportunity in public employment;
- by abolition of untouchability and titles.

Right to Freedom

- of expression, assembly, association, movement, residence and profession;
- of certain protections in respect of conviction for offences;
- of protection of life and personal liberty;
- of free and compulsory education for children between the age of six and fourteen years;
- of protection against arrest and detention in certain cases.

Right against Exploitation

- for prohibition of traffic in human beings and forced labour;
- for prohibition of employment of children in hazardous jobs.

Right to Freedom of Religion

- freedom of conscience and free profession, practice and propagation of religion;
- freedom to manage religious affairs;
- freedom as to payment of taxes for promotion of any particular religion;
- freedom as to attendance at religious instruction or religious worship in certain educational institutions.

Cultural and Educational Rights

- for protection of interests of minorities;
- for minorities to establish and administer educational institutions;
- saving of certain Laws 31A–31D.

Right to Constitutional Remedies

- by issuance of directions or orders or writs by the Supreme Court and High Courts for enforcement of these Fundamental Rights.





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The whole world is family.