



Research on teaching content to students with special needs and reading difficulties has shown that modified instructional strategies are critical to improving comprehension. Sousa (2001) noted that teachers should “consider modifying instructional strategies to meet the various learning styles and abilities of students with learning problems.” Among the strategies he suggested were to “break the assignment into smaller tasks, adjust the reading level of the classroom material, relate the new learning to students’ experiences, reduce the number of concepts presented at one time ... and provide practice test questions for study.” Waldron (1992) stated “students with learning differences often have short attention spans and are so easily distracted that concentration is eroded. They simply cannot handle the same amount of information as students with longer attention spans. For these students, briefer assignments with frequent breaks work best to sustain their on-task behaviors.”

Each of these research-based strategies has been integrated into *Basic Geography*. Students will find the short passages easy to understand due to the controlled 3.0–4.5 reading level. Each set of activity sheets breaks the content into small chunks and provides ample practice, so the information is easier for students with learning differences to understand.

*Basic Geography* meets both state and national social studies standards, including *Expectations of Excellence: Curriculum Standards for Social Studies* developed by the National Council for the Social Studies (NCSS). As students read the short passages and complete the activity sheets, they will meet many of the requirements of the ten social studies strands identified by NCSS, particularly the following:

- Strand I: Culture
- Strand III: People, Places, and Environments
- Strand VII: Production, Distribution, and Consumption
- Strand VIII: Science, Technology, and Society
- Strand IX: Global Connections

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Sousa, D. A. 2001. *How the special needs brain learns*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin Press.

Waldron, K. A. 1992. *Teaching students with learning disabilities*. San Diego, CA: Singular Publishing Group.