



**Virgin Islands Department of Education
(VIDE)**

**Draft Implementation Plan for
Virgin Islands and Basic Caribbean History
(VICH)**

2025 – 2026 School Year

Introduction

The Virgin Islands Department of Education (VIDE) Comprehensive Implementation Plan for utilizing Virgin Islands and Basic Caribbean History (VICH) outlines the steps necessary for the successful implementation of Virgin Islands and Basic Caribbean History (VICH) resources including professional development, implementation, monitoring, and evaluation. The goal is to foster an early appreciation of the Virgin Islands' culture, heritage, and historical significance through engaging and age-appropriate activities.

This ensures that all stakeholders are prepared and equipped to provide high-quality instruction aligned with student needs and department goals.

The U.S. Virgin Islands History (VICH) Framework recommended as a component of this plan is a culturally grounded K-12 curriculum designed to provide students with a deep and meaningful understanding of the historical, cultural, and social evolution of the U.S. Virgin Islands with references to the Caribbean. Through critical inquiry, primary and secondary source analysis, and community-connected learning, students will explore the rich legacies of the Virgin Islands and develop the skills needed to engage in thoughtful, informed civic life.

Why Virgin Islands History Matters

The study of Virgin Islands History fosters cultural awareness, civic responsibility, and a sense of place. It helps students appreciate the historical struggles and achievements of their ancestors, examine local and global influences on their community, and understand how the past continues to shape contemporary society.

Learning Virgin Islands history supports students in:

- Building personal and collective identity
- Gaining a deeper appreciation for cultural traditions and values
- Understanding systems of power, resistance, and resilience
- Becoming active, informed participants in their democracy

Content for this document was generated in collaboration with ChatGPT (GPT-5), a large language model developed by OpenAI, and reviewed/edited by the author (August 10, 2025).

II. Timeline and Key Phases

Phase 1: Curriculum Mapping and Alignment

Persons Responsible: Division of Curriculum and Instruction (State and District)

- **Goal:** Update alignment of Virgin Islands and Basic Caribbean History (VICH) resources with territory standards and district curriculum goals.
- **Steps:**
 1. Convene a curriculum committee consisting of teachers, instructional coaches, and administrators.
 2. Review territory standards and district goals.
 3. Map Virgin Islands and Basic Caribbean History (VICH) lessons and resources to the standards.
 4. Update pacing guides and unit plans.
 5. Share finalized curriculum maps with teachers and administrators.

Phase 2: Preparation and Inventory

Persons Responsible: Division of Curriculum (District)

To be completed by: December, 2025

- **Goal:** Ensure all resources are accounted for and ready for use.
- **Steps:**
 1. Conduct inventory of all Virgin Islands and Basic Caribbean History (VICH) materials (digital and physical).
 2. Address any missing resources by coordinating with the supplier.
 3. Distribute resources to schools and classrooms.
 4. Verify access to digital platforms and resolve login issues.

Phase 3: Professional Development

Persons Responsible: Division of Curriculum (State and District)

To be completed by: Ongoing

- **Goal:** Equip educators with the knowledge and skills to effectively use Virgin Islands and Basic Caribbean History (VICH) resources.
- **Steps:**
 1. Partner with the providers of Virgin Islands and Basic Caribbean History (VICH) resources to provide training and professional development sessions.
 2. Provide an overview of resource features, including digital tools and assessments.
 3. Conduct hands-on workshops for lesson planning and delivery.
 4. Offer follow-up coaching and support as needed.
 5. Gather feedback from participants to refine future training sessions.

Phase 4: Implementation

Persons Responsible: Division of Curriculum (District)

To be completed by: August 13, 2025

- **Goal:** Begin full implementation of all Virgin Islands and Basic Caribbean History (VICH) resources in classrooms.
- **Steps:**
 1. Provide teachers with pacing guides and implementation checklists.
 2. Ensure access to ongoing technical support for digital platforms.
 3. Monitor classroom usage to address challenges promptly.
 4. Encourage collaborative planning among teachers.

Phase 5: Monitoring and Support

Persons Responsible: (State and District Coordinators and school administrators)

To be completed by: Ongoing

- **Goal:** Track progress and address challenges during implementation.
- **Steps:**
 1. Conduct classroom observations to assess resource utilization.
 2. Review student work samples and assessments for alignment and rigor.
 3. Collect feedback from teachers and students about resource effectiveness.
 4. Host monthly check-ins with instructional coaches and school leaders.
 5. Adjust pacing guides and curriculum maps as needed.

Phase 6: Evaluation and Refinement

Persons Responsible: (State and District Coordinators and school administrators)

To be completed by: Ongoing

- **Goal:** Evaluate the success of the implementation and plan for continuous improvement.
- **Steps:**
 1. Analyze student performance data to measure resource impact.
 2. Review teacher feedback on instructional practices and resource usability.
 3. Identify strengths and areas for improvement in the implementation process.
 4. Update professional development plans and resources based on findings.
 5. Share evaluation results with all stakeholders and set goals for the next academic year.

III. Key Roles and Responsibilities

Role	Responsibilities
Board of Education	• Review and approve the VICH Curriculum
State/District Leadership	• Oversee the overall implementation plan • Allocate budget and resources for materials and professional development • Monitor progress through periodic reviews and walkthroughs
District Leadership	• Oversee the overall implementation plan • Allocate budget and resources for materials and professional development • Monitor progress through periodic reviews and walkthroughs
District Coordinators	• Facilitate curriculum mapping and professional development • Offer ongoing support for lesson planning and instructional strategies • Monitor teacher implementation and provide actionable feedback
School Administrators	• Support teachers with time for collaborative planning and professional learning • Provide feedback from classroom observations • Ensure consistent communication with district leadership • Actively participate in professional development
Teachers	• Actively participate in professional development and collaborative planning • Implement all (VICH) resources with fidelity in the classroom • Provide feedback on the effectiveness of materials and training
Students	• Engage with (VICH) resources during instruction • Provide input through surveys and focus groups about learning experiences

IV. Success Indicators

1. Increased alignment between classroom instruction and territory standards.
2. Positive teacher feedback on professional development and resources.
3. Improved student outcomes in Virgin Islands and Basic Caribbean History (VICH) assessments.
4. High levels of student engagement with all Virgin Islands and Basic Caribbean History (VICH) materials.
5. Consistent usage of all Virgin Islands and Basic Caribbean History (VICH) digital tools across schools.

V. Conclusion

By following this comprehensive implementation plan, the districts can ensure a smooth implementation of Virgin Islands and Basic Caribbean History (VICH) resources providing teachers and students with the tools they need for success. Regular monitoring and evaluation will promote continuous improvement and sustained academic achievement.

ELEMENTARY (K-2)

Introduction

This implementation plan outlines the strategy for integrating Virgin Islands and Basic Caribbean History (VICH) into the curriculum for grades K-2. The goal is to deepen students' understanding of the Virgin Islands' historical, social, and economic development while fostering critical thinking and research skills.

Objectives

- Introduce elementary students to the history, culture, and geography of the Virgin Islands and its connections within the wider Caribbean to establish place.
- Develop a sense of cultural identity and pride in the Virgin Islands' heritage while recognizing shared traditions, languages, and histories across Caribbean islands.
- Teach students about significant historical figures and events in the Virgin Islands.
- Encourage curiosity and discussion about historical changes and the impact on daily life in the Virgin Islands, making comparisons to similar shifts experienced in other Caribbean societies

A. Curriculum Overview

The curriculum will be divided into themes suitable for young learners:

Rationale: Best Practices in Education

Understanding child development theories is essential for effective teaching because these theories explain how children grow, think, and learn at different stages. Before introducing content, educators consider students' cognitive, emotional, and social readiness to ensure the material to be taught aligns to their developmental level. Developmental theories—such as those by Piaget, Vygotsky, Erikson, and others—help teachers choose appropriate teaching strategies, design age-appropriate lessons, and create supportive learning environments. For a review of research in this field, please see position paper offered by St. Croix Social Studies Coordinator Dr. Larsen's linked [here](#).

This **Kindergarten-friendly** outline helps young students learn about where we live in the Virgin Islands and Caribbean, how life has changed over time, and the special people and places in our community.

Timeline and Events in Virgin Islands and Caribbean History – For Kindergarten

- **Where and How We Live**
 - A long time ago (before 1493): Indigenous people such as the Taino lived in small villages near the sea, using boats and farming to live.

- Today: We live in towns with homes, schools, parks, and roads; we travel by cars and boats and use electricity and water from pipes.
- **Then and Now**
 - Then: People cooked with fire, used donkeys to travel, and wrote letters to talk to others.
 - Now: We use stoves, cars, phones, and computers.
 - A big event: In 1917, the Danish West Indies became part of the United States of America and became the Virgin Islands of the United States (also called the U.S. Virgin Islands), bringing many changes.
- **Our Community**
 - Our community has families, teachers, doctors, shopkeepers, and helpers.
 - We celebrate together with music, food, and holidays such as Carnival and Emancipation Day.
- **Caribbean Connection to the Virgin Islands – Kindergarten Level**
 - The U.S. Virgin Islands are part of the Caribbean, a big group of islands with warm weather and beautiful beaches.
 - People on many Caribbean islands speak different languages, but they all enjoy music, dancing, and celebrations.
 - We share fun holidays like Carnival and Three Kings Day with other islands in the Caribbean.
 - Caribbean islands, including the Virgin Islands, have a mix of cultures, foods, and traditions that make each island special but connected.

For support for the Key Events, consider the grade and age-appropriate units below. Required and recommended resources are included with additional links embedded within the units. Pacing is also suggested.

- [Where and How We Live](#)
- [Then and Now](#)
- [Our Community](#)

This **1st Grade** outline helps students learn about how we live in the Virgin Islands, how life has changed over time, and the special traditions and people that make our islands and region unique.

Timeline and Events in the Virgin Islands and Caribbean – 1st Grade Focus

1. Where and How We Live (Now and in the Past)

- Long ago: People lived in wooden houses, walked or rode donkeys, and used wells for water.
- Today: We live in different kinds of homes, drive cars, and have electricity and running water.
- Famous person to highlight: *Franklin D. Roosevelt* visited the Virgin Islands in 1934, helping bring attention to life here.

2. Then and Now

- Then: Children went to small schools or learned at home, and families grew their own food.
- Now: Children go to big schools, use computers, and shop in stores.
- Key event: In 1917, the Danish West Indies became part of the United States of America.

3. Our Local Traditions

- We celebrate Carnival, Three Kings Day, and Emancipation Day with music, dancing, and food.
- We play *quelbe* music with steel pans and washboards.

Caribbean Connection to the Virgin Islands

- Many Caribbean islands share similar traditions such as **Carnival, Emancipation Day, and Three Kings Day**.
- Caribbean people across different islands have a **shared history of colonization**, African heritage, and cultural celebrations.
- Music styles such as **calypso, reggae, and quelbe** reflect the unique but connected cultures of the Virgin Islands and the wider Caribbean region.

For support for the Key Events, consider the units below. Required and recommended resources are included with links embedded within the units. Pacing is also suggested.

1. [Where and How We Live](#)
2. [Then and Now](#)
3. [Our Community and Our Traditions](#)

This **2nd Grade** outline helps students learn how people live in the Virgin Islands and the Caribbean, how life has changed over time, and how our communities and traditions help us stay connected to our culture.

Timeline and Events in Virgin Islands and Caribbean History – For 2nd Grade

1. Where and How We Live

- **Long ago:** Indigenous peoples such as the **Taino** and **Kalinagos(Caribs)** lived across the Caribbean and in the Virgin Islands, building homes near the sea and using natural resources.
- **Colonial times (1600s–1800s):** People in the Danish West Indies and other Caribbean islands, were brought from Africa to work on sugar plantations; towns developed around ports and trade.
- **Today:** People live in cities, towns, and villages in the Virgin Islands and across the Caribbean with schools, homes, markets, and beaches.

2. Then and Now

- **Then:** People traveled by boat or donkey, used oil lamps, and grew their own food.
- **Now:** We use cars, electricity, and the internet, but we still enjoy some of the same foods, music, and stories from the past.
- **Important event:** In **1917**, the Danish West Indies became part of the **United States**, while other Caribbean islands were ruled by different European countries such as Great Britain, France, and the Netherlands.

3. Our Community and Our Traditions

- We celebrate Carnival, Emancipation Day, and Three Kings Day, just like many other islands in the Caribbean.
- Music such as Quelbe in the Virgin Islands, calypso in Trinidad, and reggae in Jamaica shows our Caribbean spirit.

Caribbean Connection to the Virgin Islands – 2nd Grade Level

- The U.S. Virgin Islands are part of the Caribbean, a group of islands that share warm weather, ocean life, and island traditions.
- Many Caribbean islands, like the U.S. Virgin Islands, were once ruled by European countries and have a shared history of enslavement and freedom.
- Caribbean islands celebrate similar holidays like Emancipation Day, Carnival, and Three Kings Day, with music, food, and parades.
- People in the Caribbean speak different languages, but we all share pride in our culture, music, food, and family traditions.

For support for the Key Events, consider the units below. Required and recommended resources are included with links embedded within the units. Pacing is also suggested.

1. [Where and How We Live](#)
2. [Then and Now](#)
3. [Our Community and Our Traditions](#)

B. Teaching Strategies

- **Storytelling:** Use folktales, picture books, and teacher-led storytelling to convey history in an engaging way.
- **Visual and Hands-On Activities:** Include maps, photographs, videos, and artifacts to help students connect with historical concepts.
- **Songs and Rhymes:** Use local songs and rhymes to teach historical and cultural themes.
- **Dramatization and Role Play:** Encourage students to act out historical stories and cultural traditions.
- **Field Trips and Community Involvement:** Arrange fieldtrips to local historical sites and invite cultural ambassadors or elders to share their knowledge.
- **Art and Craft Projects:** Engage students in making traditional crafts, flags, and artwork related to the Virgin Islands.

C. Resources and Materials

D. Assessment Methods

- **Written Assessment:** Social Studies Workbook
- **Observation and Participation:** Monitor student engagement in discussions and activities.
- **Project-Based Assessments:** Evaluate students through artwork, storytelling, and class presentations.
- **Class Discussions:** Encourage students to express their understanding and ask questions.
- **Portfolio Collections:** Collect student drawings, writings, and projects to assess progress over time.

ELEMENTARY (3-5)

Introduction

This implementation plan outlines the strategy for integrating Virgin Islands and Basic Caribbean History (VICH) into the curriculum for in grades 3-5. The goal is to deepen students' understanding of the Virgin Islands' historical, social, and economic development while fostering critical thinking and research skills.

Objectives

- Introduce students to the history, culture, and geography of the Virgin Islands.
- Develop a sense of cultural identity and pride in the Virgin Islands' heritage while understanding shared traditions, struggles, and celebrations across Caribbean societies.
- Teach students about significant historical figures and events in the Virgin Islands.
- Encourage curiosity and discussion about historical changes and their impact on daily life in the Virgin Islands, making comparisons to similar cultural and societal changes in other Caribbean islands.
- Strengthen critical thinking and research skills related to historical events and societal changes within the Virgin Islands and the wider Caribbean.

A. Curriculum Overview

The curriculum will be divided into themes suitable for different grade levels:

This **3rd Grade** unit explore how people live in the Virgin Islands and the Caribbean, how European colonization changed life then and now, and how our diverse cultures shape who we are today.

Timeline and Events in Virgin Islands and Caribbean History – For 3rd Grade

1. Where and How We Live

- Before 1493: Indigenous peoples such as the Taino and Kalinagos (Caribs) lived across the Caribbean and Virgin Islands, building homes near rivers and coasts, farming, fishing, and trading.
- Today: People live in modern homes, towns, and cities with schools, transportation, and technology, but many still rely on the sea and land for food and work.
- The Caribbean islands, beaches, and mountains continue to shape how and where people live.

2. European Influences – Then and Now

- 1493 and after: Christopher Columbus visited the Virgin Islands during his second voyage; soon after, European countries (Spain, Denmark, Great Britain, France, the Netherlands) began to explore, settle, and fight for control of the Caribbean.
- 1600s–1800s: Enslaved Africans were brought to work on sugar plantations under European rule; towns such as Charlotte Amalie and Christiansted were built during this time.
- 1917: The United States purchased the Danish West Indies from Denmark.
- Now: We still see European influences in our buildings, Names of areas, names of streets, laws, languages, foods, and holidays, but local cultures have blended and grown stronger over time.

3. Cultural Diversity and Identity

- The people of the Virgin Islands and the larger Caribbean come from African, European, Indigenous, and Asian backgrounds.
- Our music, food, clothing, and celebrations reflect this mix, making each island special.
- Events such as Carnival, Emancipation Day, and Three Kings Day celebrate our identity.

For support for the Key Events, consider the units below. Required and recommended resources are included with links embedded within the units. Pacing is also suggested.

1. [Where and How We Live](#)
2. [The Virgin Islands Then and Now](#)
3. [Cultural Diversity and Identity](#)

This **4th Grade** outline traces the historical development of the Virgin Islands from the time of its Indigenous peoples, through European exploration and colonization, the impact of the transatlantic triangular trade, and the eventual path to emancipation and freedom.

Timeline and Key Events in the Virgin Islands:

1. The Indigenous Peoples of the Virgin Islands (pre-1493)

- The Virgin Islands were originally inhabited by the **Ciboney**, **Arawak (Taino)**, and later the **Carib (Kalinago)** peoples.

- These groups developed rich cultural traditions, with settlements focused on fishing, farming, and trade.
- 2. **Exploration and Settlement (1493–1700s)**
 - **1493:** Christopher Columbus sighted the islands during his second voyage and named them the Virgin Islands for “Santa Úrsula y las Once Mil Vírgenes (Saint Ursula and her Eleven Thousand Virgins).”
 - 1600s–1700s: **European powers** (Spain, Great Britain, the Netherlands, Denmark, and France) competed for control.
 - **1671:** The **Danish West India Company** was established and made arrangement to settle St. Thomas. They arrived in 1672.
 - **1718:** Denmark colonized **St. John**; **1733:** Enslaved Africans rebelled in the St. John slave revolt.
 - **1754:** Denmark took over the islands from the company, making them royal colonies.
- 3. **The Triangular Trade (1600s–1800s)**
 - The Danish West Indies became central to the **transatlantic slave trade**, forming a leg of the **triangular trade** between Europe, Africa, and the Americas.
 - Enslaved Africans were brought to work on sugar plantations; sugar, rum, and molasses were exported to Europe.
 - The islands’ economy thrived on the labor of enslaved people and the production of sugarcane.
- 4. **The Road to Freedom (1700s–1848)**
 - **1733:** The slave revolt on St. John marked early resistance to enslavement.
 - **1848:** Enslaved people on **St. Croix** revolted, leading to the abolition of slavery on **July 3, 1848**, by Danish Governor Peter von Scholten.
 - This date is now celebrated as **Emancipation Day** in the U.S. Virgin Islands.

Caribbean Connection to the Virgin Islands – 4th Grade Level

- The Virgin Islands and other Caribbean islands were originally home to Indigenous peoples like the Taino and Kalinago (Caribs), who shared similar ways of life across the region.
- During the era of European colonization, many Caribbean islands—including the Virgin Islands—were claimed by European powers and became part of the transatlantic slave trade.
- Enslaved Africans brought to the Caribbean developed shared cultural practices—such as language, food, music, and resistance movements—that still influence life in the Virgin Islands today.
- The movement toward emancipation and freedom happened across the Caribbean, with the Danish West Indies’ 1848 emancipation linking to similar struggles in places like Jamaica (1834) and Barbados (1834).

For support for the Key Events, consider the units below. Required and recommended resources are included with links embedded within the units. Pacing is also suggested.

1. [The Indigenous Peoples of the Virgin Islands](#)
2. [Exploration and Settlement](#)
3. [The Triangular Trade](#)
4. [The Road to Freedom](#)

This **5th Grade** outline explores how the Virgin Islands' geography has shaped its culture, the political and social changes following the transfer from Danish to American rule, the current structure of government, and the evolution of its economic conditions: Modern history, political development, and cultural evolution of the Virgin Islands.

Timeline and Key Events in the Virgin Islands:

1. **The Impact of Geography on Culture (Ongoing since pre-Columbian times)**
 - The islands' location in the Caribbean and tropical climate influenced Indigenous settlement patterns, agriculture, and seafaring.
 - The terrain and proximity to trade routes shaped colonial plantation economies, cultural blending (African, European, Caribbean), and traditions like foodways, music (e.g., Quelbe), and architecture.
2. **From Transfer to Today (1917–Present)**
 - March 31, 1917: The Danish West Indies were officially transferred to the United States, becoming the U.S. Virgin Islands.
 - 1927: U.S. citizenship was granted to Virgin Islanders.
 - 1917 and 1936 Organic Acts
 - 1954: The Revised Organic Act provided for greater self-governance.
 - Ongoing: Movements for political self-determination, cultural preservation, and local autonomy continue into the present day.
3. **Structure of Government (1954–Present)**
 - The Virgin Islands operate under the Revised Organic Act of 1954, establishing the executive, legislative, and judicial branches.
 - There is a locally elected governor, a unicameral legislature, and a territorial court system.
 - The U.S. federal government retains authority over certain matters (e.g., immigration, defense).
4. **Economic Conditions (Post-emancipation to Present)**
 - Post-1848: The collapse of the sugar economy led to economic instability.
 - 20th century: Economic development increased through tourism, rum production, and federal support.
 - Recent years: Focus has shifted to economic diversification, disaster recovery (e.g., post-Hurricanes Irma and Maria in 2017), and sustainable development.

Caribbean Connection to the Virgin Islands – 5th Grade Level

- Like many other Caribbean islands, the Virgin Islands experienced a shift in colonial power, moving from European rule (Denmark) to a new governing nation (the United States in 1917), reflecting the region-wide trend of political change and decolonization.
- Caribbean islands, including the Virgin Islands, developed unique forms of self-governance under their respective colonial or post-colonial systems, shaping modern political identities.
- The Virgin Islands' cultural identity, like other Caribbean nations, blends African, European, and Indigenous influences, seen in our language, festivals, music, and food.
- Economic transitions—from agriculture and trade to tourism and service industries—have also occurred throughout the Caribbean, connecting the Virgin Islands to regional development patterns.

For support for the Key Events, consider the units below. Required and recommended resources are included with links embedded within the units. Pacing is also suggested.

5. [The Impact of Geography on Culture](#)
6. [From Transfer to Today](#)
7. [Structure of Government](#)
8. [Economic Conditions](#)

B. Teaching Strategies

- **Storytelling:** Use folktales, picture books, and teacher-led storytelling to convey history in an engaging way.
- **Visual and Hands-On Activities:** Include maps, photographs, videos, and artifacts to help students connect with historical concepts.
- **Songs and Rhymes:** Use local songs and rhymes to teach historical and cultural themes.
- **Dramatization and Role Play:** Encourage students to act out historical stories and cultural traditions.
- **Field Trips and Community Involvement:** Arrange visits to local historical sites and invite cultural ambassadors or elders to share their knowledge.
- **Art and Craft Projects:** Engage students in making traditional crafts, flags, and artwork related to the Virgin Islands.
- **Research and Presentations (Grades 3-5):** Introduce students to basic research methods, allowing them to present historical findings through projects and reports.
- **Debates and Discussions (Grades 4-5):** Facilitate class discussions on key historical events and their impact on the present.

C. Resources and Materials

- **Core Resource:** Savvas - Social Studies Workbook: (*Custom Edition for the United States Virgin Islands*)

- **Supplemental Resources:**
 - Age-appropriate books on Virgin Islands and Basic Caribbean History (VICH) and culture
 - Maps and globes
 - Videos and multimedia content about the Virgin Islands
 - Art supplies for hands-on activities
 - Music and recorded oral histories
 - Guest speakers from the community
 - Historical documents and primary sources for advanced learners

D. Assessment Methods

- **Written Assessment:** Social Studies Workbook
- **Observation and Participation:** Monitor student engagement in discussions and activities.
- **Project-Based Assessments:** Evaluate students through artwork, storytelling, and class presentations.
- **Class Discussions:** Encourage students to express their understanding and ask questions.
- **Portfolio Collections:** Collect student drawings, writings, and projects to assess progress over time.
- **Written Reports and Presentations (Grades 3-5):** Assess students' ability to research and articulate historical concepts.
- **Quizzes and Knowledge Checks (Grades 4-5):** Implement periodic assessments to measure retention of key historical facts.

MIDDLE SCHOOL (6-8)

Introduction

This implementation plan outlines the strategy for integrating Virgin Islands and Basic Caribbean History (VICH) into the curriculum for middle school students in grades 6-8. The goal is to deepen students' understanding of the Virgin Islands' historical, social, and economic development while fostering critical thinking and research skills.

Objectives

- Expand students' knowledge of key historical events in the Virgin Islands while connecting these events to broader historical developments across the Caribbean, such as regional trade, migration, and resistance movements.
- Examine the effects of colonialism, slavery, and emancipation on the region by comparing the Virgin Islands' experiences with those of neighboring Caribbean islands, highlighting shared struggles and diverse outcomes.
- Develop an understanding of economic, cultural, and political changes in the Virgin Islands within the context of Caribbean integration, regional cooperation, and cultural exchange.
- Strengthen research, discussion, and presentation skills through historical inquiry that draws on sources from both the Virgin Islands and the wider Caribbean, encouraging comparative analysis and regional perspectives.

A. Curriculum Overview

The curriculum will be divided into units for each grade level:

Grade 6 Unit 1: From Indigenous Peoples to the Cash Crop Economy

This **6th Grade** unit outline introduces students to the rich history of the Virgin Islands while situating it within the broader Caribbean context. Students will explore Indigenous life, European colonization, the plantation economy, enslavement, and emancipation, linking these events to similar patterns throughout the Caribbean. They will examine trade, migration, and cultural exchange while developing skills in research, discussion, and presentation. The unit fosters an understanding of shared Caribbean heritage and diversity. The outline presents three units.

Historical Timeline – Virgin Islands Events

1. Indigenous Peoples (Pre-1493)

- o Taino and Carib communities establish settlements on St. Croix, St. Thomas, and surrounding islands.
- o Skilled in fishing, canoe building, and agriculture (cassava, sweet potato, maize).
- o Pottery and stone tools reflect distinct artistic traditions.

- o Regional trade networks with other Caribbean islands, exchanging food, raw materials, and crafted goods.
- o Spiritual beliefs tied to nature; ceremonial sites possibly used for community gatherings.

2. Early European Encounters & Colonization (1493–1671)

- o 1493: Christopher Columbus' second voyage passes through the Virgin Islands.
- o Conflicts and displacement of Indigenous peoples due to European diseases and raids.
- o Islands change hands among Spanish, Dutch, English, and French.
- o Establishment of small-scale settlements for trade and military advantage.
- o Pirates and privateers operate in nearby waters, impacting trade and security.

3. Cash Crops during Enslavement Era (1671–1848)

- o 1671: Danish West India and Guinea Company begins official colonization of St. Thomas.
- o 1718: St. John colonized by Danes; sugar plantations expand rapidly.
- o Enslaved Africans brought to work on sugar, cotton, and indigo plantations.
- o Harsh living and working conditions under plantation system.
- o Resistance through cultural preservation, work slowdowns, and rebellions (e.g., 1733 St. John revolt).
- o Trade connections with other Caribbean colonies bring both goods and enslaved people.

4. Emancipation and Labor Shifts (1848–Late 1800s)

- o 1848: Enslaved people gain freedom in Danish West Indies following protests and uprisings.
- o Apprenticeship and labor contracts replace slavery, but inequalities remain.
- o Decline of sugar industry due to competition and economic changes.
- o Formerly enslaved people establish free villages and maintain traditions such as music, storytelling, and crafts.
- o Migration within the Caribbean as workers seek employment on neighboring islands.

Caribbean Connections:

- o Indigenous trade networks linked Virgin Islands to Puerto Rico, Hispaniola, and Lesser Antilles.
- o European colonization patterns mirrored across the Caribbean, with frequent changes in colonial rulers.
- o Plantation economies dominated the region, relying on enslaved African labor.
- o Emancipation movements occurred across the Caribbean between 1834–1886.
- o Inter-island migration shaped languages, music, and customs.

Grade 6 – Unit 2: Peoples, Powers, and Ideas: The Virgin Islands and the Caribbean in a Changing World

This unit examines the peoples, populations, and political systems that shaped the Virgin Islands and Caribbean from pre-Columbian times to the 20th century. Students explore Indigenous experiences, European colonization, colonial society growth, and cultural change, connecting Virgin Islands history to broader Caribbean trade, migration, resistance, and cultural exchange. Using maps and primary sources, students deepen their understanding of local and regional historical links.

Historical Timeline – Virgin Islands Events

Pre-1493 – Pre-Columbian Diversity

- o Diverse indigenous groups, including the Saladoid, Arawak, and Taino, inhabit the Virgin Islands.
- o These groups develop distinct cultural practices, social structures, and trade networks across the islands.

1500s – 1600s – A Changing Population

- o Arrival of Europeans leads to a decline in indigenous populations due to disease and conflict.
- o African slaves are brought to the islands to support the emerging plantation economy.
- o Growth of a multi-ethnic population including Europeans, Africans, and indigenous peoples.

1600s – 1700s – Colonial Societies and Government in North America and the Caribbean

- o The Danish West India Company establishes colonial government in the Virgin Islands.
- o Plantation society forms with rigid social hierarchies.
- o Local government operates under Danish rule, with influence from European colonial powers.

Caribbean Connection

- o Indigenous peoples across the Caribbean shared cultural similarities but were greatly impacted by European colonization.
- o The forced migration of enslaved Africans shaped demographics and cultures throughout the Caribbean.
- o Plantation economies and colonial governments with European powers were common across the region.
- o Diverse populations in Caribbean colonies led to rich cultural blending and complex social systems.

Grade 6 – Unit 3 From Islands to Archipelago: The Virgin Islands and Their Caribbean Connections

This unit examines the Virgin Islands' history from the late slavery period through the 20th century, tracing the region's transformation under Danish rule, its integration into Caribbean and American spheres, and its place in the diverse cultural mosaic of the Caribbean. Students will connect the Virgin Islands' local history to regional movements such as the abolition of slavery, the rise of labor movements, the growth of tourism, and migration trends. Through comparative analysis, they will explore how shared experiences of colonialism, resistance, and cultural exchange shaped the modern Caribbean.

1. Historical Timeline – Virgin Islands Events

1700s – 1800s – The Lasting Influence of Slavery

- o Enslaved Africans contribute to cultural, economic, and social life on the islands.
- o Slavery shapes land use, labor systems, and social stratification.
- o Resistance and revolts occasionally occur among enslaved populations.

1671 – 1917 – Time of the Danish Government

- o Danish rule persists with ongoing economic dependence on sugar plantations.
- o Slavery is abolished in 1848, leading to social and economic changes.
- o The islands are sold to the United States in 1917.

1900s – Present – Becoming Caribbean-American

- o The Virgin Islands develop a unique identity blending Caribbean and American influences.
- o Political status as a U.S. territory shapes governance and rights.
- o Cultural traditions celebrate both Caribbean heritage and American citizenship.

Ongoing | A Caribbean Mosaic

- o Migration and cultural exchange maintain strong ties between the Virgin Islands and other Caribbean islands.
- o Festivals, language, cuisine, and music reflect a shared Caribbean identity.
- o Regional cooperation and economic links continue to strengthen the archipelago's connections.

Caribbean Connection

- o Slavery's impact on society and culture is a shared legacy throughout Caribbean islands.
- o Many Caribbean islands experienced colonial transitions and emancipation struggles similar to the Virgin Islands.
- o Caribbean-American identities are common in U.S. territories and diaspora communities.
- o Ongoing cultural exchange reinforces the Caribbean as a vibrant and diverse mosaic of peoples and traditions.

Grade 7 Social Studies: Virgin Islands and Caribbean History

Unit 1: Exploring Location and Identity in the Virgin Islands and Caribbean

Unit Summary: In this unit, students explore the Virgin Islands and the wider Caribbean through the study of absolute and relative location. They learn about Indigenous peoples such as the Saladoid, Arawak, Taino, and Carib, the arrival of Europeans, colonization, and the Transatlantic Slave Trade, focusing on how geography shaped culture and identity.

Historical Timeline – Virgin Islands in the Caribbean Context

Before 1000 CE – Early Indigenous Inhabitants

- o Saladoid, Arawak, Taino, and Carib peoples settle the Virgin Islands and wider Caribbean.
- o Use of natural landmarks and celestial bodies to navigate (relative and absolute location).
- o Canoes enable inter-island travel facilitating trade and cultural exchange.

1493 – European Arrival

- o Christopher Columbus visits the Virgin Islands on his second voyage, naming islands such as St. Croix, St. Thomas, and St. John.
- o Initial contact leads to dramatic changes for Indigenous peoples due to disease, conflict, and enslavement.

1600s – Colonization of the Virgin Islands

- o Dutch, English, French, Spanish, and Danish powers compete for control of Caribbean islands.
- o 1671 – Denmark establishes the Danish West India Company, claiming St. Thomas
- o 1718 – St. John colonized
- o 1733 – St. Croix is purchased from France
- o Plantation economy begins, heavily reliant on enslaved Africans.

1600s–1800s – Transatlantic Slave Trade

- o Enslaved Africans forcibly transported to the Virgin Islands and Caribbean islands.
- o Navigation relies on absolute location, while inter-island movement utilizes relative location.

Caribbean Connection

- o Indigenous migration and navigation patterns shared across the Caribbean.
- o European colonization and mapping impacted all Caribbean islands.
- o The Transatlantic Slave Trade shaped the demographic and cultural landscape regionally.

For support for the Key Events, consider the unit below. Required and recommended resources are included with links embedded within the unit Pacing is also suggested.

Central America and the Caribbean.

Unit 2: The Impact of History and Geography on Culture and Governance

Unit Summary: Students analyze how history and geography shaped the Virgin Islands and Caribbean's cultures, economies, civic life, and governance. The unit covers colonial society, slavery, emancipation, and political developments, including the 1917 transfer from Denmark to the U.S.

Historical Timeline – Virgin Islands in the Caribbean Context

1600s–1800s – Colonial Societies and Economy

- Plantation economies develop based on enslaved African labor.
- Geographic features influence settlement and trade routes.

1848 – Emancipation in the Danish West Indies

- Slavery abolished after the 1848 rebellion.
- Social and economic shifts result in new population distributions.

Late 1800s–Early 1900s – Colonial Governance and Regional Interaction

- Local government institutions grow in towns such as Charlotte Amalie and Christiansted.
- Trade and cultural exchange continue via relative location with neighboring islands.

1917 – Transfer to the United States

- Danish West Indies sovereignty transferred to the U.S.
- Political geography changes, but regional Caribbean ties endure.

Caribbean Connection

- Plantation economies and emancipation part of wider Caribbean history.
- Political changes in the Virgin Islands mirror other Caribbean colonies.
- Cultural and economic exchanges reflect ongoing Caribbean integration.

Unit 3: Regional Connections and Cultural Identity in the Caribbean

Unit Summary: This unit focuses on the Virgin Islands' place in the Caribbean community through geography, history, migration, and shared cultural identity. Students study modern political and economic ties and the role of regional organizations.

Historical Timeline – Virgin Islands in the Caribbean Context

20th Century – Geographic and Political Positioning

- Virgin Islands' absolute location positions it as a strategic hub for trade and regional cooperation.
- Relative location facilitates cultural and economic connections with Caribbean neighbors.

20th Century – Migration and Cultural Exchange

- Caribbean migration strengthens cultural ties and shared identities.
- Languages, religions, and traditions reflect regional diversity.

Participation in Regional Organizations

- Virgin Islands involved in bodies like CARICOM promoting cooperation.
- Regional disaster response and environmental efforts demonstrate geographic realities.

Contemporary Era – The Virgin Islands as a Caribbean Hub

- Economy diversified with tourism and services linked to regional markets.
- Civic life and governance blend local and regional influences.

Caribbean Connection

- The Virgin Islands' cultural identity intertwined with the Caribbean through migration and history.
- Regional cooperation highlights the importance of geographic connections.
- Ongoing collaboration strengthens Caribbean integration.

Grade 8 Unit 1: The Colonial Caribbean and the Formation of the Virgin Islands

Unit Summary: Students will explore the colonial history of the Caribbean with an emphasis on the Danish colonization of the Virgin Islands. This unit examines European powers' competition in the Caribbean, the establishment of plantation economies, and early social and cultural life in the Danish West Indies. Students will connect Virgin Islands events to broader Caribbean colonization and settlement patterns.

Historical Timeline – Virgin Islands Events

1600s – Early 1700s | The Colonial Caribbean

- Dutch, English, French, Spanish, and Danish powers compete for control of Caribbean islands.
- European colonization begins, marked by settlement, resource extraction, and indigenous displacement.
- Sugar emerges as a key cash crop, transforming economies and societies.

1671 | Danish Colonization of St. Thomas

- Danish West India Company claims St. Thomas and establishes the first permanent Danish settlement.

1718 | Colonization of St. John

- Denmark expands control by colonizing St. John.

1733 | Purchase of St. Croix from France

- Denmark acquires St. Croix, completing the trio of islands forming the Danish West Indies.

1700s – 1800s | Life in the Danish West Indies

- Plantation economy thrives, reliant on enslaved African labor.
- Development of a stratified society including European planters, free people of color, and enslaved Africans.
- Cultural blending begins, creating unique Afro-Caribbean traditions.

Caribbean Connection

- European powers vied for Caribbean islands for their strategic and economic value, similar to the Virgin Islands experience.
- Sugar plantation economies dependent on enslaved labor were common throughout the Caribbean.
- Cultural mixing and social hierarchies emerged across Caribbean colonies due to the diverse population mix.

- Indigenous populations throughout the Caribbean were displaced or decimated due to European colonization.

Grade 8 Unit 2: Divisions, Resistance, and Emancipation in the Virgin Islands and Caribbean

Unit Summary:

This unit focuses on the social divisions created by slavery, the resistance movements that emerged, and the profound changes wrought by emancipation. Students will analyze the Virgin Islands' 1848 emancipation event within the wider Caribbean abolition context, exploring the legacy of slavery and resistance.

Historical Timeline – Virgin Islands Events

1700s – 1800s | Divisions Caused by Slavery

- The enslaved African population grows, outnumbering European settlers.
- Social classes and divisions solidify: European planters, free people of color, and enslaved Africans.
- Harsh plantation conditions create widespread oppression and social tension.

1733 | St. John Slave Rebellion

One of the earliest and longest slave revolts in the Caribbean, lasting several months.

1803 Abolition of the Danish Slave Trade

Denmark was the first European colonial power to officially abolish the transatlantic slave trade on March 16, 1792, with the ban taking effect in 1803. While the ban was in effect, slave owners were granted a ten-year grace period to continue transporting enslaved people from Africa.

1848 | Emancipation in the Danish West Indies

- July 3, 1848: Enslaved Africans revolt on St. Croix, forcing Governor Peter von Scholten to declare freedom.

Post-1848 | Aftermath of Slavery

- Freed people seek economic independence, land ownership, and social equality.
- Economic challenges arise as plantation economies shift and labor systems change.
- Cultural traditions flourish, preserving African heritage.

Caribbean Connection

- Slave rebellions were widespread in the Caribbean, including in Jamaica (1831) and Haiti (1791).
- Emancipation occurred in phases across the region during the 19th century, each with unique social and economic impacts.
- Freed populations across the Caribbean struggled for rights, land, and recognition in post-slavery societies.
- Cultural retention and adaptation became key for identity in many Caribbean islands after emancipation.

Grade 8 Unit 3: Political and Economic Development in the Virgin Islands

Unit Summary: Students explore the political evolution and economic changes in the Virgin Islands from Danish rule through U.S. acquisition and into modern self-governance. The unit situates these developments within Caribbean regional political shifts and economic trends.

Historical Timeline – Virgin Islands Events

1800s – Early 1900s | Political and Economic Development

- The plantation economy declines as global sugar prices fall.
- Movements for political reform and labor rights emerge.

1917 | Transfer of the Danish West Indies to the United States

- The U.S. purchases the islands for \$25 million, citing strategic military interests during World War I.
- Transition to U.S. territorial administration begins.

1920s – 1950s | Move Toward Self-Governance

- Increased local political participation and advocacy for rights.
- Growth in tourism and diversification of the economy.

1960s – Present | Modern Political Status and Economy

- The U.S. Virgin Islands establish their own legislature and government structure.
- Economic challenges and opportunities evolve with tourism, manufacturing, and service industries.

Caribbean Connection

- Many Caribbean islands underwent similar political transitions during the 20th century, from colonial rule toward greater self-governance or independence.

- Economic diversification away from plantation agriculture is a common trend across the Caribbean.
- Regional cooperation through organizations like CARICOM developed to address shared economic and political issues.

The strategic importance of Caribbean islands influenced global powers' involvement in the region.

B. Teaching Strategies

- **Inquiry-Based Learning:** Encourage students to ask questions and explore historical sources.
- **Primary Source Analysis:** Introduce students to historical documents, maps, and artifacts.
- **Project-Based Learning:** Assign group projects on key historical topics.
- **Debates and Discussions:** Facilitate class discussions on historical events and their impact.
- **Field Trips and Guest Speakers:** Organize visits to historical sites and invite local historians to speak.
- **Multimedia and Technology:** Use documentaries, podcasts, and digital resources to enhance learning.

C. Resources and Materials

- **Core Resource:**
- **Supplemental Resources:**
 - Age-appropriate books and articles on Virgin Islands and Basic Caribbean History (VICH)
 - Maps, timelines, and historical documents
 - Documentaries and digital archives
 - Artifacts and photographs
 - Guest speakers and field trip opportunities

D. Assessment Methods

- **Written Assessment:** Social Studies Workbook
- **Research Projects:** Evaluate students' ability to investigate and present historical topics.
- **Oral Presentations and Class Debates:** Assess students' understanding through verbal expression.
- **Written Assignments and Essays:** Gauge critical thinking and historical analysis.
- **Exams and Quizzes:** Measure knowledge retention and comprehension.
- **Portfolio Reviews:** Collect student work to assess progress over time.

E. Timeline and Implementation Steps

1. Master Schedule:

- Virgin Islands and Basic Caribbean History (VICH) will be scheduled as a stand-alone course. The course will be taught two times per week.

2. Preparation Phase (Before School Year Begins)

- Develop lesson plans and gather resources.
- Coordinate with guest speakers and historical sites.
- Prepare multimedia materials and discussion guides.

3. Implementation Phase (Throughout the School Year)

- Introduce historical topics through storytelling, research, and discussions.
- Engage students in interactive learning activities and projects.
- Incorporate debates and multimedia tools to enhance comprehension.

4. Evaluation and Adaptation (End of Semester/Yearly Review)

- Collect feedback from students and teachers.
- Assess students' performance through projects, essays, and discussions.
- Modify lesson plans based on student engagement and learning outcomes.

HIGH SCHOOL (Grades 9-12)

Introduction

This implementation plan details the strategy for integrating Virgin Islands and Basic Caribbean History (VICH) into the curriculum for high school students in grades 9–12. It aims to deepen students' critical understanding of the Virgin Islands' historical, social, political, and economic development within the broader Caribbean and global contexts, while cultivating advanced research, analytical, and communication skills.

Objectives

- Develop a deep understanding of the historical events that shaped the Virgin Islands, situating these within the broader context of Caribbean history and its global connections.
- Analyze the impact of colonialism, slavery, emancipation, and economic transformations on the Virgin Islands and the wider Caribbean region, exploring themes of resistance, resilience, and legacy.
- Examine the political evolution of the Virgin Islands, including its relationship with the United States, alongside Caribbean movements for self-determination, governance, and regional integration.
- Facilitate in-depth discussions on contemporary social, cultural, and political issues related to Virgin Islands and Caribbean identity, encouraging students to engage with multiple perspectives.
- Strengthen advanced research, critical debate, and presentation skills through rigorous historical inquiry, incorporating primary and secondary sources from both the Virgin Islands and the Caribbean.

A. Curriculum Overview

The curriculum will cover key historical periods and themes:

This Virgin Islands and Caribbean History (VICH) high school course is comprised of four units and considered as Part I.

Part I Unit 1 Title: Geography and Geology of the Caribbean

Unit Summary

This unit examines the geological and geographical layout of the Caribbean, including the topography, natural resources, and the natural disasters that shape life in the region. Students will connect physical geography to historical and political developments, exploring how events such as colonization, emancipation, and territorial changes have shaped both the Caribbean as a whole and the U.S. Virgin Islands in particular.

Historical & Political Timeline – Virgin Islands in the Caribbean Context

Pre-1493 – Formation & Early Peoples

- Caribbean islands, including the Virgin Islands, are formed through volcanic activity and tectonic plate movements.
- Indigenous peoples, including the Saladoid, Arawaks, Tainos, and Caribs, inhabit the islands, adapting to their environments and natural hazards.

1493 – European Contact

- Christopher Columbus lands in the Virgin Islands during his second voyage, beginning European exploration of the Lesser Antilles.
- Geographic position makes the islands a strategic stop in regional sea routes.

1600s–1700s – Colonial Competition

- European powers (Denmark, England, France, Spain, the Netherlands) compete for Caribbean territory for its agricultural and trade potential.
- **1671–1733** – Danish control established over St. Thomas, St. John, and St. Croix; sugar plantations dominate the economy.

1800s – Emancipation & Political Change

- **1848** – Emancipation in the Danish West Indies after slave uprisings, paralleling freedom movements in the wider Caribbean.
- Hurricanes and droughts periodically impact economies and politics across the region.

1917 – Transfer to the United States

- Strategic importance of the location of the Virgin lands to the US. Three Attempts to buy the islands in 1867, 1902, 1917.
- Denmark sells the Danish West Indies to the United States for \$25 million in gold, creating the U.S. Virgin Islands.
- U.S. military and political presence increases in the Caribbean.

Late 1900s–Present – Modern Governance & Disasters

- Growth of tourism-based economies and regional cooperation through organizations like CARICOM and the OECS (though the USVI is not a member, it maintains connections).
- Severe hurricanes (e.g., Hugo in 1989, Irma and Maria in 2017) cause regional devastation and influence disaster management policies.

Caribbean Connection

- The Virgin Islands share a common physical geography with the Caribbean, including volcanic origins, coral formations, and exposure to hurricanes, earthquakes, and tsunamis.
- Historical and political developments—such as colonization, emancipation, and trade—followed patterns seen across the Caribbean, linking the Virgin Islands to the broader regional story.
- The U.S. Virgin Islands’ history reflects the Caribbean’s strategic role in global politics, economics, and cultural exchange from the colonial period to today.

For support for the Key Events, consider the unit below. Required and recommended resources are included with links embedded within the units. Pacing is also suggested.

Geography and Geology of the Caribbean

Part I Unit 2 Title: Early Inhabitants of the Caribbean

Unit Summary (9th Grade)

This unit explores the early inhabitants of the Caribbean, focusing on the Saladoid, Arawaks, Tainos, and Caribs. Students will investigate their cultural practices, social structures, economies, and spiritual beliefs prior to European contact. They will analyze how these societies adapted to their environments, interacted with each other, and responded to early European arrival. The unit will also examine the profound political and cultural shifts caused by colonization, situating Virgin Islands history within the broader Caribbean context.

Historical & Political Timeline – Virgin Islands in the Caribbean Context

Before 500 BCE – Early Settlements

- **Saladoid** peoples are among the earliest known inhabitants of the Caribbean, including some settlement evidence in the Virgin Islands.
- Nomadic lifestyle with reliance on fishing, shellfish gathering, and stone tools.

500 BCE–1000 CE – Agricultural Development

- **Arawak-speaking groups** migrate into the Virgin Islands and other Caribbean islands.
- Farming of cassava, maize, and other crops begins; pottery-making develops; permanent villages established.

1000 CE–1400s – Complex Societies

- **Tainos** emerge as a dominant Arawak group, with organized chiefdoms (cacicazgos) in the Greater Antilles and cultural influence in the Virgin Islands.

- **Caribs** expand through the Lesser Antilles, known for seafaring skill, trade networks, and conflict with other groups.
- Inter-island exchange of goods, ideas, and customs strengthens a shared regional identity.

1493 – European Arrival

- Christopher Columbus’s second voyage brings Europeans to the Virgin Islands; St. Croix is named “Santa Cruz.”
- First recorded violent encounter between Europeans and Caribs in the Lesser Antilles.

1500s – Early Colonization Impact

- Rapid population decline of Indigenous peoples in the Virgin Islands and across the Caribbean due to disease, forced labor, and displacement.
- Shift in political control as European powers begin to claim and settle islands.

Caribbean Connection

- Indigenous migration and trade routes connected the Virgin Islands to islands from Cuba to Trinidad, creating a shared cultural sphere before European contact.
- Political structures, such as the Taino caciques and Carib war leadership, reflected governance systems seen across the Caribbean.
- The arrival of Europeans in the Virgin Islands was part of a regional wave of conquest and colonization that reshaped political boundaries, economies, and cultural identities throughout the Caribbean.

For support for the Key Events, consider the unit below. Required and recommended resources are included with links embedded within the unit. Pacing is also suggested.

[Early Inhabitants of the Caribbean](#)

Part I Unit 3: European Exploration and Colonization

Unit Summary

This unit examines the historical era of European exploration and colonization, focusing on the Virgin Islands within the larger Caribbean context. Students will analyze the economic, political, and religious motivations for expansion, the challenges faced by explorers and settlers, and the deep and lasting impacts of colonization on Indigenous peoples, societies, and global trade. The study will highlight how European rivalries shaped the political and economic development of the Virgin Islands and its connections to the wider Caribbean world.

Historical Timeline – Virgin Islands in the Caribbean Context

Late 1400s – Age of Exploration Begins

- **1492** – Christopher Columbus reaches the Bahamas, opening the way for European expansion into the Caribbean.
- **1493** – On his second voyage, Columbus visits the Virgin Islands, encountering Carib peoples and naming several islands.

1500s – Spanish Dominance & Early Impact

- Spain claims vast territories in the Caribbean, using them as bases for further conquest in the Americas.
- Indigenous populations decline sharply due to disease, forced labor, and displacement.
- The Virgin Islands remain largely unsettled by Europeans but serve as a stopover for ships.

1600s – Rise of Colonial Competition

- Other European powers, including England, France, the Netherlands, and Denmark, challenge Spanish dominance.
- The Virgin Islands become contested territory, with pirates and privateers active in surrounding waters.
- **1671** – Denmark establishes the Danish West India Company and claims St. Thomas.

1700s – Expansion of Colonization

- **1718** – St. John is settled by Denmark.
- **1733** – Denmark purchases St. Croix from France, completing its control of the three main Virgin Islands.
- Enslaved Africans are brought in large numbers to work on sugar plantations, forming the backbone of the colonial economy.

1800s – Shifts in Power and Policy

- Abolition movements grow in Europe and the Caribbean.
- **1848** – Enslaved and free Black Virgin Islanders, led by General Buddhoe, force Danish authorities to abolish slavery.

Caribbean Connection

- The colonization of the Virgin Islands mirrored trends across the Caribbean, where European powers competed for territory, resources, and control of trade routes.
- Plantation economies built on enslaved African labor connected islands through the “triangular trade” system linking Europe, Africa, and the Americas.

- Colonial rivalries in the Virgin Islands were part of broader military and political struggles in the Caribbean, including wars between Britain, France, Spain, and the Netherlands.
- Cultural blending and creolization seen in the Virgin Islands reflected a wider Caribbean process of merging African, European, and Indigenous influences.

For support for the Key Events, consider the unit below. Required and recommended resources are included with links embedded within the unit. Pacing is also suggested.

European Exploration and Colonization

Part I Unit 4 Title: Sugar Revolution and Enslavement

Unit Summary: This unit examines the historical significance of the Sugar Revolution in transforming the Caribbean's economy, environment, and society, with a focus on the Virgin Islands. Students will analyze how the introduction of large-scale sugar production reshaped the land, intensified the transatlantic slave trade, and entrenched systems of social and economic inequality. The unit will also explore how enslaved Africans resisted oppression and preserved cultural traditions, and how the legacy of the Sugar Revolution continues to shape the Virgin Islands and the wider Caribbean today.

Historical Timeline – Virgin Islands in the Caribbean Context

Early 1600s – Beginnings of Sugar Cultivation

- European colonists introduce sugarcane to the Caribbean from the Eastern Mediterranean and the Canary Islands.
- Small-scale production begins in English, French, and Dutch colonies, including some cultivation in nearby islands to the Virgin Islands.

Mid-1600s – The Sugar Revolution

- Rapid expansion of sugar plantations across the Caribbean, especially in Barbados, Jamaica, and other British and French colonies.
- Plantation system replaces small-scale farming, drastically changing land use and settlement patterns.

Late 1600s–1700s – Spread to the Virgin Islands

- **1671–1733** – Danish West India Company gains control of St. Thomas, St. John, and St. Croix, introducing large-scale sugar cultivation.
- Massive importation of enslaved Africans to work plantations, leading to a predominantly African-descended population.

1700s–1800s – Height of the Sugar Economy

- Sugar becomes the dominant export of the Virgin Islands and most Caribbean colonies, fueling European wealth.

- Harsh conditions lead to uprisings, including the **1733 Slave Rebellion** on St. John.

1800s – Decline of the Sugar Economy

- **1848** – Emancipation in the Danish West Indies ends legal slavery, drastically changing the labor system.
- Global sugar market shifts and competition from beet sugar reduce profitability, leading to economic changes in the Virgin Islands.

Caribbean Connection

- The Sugar Revolution in the Virgin Islands was part of a larger Caribbean transformation, with similar economic and social changes in islands such as Barbados, Jamaica, and Martinique.
- The plantation system tied the Virgin Islands into the Atlantic economy through the triangular trade, linking Europe, Africa, and the Americas.
- The massive increase in enslaved African labor across the Caribbean created shared cultural traditions, resistance movements, and legacies of inequality that remain evident today.
- Economic shifts after emancipation in the Virgin Islands reflected a broader regional decline in sugar profitability and the search for alternative industries.

For support for the Key Events, consider the unit below. Required and recommended resources are included with links embedded within the unit. Pacing is also suggested.

Sugar Revolution and Enslavement

This Virgin Islands and Caribbean History (VICH) high school course is comprised of three units and considered as Part II.

Part II Unit I Title: Emancipation in the Virgin Islands.

Unit Summary: This unit explores the historical context and implications of emancipation in the Danish West Indies and the broader Caribbean, focusing on the events leading up to and following the 1848 rebellion. Students will analyze primary and secondary sources to understand the social, political, and economic impacts of emancipation on enslaved individuals and the colonial systems in place.

Historical Timeline – Virgin Islands in the Caribbean Context

Early 1800s – Growing Tensions Over Slavery

- Across the Caribbean, enslaved communities resist oppression through revolts, escapes, and organized resistance.
- Abolitionist movements gain momentum in Britain, France, and Denmark, influencing public opinion and colonial policy.

1830s – Regional Emancipation Movements

- 1833 – Britain passes the Slavery Abolition Act, freeing enslaved people in most of its Caribbean colonies by 1838.
- Freed communities in the British Caribbean serve as models and points of hope for enslaved populations in the Danish West Indies and other territories.

1840s – Rising Unrest in the Danish West Indies

- Harsh labor conditions persist, and free Black and mixed-race populations push for greater rights.
- Rumors of freedom from neighboring islands spread, intensifying demands for emancipation.

1848 – Emancipation in the Danish West Indies

- July 3, 1848 – Enslaved people on St. Croix, led by Moses “Buddhoe” Gottlieb, organize a mass protest at Fort Frederik in Frederiksted.
- Danish Governor Peter von Scholten proclaims immediate emancipation to prevent bloodshed.
- Approximately 30,000 enslaved people in St. Croix, St. Thomas, and St. John are freed.

Post-1848 – Labor Struggles and Social Change

- Plantation owners attempt to control freed workers through contract labor and restrictive laws.
- 1849–1870s – Many freed people leave plantations, forming independent communities and working as fishermen, craftsmen, and traders.

Late 1800s – Regional Impact

- Emancipation in the Danish West Indies reinforces the Caribbean-wide shift toward free labor economies.
- Social hierarchies remain, but political activism grows among freed populations, influencing later movements for civil rights and self-governance.

Caribbean Connection

1804 – Haitian Independence

- o Haiti becomes the first independent Black republic following a successful slave revolt, inspiring enslaved and free Black populations across the Caribbean.

1834–1838 – British Caribbean Emancipation

- o Britain abolishes slavery in its Caribbean colonies, implementing full emancipation by 1838.
- o Freed communities influence enslaved populations in neighboring territories, including the Danish West Indies.

1848 – French Caribbean Emancipation

- o France abolishes slavery in its Caribbean colonies such as Martinique and Guadeloupe, reinforcing the regional momentum toward freedom.

Early to Mid-1800s – Spread of Abolitionist Ideas and Networks

- o Abolitionist philosophies and news travel throughout the Caribbean via sailors, traders, and migrants.
- o Cross-island communication strengthens the resolve and strategy of enslaved peoples demanding liberation.

Mid to Late 1800s – Shared Post-Emancipation Challenges

- o Newly freed populations across the Caribbean face economic exploitation, social inequality, and political disenfranchisement.
- o Labor movements and political activism begin to grow region-wide, linking Caribbean communities in their struggle for civil rights and self-determination.

For support for the Key Events, consider the unit below. Required and recommended resources are included with links embedded within the unit. Pacing is also suggested.

Emancipation

Part II Unit 2 Title: Post-Emancipation Socio-Economic and Political Transformations in the Virgin Islands and the Caribbean

Unit Summary: This unit explores the socio-economic, political, and cultural transformations that occurred in the Virgin Islands and the Caribbean following emancipation. Students will investigate the challenges faced by formerly enslaved individuals, the emergence of labor movements, and the significant figures who fought for rights, including influential leaders like David Hamilton Jackson and the queens of the Labor Riot.

Historical Timeline – Virgin Islands in the Caribbean Context

Late 1800s – Post-Emancipation Labor Struggles

- o Freed people navigate harsh labor contracts and economic dependency on plantations.
- o The decline of the sugar economy creates widespread poverty and unemployment in the Virgin Islands.

1878 – The Fireburn Labor Riot

- o A major labor uprising on St. Croix led by female labor leaders known as the “Queens” (Mary, Agnes, and Mathilda).
- o Protest against poor wages, working conditions, and lack of political rights.

Early 1900s – Rise of Political Activism

- o David Hamilton Jackson emerges as a key leader advocating for workers’ rights, education, and political reform.
- o Push for the repeal of restrictive press laws and expanded voting rights.

1917 – Transfer of the Virgin Islands to the United States

- o The U.S. purchase of the islands marks a new political era with new challenges and opportunities.

1920s–1940s – Continued Social and Economic Changes

- o Growth of labor unions and increased political participation.
- o Development of education and infrastructure under U.S. administration.

Caribbean Connection Timeline

Late 1800s – Widespread Labor Unrest

- o Labor riots and strikes occur in many Caribbean territories (e.g., Trinidad in 1884, Barbados in 1887).
- o Women often play key roles in organizing and leading protests.

Early 1900s – Growth of Labor Movements

- o Prominent Caribbean leaders emerge, such as Marcus Garvey in Jamaica and Casely Hayford in the Gold Coast, advocating for civil rights and economic justice.
- o Cross-island collaboration strengthens labor and political movements.

1917 – Political Transitions and Colonial Changes

- o Various Caribbean colonies experience shifts in colonial administration, impacting local governance and rights.

1920s–1940s – Expansion of Social Reforms

- o Labor unions gain formal recognition across the Caribbean.
- o Increased demands for universal suffrage, education, and improved living conditions.

For support for the Key Events, consider the unit below. Required and recommended resources are included with links embedded within the unit. Pacing is also suggested.

Post Emancipation

Part II Unit 3

Unit Title: The Transfer of Sovereignty — From Denmark to the United States

Unit Summary: In this unit, students will examine the transfer of sovereignty over the Danish West Indies from Denmark to the United States. This exploration will analyze the treaties and diplomatic processes that led to this exchange of power, including motivations, negotiations, and effects for those involved. Students will understand the geopolitical context of the early 20th century that contributed to this event.

Historical Timeline – Virgin Islands in the Caribbean Context

Late 1800s – Danish West Indies Strategic Importance

- o The Virgin Islands serve as a key naval and trade location in the Caribbean, especially during global conflicts.
- o Denmark faces economic challenges managing the colonies, leading to interest in selling the islands.

Early 1900s – U.S. Interest Grows

- o The United States seeks to expand its naval presence and protect the Panama Canal, viewing the Virgin Islands as strategically important.
- o Negotiations between Denmark and the U.S. begin regarding the potential sale.

1916 – Treaty Signed

- o The Treaty of the Danish West Indies is signed, agreeing on the transfer of sovereignty for \$25 million.

March 31, 1917 – Official Transfer

- o The Danish West Indies officially become the United States Virgin Islands.
- o Transition includes changes in governance, legal systems, and military presence.

Post-1917 – Impact on Virgin Islands Society

- o The change in sovereignty brings new political structures, citizenship rights, and economic opportunities.
- o Residents adjust to U.S. governance amid ongoing cultural and social changes.

Caribbean Connection Timeline

Late 1800s – Colonial Rivalries in the Caribbean

- European powers and the emerging U.S. compete for influence and control over Caribbean territories.
- The strategic value of Caribbean islands increases with the construction of the Panama Canal.

Early 1900s – U.S. Expansionism

- The U.S. acquires other Caribbean territories (e.g., Puerto Rico in 1898), signaling a shift in regional power dynamics.
- The U.S. adopts the Roosevelt Corollary, increasing involvement in Caribbean affairs.

1917 – Regional Sovereignty Changes

- The transfer of the Danish West Indies marks one of several sovereignty changes in the region during this period.
- Caribbean islands continue to experience shifts in colonial governance due to global geopolitical pressures.

Post-World War I – Geopolitical Reconfiguration

- Caribbean nations and territories adjust to new political realities post-WWI, with increased U.S. economic and military influence.
- Movements for greater autonomy and self-determination gain momentum across the Caribbean.

For support for the Key Events, consider the unit below. Required and recommended resources are included with links embedded within the unit. Pacing is also suggested.

[Transfer and United States Government](#)

[Link to Full VI History Curriculum](#)

VI-Centric Civics Part I: Constitutional Development & Political Status in the U.S. Virgin Islands (with Caribbean Comparative Perspectives)

Course Length: 1 Semester (18 weeks)

Target Level: Grades 9–12

Aligned Standards: VISA-SS Civics & Government strands (Driving Concepts: Civic Life, Political Institutions, Rights & Responsibilities, Historical & Global Context)

Unit 1 – Historical Foundations of Virgin Islands Government

- **Virgin Islands Context:**
 - Pre-colonial governance traditions of the Taino and Carib.
 - Colonial administrative systems under Danish rule.
 - U.S. acquisition in 1917 and subsequent Organic Acts (1936, 1954).
- **Caribbean Comparative Lens:**
 - Political evolution in other Caribbean territories (e.g., Puerto Rico, Bermuda, Cayman Islands, Martinique).
 - Similarities/differences in colonial transitions and autonomy levels.
- **VISA-SS Connections:** Historical development of political systems; relationship between history and civic structures.

Unit 2 – Constitutional Conventions of the Virgin Islands

- **Virgin Islands Context:**
 - Review of the 5 past constitutional conventions — goals, outcomes, and why they failed to be fully ratified.
 - Detailed study of the 6th Constitutional Convention and current proposals.
- **Caribbean Comparative Lens:**
 - Review of constitutional reform movements in the Caribbean (e.g., Jamaica’s constitutional review process, Barbados becoming a republic).
 - How small island territories approach drafting or revising constitutions.
- **Key Discussion:** Should political status be determined before or after a constitution?
- **VISA-SS Connections:** Decision-making in government; processes of constitutional development.

Unit 3 – Political Status and the U.S. Relationship

- **Virgin Islands Context:**
 - Meaning of “unincorporated territory.”
 - Debates on self-determination: statehood, free association, independence, enhanced autonomy.
 - The “Insular Cases” — history, rulings, and implications for territorial rights.
 - Introduce the concept of “shadow citizens”

- How does this concept impact Virgin Islanders' representation in Congress, voting rights in presidential elections, and ability to influence federal policy.

Caribbean Comparative Lens:

- Status options chosen by other Caribbean territories: independent states (e.g., St. Lucia), associated states (e.g., Puerto Rico), and overseas departments (e.g., Guadeloupe).
- Case studies of changes in political status and their effects on citizens.
- **VISA-SS Connections:** Rights and responsibilities in different governance systems; international law perspectives.

Unit 4 – Rights, Responsibilities, and Civic Engagement

- **Virgin Islands Context:**
 - Bill of Rights in proposed constitutions.
 - Public participation in constitutional reform.
 - Youth civic roles in shaping future governance.
- **Caribbean Comparative Lens:**
 - Civic participation and activism models in Caribbean democracies.
 - Comparative analysis of rights provisions in Caribbean constitutions.
- **Student Projects:**
 - Public forum simulations where students advocate for specific constitutional provisions using both VI and Caribbean examples.
- **VISA-SS Connections:** Civic participation; informed decision-making; global context of rights.

For support for the Key Events, consider the report below.

- [Shadow Citizens](#)

Culminating Project:

Students will:

1. Compare and contrast the Virgin Islands constitutional development process with that of one other Caribbean territory.
2. Propose constitutional provisions for the VI that reflect both local needs and lessons learned from Caribbean neighbors.
3. Present proposals in a simulated public hearing or legislative session.

Part II: Government in Action & Public Policy in the U.S. Virgin Islands (with Caribbean Comparative Perspectives)

Course Length: 1 Semester (18 weeks)

Target Level: Grades 9–12

Aligned Standards: VISA-SS Civics & Government strands (Driving Concepts: Civic Life, Political Institutions, Rights & Responsibilities, Historical & Global Context)

Unit 1 – Structure of Government

- **Virgin Islands Context:**
 - Revoke Organic Act of 1936 with Revised Organic Act
 - Executive, Legislative, and Judicial branches under the Revised Organic Act of 1954.
 - Territorial–federal relationship in governance powers.
- **Caribbean Comparative Lens:**
 - Parliamentary systems in independent Caribbean states (e.g., Jamaica, St. Kitts and Nevis).
 - Hybrid and territorial systems in places like Cayman Islands, Bermuda, and Martinique.
 - Discussion of how political structure influences decision-making and citizen participation.
- **VISA-SS Connections:** Separation of powers; checks and balances; political structures in a global context.

Unit 2 – Elections and Political Parties

- **Virgin Islands Context:**
 - Election process for Governor, Legislature, and Delegate to Congress.
 - Role and history of political parties in the VI.
 - Voting rights and voter turnout trends.
- **Caribbean Comparative Lens:**
 - Multi-party systems in places like Trinidad & Tobago.
 - Non-partisan or dominant party systems in other territories (e.g., Anguilla).
 - Youth participation and voter mobilization strategies across the Caribbean.
- **VISA-SS Connections:** Electoral processes; role of political parties; democratic participation.

Unit 3 – Public Policy and Governance Issues

- **Virgin Islands Context:**
 - Current local policy debates (e.g., economic diversification, education reform, environmental policy).
 - How public policy is made at the territorial level and its connection to federal mandates.

Caribbean Comparative Lens:

- Shared regional policy concerns: hurricane preparedness, tourism dependency, economic inequality.
- Regional cooperation efforts (CARICOM, OECS) and the VI's observer/indirect participation.
- **Case Study:** How Barbados, the Bahamas, and the VI approach climate resilience.
- **VISA-SS Connections:** Policy analysis; governance and decision-making; regional and global interdependence.

Unit 4 – The Justice System and Rule of Law

- **Virgin Islands Context:**
 - Territorial court structure vs. federal court presence in the VI.
 - Rights of the accused and due process under local and federal law.
- **Caribbean Comparative Lens:**
 - Judicial systems inherited from British vs. French colonial traditions.
 - The role of regional courts, such as the Caribbean Court of Justice (CCJ), and why some territories use them while others do not.
- **Key Debate:** Should the VI align more with U.S. federal judicial oversight or pursue greater judicial autonomy?
- **VISA-SS Connections:** Rule of law; judicial independence; international legal frameworks.

Unit 5 – International Relations and Regional Cooperation

- **Virgin Islands Context:**
 - How the VI participates in international trade, tourism marketing, disaster relief, and environmental protection through U.S. representation.
 - Relationships with neighboring Caribbean islands for cultural and economic exchange.
- **Caribbean Comparative Lens:**
 - Direct diplomatic and trade relationships in independent Caribbean states.
 - Regional solidarity movements and collective bargaining power of small states.
 - Examples of cultural diplomacy: carnival exchanges, sports tournaments, arts festivals.
- **VISA-SS Connections:** Global interdependence; foreign policy; regional cooperation.

For support for the Key Events, consider the document below.

- [REVISED Organic Act of the Virgin Islands](#)

Culminating Project:

Students will:

1. Select a governance or policy challenge facing the VI.
2. Research how one or more Caribbean territories addressed a similar challenge.
3. Create a comparative policy brief with recommendations for the VI.
4. Present to a mock “Legislative Policy Review Committee” for feedback.

B. Teaching Strategies

- **Lectures and Discussions:** Provide structured lessons with open discussions on key historical themes.
- **Primary Source Analysis:** Use historical documents, letters, and legal texts to encourage critical thinking.
- **Research Projects:** Assign students topics to research and present findings in essays, reports, and multimedia formats.
- **Debates and Simulations:** Engage students in debates on historical and contemporary issues related to the Virgin Islands.
- **Field Trips and Guest Lectures:** Organize visits to historical sites and invite historians, activists, and government officials to speak.
- **Multimedia Integration:** Utilize documentaries, podcasts, and digital archives to enhance learning.

C. Resources and Materials

- **Core Resource:** The Umbilical Cord (9), Social Studies Civics (10-12): (*Custom Edition for the United States Virgin Islands*)
- **Supplemental Resources:**
 - Academic books and scholarly articles on Virgin Islands and Basic Caribbean History (VICH)
 - Historical documents and primary sources
 - Digital archives and online databases
 - Documentaries and films
 - Guest speakers and local historians

D. Assessment Methods

- **Essays and Research Papers:** Assess students’ ability to analyze historical events and articulate arguments.
- **Oral Presentations and Debates:** Evaluate students’ critical thinking and public speaking skills.
- **Exams and Quizzes:** Test knowledge retention and analytical skills.
- **Project-Based Learning:** Assign independent and group projects focused on historical themes.
- **Portfolio Reviews:** Collect students’ work overtime to track progress and depth of understanding.

E. Timeline and Implementation Steps

1. Master Schedule:

- Virgin Islands and Basic Caribbean History (VICH) will be scheduled as a stand-alone course. The course will be taught two days per week during the Flex block.

2. Preparation Phase (Prior to School Year)

- Develop lesson plans and compile resources.
- Coordinate with historians, educators, and guest speakers.
- Plan field trips and community engagement opportunities.

3. Implementation Phase (Throughout the School Year)

- Introduce historical topics sequentially, building on prior knowledge.
- Conduct research-based assignments and interactive class activities.
- Incorporate discussions, debates, and student-led presentations.

4. Evaluation and Adaptation (End of Semester/Yearly Review)

- Gather feedback from students, teachers, and guest lecturers.
- Assess students' progress through written and oral evaluations.
- Modify the curriculum based on effectiveness and student engagement

Sample Lesson Plans

Virgin Islands and Basic Caribbean History (VICH)

Sample Lesson Plans by Grade Bands

Title: How Does Our Local Virgin Islands History Reflect Broader Caribbean Histories?

Overview: Sample lessons are developed with a K–12 unit in mind that explores the rich history and culture of the Virgin Islands through the lens of its connections with the broader Caribbean region. Students at each grade band will engage in learning experiences that emphasize how local events, people, and cultural practices are part of larger Caribbean histories and shared experiences.

- In the early grades (K–2), students begin by locating the Virgin Islands geographically and exploring cultural similarities shared with neighboring Caribbean islands, building a foundation of identity and belonging within a regional community.
- In grades 3–5, students examine key historical moments such as emancipation, understanding how freedom movements in the Virgin Islands were influenced by, and influenced other Caribbean societies.
- For middle school students (grades 6–8), the focus shifts to labor and social movements, where students compare and analyze struggles for rights and justice across the Caribbean, deepening their understanding of regional solidarity and shared histories.
- In the high school years (grades 9–12), students explore complex geopolitical events such as the 1917 transfer of the Danish West Indies to the United States, situating local history within Caribbean political and economic dynamics and fostering critical thinking about sovereignty and identity.

Throughout the progression, students will:

- Recognize the Virgin Islands as an integral part of Caribbean history and culture.
- Understand how historical events in the Virgin Islands both reflect and contribute to regional developments.
- Develop skills in analysis, comparison, and critical reflection that bridge local and broader Caribbean perspectives.

The question is a **thread woven through all grade bands**, but explicitly explored in:

- Early grades via culture and geography
- Middle grades via historical and socio-political developments tied to Caribbean events
- High school via in-depth historical and political-economic units that analyze Virgin Islands history as part of broader Caribbean narratives

The thematic approach promotes a holistic understanding of history that honors local heritage while connecting it to the wider stories of the Caribbean, encouraging students to appreciate their unique place in these overlapping narratives.

To highlight the Caribbean context

- K–2: Focuses on locating the Virgin Islands within the Caribbean and exploring shared cultural traits among Caribbean islands.
- 3–5: Explores emancipation in the Virgin Islands alongside similar Caribbean freedom movements, emphasizing regional connections.
- 6–8: Analyzes labor and social movements within the Caribbean, comparing the Virgin Islands’ experiences to those in other islands to understand shared struggles.
- 9–12: Examines the 1917 transfer of the Danish West Indies with an emphasis on Caribbean geopolitical and economic contexts, highlighting regional implications and sovereignty.

K–2 Sample Lesson Plan

Title: Our Islands and Our Neighbors: Exploring the Virgin Islands and the Caribbean

Objectives:

- Students will identify the Virgin Islands on a map and recognize neighboring Caribbean islands.
- Students will describe at least two cultural similarities between the Virgin Islands and other Caribbean islands.
- Students will express appreciation for their own cultural identity within the broader Caribbean context.

Suggested Materials:

- Large map or globe showing the Caribbean region
- Printable island map worksheets
- Picture books or videos about Caribbean children or cultures (e.g., “Anansi the Spider” stories or similar)
- Chart paper and markers
- Crayons or colored pencils
- Optional: Drawing paper for art activity

VISA-SS Standard:

- VISA-SS.K.GEO.1: Use maps and globes to locate the Virgin Islands and other Caribbean islands.

Suggested Lesson Breakdown

Warm-Up (5 minutes):

- Begin by showing a globe or large map and ask students if they know where the Virgin Islands are located.
- Show where the Virgin Islands are relative to other islands in the Caribbean.
- Read aloud a short picture book or play a video highlighting children's lives or culture in the Caribbean.

Main Activity (20 minutes):

- Hand out the island map worksheets. Guide students to color and label the Virgin Islands and at least two neighboring islands.
- Discuss similarities such as types of food, music, or weather. Record student ideas on chart paper.
- Optional: Students draw a picture of something that connects their life to the Caribbean (e.g., food, a festival, or the ocean).

Review and Wrap-Up (5 minutes):

- Gather students to share one thing they learned about the Virgin Islands or Caribbean neighbors.
- Display the chart paper and drawings in the classroom.
- Summarize how the Virgin Islands are part of a larger Caribbean community with shared traditions.

Assessment:

- Informal: Observe participation in map activity and discussion.
- Formal: Students correctly identify the Virgin Islands on their worksheet and name at least one cultural similarity.

Suggested Digital Tools:

- Google Earth to virtually explore the Caribbean islands as a group.
- YouTube read-alouds or culturally relevant Caribbean story videos (e.g., folk tales).
- Simple digital drawing apps (like Tux Paint or Kid Pix) for the art activity if tech is available.

Suggested Resources for K–2

- **Books:**
 - Savvas - Social Studies Workbook: (*Custom Edition for the United States Virgin Islands*)
 - *Anansi Stories* (Caribbean folk tales)

- *How Anansi Spun Madras* by Torhera Durand
- **Videos:**
 - Caribbean cultural dances and music clips on YouTube (e.g., Calypso and Reggae basics)
 - Simple geography videos on the Caribbean islands for young learners (National Geographic Kids)
- **Interactive Tools:**
 - Google Earth tour of the Caribbean islands
 - PBS Kids Caribbean-themed games and stories

3–5 Sample Lesson Plan

Title: Emancipation and the Caribbean: Understanding Freedom’s Journey

Objectives:

- Students will explain the significance of emancipation in the Virgin Islands and other Caribbean territories.
- Students will sequence emancipation events in the Virgin Islands and neighboring islands on a timeline.
- Students will describe how news and ideas about freedom spread across the Caribbean.

Materials:

- Timeline cards with key emancipation dates and events (e.g., Haiti 1804, British Caribbean 1834–1838, Danish West Indies 1848)
- Large poster paper or whiteboard for timeline display
- Primary source excerpts (adapted for upper elementary) or simplified narratives of emancipation stories
- Markers, chart paper
- Reflection journals or paper for student responses

VISA-SS Standards:

- VISA-SS.4.HIS.3: Explain the significance of emancipation in the Virgin Islands and other Caribbean territories.

Lesson Breakdown

Warm-Up (5 minutes):

- Begin with a brief storytelling or read-aloud about emancipation in the Virgin Islands.
- Ask students what they know about freedom and why it might be important.
- Introduce the idea that many islands fought for freedom at different times.

Main Activity (20 minutes):

- Distribute timeline cards with emancipation events across the Caribbean.
- In groups, students arrange the cards chronologically on poster paper or a whiteboard.
- Discuss each event briefly, highlighting connections between the islands.
- Read adapted primary source excerpts or stories from the Virgin Islands and other islands about emancipation struggles.

Review and Wrap-Up (5 minutes):

- Groups share what surprised them or what they found important about the timeline.
- Facilitate a discussion on how people in the Virgin Islands might have learned about other emancipation movements.
- Students write a short reflection answering: “How does our story fit into the bigger Caribbean story?”

Assessment:

- Formative: Participation in timeline arrangement and group discussion.
- Summative: Written reflections showing understanding of emancipation’s significance and regional connections.

Digital Tools:

- Timeline apps to create interactive timelines.
- Virtual museum tours (e.g., Smithsonian NMAAHC) featuring Caribbean emancipation history.
- Padlet or Jamboard for collaborative reflections or sharing timeline ideas.

Resources for Grades 3–5

- **Primary Sources:**
 - Excerpts from emancipation proclamations (adapted for grade level)
 - Oral histories or recorded stories from Caribbean elders (transcripts)
- **Websites:**
 - Smithsonian National Museum of African American History and Culture — Caribbean Emancipation resources
 - Caribbean Memory Project — digital archives and stories
- **Interactive Tools:**
 - Timeline JS for creating interactive timelines on emancipation

6–8 Sample Lesson Plan

Title: Labor Movements Across the Caribbean: Voices for Change

Objectives:

- Students will analyze labor and social movements in the Virgin Islands and compare them to similar movements in other Caribbean islands.
- Students will identify key causes, events, and outcomes of labor protests, including the VI Labor Riot of 1935.
- Students will develop critical thinking skills by comparing similarities and differences across Caribbean labor movements.

Materials:

- Primary and secondary source excerpts on the VI Labor Riot and Caribbean labor protests (adapted for middle school)
- Venn diagram worksheets or digital diagram tools
- Chart paper and markers
- Projector or screen for multimedia presentations
- Notebooks for reflection notes

VISA-SS Standard:

- VISA-SS.7.HIS.2: Analyze social and labor movements in the Caribbean and their effects on the Virgin Islands.

Lesson Breakdown

Warm-Up (5 minutes):

- Begin with a brief video or story about the 1935 VI Labor Riot or a similar Caribbean labor protest.
- Ask students to brainstorm reasons why workers might protest or demand better conditions.

Main Activity (30 minutes):

- Provide students with excerpts describing the VI Labor Riot and labor protests in Trinidad and Jamaica.
- In small groups, students use Venn diagrams to compare and contrast causes, events, leadership, and outcomes.
- Groups present their findings to the class, highlighting both unique and shared features of the movements.

Review and Wrap-Up (10 minutes):

- Lead a class discussion reflecting on the importance of regional solidarity and shared struggles in shaping Caribbean societies.
- Students write a brief journal entry: “What lessons do labor movements teach us about standing up for rights today?”

Assessment:

- Formative: Group presentations and Venn diagrams.
- Summative: Reflective journal entry demonstrating understanding of labor movement significance and regional connections.

Digital Tools:

- Digital Venn diagram creators such as Canva
- Online archives such as the Caribbean Memory Project for accessing primary sources.
- Short documentary clips or podcasts on Caribbean labor history (e.g., History Extra podcasts).
- Collaborative platforms such as Google Docs or Padlet for group work and reflections.

Resources for Grades 6–8

- **Primary Sources:**
 - Newspaper articles and photos from labor riots (adapted or original)
 - Speeches or letters from Caribbean labor leaders (simplified)
- **Websites:**
 - Caribbean Memory Project
 - Digital Library of the Caribbean (dLOC) historical documents and images
- **Videos/Podcasts:**
 - History Extra podcast episodes on Caribbean labor history
 - Documentary clips on the 1935 VI Labor Riot
- **Interactive Tools:**
 - Canva for Venn diagrams and collaborative projects

9–12 Sample Lesson Plan

Title: Transfer Day in a Caribbean Context: The 1917 Sovereignty Change of the Danish West Indies

Objectives:

- Students will analyze the political, economic, and social factors leading to the transfer of the Danish West Indies to the United States in 1917.

- Students will evaluate the broader Caribbean implications of this sovereignty change.
- Students will develop skills in analyzing primary documents and engaging in informed debate.

Materials:

- Copies of treaty excerpts (e.g., Treaty of the Danish West Indies transfer)
- Historical newspaper articles from the era (digital or printed)
- Political cartoons and maps of the Caribbean and regional geopolitics around 1917
- Debate guidelines and rubric
- Timeline templates or software

VISA-SS Standard:

- VISA-SS.9.HIS.4: Evaluate the political, economic, and social impact of key historical events in the Virgin Islands and Caribbean.

Lesson Breakdown

Warm-Up (5 minutes):

- Introduce the historical background with a brief lecture or multimedia presentation about the Danish West Indies prior to 1917.
- Show political maps highlighting the islands and Caribbean powers involved.
- Pose an open question: “What might motivate countries to transfer territory?”

Main Activity (35 minutes):

- Students analyze treaty excerpts and historical newspapers in small groups, noting reasons for transfer and reactions from different stakeholders.
- Groups create timelines situating the transfer within regional events such as changes in Caribbean sovereignty.
- Conduct a structured classroom debate: Was the transfer beneficial or detrimental for the Virgin Islands? Students represent different perspectives (Denmark, U.S., local inhabitants, Caribbean neighbors).

Review and Wrap-Up (5 minutes):

- Debrief the debate and summarize the complex impacts of the transfer.
- Students write an exit ticket answering: “How did this event connect the Virgin Islands to Caribbean history?”

Assessment:

- Formative: Participation in document analysis, timeline creation, and debate.
- Summative: Exit ticket demonstrating understanding of historical context and critical perspectives.

Digital Tools:

- Online treaty databases (e.g., Avalon Project at Yale).
- Digital archives for historical newspapers (e.g., Chronicling America).
- Interactive political map tools (e.g., World History Atlas apps).
- Video conferencing platforms with breakout rooms for debates (Zoom, Google Meet).

Resources for Grades 9–12

- **Primary Sources:**
 - Treaty of the Danish West Indies transfer text
 - 1917-era newspaper archives from Caribbean and US sources
 - Political cartoons and diplomatic correspondences (archival collections)
- **Websites/Archives:**
 - Avalon Project at Yale (historical treaties)
 - Chronicling America (historic newspapers)
 - Caribbean Memory Project & Digital Library of the Caribbean (dLOC)
- **Videos/Documentaries:**
 - PBS documentaries on Caribbean history and colonialism
 - Lectures or talks by Caribbean historians (available on YouTube or university websites)
- **Digital Tools:**
 - World History Atlas apps
 - Debate platforms and collaborative tools like Google Classroom, Zoom breakout rooms

CURRICULUM RESOURCE GUIDE

Virgin Islands and Basic Caribbean History (VICH) (K-2) The Savvas Social Studies workbook, custom edition for the United States Virgin Island (USVI) for grades K–2, is designed to align with the Virgin Island Standards of Achievement for Social Studies (VISA-SS). This curriculum aims to prepare students for college, career, and civic life while embracing the unique history and culture of the USVI. This edition is based on the myWorld Interactive K–5 Social Studies program, which encourages active inquiry and integrates civics, economics, geography, and history concepts. The curriculum emphasizes literacy development, critical thinking, and communication skills, supporting students in becoming engaged and responsible citizens.

The **HMH Social Studies Civics: Custom Edition for the U.S. Virgin Islands** is a tailored civics textbook designed to meet the specific educational needs of students in the U.S. Virgin Islands. It covers foundational principles of American government, including the Constitution, the three branches of government, citizenship, and civil rights, while also incorporating localized content relevant to the history, government, and civic structure of the Virgin Islands. The textbook emphasizes the role of civic responsibility and participation, both in the broader U.S. democratic system and within the unique territorial context of the Virgin Islands. It includes interactive activities, primary sources, and region-specific case studies to help students connect national civic ideals with their local identity and governance.

The Umbilical Cord: Virgin Island History by Harold Willocks is a concise account of the history of the U.S. Virgin Islands. The book traces the region's development from its Indigenous peoples through European colonization, the transatlantic slave trade, Danish rule, and the eventual transfer to the United States in 1917. It emphasizes the cultural, political, and economic connections that have shaped the islands, likening these ties to an "umbilical cord" that links the past to the present. The work is especially noted for its accessibility to younger readers and its use in educational settings across the Virgin Islands.

GoOpenUSVI: A resource Hub designed to support social studies education, and, specifically VICH. Through this Hub, educators can access high-quality, openly licensed educational resources aligned to the Virgin Islands Standards of Achievement for Social Studies (VISA-SS). In addition to national standard-aligned resources, the Hub houses local Virgin Islands History resources which ensure that our educators and the broader community have access to relevant materials that celebrate and preserve our unique Virgin Islands heritage. By centralizing these resources, we aim to empower teachers to deliver meaningful instruction deeply rooted in the history and culture of the Virgin Islands, while promoting pride, a strong sense of identity, and a thirst for lifelong learning across the Territory and beyond.

<https://goopenusvi.vide.vi/hubs/our-legacy#sociology>

Scheduling & Course Options

Elementary Schools – Add a course titled Virgin Islands/Caribbean History in addition to the Social Studies course

Middle Schools –Social Studies will be taught 3 days per week, while Virgin Islands/ Caribbean History will be taught for 2 days per week.

Senior High Schools - Social Studies will be taught 3 days per week, while Virgin Islands/ Caribbean History will be taught for 2 days per week.

Note:

- The **Flex Block** (30 minutes) gives students a consistent slot for **Virgin Islands and Basic Caribbean History (VICH)**.