



DIGESTIBLE DISCOVERIES

Issue 10 New Worlds, Old Lands

Unit Topics & Skills

This unit integrates multiple subjects, giving your student hands-on, engaging learning experiences. Below is a breakdown of the key topics and skills your student will explore in each subject area.

Science

- **Ecosystem Dynamics:** Biotic vs. abiotic factors, ecosystems, and habitat interdependence
- **Energy Flow:** Producers, consumers, decomposers, food chains, and energy transfer
- **Animal Adaptations & Ecology:** Case studies on the American alligator (apex predator/ecosystem engineer) and salmon
- **Physics & Forces:** Isaac Newton's Laws of Motion, force, mass, and buoyancy
- **Earth Science:** Coastal erosion, sediment deposition, and wetland environmental features
- **Hands-On Engineering:** Designing, building, testing, and refining floating ship models
- **Scientific Method:** Conducting labs, recording observations, analyzing data, and using scientific vocabulary

History & Social Studies

- **Early European Exploration:** Motivations, routes, and impacts of Spanish, French, Dutch, and English explorers
- **The Columbian Exchange:** Transfer of plants, animals, diseases, and global trade impacts
- **Indigenous Civilizations:** Major North American Indigenous cultures, regional societies, and environments
- **European & Indigenous Interactions:** Cultural exchanges, trade, land disputes, and conflicts
- **Forced Labor Systems:** Introduction to the encomienda system, the Middle Passage, and early slavery in British America
- **St. Augustine (1565):** First permanent European settlement, Spanish defense strategies, and Castillo de San Marcos
- **Roanoke (1587):** The "Lost Colony" mystery, John White, and archaeological evidence
- **Jamestown (1607):** First permanent English settlement, early struggles, tobacco cash crop, and Powhatan relations
- **Plymouth (1620) & The Mayflower Compact:** Pilgrims, religious motivations, early self-governance, and Wampanoag alliance
- **Geography & Settlement Patterns:** How natural landforms, coastal routes, and weather shaped regional American history
- **Chronology & Timelines:** Creating timelines, sequencing major events, and tracing historical cause-and-effect

Tip for Parents:

Use this breakdown to see which skills and topics each unit covers.

You can mix and match units to create a full year of learning tailored to your child's interests and needs.

9 units = approximately 180 days (full 5-day school week)

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Unit Topics & Skills



Art

- **Color Theory:** Warm vs. cool colors and using color selection to convey mood and atmosphere
- **Drawing & Rendering:** Pencil drawing techniques, contour sketching, texture work, shading, and perspective
- **Composition & Layout:** Establishing foreground and background, creating contrast, and designing habitat compositions
- **Scientific Illustration:** Observational drawing techniques for realistic plants, animals, and natural environments
- **Art History & Reflection:** Analyzing historical artwork for cultural influence and bias, creating original artwork, and reflecting on artistic choices

English Language Arts

- **Grammar & Vocabulary:** Parts of speech, key domain-specific vocabulary, and using context clues to determine word meanings
- **Informational Text Reading:** Main idea and detail extraction, reading comprehension, compare/contrast analysis, and citing textual evidence to support theories
- **Poetry Analysis:** Literary reading and analysis of excerpts from "The Song of Hiawatha" by Henry Wadsworth Longfellow
- **Writing Development:** Paragraph writing, summary writing, developing explanations with facts and evidence, and narrative writing from prompts
- **Research & Writing Process:** Planning, drafting, revising, editing, and publishing an informative European Explorer research project
- **Research Skills:** Source evaluation, effective note-taking, paraphrasing source material, and standard MLA citations

Optional Unit Companions

Spelling Companion: Enhance your student's spelling mastery and vocabulary retention with a dedicated 4-week add-on workbook designed directly around this unit's historical, scientific, and literary themes.

- **Targeted Word Lists:** Focuses on domain-specific vocabulary from early exploration, ecosystem science, and colonial history
- **Skill Practice:** Writing practice, crosswords, word searches, and proofreading exercises
- **Dictation & Assessment:** Ready-to-use weekly dictation test sentences and answer keys

Research Companion: A step-by-step guided student workbook that scaffolds the European Explorer research project from initial inquiry to final publication.

- **Guided Research Templates:** Structured graphic organizers for source evaluation, note-taking, and outlining
- **MLA Formatting Guide:** Clear, student-friendly instructions for formatting citations and building a Works Cited page
- **Drafting & Editing Checklists:** Walkthrough guides for planning, drafting, editing, and final project polish

