**Welcome to 5th grade Social Studies!**

This year, we will learn about the Western Hemisphere: North America, Central America, and South America.

The major topics we will focus on include:

\* **Geography**, including landforms and political boundaries

\* **Complex Societies and Civilizations**, including the Maya, Incas, and Aztecs

\* **Early Peoples of the Americas**, including Native American groups across the continents

\* **European Exploration and its Effects** on both the land and the indigenous people already living there

\* **Government**, including its structure, important historical documents and events, and the fight for civil/human rights

\* **Comparative Cultures**, including those of Canada and Mexico

\* **Economics**, and how countries work to earn/make money as well as trade with other nations

We will be using a variety of sources to learn historical information, think critically, and discuss important topics in a constructive and respectful manner. We will also have the ability to use that information to answer questions and construct short and extended written responses, as well as create a few fun projects centered around what we are studying.