



Social Studies Curriculum 8th Grade American History

Approved by the Board of Education

June 18, 2014

COURSE TITLE: 8th Grade American History

GRADE LEVEL: 8th

CONTENT AREA: Social Studies

Course Description:

This course explores American History from the age of exploration through Reconstruction. This course integrates geography, economics, government and the study of diverse cultures while investigating American History. Students will gain a better understanding of the world they live in by studying the past through primary and secondary sources, critical thinking, simulations and cooperative learning.

Course Rationale:

Social studies creates students who learn skills ranging from reading a map to framing an argument, and it teaches students to assess the validity of evidence, evaluate conflicting points of view and apply facts in order to make decisions and articulate compelling arguments. These real world skills enable students to become critical thinkers, independent learners, problem solvers, and effective communicators so that they will be able to acquire information, an understanding of cultural diversity and the skills necessary to become full participants in our democratic society.

Course Scope and Sequence

Unit 1: Dibs on America 6 (80 min class periods)	Unit 2: Colonial Regions 6 (80 min class periods)	Unit 3: Conflict in the Colonies 10 (80 min class periods)
Unit 4: Revolutionary War 3 (80 min class periods)	Unit 5: Supreme Law of the Land 15 (80 min class periods)	Unit 6: The United States Expands 8 (80 min class periods)
Unit 7: The United States Divides 8 (80 min class periods)	Unit 8: Reconstructing the United States 3 (80 min class periods)	

Course Materials and Resources:

Discovering our Past: A History of the United States: Early Years by McGraw-Hill Education
2014 Suite (Print edition and 7 year online editions)

Unit Objectives

Unit 1: Dibs on America

- Analyze the viability and diversity of Native American cultures before Europeans came
- Evaluate the importance of the discovery, exploration, and early settlement of America
- Locate states, cities, and topographic features of the United States and locate and describe geographic places, using absolute and relative location
- Select, investigate, and present a topic using primary and secondary resources, such as oral interviews, artifacts, journals, documents, photos and letters

Unit 2: Colonial Regions

- Analyze the viability and diversity of Native American cultures before Europeans came
- Evaluate the importance of the discovery, exploration, and early settlement of America
- Locate states, cities, and topographic features of the United States and locate and describe geographic places, using absolute and relative location
- Select, investigate, and present a topic using primary and secondary resources, such as oral interviews, artifacts, journals, documents, photos and letters

Unit 3: Conflict in the Colonies

- Describe how laws and events affect members of groups and relationships among groups and assess how experiences influence perceptions and judgments of events
- Analyze why Britain began to enact trade laws and taxes for the American colonists
- Interpret the perspectives of patriots and loyalists during events leading to the Revolutionary War
- Analyze important principles in the Declaration of Independence, including inalienable rights and government by consent of the governed

Unit 4: Revolutionary War

- Interpret the American Revolution, including the perspectives of patriots and loyalists and factors that explain why the American colonists were successful

Unit 5: Supreme Law of the Land

- Analyze important principles in the Constitution including:
 - Limited government
 - Rule of law
 - Majority rule and minority rights
 - Separation of powers
 - Checks and balances
 - Amendment process
 - Federalism (i.e., as regards federal and state governments, powers being shared, delegated and reserved)
 - Popular sovereignty
- Apply knowledge of responsibilities that governments and citizens need to accept in order to carry out the principles in the Bill of Rights

- Explain how laws are made, interpreted, enforced and how power is distributed among individuals and branches of government
- Demonstrate knowledge of the principles expressed in documents shaping republic in the United States

Unit 6: The United States Expands

- Assess the significance of Westward Expansion including:
 - Lewis and Clark Expedition
 - Texas and the Mexican War
 - Louisiana Purchase
 - Oregon Territory
 - California Gold Rush
- Analyze cultural interactions among these groups:
 - Native Americans
 - Immigrants from Europe
- Summarize the reform movement of Jacksonian Democracy
- Analyze how technologies affect the movement of people, products and ideas.
- Determine the economic causes and effects of westward expansion (business cycle, unemployment, market economy)

Unit 7: The United States Divides

- Explain how the Northern and Southern regions of the United States related to one another and changed over time (1819 and 1860)
- Interpret political, economic and social causes of the Civil War (abolitionism, the Missouri Compromise, Compromise of 1850, slavery, state's rights)

Unit 8: Reconstructing the United States

- Interpret political, economic and social causes and consequences of the American Civil War