

Social Studies - Grade 8

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Meyzeek Middle School
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Materials Needed

Class folder (regular folder with three rings in center), Steno Pad

General Course Description

Content

The students enrolled in this course will study key events in American history from prehistory through the Reconstruction Era. In addition, special consideration will be paid to the Content Standards/Learning Targets for Social Studies Assessment and the five sub-disciplines therein: government, history, geography, economics, and culture.

Methodology

The primary means of instruction for the course will be a "backwards" curricular approach. This methodology is built on the philosophy that students are more likely to achieve mastery when presented with a core set of material in the beginning of each unit and provided reinforcement for several weeks until a culminating activity allows for demonstration. These reinforcing activities generally include classroom exercises, thematically relevant enrichment activities, in and out-of-class readings, homework, and discussions. The scope and depth of the knowledge to be mastered will vary from class to class, but will be guided in general by the principles outlined in the Core Content and a less scientific but equally important sense of what all citizens should know about American society and history.

Tests will be administered after each unit of study. Preparation for all tests is accomplished as each unit progresses, and all test dates will be announced at least one week ahead of time. Two reviews will always be conducted before each test.

Each student must keep a journal, preferably in a Steno Pad. Students will write in their journals two to three times per week. Topics will vary, although most will center on reactions to learning targets in our studies. Journals should be kept in the student's class folder.

Each student is also responsible for keeping a class folder. Within this folder the student should have his/her journal, any returned papers, and six current events entries. Current events should be completed once per week, and attached in the center clip of the class folder. The folder itself will be collected once per grading period, toward the end of the six weeks.

Students will be made aware of their grades using Parent Portal, the Internet-based gradebook. Each student has their own specific login information that will be sent home the second week of school. Additionally grades will be posted at the beginning of each school week outside the classroom door for families without Internet access or should parents deem it appropriate for the student to monitor their own grade.

Finally each student will complete a content area portfolio piece. Although writing portfolios will not be submitted for evaluation in eighth grade this year, all students are required to complete them to be sent to their high school and it is imperative that students continue to build on the experience of working with them. This writing piece will be an editorial written about a real-world problem chosen by the student.

Student Evaluation

Classwork	20%
Homework	15%
Daily/Participation	15%
Tests	10%
Journals	10%
Projects	10%
Current Events	10%
Quizzes	10%

Targeted Skills

Students will take part in a variety of activities throughout the year, all with the goal of improving current and future academic performance.

1. Open-ended response and essay writing enhance the student's ability to communicate in written form and are a key element of KCAS and portfolio assessment. Students will be given opportunities for such writing both in their journal and during in-class, rubric evaluated writing assignments.
2. The ability to question why certain historical events took place, analysis of cause and effect, and the placing of proper perspective on current events will all be stressed. Special emphasis will also be placed on the ability to pre-write and answer essay questions.
3. Map skills; the ability to read charts, graphs and tables; and an awareness of many historical persons, places and events will all be targeted as well.
4. The use of technology and computer skills will be highlighted during specific units of study, with particular focus on researching and developing databases, assessment with CPS Software, and Power Point presentations.

Course Outline

American Prehistory and Geography - August

Native Americans - September

European Exploration - October

American Government/Mock Trial – late October through mid-November

American Colonial Life - mid-November through early December

The American Revolution - January

Economics - February

Early U.S. History – March through early April

Civil War and Reconstruction/Course Review - mid-April through May

Segregation and the Civil Rights Movement – mid-May