



Building on the social studies skills developed in the elementary grades, students in the middle school years begin with a study of people, cultures, and ideas in the Western Hemisphere and move from there to explorations of the Eastern Hemisphere, ending with the early history of the United States. In each grade, students investigate historical events, examine geographic features and resources, consider economic decision-making processes, and understand types of governments and civic responsibility.

Expectations for 8th Grade Students:

- **History:** Examine and interpret a variety of primary and secondary sources, from different perspectives, to formulate a hypothesis and construct a written historical argument about a topic in American history (origins of the American Revolution through Reconstruction).
- **Geography:** Use different geographic tools and data such as maps, globes, diagrams, charts such as population pyramids and climate graphs, geospatial technologies (geographic information systems, Google Earth, global positioning systems) to analyze human and physical systems; explain both conflict and cooperation over space and resources in the United States from the origins of the American Revolution through Reconstruction.
- **Economics:** Provide examples of how economic freedom and free trade are important for economic growth; explain why it is important to manage personal credit and debt. **Personal Financial Literacy:** Examine the role of consumer decisions and taxes within the market economies of early American history.
- **Civics:** Analyze the elements of continuity and change in the United States' constitutional system; summarize the role of law and the rights, roles, and responsibilities of citizens in a democracy.

Throughout 8th Grade You May Find Students:

- Gathering and analyzing primary and secondary sources (art, documents, photos, letters, diaries, propaganda, artifacts) from multiple perspectives to develop and defend an historical thesis; constructing a written argument either for or against an ideal expressed or action taken by the United States during the period of time from the Revolution to Reconstruction; analyzing the causes and effects of major historical events such as the American Revolution, slavery, abolition, and states' rights.
- Using different types of maps and other geographic tools to explain and interpret significant events in U.S. history from the American Revolution through Reconstruction (Westward Expansion, Gold Rush, population growth); addressing issues of land ownership and security from a geographic perspective; making inferences about how the location of and access to resources may lead to cooperation or conflict.
- Discussing the economic policies of the U.S. between the Revolution and Reconstruction; analyzing how policies, tariffs, taxation, and availability of resources affected the growth of the nation; analyzing the benefits and costs of credit and debt.
- Analyzing foundational documents (the Declaration of Independence, the Constitution and the Bill of Rights); discussing how the U.S. constitutional system of government evolved between the American Revolution and Reconstruction, paying particular attention to the changing definition and rights of citizens; examining the changes to the U.S. Constitution and the tensions between individual rights, state law, and national law; explaining the rule of law and the role of judicial review in the U.S. judicial system.