

EIGHTH GRADE

World History to 1500

Students in the eighth grade can be described as curious and independent learners, discovering who they are and determining their place in the world. As they begin to assert independence from adults and become more reliant on peers, they continue to need a great amount of guidance. Through instruction that includes various media and first-hand experiences, students become more aware of events on a global scale and learn how these events affect them.

The study of world history in Grade 8 addresses the time period from prehistoric man to the 1500s. Content standards for this grade incorporate the strands of economics, geography, history, and political science, with an emphasis on the history and geography strands. Course content focuses on the migrations of early peoples, the rise of civilizations, the establishment of governments and religions, the growth of economic systems, and ways in which these events shaped Europe, Asia, Africa, and the Americas. Unique to this course are experiences that provide for the study of the how human beings view themselves over time.

To address the independent and curious nature of eighth graders, instruction is designed to actively involve students in critical thinking and the exchange of ideas, including critical evaluation, interpretation, reasoning, and deduction. Instruction of this nature can best be accomplished through the use of electronic media such as the Internet, videos, and television as well as by participation in small-group and individual activities.

Abbreviated terms used in Grade 8 content standards include *A.D.* (abbreviation of *anno Domini*, Latin for “in the year of our Lord”) and *B.C.* (“before Christ”). These designations are used to label years on the Gregorian calendar. The terms *C.E.* (meaning “in the Common Era”) and *B.C.E.* (meaning “before the Common Era”) are beginning to be utilized by some schools of theology as well as appear in some publications such as state and national assessments and national history standards. The use of the abbreviated terms of *C.E.* and *B.C.E.*, also based on the Gregorian calendar, does not in any way, diminish or negate the importance of the terms *A.D.* and *B.C.*

Students will:

E	G	H	CG
	✓	✓	

1. Explain how artifacts and other archaeological findings provide evidence of the nature and movement of prehistoric groups of people.

Examples: cave paintings, Ice Man, Lucy, fossils, pottery

- Identifying the founding of Rome as the basis of the calendar established by Julius Caesar and used in early Western civilization for over a thousand years
- Identifying the birth of Christ as the basis of the Gregorian calendar used in the United States since its beginning and in most countries of the world today, signified by *B.C.* and *A.D.*
- Using vocabulary terms other than *B.C.* and *A.D.* to describe time
Examples: *B.C.E.*, *C.E.*
- Identifying terms used to describe characteristics of early societies and family structures
Examples: *monogamous*, *polygamous*, *nomadic*

E	G	H	CG
✓	✓	✓	✓

2. Analyze characteristics of early civilizations in respect to technology, division of labor, government, calendar, and writings.

- Comparing significant features of civilizations that developed in the Tigris-Euphrates, Nile, Indus, and Huang He River Valleys
Examples: natural environment, urban development, social hierarchy, written language, ethical and religious belief systems, government and military institutions, economic systems
- Identifying on a map locations of cultural hearths of early civilizations
Examples: Mesopotamia, Nile River Valley

E	G	H	CG
		✓	

3. Compare the development of early world religions and philosophies and their key tenets.

Examples: Judaism, Hinduism, Confucianism, Taoism, Christianity, Buddhism, Islam, Greek and Roman gods

- Identifying cultural contributions of early world religions and philosophies
Examples: Judaism, Hinduism, Confucianism, Taoism, Christianity, Buddhism, Islam, Greek and Roman gods, Phoenicians

E	G	H	CG
		✓	✓

4. Identify cultural contributions of Classical Greece, including politics, intellectual life, arts, literature, architecture, and science.

E	G	H	CG
✓	✓	✓	✓

5. Describe the role of Alexander the Great in the Hellenistic world.
- Examples: serving as political and military leader, encouraging cultural interaction, allowing religious diversity
- Defining boundaries of Alexander the Great's empire and its economic impact
 - Identifying reasons for the separation of Alexander the Great's empire into successor kingdoms
 - Evaluating major contributions of Hellenistic art, philosophy, science, and political thought

E	G	H	CG
✓	✓	✓	✓

6. Trace the expansion of the Roman Republic and its transformation into an empire, including key geographic, political, and economic elements.
- Examples: expansion—illustrating the spread of Roman influence with charts, graphs, timelines, or maps
transformation—noting reforms of Augustus, listing effects of Pax Romana
- Interpreting spatial distributions and patterns of the Roman Republic using geographic tools and technologies

E	G	H	CG
✓	✓	✓	✓

7. Describe the widespread impact of the Roman Empire.
- Example: spread of Roman law and political theory, citizenship and slavery, architecture and engineering, religions, sculptures and paintings, literature, and the Latin language
- Tracing important aspects of the diffusion of Christianity, including its relationship to Judaism, missionary impulse, organizational development, transition from persecution to acceptance in the Roman Empire, and church doctrine
 - Explaining the role of economics, societal changes, Christianity, political and military problems, external factors, and the size and diversity of the Roman Empire in its decline and fall

E	G	H	CG
	✓	✓	

8. Describe the development of a classical civilization in India and China.
- Examples: India—religions, arts and literature, philosophies, empires, caste system
China—religions, politics, centrality of the family, Zhou and Han Dynasties, inventions, economic impact of the Silk Road and European trade, dynastic transitions
- Identifying the effect of monsoons on India
 - Identifying landforms and climate regions of China
- Example: marking landforms and climate regions of China on a map

E	G	H	CG
		✓	✓

9. Describe the rise of the Byzantine Empire, its institutions, and its legacy, including the influence of the Emperors Constantine and Justinian and the effect of the Byzantine Empire on art, religion, architecture, and law.

- Identifying factors leading to the establishment of the Eastern Orthodox Church

E	G	H	CG
✓	✓	✓	✓

10. Trace the development of the early Russian state and the expansion of its trade systems.

- Examples: rise of Kiev and Muscovy, conversion to Orthodox Christianity, movement of peoples of Central Asia, Mongol conquest, rise of czars

E	G	H	CG
	✓	✓	✓

11. Describe early Islamic civilizations, including the development of religious, social, and political systems.

- Tracing the spread of Islamic ideas through invasion and conquest throughout the Middle East, northern Africa, and western Europe

E	G	H	CG
✓	✓	✓	✓

12. Describe China's influence on culture, politics, and economics in Japan, Korea, and Southeast Asia.

- Examples: culture—describing the influence on art, architecture, language, and religion
politics—describing changes in civil service
economics—introducing patterns of trade

E	G	H	CG
✓	✓	✓	✓

13. Compare the African civilizations of Ghana, Mali, and Songhai to include geography, religions, slave trade, economic systems, empires, and cultures.

- Tracing the spread of language, religion, and customs from one African civilization to another
- Illustrating the impact of trade among Ghana, Mali, and Songhai

- Examples: using map symbols, interpreting distribution maps, creating a timeline

E	G	H	CG
✓	✓	✓	✓

14. Describe key aspects of pre-Columbian cultures in the Americas including the Olmecs, Mayas, Aztecs, Incas, and North American tribes.

- Examples: pyramids, wars among pre-Columbian people, religious rituals, irrigation, Iroquois Confederacy

- Locating on a map sites of pre-Columbian cultures

- Examples: Maya, Inca, Inuit, Creek, Cherokee

E	G	H	CG
✓		✓	✓

15. Describe military and governmental events that shaped Europe in the early Middle Ages (600-1000 A.D.).

- Examples: invasions, military leaders

- Describing the role of the early medieval church
- Describing the impact of new agricultural methods on manorialism and feudalism

E	G	H	CG
✓	✓	✓	✓

16. Describe major cultural changes in Western Europe in the High Middle Ages (1000-1300 A.D.).

Examples: the Church, scholasticism, the Crusades

- Describing changing roles of church and governmental leadership
- Comparing political developments in France, England, and the Holy Roman Empire, including the signing of the Magna Carta
- Describing the growth of trade and towns resulting in the rise of the middle class

E	G	H	CG
✓		✓	✓

17. Explain how events and conditions fostered political and economic changes in the late Middle Ages and led to the origins of the Renaissance.

Examples: the Crusades, Hundred Years' War, Black Death, rise of the middle class, commercial prosperity

- Identifying changes in the arts, architecture, literature, and science in the late Middle Ages (1300-1400 A.D.)