

Course Title:	U.S. History
Grade(s):	8

Course Description
This course explores the major events, ideas, and people that shaped the United States from the Colonial era through the Civil War. Students begin with a review of life in the thirteen colonies and trace the nation's development through the American Revolution, the Constitution, westward expansion, reform movements, and the growing sectional tensions that ultimately led to the Civil War. Throughout the course, students engage with Connecticut's social studies standards by practicing historical inquiry, evaluating sources, and considering multiple perspectives to understand how the past influences the present. Students develop essential skills, including: • Historical thinking—sourcing, contextualizing, corroborating, and close reading of primary and secondary documents. • Civic and geographic reasoning—examining how geography shaped settlement, how ideas of government evolved, and how individuals and groups influenced democratic principles. • Argument and communication—writing evidence-based claims, participating in discussions, and presenting historical conclusions clearly. • Research and inquiry skills—formulating questions, gathering credible evidence, and constructing interpretations of past events. By the end of the year, students will have a deeper understanding of the roots of the United States and the conflicts and compromises that shaped the nation's path toward the Civil War.
Approved Curricular Materials/Textbook(s)
<i>American History: Beginnings to 1877</i> Savvas Learning Company

Unit Title	Unit Description (Include Unit Objectives)	Unit Pacing
Unit 1: Colonial Era Review	Colonial Era Review— In this unit, students will learn about why European nations colonized the Americas. Students will explore how the English colonies developed into three distinct regions: the New England, Middle, and Southern colonies. Students will be able to explain how geography influenced each colony and led to the development of their own unique cultures, political structures, and ways of life.	4 weeks (September)
Unit 2: The Revolutionary Era	The Revolutionary Era-This unit covers the period from the mid-1700s through the 1780s. Key topics include the growing tension between the colonies and the British, the causes of the war, major figures, significant battles, and the founding documents of the United States. By the end of this unit, students will be able to analyze the causes and effects of the American Revolution, explain the significance of key events and figures, and evaluate the impact of founding documents such as the Declaration of Independence and the Articles of Confederation using primary and secondary sources to support their conclusions.	6 weeks (October-mid November)
Unit 3: The Constitution	The Constitution- This unit focuses on the challenges of the new nation and how the Constitution and the Bill of Rights established the framework for the current government. Upon completion of this unit, students will be able to analyze and explain the historical context, key debates, and enduring principles that shaped the U.S. Constitution and the Bill of Rights, evaluating how these documents continue to structure and limit the power of the U.S. government today.	6 weeks (mid November-December)
Unit 4: The New Republic	The New Republic- This unit examines the early years of the United States, beginning with George Washington's presidency and continuing through the War of 1812. Students will explore how the first leaders established the executive branch, set important precedents, and addressed challenges such as domestic unrest, economic development, and foreign relations. The unit also covers the formation of political parties, key events in early American foreign policy, and the War of 1812. By the end of this unit, students will be able to analyze how early presidential leadership, domestic policies, and foreign conflicts shaped the New Republic, and use historical evidence to evaluate the successes and challenges of the United States during its first decades.	4 weeks (January)

Unit 5: The Age of Jackson and Westward Expansion	The Age of Jackson and Westward Expansion- This unit explores the period of American history during the presidency of Andrew Jackson and the nation's westward expansion. Students will examine Jackson's policies, including the rise of the "common man," the expansion of democracy, and controversial actions such as the Indian Removal Act. The unit also covers the westward movement of settlers, Manifest Destiny, the Mexican-American War, the Gold Rush, and the economic, social, and political impacts of territorial growth. Through these topics, students will understand how this era shaped American identity, opportunity, and conflict. By the end of this unit, students will be able to analyze the impact of Jacksonian democracy and westward expansion on American society, evaluate the consequences of key policies and events, and use historical evidence to explain how this period shaped the nation's development.	6 weeks (February-March)
Unit 6: Society Before the Civil War	Society Before the Civil War - This unit will analyze how distinct regional identities developed in the North, South, and emerging West, leading to intense sectionalism and an irreparable national divide. Upon completion of this unit, students will be able to evaluate and synthesize the primary economic, social, and political causes of sectionalism in the Antebellum United States, analyzing how differing ideologies over slavery, westward expansion, and states' rights made national compromise impossible by 1860.	4 weeks (March-April)
Unit 7: Sectionalism and Civil War	Sectionalism and Civil War - This unit explores the deep-seated political, economic, and social divisions that led the United States to its greatest internal conflict. Students will analyze the concept of sectionalism—loyalty to one's region rather than the nation as a whole—and trace how compromises over key issues ultimately failed to preserve the Union. Upon completion of the unit on Sectionalism and the Civil War, students will be able to evaluate and synthesize the primary political, economic, and social causes of the American Civil War, analyzing how foundational disagreements over states' rights and slavery led to armed conflict and permanently altered the course of American history.	8 weeks (April-June)