

Grade 8 Social Studies TEKS

Overview

In Grade 8, students study the history and geography of the United States from the early colonial period through Reconstruction. Students learn about political, economic, and social events and issues related to the colonial and revolutionary eras, the creation and ratification of the U.S. Constitution, challenges of the early Republic, westward expansion, sectionalism, the Civil War, and Reconstruction. There is a focus on the impact of geography on these events. Students use critical-thinking skills, including identification of bias in written, oral, and visual material.

History: Students will

- Identify major time periods in U.S history through 1877.
- Identify causes and effects of European exploration and colonization of the Americas.
- Explain beginnings of representative government and evaluate documents that were written.
- Analyze events, causes, effects and individuals of the American Revolution.
- Describe challenges faced by the government and leaders of the early Republic.
- Explain political, economic and social development of westward growth.
- Analyze influences of the Civil War on American society.
- Describe effects of Reconstruction on the nation.

Geography: Students will

- Use tools of geography to collect, analyze, and explain distance, location, natural resources, and patterns of settlement.
- Identify the location and characteristics of places and regions of the U.S.A., past and present.
- Describe geographic factors that influenced the settlement of the United States.
- Describe how individuals have adapted to and modified their environments.

Economics: Students will

- Explain why certain areas of the United States develop different economic patterns from others.
- Analyze events and economic forces that caused the Industrial Revolution.
- Describe origins and developments of the U.S. free enterprise system during the 18th and 19th centuries.

Government: Students will

- Identify important ideas in the Founding Documents such as the Declaration of Independence, U.S. Constitution, and Bill of Rights.
- Identify and describe major features of the executive, legislative and judicial branches of government.
- Identify and describe important landmark Supreme Court cases during the 18th and 19th centuries.

Citizenship: Students will

- Describe important customs, symbols, and celebrations that represent American beliefs.
- Explain the importance of individual participation in the democratic process.
- Identify important national leaders in American history.
- Summarize basic rights of American citizens.

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Culture: Students will

- Explain the relationship between art, music, and drama within the different cultural groups in the United States.
- Identify contributions of people of different racial, ethnic, and religious groups to the growth and development of the United States.

Science, Technology and Society: Students will

- Describe the impact of science and technology on life in the United States during the 18th and 19th centuries.

Social Studies Skills: Students will

- Apply critical thinking skills to organize and use information.
- Communicate in written, oral and visual forms.
- Use problem-solving and decision-making skills to work independently and with others.

Tips for Parents

- Stop to read historical markers on roadways while traveling by car on a family vacation.
- Ask your child to plan a family trip to a local history museum or collection (LBJ Library, Texas History Museum, Center for American History).
- Read the newspaper and watch TV news with your child. Discuss interesting U.S. events and people in the news. Use a U.S. map to mark locations of events in the news.
- Watch educational television programs on U.S. history and discuss interesting points with your child (documentaries, biographies, etc.).
- Visit local art galleries and historic sites. Discuss the most important new idea gained from each visit.
- Attend and participate in special events and cultural celebrations in the community, such as the AISD Powwow and the American Indian Heritage Festival held the first Saturday in November each year.
- Help your child use a U.S. road map or atlas to plan a trip to an interesting place in the United States.
- Discuss how the U.S. is divided into regions and how each region is different. Use road maps, atlases, books, and online resources to locate landmarks and historical sites throughout the regions.
- Look for pictures and newspaper articles of elected officials with your child. Discuss the responsibilities and duties of these elected officials. Identify representatives and senators from your district.
- Use opportunities in current events to discuss the three branches of the U. S. government.
- Discuss characteristics of a responsible U.S. citizen. Take your child to the polls when you vote.
- Encourage your child to participate in National History Day activities at your school.
- Go to the public library to look for primary sources (documents, letters, diaries, etc.); read and discuss them with your child.