**Curriculum**

**8th Grade American History**

**Course Overview**

Using both chronological and thematic approaches, the American History course covers the story of America from pre-history to modern times. Major events, topics and individuals are discussed with an aim to see how America has dealt with its problems and forged one nation from the many disparate groups that make up its population. American government is examined, with special emphasis placed on the study of the Declaration of Independence and the Constitution. A variety of skills are taught throughout the term of the course.

**Department Standards**

Expected Outcomes:

1. Knowledge of and interest in history, the social and behavioral sciences and related subjects.
2. Constructive participation in a democratic society.
3. Understanding of various societies throughout history.
4. Development of critical analysis skills.
5. Development of research skills.
6. Development of communication and presentation skills.

**Benchmarks**:

Course Benchmarks

The students will:

1. gain a knowledge and understanding of events and people who have shaped American history and culture.

2. gain an understanding of the evolution of American democracy and government.

3. articulate orally, in written form and in technological formats their ideas concerning historical topics.

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**Performance Indicators**

**First Quarter Performance Indicators**

* Identify important Native American tribes
* Explain how geography affected the Native Americans’ ways of life (Technology Standards 3.2, 4.3)
* Identify the 13 original English colonies on a map
* Analyze information from historical maps
* Identify the major founders and the reasons for founding the colonies
* List and identify the elements in a political cartoon
* Analyze and evaluate primary source materials
* Identify major dates and their importance
* Explain the reasons for the development of slavery in the English colonies
* Research and analyze a historical topic (Technology Standards 1.1,1.2,3.1,3.2,3.3)

**Second Quarter Performance Indicators**

* Describe the importance of the events leading to the Revolution
* Identify and analyze types of propaganda and the type used in the Boston Massacre
* Explain the importance of major battles of the war
* Identify important personages of the period
* List problems of the articles of Confederation
* Explain the reasoning behind the principles of the Constitution
* Discuss the three branches of government and how the system of checks and balances works
* List the ways the Constitution can be changed
* Enumerate the protections and freedoms guaranteed by the Bill of Rights
* List precedents established by Washington
* Compare and contrast the philosophies of the first two political parties
* Explain the problems with the process of electing a president and how these problems were solved
* Describe the reasons for the unpopularity of Federalist laws
* Locate and label states or parts of states made from various land acquisitions
* Examine the hardships faced by the Corps of Discovery
* Examine the causes and effects of the War of 1812
* Identify areas of major conflict during the War of 1812

**Third Quarter Performance Indicators**

* Describe the events surrounding the “Corrupt Bargain”
* Discuss protective tariffs and explain the animosity Southerners had towards them
* Describe the events surrounding the removal of the Southern Indians westward to Oklahoma
* Explain the purpose of the Missouri Compromise
* Discuss the ways in which the US acquired new territories and the problems these acquisitions caused
* Analyze and evaluate primary source materials
* Compare and contrast the lives of slaves and factory workers
* Provide documentation of factual information
* List the important factors that led to the outbreak of the Civil War
* Locate and label the Confederate States on a map
* Explain why the Civil War is considered the first modern war (Technology Standards 3.2, 4.3)
* Compare and contrast the advantages of the North and South before the Civil War
* List important dates in the Civil War
* In groups, research, plan and create components on aspects of the quest by African-Americans to gain their civil rights (Technology Standards 1.2, 1.3, 1.4, 2.1, 2.4, 3.2, 4.1, 4.3)

**Fourth Quarter Performance Indicators**

* Identify important women in the Women’s Rights movement in the 19th and 20th centuries and their contributions to that movement (Technology Standards 1.2, 1.3, 1.4, 2.1, 2.4, 3.2, 4.1, 4.3)
* List important events in the Women’s Rights movement (Technology Standards 1.2, 1.3, 1.4, 2.1, 2.4, 3.2, 4.1, 4.3)
* Discuss the causes of World War I
* Identify the reasons for US involvement in World War I
* Discuss Wilson’s “Fourteen Points”
* Discuss the effects of the Treaty of Versailles
* Identify weaknesses in the 1920s economy
* List and describe FDR’s New Deal programs
* Evaluate the significance of those programs
* List and identify the elements in a political cartoon
* List the causes of World War II
* List the major battles of World War II and explain their importance
* List important dates in World War II
* Evaluate the reasons for the use of the atomic bombs

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**Assessments**

**First Quarter Assessments and Common Assignments**

Reading aloud in class

Reading comprehension exercise

Discussions in class, questions to individuals on a random basis

Expository writing

 Historical project or Presidential Candidates project

Tests on Units 1 and 2

**Second Quarter Assessments and Common Assignments**

Reading aloud in class

Reading comprehension exercise

Discussions in class, questions to individuals on a random basis

Memorization of the preambles to the Declaration and the Constitution

Expository writing

Tests on Units 3-5

**Third Quarter Assessments and Common Assignments**

Reading aloud in class

Reading comprehension exercise

Discussions in class, questions to individuals on a random basis

DBQ exercise

Expository writing

Creative writing

Tests on Units 6-8

African-American research exercises

**Fourth Quarter Assessments and Common Assignments**

Reading aloud in class

Reading comprehension exercise

Discussions in class, questions to individuals on a random basis

Women's Rights research exercises

Tests on World War I and the Depression

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**Core Topics**

**First Quarter Core Topics**

Pre-Columbian societies

The Colonial period

Revolutionary War

**Second Quarter Core Topics**

Revolutionary War

Constitution

Early years of the new country

**Third Quarter Core Topics**

Expansion of the country

War of 1812

Age of Jackson

Life and work in antebellum America

The Civil War Equal Rights

**Fourth Quarter Core Topics**

Equal Rights

Events of the first half of the 20th century

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**Specific Content**

**First Quarter Specific Content**

Ice Age migration

Native American societies and their ways of life

Founding of the English colonies in North America,

Differences in ways of life between northern and southern colonies

Historical topic project or Presidential Election project Events leading to the Revolution

 Declaration of Independence

**Second Quarter Specific Content**

Major events during the war

Problems faced by Continental Congress under Articles of Confederation

Principles of the Constitution

The three branches and how they work

Flexibility of the Constitution

Importance of the Bill of Rights

The country under the first presidents and the problems and situations they had to deal with

**Third Quarter Specific Content**

Louisiana Purchase

Causes and execution of the War of 1812

Elections of 1824 and 1828

Nullification Crisis

Indian Removal

Acquisition of Texas, Oregon and Mexican Cession

Slave life and factory life in the US before the Civil War

Events leading to the Civil War

Prosecution of the war The African-American struggle for equal rights

**Fourth Quarter Specific Content**

Women’s Rights

World War I

The Great Depression

World War II

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**Resources**

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Main Text: Discovering Our Past, Appleby, Joyce, et. al.

In addition to the main text:

The Story of America, John A. Garraty

Handouts, maps, essays

Fight For Freedom, Rob Hudgens booklet

Why We Fight, Frank Capra video

Various written and web-based sources

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