

SOCIAL STUDIES COURSE DESCRIPTION GRADE EIGHT – U.S. HISTORY

In grade eight social studies, students study the history and geography of the United States from the Age of Exploration through Reconstruction. The knowledge and skills in subsection (b) of this section comprise the first part of a two-year study of U.S. history. The second part, comprising U.S. history since Reconstruction to the present, is provided in 113.32 of this title (relating to United States History Studies Since Reconstruction [One Credit]). The content builds upon that from grade five but provides more depth and breadth. Historical content focuses on the political, economic, and social events and issues related to the colonial and revolutionary eras, the creation and ratification of the U.S.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, Civil War, and Reconstruction. Students describe the physical characteristics of the United States and their impact on population distribution and settlement patterns in the past and present. Students analyze the various economic factors that influenced the development of colonial America and the early years of the Republic and identify the origins of the free enterprise system. Students examine the American beliefs and principles, including limited government, checks and balances, federalism, separation of powers, and individual rights reflected in the *U.S. Constitution* and other historical documents. Students evaluate the impact of Supreme Court cases and major reform movements of the 19th century and examine the rights and responsibilities of citizens of the United States as well as the importance of effective leadership in a democratic society. Students evaluate the impact of scientific discoveries and technological innovations on the development of the United States. Students use critical-thinking skills, including identifying bias in written, oral, and visual material.

To support the teaching of the essential knowledge and skills, the use of a variety of rich primary and secondary source material such as the complete text of the U.S. of the U.S. Constitution and the Declaration of Independence; landmark cases of the U.S. Supreme Court; biographies and autobiographies; novels; speeches, letters, and diaries; and poetry, songs, and artworks is encouraged. Selections may include excerpts from the letters of John and Abigail Adams, an excerpt from the Seneca Falls Declaration of Sentiments and Resolutions, and poems of the Civil War era. Motivating resources are also available from museums, historical sites, presidential libraries, and local and state preservation societies.

The eight strands of the essential knowledge and skills for social studies are intended to be integrated for instructional purposes with the history and geography strands establishing a sense of time and a sense of place. Skills listed in the geography and social studies skills strands in subsection (b) of this section should be incorporated into teaching of all essential knowledge and skills for social studies. A greater depth of understanding of complex content material can be attained when integrated social

studies content from the various disciplines and critical-thinking skills are taught together.

Throughout social studies in Kindergarten-Grade 12, students build a foundation in history; geography; economics; government; citizenship, culture; science, technology, and society; and social studies skills. The content, as appropriate for the grade level or course, enables students to understand the importance of patriotism, function in a free enterprise society, and appreciate the basic democratic values of our state and nation as referenced in the Texas Education Code, 28.002 (h).

First 9 weeks – Geography, Exploration and Colonial Revolution

Second 9 weeks - Creation and Ratification of Constitution.

Third 9 weeks – Early Republic, Westward Expansion

Fourth 9 weeks – Sectionalism, Civil War, Reconstruction