

## 8<sup>TH</sup> GRADE HISTORY CURRICULUM – U.S. HISTORY

Mr. Sengstock – Room 206

Textbook: *The American Nation*. Upper Saddle River: Prentice Hall

This year, the eighth grade has continued to explore nineteenth century America. Our focus has begun with the Age of Jefferson.

As the year proceeds, we will become acquainted with the economic transformations brought on by the Industrial Revolution, the continuing evolution of democracy, the erosion of the U.S. ability to compromise, the theme of Manifest Destiny, and the increasing economic sectionalism that hurt our country. Attention will be given to the practice and culture of slavery, along with the reasons our country went to war with itself. After studying the impact and accomplishments of the Civil War, the eighth grade will examine the Era of Reconstruction and, if time permits, the rise of the U.S. into a world power.

The centerpiece of the eighth grade history curriculum revolves around the successful completion of the U.S. and Illinois constitution tests. A passing grade on both tests is necessary for promotion into high school. These units of study will begin during the final grading period of the school year. The U.S. Constitution test is valued at 500 points, and the Illinois Constitution test is valued at 100 points.

When the school year ends, I will hope to have increased our understanding and appreciation for the U.S. and the Constitution we live under. In an age of increased political apathy, I intend to demonstrate that democracy works, and that we are all valuable participants in our free republic. Through our studies, students will be reminded that our freedoms should not be taken for granted.

Textbook readings, corresponding questions, and map activities are the main sources of homework in U.S. history, assigned to assess student comprehension of the content and as preparation for discussion the following day. Because high school history curriculums tend to emphasize the importance of expository and opinion writing, essays will be assigned during each unit of study to help students develop their writing styles.

Teacher-created tests are administered at the completion of each unit, and generally include short answer questions, fill in the blank questions, essay questions, multiple choice questions, and matching questions. All students are invited to come to morning study sessions that are scheduled on test days.

As an extension of the U.S. history curriculum, all of my classes and I attempt to keep up with current events that are shaping our nation and world. This year, we will be paying close attention to the presidential primary elections and caucuses. Our classes have full period discussions every other week or so. To enhance discussion, I ask that students bring in a national or world news article to share with the class.