

# U.S. HISTORY, CONSTITUTION, AND GOVERNMENT CONTENT STANDARDS

## Grade 8

**Standard 1:** The student will develop and practice process skills in social studies.

- \*1. Develop and apply cause and effect reasoning and chronological thinking to past, present, and potential future situations.
2. Identify, analyze, and interpret primary and secondary sources, such as artifacts, diaries, letters, photographs, art, documents, newspapers, and contemporary media (e.g., television, motion pictures, and computer-based technologies) that reflect events and life in United States history.
3. Construct various timelines of the United States, highlighting landmark dates, technological changes, major political, economic and military events, and major historical figures.
4. Locate on a United States map major physical features, bodies of water, exploration and trade routes, and the states that entered the Union up to 1877.
5. Interpret economic and political issues as expressed in maps, tables, diagrams, charts, political cartoons, and economic graphs.
6. Make distinctions among propaganda, fact and opinion; evaluate cause and effect relationships; and draw conclusions.
7. Interpret patriotic slogans and excerpts from notable quotations, speeches and documents (e.g., “Give me liberty or give me death,” “Don’t Tread On Me,” “One if by land and two if by sea,” “The shot heard ‘round the world,” “E Pluribus Unum,” the Declaration of Independence, the Preamble to the Constitution, “Fifty-four forty or Fight,” and the Gettysburg Address).

**\*Standard 2:** The student will develop skills in discussion, debate, and persuasive writing by analyzing historical situations and events.

- \*1. Read, write, and present a variety of products, such as tables, charts, graphs, maps, reports, letters, computer presentations, checklists, resumes, brochures, pamphlets, and summaries.
- \*2. Write on, speak about, and dramatize different historical perspectives of individuals and groups (e.g., settlers, slaves, indentured servants, and slave holders; Patriots and Loyalists; Federalists and Anti-Federalists; political parties; rural and urban dwellers; and peoples of different cultural, economic, and ethnic backgrounds).
- \*3. Write on, speak about, and dramatize different evaluations of the causes and effects of major events (e.g., the American Revolution, the Constitutional Convention, the Industrial Revolution, westward expansion, the Civil War, and Reconstruction).
- \*4. Examine the development and emergence of a unique American culture (e.g., art, music, and literature).

**Standard 3:** The student will examine and explain the causes of the American Revolution and the ideas and interests involved in forging the revolutionary movement.

1. Explain the political and economic consequences of the French and Indian War in both Europe and North America, and the overhaul of English imperial policy following the Treaty of Paris of 1763 and the Proclamation of 1763.

2. Compare and contrast the arguments advanced by defenders and opponents of the new imperial policy on the traditional rights of English people and the legitimacy of asking the colonies to pay a share of the costs of empire, including the Sugar, Stamp, and Declaratory Acts.

3. Reconstruct the chronology and recognize the significance of the critical events leading to armed conflict between the colonies and England.

a. Colonial opposition to and protests against “taxation without representation” (e.g., the Sons of Liberty and boycotts of British goods).

b. The Quartering Act and the Townshend Acts.

c. The Boston Massacre.

d. The Boston Tea Party and the “Intolerable Acts.”

e. The First Continental Congress.

\*4. Analyze political, ideological, religious, and economic origins of the Revolution.

5. Examine the arguments between Patriots and Loyalists about independence and draw conclusions about how the decision to declare independence was reached at the Second Continental Congress.

**Standard 4:** The student will evaluate and describe the factors which affected the course of the American Revolution and contributed to the American victory.

1. Analyze the ideological war between Great Britain and her North American colonies as expressed in the Declaration of Independence.

a. Explain the major ideas expressed in the Declaration of Independence and their intellectual origins.

b. Describe how key principles of the Declaration of Independence grew in importance to become unifying ideas of democracy in the United States.

2. Explain the significance of the political, economic, geographic and social advantages and disadvantages of each side.

3. Compare and contrast different roles and perspectives on the war (e.g., men and women, white colonists of different social classes, free and enslaved African Americans, and Native Americans).

4. Identify and chronologically detail significant developments, battles and events, including Lexington and Concord, the publication of Common Sense, Saratoga, the French Alliance, the Valley Forge encampment, Yorktown, and the Treaty of Paris of 1783, and explain how the colonists won the war against superior British resources.

5. Trace the formation of a national government of the United States by the Second Continental Congress in the Articles of Confederation.

6. Recognize the significance of key individuals, including King George III, Lord North, John Adams, Samuel Adams, Paul Revere, Benjamin Franklin, George Washington, Lord Cornwallis, Thomas Jefferson, Patrick Henry, and Thomas Paine.

**Standard 5:** The student will examine the significance of and describe the institutions

and practices of government created during the American Revolution and how they were revised between 1787 and 1815 to create the United States Constitution and the Bill of Rights.

1. Evaluate the provisions of the Articles of Confederation, its provisions, strengths and weaknesses, and the various state constitutions.
2. Explain the dispute over the western lands and how it was resolved through the Northwest Ordinance, and describe the economic issues arising out of the Revolution and Shays' Rebellion.
3. Recognize and analyze the significance of the Constitutional Convention, its major debates and compromises, and key individuals (e.g., George Washington, James Madison, and George Mason); the struggle for ratification of the Constitution as embodied in the Federalist Papers and Anti-Federalist arguments; and the addition of the Bill of Rights to the Constitution.
4. Identify and explain the fundamental principles of the Constitution, including popular sovereignty, consent of the governed, separation of powers, checks and balances, and federalism.
5. Interpret and give examples of the rights, responsibilities, liberties, and protections all individuals possess under the Constitution and the Bill of Rights, including the freedoms of religion, speech, press, assembly and petition, and the rights to due process and trial by jury.
- \*6. Examine the major domestic and foreign affairs issues facing the first three presidents and Congress, the development of political parties, and the significance of the presidential election of 1800.
- \*7. Describe Alexander Hamilton's economic plan for the United States (e.g., the national bank, redemption of bonds, and protective tariffs).
8. Appraise how Chief Justice John Marshall's precedent-setting decisions in *Marbury v. Madison* and *McCulloch v. Maryland* interpreted the Constitution and established the Supreme Court as an independent and equal branch of the federal government.
9. Describe United States foreign relations and conflicts, territorial disputes, the War of 1812, and the significance of the Monroe Doctrine, the Louisiana Purchase and the acquisition of Florida in the Adams-Onís Treaty.

**Standard 6:** The student will examine and describe the economy of the United States from 1801 to 1877.

- \*1. Describe the economic growth and changes in the United States in science, technology, energy, manufacturing, entrepreneurship, and transportation, including geographic factors in the location and development of United States industries and centers of urbanization (e.g., Industrial Revolution, the early labor movement, and famous entrepreneurs of the time).
2. Evaluate the impact in the Northern states of the concentration of industry, manufacturing, and shipping; the development of the railroad system; and the effects of immigration and the immigrant experience.
3. Evaluate the impact in the Southern states of the dependence on cotton, the plantation system and rigid social classes, and the relative absence of enterprises engaged in manufacturing and finance.
4. Assess the economic, political and social aspects of slavery, the variety of slave

experiences, African American resistance to slavery, and the rise of sharecropping and tenant farming.

**Standard 7:** The student will examine the significance of the Jacksonian era.

- \*1. Trace the development of Jacksonian Democracy and explain why the election of Andrew Jackson was considered a victory for the “common man.”
- \*2. Analyze Jackson’s attack on the Second Bank of the United States and the subsequent business cycle of inflation and depression in the 1830s.
- 3. Describe and explain the Nullification Crisis and the development of the states’ rights debates.
- 4. Compare and contrast the policies toward Native Americans pursued by presidential administrations through the Jacksonian era, and evaluate the impact on Native Americans of white expansion, including the resistance and removal of the Five Tribes (i.e., Choctaw, Chickasaw, Creek, Seminole, and Cherokee).

**Standard 8:** The student will research and interpret evidence of how Americans endeavored to reform society and create a distinct culture from 1801 to 1877.

- \*1. Analyze changing ideas about race and assess pro-slavery and anti-slavery ideologies in the North and South.
- 2. Explain the fundamental beliefs of abolitionism and the operation of the Underground Railroad.
- \*3. Assess the importance of the Second Great Awakening and the ideas and beliefs of its principal leaders.
- 4. Identify major utopian experiments (e.g., New Harmony, Indiana, and Oneida, New York) and describe the reasons for their formation.
- \*5. Examine changing gender roles and the ideas and activities of women reformers.
- 6. Identify and explain the significance of the activities of early reform leaders of different racial, economic and social groups in education, abolition, temperance, and women’s suffrage.

**Standard 9:** The student will evaluate and explain the westward expansion of the United States from 1801 to 1877.

- 1. Examine and discuss Manifest Destiny as a motivation and justification for westward expansion, the lure of the West, and the reality of life on the frontier.
- 2. Delineate and locate territorial acquisitions (e.g., Texas Annexation, Mexican Cession, and Gadsden Purchase), explorations, events, and settlement of the American West using a variety of resources.
- 3. Describe the causes and effects of the Louisiana Purchase and the explorations of Lewis and Clark.
- \*4. Analyze the causes of Texas independence and the Mexican-American War, and evaluate the provisions and consequences of the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo.
- 5. Assess the factors that led to increased immigration (e.g., the Irish potato famine, railroad construction, and employment opportunities) and how ethnic and cultural conflict was intensified.
- 6. Compare and contrast the causes and character of the rapid settlement of Oregon and California in the late 1840s and 1850s.

- \*7. Examine the religious origins and persecution of the Mormons; explain the motives for their trek westward, and evaluate their contributions to the settlement of the West.
- 8. Describe the importance of trade on the frontiers and assess the impact of westward expansion on Native American peoples, including their displacement and removal and the Indian Wars of 1850s-1870s.
- \*9. Evaluate the impact of the Homestead Act of 1862 and the resulting movement westward to “free land”.

**Standard 10:** The student will examine and describe how the North and South differed and how politics and ideologies led to the Civil War.

- \*1. Identify and explain the economic, social, and cultural sectional differences between the North and the South.
- 2. Examine how the invention of the cotton gin, the demand for cotton in northern and European textile factories, and the opening of new lands in the South and West led to the increased demand for slaves.
- \*3. Evaluate the importance of slavery as a principal cause of the conflict.
- 4. Explain how the Compromise of 1850, the publication of Uncle Tom’s Cabin, the Kansas-Nebraska Act, the Dred Scott decision, and John Brown’s raid on Harper’s Ferry contributed to and increased sectional polarization.
- 5. Discuss the significance of the presidential election of 1860, including the issues, personalities, and results.

**\*Standard 11:** The student will describe the course and character of the Civil War and Reconstruction eras and their effects on the American people, 1861 – 1877.

- \*1. Compare the economic resources of the Union and the Confederacy at the beginning of the Civil War and assess the tactical advantages of each side.
- \*2. Identify the turning points of the war (e.g., major battles and the Emancipation Proclamation) and evaluate how political, economic, military, and diplomatic leadership affected the outcome of the conflict.
- \*3. Compare and contrast the motives for fighting and the daily life experiences of Confederate soldiers with those of Union soldiers, both white and African American.
- \*4. Compare homefront and battlefront roles of women in the Union and the Confederacy.
- \*5. Examine the various plans for Reconstruction the programs to transform social relations in the South, and the successes and failures of Reconstruction in the South, North, and West (e.g., the role of carpetbaggers and scalawags, the passage of Black Codes, the accomplishments of the Freedmen’s Bureau, and the rise of the Ku Klux Klan).
- \*6. Explain the provisions of the 13th, 14th, and 15th Amendments and the political forces supporting and opposing each.
- \*7. Analyze the escalating conflict between the president and Congress, and explain the reasons for and consequences of Andrew Johnson’s impeachment and trial.
- \*8. Analyze how and why the Compromise of 1877 effectively ended Reconstruction.