The 8th grade course in the Social Studies Recommended Curriculum has a broad chronological scope. Students are expected to develop an understanding of pre-industrial United States history and its connections to Delaware history. The historical timeframe in which instruction takes place is wide, in part, to allow for the integration of civics and economics through topics that are significant and best suited as contexts for the targeted benchmarks. Students will engage in inquiry to develop historical thinking skills such as crafting and examining the questions that drive research and interpretations, analyzing and corroborating evidence, weighing evidence, and explaining competing interpretations.

A student should understand chronology in such a way as to be able to situate people, laws, and events in appropriate timeframes, while at the same time explaining causal relationships and change over time.

For example, the period between 1609 and 1877 witnessed European colonization of the Americas, the American Revolution, writing of the Constitution, conflict over slavery, the settlement of the West, the rise of industrialization and urbanization, increasing technological change, and civil war. Without knowing the exact years for an event, a student should still be able to situate events within the course's timeframe relative to other major events. Students should also be able to explain the major causes and effects of significant events or developments and describe important changes that occurred as a result of each. An organized mental framework of events, people, trends, and other historical phenomena is essential to making sense of an otherwise "tangled mess" of events and understanding, evaluating, and constructing historical interpretations.

Among other instructional resources, this course recommends lessons[1] from the Stanford University History Education Group's (SHEG) Reading Like a Historian curriculum which engages students in historical inquiry. Each SHEG lesson revolves around a central historical question and features sets of competing primary documents modified for groups of students with diverse reading skills and abilities.

Students learn to investigate historical questions employing reading strategies such as sourcing, contextualizing, corroborating, and close reading.

Social Studies Standards measured in the 8th grade U.S. History course

Civics 1b	History 1a
Civics 2b	History 2a
Civics 3b	History 2b
Economics 1a	History 3a
Economics 2a	

Instead of memorizing historical facts, students simulate the practices of historians as they evaluate the trustworthiness of multiple perspectives on issues, and make historical claims backed by documentary evidence.

[1] Lessons are also recommended from other credible sources, including the Delaware Social Studies Education Project, the Delaware Recommended Curriculum, and the National Council for Economic Education.

Lessons from the Reading Like a Historian curriculum generally follow a three-part structure:

1. *Establish or review relevant historical background knowledge and pose the central historical question.* Each lesson approaches background knowledge differently. While establishing background knowledge is important, it's only a first step in the inquiry process, and shouldn't extend beyond opening the lesson. This content introduces and frames the central historical question, motivating students to investigate the documents for that lesson.

2. *Students read documents, then answer guiding questions or complete a graphic organizer.* Documents address the central historical question; most lessons use two or more documents with conflicting perspectives or accounts. The curriculum offers four basic lesson structures:

- *Opening up the Textbook (OUT)*: Students examine two documents: the textbook and a historical document that challenges or expands the textbook's account.

- *Cognitive Apprenticeship:* A teacher explicitly models historical reading skills (sourcing, contextualization, corroboration, close reading).

- *Inquiry:* Students investigate historical questions, evaluate evidence, construct historical claims, and develop hypotheses through analyzing sets of documents.

- *Structured Academic Controversy (SAC)*: For these lessons, students work in pairs and then teams as they explore a historical question. After taking opposing positions on a question, they try to arrive at a consensus or at least clarify their differences.

3. Whole-class discussion about a central historical question using documentary evidence to support claims. Students practice historical thinking skills, articulate claims and defend them with evidence from the documents. Students see that history is open to multiple interpretations, and that the same piece of evidence can support conflicting claims.

The videos linked below demonstrate the use of SHEG instructional resources in classrooms.

- Reading Like a Historian: Overview
- Reading Like a Historian: Sourcing Follow along as students study original documents to determine whether the source is believable.
- Reading Like a Historian: Contextualization See how the teacher scaffolds learning as students develop their understanding of context.
- Reading Like a Historian: Corroboration Students use books, documents, and images to make judgments about reliability and bias.

Instructor Notes

- *Instructional resources* are available for each time period studied. **Teachers should note that not every resource should be used as there is not enough time. Rather, teachers should select lessons that appear best suited to promote their own students' mastery of the targeted standard.**
- The syllabus calls for 34 weeks of instruction to allow time for pacing changes.

Assessment Resources

These assessments developed by the Stanford History Education Group capture students' skills and understanding in action – rather than recall of discrete facts. Short written responses provide a window to what students think – the information [or "data"] teachers need to make instructional adjustments. These assessments closely align with the expectations of the Common Core State Standards.

Evaluation of evidence involves the critical assessment of historical sources. It includes the following:

- ***Sourcing*** asks students to consider who wrote a document as well as the circumstances of its creation. Who authored a given document? When? For what purpose?
- *Contextualization* asks students to locate a document in time and place, and to understand how these factors shape its content.
- *Corroboration* asks students to consider details across multiple sources to determine points of agreement and disagreement.

Historical knowledge encompasses various ways of knowing about the past, including:

- *Historical information* is the recognition and recall of important factual data.
- *Significance* requires students to evaluate the importance of people and events.
- *Periodization* asks students to group ideas and events by era.
- *Narrative* is deep knowledge of how the past unfolded over time.

Historical argumentation requires the articulation of historical claims and the use of evidence to support them.

These assessments closely align with the new Common Core State Standards. Each of our assessments is keyed to one or more standard and includes a link identifying the relevant standards. Some of the standards addressed include:

#1 (Gr. 6-12): Evaluating the date and origin of evidence (sourcing)

#6 (Gr. 6-12): Corroborating across multiple points of view

#8 (Gr: 6-12): Evaluating trustworthiness of claims

Week 1

Introduction: How to Think Historically

Students and historians often approach accounts of the past much differently. History is not, as many students think, a mirror image of the past. Whereas students often "learn" from texts that present themselves as entirely factual and authoritative, historians engage them critically with a mindset toward challenging then refining or creating new interpretations based on evidence from the past.

The introduction to this course features exercises designed to promote a better understanding of the manner in which historians approach historical materials and the nature of the discipline itself as students make judgments about fragmentary and competing evidence in preparation for drawing conclusions and forming interpretations.

Instructional Resources

Students recognize skills of historical inquiry that are used regularly, such as reconciling conflicting claims and evaluating the reliability of narrative accounts.

Lunchroom Fight

Snapshot Autobiography

Evaluating Sources

The Cheating Scandal Lesson Two History 2b

Weeks 2-6

Three Worlds Meet: Colonization and Settlement Follow (1492 – 1750)

The 15th and 16th century voyages of discovery brought Europe, Africa, and the Americas into direct contact, producing an exchange of foods, animals, and diseases that historians call the "Columbian Exchange."

During the 17th century, when England established its first permanent colonies in North America, the southern-most colonies tended to rely upon agricultural production while northern economies were more diverse.

By 1700, the American colonies had surpassed England in the population growth rate, the proportion of white men who owned property and were able to vote, as well as in the population's ethnic and religious diversity. The early and mid-18th century brought an increase in immigration, including the importation of enslaved Africans as a labor force for the southern agricultural economy.

Instructional Resources

- Mapping Mistakes History 2b
- Waldseemüller's Map: World 1507 History 2a
- Waldseemüller's Map Interactive
- Drake's West Indian Voyage 1588-1589 History 2b
- Pocahontas History 2b, History 3a
- Mapping the New World History 3a
- Puritans History 2b
- Salem Witch Trials History 2b, History 3a
- Examining Passenger Lists 1635 History 2a
- Colonial America Lesson Three – Landing of the Pilgrims History 2b, History 3a
- Understanding the Colonial Economy in a Global Context Economics 1a, History 1a
- The Starving Time in Jamestown History 2b, History 3a
- Hero or Traitor: Bacon's Rebellion History 2ab
- Antonio A Slave History 1a, History 2a

Assessment Resources

- The First Thanksgiving History 2b
- Signing of the Mayflower Compact History 2b
- Seven Years' War History 2b
- The Virginia Company History 2b
- Creating Columbus Day History 2b

Weeks 7-12
Revolutionary America (1750 – 1787)

The era of the American Revolution is of great significance because it resulted in the creation of the United States. The political philosophies and principles that evolved in Britain's American colonies informed the colonists' responses to British policies and the design of the political system in which we now live.

The Declaration of Independence not only severed our relationship with England, but also committed the nation to principles that help define our political culture. In the American Revolution, colonists fought for their independence in the name of certain universal principles such as rule of law, constitutional rights, and popular sovereignty.

Changes in the colonial economic and political relationship with Great Britain were made more serious by British attempts to raise money to support the empire. Tensions increased further after Parliament passed the Coercive Acts and the First Continental Congress took the first steps toward independence from Britain. Not all American colonists supported independence from Great Britain. Before the colonies gained independence, they had to fight a long and bitter war.

Students should investigate topics that develop chronological thinking (e.g. causes and effects of the revolution, changes wrought by British policies), analytic skills (e.g. accounts of the battle of Lexington, representations of the Boston Massacre), and ability to evaluate interpretations (e.g. how revolutionary was the American Revolution).

Instructional Resources

DRC: Interpreting the Past History 3a
Great Awakening History 2b
Stamp Act History 2b
Battle of Lexington History 2b, History 3a
Lexington and Concord History 2b, History 3a
Loyalists History 2a
Declaration of Independence History 3a
DRC: Declaration of Independence Civics 2b

Assessment Resources

Washington Crosses Delaware History 2b
Signing the Declaration of Independence History 2b

Weeks 13-18
Early Republic (1787 – 1824)

Historical Research: Begin a National History Day project.

The Early Republic era featured a burst of constitutionalism in American history, and sparked changes that led to the development of a national economy, the birth of our two-party system, and the first major wave of westward expansion.

The first American government under the Articles of Confederation struggled to fulfill the purposes for which it was created. In response, Congress convened a meeting of states that produced a new Constitution based on the underlying principles of representative democracy, the constitutional separation of powers, and the rule of law. Our Constitution also produced a federal system that guards against centralized power but the constantly shifting flow of power between the federal and state governments has resulted in alternating periods of cooperation, conflict, and controversy.

Historians have disagreed over the motivations for writing the Constitution and whether the Framers intended a strong, centralized political system or one that is decentralized with a heavy emphasis on individual rights.

Students should examine the principles of our American political system, the content of our Constitution, and their responsibilities as citizens in a democratic society.

Instructional Resources

- Old Speak to New Speak Civics 2b
- Do we need a new government? Civics 1b, History 1a
- DRC: Federalism Civics 1b
- Shay's Rebellion History 3a
- Federalists vs. Anti-Federalists History 2b
- Slavery in the Constitution History 2b, History 3a
- Hamilton vs. Jefferson History 2b, History 3a
- Close Reading: Secondary Source and the Preamble to the Constitution Civics 2b, History 1a
- Nothing Must be Said: Jefferson and Implied Powers History 1a
- First Congress, Lesson Two Civics 2b, History 1a
- First Congress, Lesson Four Economics 2a
- First Congress, Lesson Five Civics 1b
- First Congress, Lesson Seven Economics 2a
- DRC: Money, Banking, and Taxes Economics 2a
- Motivations for Writing and Ratifying the U.S. Constitution History 3a
- The U.S. Constitution: I Smelt a Rat History 2ab

Assessment Resources

- The War of 1812 History 1a
- Principle of Equality Civics 2b, History 1a

Weeks 19-23

Economic and Social Change (1825 – 1859)

In the decades before the Civil War, northern and southern development followed increasingly different paths. By 1860, the North contained 50 percent more people than the South. It was more urbanized and attracted many more European immigrants. The northern economy was more diversified. The South had smaller and fewer cities and a third of its population lived in slavery.

The growth of industry and urban centers in the northeastern U.S. led to an increase in the number of railroads. The number of people employed in agriculture declined as new technology increased productivity on farms.

The antebellum era saw efforts to reform society through prohibition of alcohol, ensuring women's rights and equality, and abolition of slavery.

New technology in transportation, communication, and agriculture reduced the cost of bringing goods to markets, stimulating both agriculture and industry. Economic development contributed to the rapid growth of cities.

Instructional Resources

DRC: How Markets Work Economics 1a

Nat Turner History 2ab

Indian Removal History 2a

Irish Immigration History 1a, History 2a

Women's Rights and Reform History 1a, History 2a

Women's Suffrage: Their Rights and Nothing Less History 1a, History 2a

Hidden in Plain View History 3a

Assessment Resources

Slave Quarters History 3a

Clay's American System History 2b

Weeks 24-30

Westward Expansion and Sectional Conflict (1825 – 1859)

John Jay Chapman once wrote that "There was never any moment in our history when slavery was not a sleeping serpent." Territorial acquisitions and the mass movement of Americans westward during this era stirred the serpent from its sleep.

By 1859 the question of whether slavery should be allowed in newly acquired western territories drove a wedge between North and South that brought the nation to the brink of disunion. In the interim, westward expansion triggered a war with Mexico and the relocation of Native Americans.

Technological improvements, federal policies, and nationalist beliefs in "Manifest Destiny" help fuel the movement westward.

Transportation improvements linked the nation together and improved the lives of western settlers. Southern states wanted to extend slavery and cotton production to the new territories in the West. Congress reached a series of compromises which maintained the balance of power between slave and free states.

Instructional Resources

Louisiana Purchase History 2a, History 3a

Lewis and Clark History 2a, History 3a

Slavery in the United States: Primary Sources and the Historical Record History 2ab

The Legacy of Indian Removal History 2a

Westward Expansion History 1a, History 2a

Close Reading: Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass History 2b, History 3a

Assessment Resources

Traders in the West History 2b

Portrait of an Iroquois Leader History 2b

Historian Disagreement History 3a

John Brown's Legacy History 2b

Weeks 31-32
Civil War and Reconstruction
(1860 – 1877)

The Civil War is a momentous event in American history as it represents the moment when the Union faced its greatest threat. Ultimately, northern victory consolidated that Union. The abolition of slavery meant that, for the first time, the American people could seriously claim to be living up to their commitment to the principle of liberty rooted in the American state papers.

The war altered the federal governments' relationship to the American economy and the states. The Lincoln administration instituted the first national banking system and national currency, the first national taxes on income, and the first highly protective tariffs, and laid the foundation for the first transcontinental railroad.

As important as the war itself was the volatile issue of Reconstruction – a process considered during the war itself and one that launched what one historian memorably labeled an "unfinished revolution."

Historians have disagreed about a number of issues surrounding the Civil War including the war's causes, whether Union victory was inevitable, whether the war limited or encouraged economic growth in the short run, and how much the war and Reconstruction actually accomplished.

Instructional Resources

The Civil War through a Child's Eye History 2a
Persuasion in Historical Context: The Gettysburg Address History 2b, History 3a
America at the Centennial History 1a
Close Reading: The Gettysburg Address History 2b, History 3a
Children of the Civil War History 2b, History 3a
Saving Privates Bixby History 2ab
Our Nation's Report Card Civics 2b

Assessment Resources

Attack on Fort Sumter History 1a
Morale after Fredericksburg History 2b
Gardner's Civil War Photography History 2b
A Perspective on Slavery History 2b, History 3a
Antebellum South History 2b, History 3a
Causes of the Civil War History 3a