

**CORE BODY OF KNOWLEDGE**  
**EIGHTH GRADE SOCIAL STUDIES**  
**GRADE 8**

For each of the sections that follow, students may be required to analyze, recall, explain, interpret, apply, or evaluate the particular concepts being taught.

**COURSE DESCRIPTION**

Grade eight social studies includes the study of Central and South American geography. Students are also exposed to current events through analysis of present day news issues. Finally, the course covers American history from the period of Reconstruction through and including World War II.

**STUDY SKILLS**

- Students will learn to outline text
- Students will learn study skills, including flash cards, how to apply information, and proper essay techniques
- Students will become familiar with geographic study techniques

**VOCABULARY**

- Students will be expected to utilize appropriate vocabulary
- Students will be exposed to a variety of vocabulary terms in the course of the study of South American geography and American history

**GRAMMAR**

- Students' grammar will be expected to be above board with all written assignments
- Grammar will be checked and corrected to allow for optimal learning

**WRITING**

- Students will be expected to write proper essays
- Students will be writing research reports
- Students will write reflective journals

**MAJOR UNIT THEMES:**

**1. CURRENT EVENTS**

- Current news events will be reviewed and discussed with students

- Will be in the areas of global awareness, national awareness, local awareness, and sports.

## **2. CARIBBEAN RIM**

- Students will review the physical geography of Central America and the Caribbean nations
- Students will review native traditions, colonial history, culture, and economics of this region

## **3. CARIBBEAN SOUTH AMERICA**

- Students will understand that Caribbean South America, including Colombia, Venezuela, Guyana, Suriname, and French Guiana is a region with diverse physical features, wildlife, culture, and economy of Caribbean.
- Students will understand that the region had Spanish conquests and valuable resources. The civil wars in Columbia have shaped its history and culture.
- Students will understand that Venezuela and Guianas are rich with natural resources and that the region has been influenced by culture and economy.

## **4. ATLANTIC SOUTH AMERICA**

- Students will learn about the plains and rain forest of Atlantic South America.
- Students will study the physical geography of Brazil, Argentina, Uruguay, and Paraguay.
- Students will understand the influence of Brazil's history through its people and culture.
- Argentina, Uruguay, and Paraguay have been influenced by European immigration, a tradition of ranching, and large urban populations.

## **5. PACIFIC SOUTH AMERICA**

- The students will understand that the Andes Mountains dominate the physical geography of Pacific South America.
- The study of history and culture of the region will be undertaken
- The region's climate and resources are influenced by the Andes.
- Native cultures and Spanish influence have shaped the history and culture.
- Challenges of poverty and political instability will be discussed.

## **6. RECONSTRUCTION**

- Students will learn about the challenges that the nation faced after the Civil War
- The nation faced many problems in rebuilding the Union
- The return to power of pre-war southern leaders lead Republicans in Congress to take control of Reconstruction
- African Americans faced new hurdles and the South attempted to rebuild

## **7. AMERICANS MOVE WEST**

- Students will study Westward expansion and how Native American reacted to these changes.
- Mining, ranching, and railroads transformed the western landscape
- Native Americans and the US government came into conflict over land
- Settlers on the Great Plains created new communities and unique political groups

## **8. THE INDUSTRIAL AGE**

- Students will learn about new innovations in the late 1800s
- The Second Industrial Revolution led to new sources of power and advances in transportation and communication
- The growth of big business led to the formation of monopolies
- Changes in the workplace led to an increase in labor unions and workers' strikes

## **9. IMMIGRANTS AND URBAN LIFE**

- Students will learn about immigration and its effects on US cities
- New waves of immigration brought large numbers of Europeans to the United States
- American cities experienced dramatic expansion and change
- The rapid growth of cities caused both challenges and opportunities

## **10. THE PROGRESSIVE SPIRIT OF REFORM**

- Students will learn about the reform movements that swept across the US in the late 1800s and early 1900s
- The Progressive Movement addressed problems in American society
- Progressives and other reformers focused on improving conditions for American workers
- Progressives made advances for the rights of women and some minorities
- Presidents in the early 1900s promoted progressive reforms

## **11. AMERICA AS A WORLD POWER**

- Students will analyze how America became a global power in the late 1800s and early 1900s
- The United States joined the race for control of overseas territories
- The United States expanded into new areas as a result of the Spanish-American War
- The United States expanded its role in Latin America in the early 1800s

## **12. WORLD WAR I**

- Students will learn how an assassination in Europe sparked the deadliest war the world had seen to this point
- Students will see how tensions in Europe exploded into deadly war
- Students will evaluate how American citizens and soldiers prepared for war
- American troops helped the Allies achieve victory in World War I
- The United States and the victorious Allied Powers clashed over postwar plans

## **13. ROARING TWENTIES**

- Students will understand how American life changed in the years after World War I
- American industries boomed in the 1920s, changing many Americans' way of life
- Americans faced new opportunities, challenges, and fears as major changes swept the country in the 1920s
- Musicians, artists, actors, and writers contributed to American popular culture in the 1920s

## **14. GREAT DEPRESSION**

- Students will learn about how Americans coped with the economic problems of the 1930s
- Students will learn about how farmers were affected by the Dust Bowl
- Students will evaluate the collapse of the stock market in 1929 and how it helped lead to the start of the Great Depression
- Franklin Roosevelt's New Deal included government programs designed to relieve unemployment and help the economy to grow
- Americans struggled to survive during the Great Depression

## **15. WORLD WAR II**

- Students will learn about how the involvement of the United States in World War II changed the society and economy of the United States
- The rise of aggressive totalitarian governments led to the start of World War II
- The study of the Holocaust and its effects will be undertaken
- American's involvement in World War II helped the US economy and changed the lives of many Americans
- Fighting in Northern Africa and Europe stopped the German advance and began driving back German forces
- Allied troops reversed Japan's expansion in the Pacific and battled towards the main Japanese islands
- The Allies won World War II, the most devastating war in world history.

*The Americas, Houghton Mifflin Harcourt Publishing Company, 2012*

*United States History: Civil War to the Present, Houghton Mifflin Harcourt Publishing Company, 2012*

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