

Loyalsock Township School District

Benchmarks: What Students Should Know and Be Able to Do

United States History I (Prehistory - Reconstruction)

Unit 1 | Building a Nation | Prehistory to 1783

Topic: Three Cultures Meet (September/October)

Big Ideas:

1. Places and regions have physical and human characteristics, and one's culture and experiences may influence perception of place.
2. Characteristics, distribution, and migration of human populations impact culture, economic interdependence, settlement patterns, and control of the Earth's surface.
3. World history continues to influence Pennsylvanians, citizens of the United States, and individuals throughout the world today.

Essential Questions:

- **Geography of the United States**
What are the most important geographic characteristics of the United States?
- **Native American Cultures**
How did early Native American societies modify and adapt to their surroundings?
- **European Cultures**
How did events and developments in Europe lead to the age of exploration?
- **West African Cultures**
How did African history affect early American history?
- **Exploration and Discovery**
How did the age of exploration and discovery change Europe's understanding of the world?
- **Cultural Exchange**
How did interaction between European, African, and Native American cultures shape early American history?

Topic: Colonial America (October/November)

Big Ideas:

1. Economic decision-making by entities and individuals impact others locally, regionally, and around the globe.
2. All economic systems must answer what, and how, goods and services will be produced, and who will consume those goods and services.
3. Limited resources and unlimited wants require choices by individuals, groups, and nations.
4. The choices we make, whether as consumers or as citizens active in politics, impact people around the globe.

Essential Questions:

- **European Colonization**
Why did some Europeans choose to leave home and settle in colonial America?
- **New England Colonies**
How did location affect daily life in the New England colonies?
- **Middle Colonies**
How did location affect daily life in the Middle colonies?
- **Southern Colonies**
How did location affect daily life in the Southern colonies? How did life there compare with other colonial regions?
- **Colonial Life: Multiple Perspectives**
For various groups, what did it mean to be "American" in 1750?

Topic: Revolutionary America (November/December)

Big Ideas:

1. Nationalism plays a number of influential roles with far-reaching consequences in an interdependent world.
2. Citizens understand their rights and practice their responsibilities in a vibrant society.
3. Civil discourse and thoughtful deliberation are necessary to promote the common good and protect the individual.

Essential Questions:

- **The Colonies Come of Age**
In what ways were the American colonies becoming their own nation before 1763? In what ways were they still part of the British Empire?

- **Britain vs. the Colonists**

Why did the colonists risk their lives to fight for independence from Great Britain?

- **The Declaration of Independence Explored**

How does the Declaration of Independence reflect the colonists' ideas about government?

- **Fighting for Independence**

How did the United States manage to win the Revolutionary War?

- **The Revolution in American Society**

What roles did different groups of Americans play in the Revolutionary War?

Unit 2 | Becoming an Independent Nation | 1776 to 1800

Topic: Establishing a New Government (December/January)

Big Ideas:

1. An engaged citizen is a life-long learner continuing to benefit from internal maturity and external influences.
2. Engaged citizens understand the workings of government and use historic precedents in shaping thought and action.
3. Civil discourse and thoughtful deliberation are necessary to promote the common good and protect the individual.

Essential Questions:

- **The Articles of Confederation**

How well did the Articles of Confederation address the needs of the new nation?

- **Creating a Government**

How did decisions made at the Constitutional Convention affect the balance of power in the new nation?

- **A More Perfect Union**

How does the Constitution reflect major principles of American democracy?

- **The Bill of Rights**

How does the Bill of Rights help government balance rights and order in the U.S. political system?

Topic: Leaders and Challenges of a New Nation (January)

Big Ideas:

1. The enjoyment of human rights and their exercise are dependent upon the community of nations and their citizens maintaining vigilance on governments and their actions.
2. The history of the United States continues to influence its citizens, and has impacted the rest of the world.
3. Citizens understand the workings of government and use historic precedents in shaping thought and action.

Essential Questions:

- **Washington's Presidency**
In what ways did George Washington's presidency influence the future of the U.S. political system?
- **Hamilton vs. Jefferson**
How did the nation's early problems reveal different philosophies about government?

Unit 3 | A Nation Expands | 1790 to 1860

Topic: Building a New National Identity (February)

Big Ideas:

1. A thoughtful citizen evaluates the accuracy of communications and analyzes media sources attempting to influence the public agenda.
2. Geography is used to explain the past, interpret the present, and plan for the future.

Essential Questions:

- **The Age of Jefferson**
To what extent did Jefferson's actions as president reflect his principles?
- **The War of 1812**
What was the impact of the War of 1812 on the early history of the United States?
- **Foreign Affairs**
How did American foreign affairs after the War of 1812 reveal changing attitudes about the United States?
- **Challenges of Expansion**
Did the benefits of American expansion outweigh the costs?

Topic: New Horizons (March)

Big Ideas:

1. Adherence to the rule of law validates an individual's responsibility to society.
2. Human actions modify the physical environment, and physical systems affect human systems.
3. Geographic representations are essential to explain the spatial organization of people, places, and environments.

Essential Questions:

- **Jacksonian Democracy**
Was Andrew Jackson a champion of democracy? Why?
- **The Native American Experience**
What were the causes and effects of Indian removal policies during the 1830s?
- **Westward Expansion**
What impact did Manifest Destiny have on the growth and development of the United States?
- **Life in the West**
For various groups, what was life like in newly settled areas of the West?

Topic: Industrial Expansion and Reform (April)

Big Ideas:

1. Individuals and entities endeavor to obtain goods and services and to accumulate wealth.
2. The interaction of buyers and sellers determines prices and quantities exchanged, except when influenced by governmental policies.

Essential Questions:

- **Industrialization**
Did the benefits of technological advances made during the Industrial Revolution outweigh the costs?
- **Urbanization and Immigration**
How did urbanization and immigration change the nature of city life in America?
- **Reform Movements**
How did the reform movements of the 1840s change American society?

Unit 4 | A Nation Divided | 1820 to 1877

Topic: Slavery and the Civil War (April/May)

Big Ideas:

1. The history of the Commonwealth continues to influence Pennsylvanians today, and has impacted the United States and the rest of the world.
2. The location of resources, transportation, communication networks, and technological innovation affect international economic patterns and the distribution of wealth.

Essential Questions:

- **Slave Life and Culture**

In antebellum America, what did it mean to be an *enslaved* African American? What did it mean to be a *free* African American?

- **Regional Differences**

How did geographical differences between the North and the South lead to conflict?

- **The Road to Disunion**

By 1860, why were the nation's leaders unable to keep the Union together?

- **The Course of War**

How did the Union win the Civil War?

- **Impact of the War**

To what extent was the Civil War America's second revolution?

Topic: Reconstruction (May/June)

Big Ideas:

1. Historical context is needed to comprehend time and space.
2. Historical interpretation involves an analysis of cause and result.
3. Perspective helps to define the attributes of historical comprehension.

Essential Questions:

- **Unity and Division**

What problems did Reconstruction resolve? What problems did it fail to resolve?

- **Postwar Society**

In what ways did Reconstruction change Southern society?

- **An Era Ends**

How did the Civil War and Reconstruction affect the lives of future generations of Americans?