



Dear Parent or Guardian,

In Grade 8, students study the history of the United States from the early colonial period through Reconstruction. The knowledge and skills in this section comprise the first part of a two-year study of U.S. history. The content in Grade 8 builds upon that from Grade 5 but provides more depth and breadth. Historical content focuses on the political, economic, religious, and social events and issues related to the colonial and revolutionary eras, the creation and ratification of the U.S. Constitution, challenges of the early republic, the Age of Jackson, westward expansion, sectionalism, Civil War, and Reconstruction. Students describe the physical characteristics of the United States and their impact on population distribution and settlement patterns in the past and present. Students use critical-thinking skills, including the identification of bias in written, oral, and visual material. The students will use of a variety of rich primary and secondary source material such as the complete text of the U.S. Constitution and the Declaration of Independence, landmark cases of the U.S. Supreme Court, biographies, autobiographies, novels, speeches, letters, diaries, poetry, songs, and artworks.

During the sixth six weeks grading period, students will be engaged in course work over the following units of study:

Reconstruction: This unit addresses the concept of change necessary for Reconstruction including passage of the 13th, 14th, and 15th amendments and the political effects of legislative acts such as the Homestead Act, the Dawes Act, and the Morrill Act.

Connecting the Dots: Using the concept of social or political change, this unit reviews concepts and information from the Grade 8 social studies course in early American history from colonial times through the highlights of Reconstruction.

Throughout the sixth six weeks grading period, student knowledge and understanding will be assessed in a variety of ways, such as:

- Analyzing past STAAR questions
- Analyzing Primary & Secondary sources
- Comparing and Contrasting Point of View
- Engaging in Pair/Share
- Engaging in Peer Tutoring
- Engaging in student collaborative learning
- Evaluating impact of selected landmark Supreme Court decisions
- Explaining Political, Economic and Social roots of Historical periods
- Identifying bias in History
- Interacting with Academic Vocabulary
- Making connections between different groups
- Making connects to Future Historical Events and Present Situations
- Marking the text
- Taking Cornell Notes
- Taking Formative & Summative Assessments
- Using Thinking Maps and Graphic Organizers

Please feel free to contact us if you have any questions or concerns regarding your student. We look forward to working with you and your child to ensure academic success.

Respectfully, United States History until 1877 Teachers