

Social Studies
Grade 8

Unit 1: Colonization and Settlement

Examine how early European Explorers and colonization resulted in cultural and ecological interactions among previously unconnected peoples.

Initial Understanding

Locate and identify the regional tribes of North America
Describe the social composition of the early settlers and their various motives for exploration and colonization

Developing an Interpretation

Trace the routes taken by early explorers from the 15th-17th century
Explain the common elements of Native American societies such as religion, use of environment, gender roles, family, values, etc.
Examine settlements in Colonial America –New England, Middle, and Southern Colonies-
Examine way of life, homes, and land acquisition

Making Connections

Compare the Native American cultures with the European culture and describe how the mixing of cultures led to conflict
Examine how political, religious, and social institutions developed in the new colonies

Critical Stance

Evaluate the results of the French and Indian War and how the results of that war changed the map of North America
Examine the plight of the North American Native American and defend or refute the statement that “conflicts were inevitable”

Unit 2: Revolution and the New Nation

Examine the causes of the American Revolution and the reasons for the American victory

Initial Understanding

Recount the Patriots and Loyalists positions on independence
Examine the importance and language of the Declaration of Independence
Identify key leaders and their contributions to the American cause
Using a map, trace and describe the major battles of the Revolutionary War

Developing an Interpretation

Use technology to create a timeline showing a chronology of the critical events leading to the outbreak of the Revolution
Analyze the contribution of political philosophies on the Declaration of Independence

Making Connections

Support America’s relationship with France, Holland and Spain during the revolution and the contribution of each to the American victory
Explain how key principals in the Declaration of Independence unified ideas of American democracy

Critical Stance

Appraise George Washington’s military and political leadership in conducting the Revolutionary War
Assess the impact of the American Revolution on politics, economy, and society
Defend or refute that the colonists struggle with England was inevitable
Debate the issue of independence from the view point of Patriots and Loyalists

Examine the issues involved in the creation and ratification of the United States constitution and the government it established.

Initial Understanding

- List key figures and their contributions to the United States Constitution
- Describe key features of the constitution and the Bill of Rights

Developing an Interpretation

- Describe the process of how a bill becomes a law
- Explain the system of checks and balances

Making Connections

- Trace the evolution of the Supreme Court's powers between 1792-1820
- Explain how the original Constitution excluded large groups of people that inhabited the North American continent

Critical Stance

- Debate the role of government from the perspective of federalists and anti-federalists
- Explain and defend the Bill of Rights.
- Debate the decisions of the Supreme Court regarding abolitionists

Unit 3: Expansion and Reform

Explain the economic, political, racial, social, and religious roots of the United States territory expansion and its implications throughout the world

Initial Understanding

- Locate and identify the land purchases of the U.S. during the period of expansion
- Explain President Madison's reasons for declaring war on Great Britain in 1812
- Recall the major events of the Mexican/American War
- Identify the origins of the Monroe Doctrine

Developing an Interpretation

- Examine the significance of the port of New Orleans to western farmers, and how the acquisition led to the entire Louisiana Purchase
- Explain the roots of Manifest Destiny
- Explain how the Northwest ordinance of 1787 was used as a model for future expansion in the U.S.
- Explain why the election of Andrew Jackson was considered a victory for the "common man"

Making Connections

- Analyze federal and state Indian Policies
- Explain how the Monroe Doctrine influenced hemispheric relations
- Analyze how the ideology of Manifest Destiny influenced westward expansion
- Investigate the impact of removal and settlement on various tribes
- Describe the origins of Jacksonian democracy and its effect on U.S. government

Critical Stance

- Assess the causes of the rapid settlement of California and Oregon
- Evaluate the historical contributions of Lewis and Clark by tracing their journey, findings, and accomplishments
- Judge how Americans strived to reform society and reorganize political democracy to create a distinct culture and government
- Assess the changes to the Missouri/Mississippi River delta systems and how these changes impacted vegetation, animal life, and land formations

Unit 4: Civil War and Reconstruction

Analyze the causes, key events, and complex consequences of the Civil War.

Initial Understanding

- Identify the economic, social, and cultural differences between the North and South
- Explain the role and economic significance of slavery
- Define sectionalism and explain the abolitionist movement
- Identify key figures and their contributions to their sectional point of view that led up to the Civil War

Developing an Interpretation

- Explain how events after the Compromise of 1820, and the Dred Scott decision contributed to sectional polarization
- Explain the causes of the Civil War
- Chart the secession of the Southern states and explain the process and reasons for the secession

Making Connections

- Compare and contrast the strengths and weaknesses of the North and the South
- Create a map that depicts the major battle sites of the Civil War
- Describe innovations in military technology and explain their impact on humans, property, and man's ability to wage war.

Critical Stance

- Evaluate the importance of slavery as a significant cause of the Civil War
- Analyze purpose, meaning, and significance of the Gettysberg Address
- Evaluate the Lincoln Presidency and its impact on civil rights
- Examine how the war affected combatants, civilians, the physical environment, and future warfare

Analyze the character and lasting consequences of Reconstruction

Initial Understanding

- List the original goals of reconstruction
- Explain the 13th, 14th and 15th amendments
- List ways and means used to exclude Americans from the benefits of the 13th, 14th and 15th Amendments

Developing an Interpretation

- Examine the effect reconstruction had on the political and social structures of different regions
- Analyze the 13th, 14th, and 15th amendments and their connection to reconstruction

Analyze the impact Lincoln's assassination had on Reconstruction

Making Connections

- Defend the effectiveness of the 13th, 14th, and 15th amendments

Critical Stance

- Justify why the election of 1876 led to the end of the period of reconstruction
- Defend or refute the effectiveness of Reconstruction and its impact on all American people

Unit 5: The Industrial United States

Analyze the transformation of The American economy and the changing social and political conditions in the United States in response to the Industrial Revolution

Initial Understanding

- Identify the contributions of inventors
- Recognize the role of inventions in fueling the Industrial Revolution
- Map the patterns of industrial development

Developing an Interpretation

- Explain the contributions and impacts of unions, immigration and the growth of cities.
- Determine southern legislation after reconstruction that limited the effectiveness of the 13th, 14th, and 15th amendments
- Explain the changing work force in regards to age, gender, and reasons for employment

Making Connections

Trace the changing demand of labor and leisure

Analyze the impact of the growth of railroads on Native American cultures and on the Industrial Revolution

Interpret the growing trend of immigration and how it fueled the Industrial Revolution

Critical Stance

Evaluate the effects of “big business” on consumers

Evaluate the changing role of women during the Industrial Revolution

Analyze the continuing role of education and how it contributed to the Industrial Revolution and future generations of American society