

Grade 7

Exploration to Pre Civil War

In Grades 7 and 8, students will examine the United States and Pennsylvania through an historical lens. The two-year sequence is arranged chronologically beginning with the settlement of North and South America by Native Americans and ending with an examination of the U.S. in the 21st century. Although the courses emphasize the skill of chronological reasoning and causation, the courses also integrate the skills and content from geography, politics, economy, and culture into the study of history.

NATIVE AMERICANS:

- 7.1 The physical environment and natural resources of North America encouraged the development of the first human settlements and the culture of Native Americans. Native Americans societies varied across North America.
 - 7.1a Geography and climate influenced the migration and cultural development of Native Americans. Native Americans in North America are divided by geographic region resulting in similar cultural patterns.

COLONIAL DEVELOPMENTS

- 7.2 European exploration of the New World resulted in various interactions with Native Americans and in colonization. The American colonies were established for a variety of reasons, and developed differently based on economic, social, and geographic factors. Colonial America had a variety of social structures under which not all people were treated equally.
 - 7.2a Social, economic and scientific improvements helped European nations launch an Age of Exploration.
 - 7.2b Different European groups had varied interactions and relationships with the Native American societies they encountered. Native American societies suffered from losses of life and land due to the encounter with Europeans..
 - 7.2c European nations established colonies in North America for economic, religious, and political reasons.
 - 7.2d In Pennsylvania, many settlers established colonies along the Delaware River The settlers practiced religious tolerance and became a model for religious freedom.
 - 7.2e Over the course of the 17th and 18th centuries, slavery grew in the colonies. Enslaved Africans utilized a variety of strategies to both survive and resist their conditions.

AMERICAN INDEPENDENCE

- 7.3 Growing tensions over political power and economic issues sparked a movement for independence from Great Britain. Pennsylvania played a critical role in the course and outcome of the American Revolution.
 - 7.3a Conflicts between France and Great Britain in the 17th and 18th centuries in North America altered the relationship between the colonies and Great Britain.
 - 7.3b Stemming from the French and Indian War, the British government enacted and attempted to enforce new political and economic policies in the colonies. These policies triggered varied colonial responses, including protests and dissent.
 - 7.3c Influenced by Enlightenment ideas and beliefs in the rights of Englishmen, American colonial leaders outlined their grievances against British policies and actions in the Declaration of Independence.
 - 7.3d Military strategies, geography, and aid from other nations influenced the outcome of the American Revolution. Iroquois (Haudenosaunee) and other Native American groups became involved in the war in different ways.

HISTORICAL DEVELOPMENT OF THE CONSTITUTION

- 7.4 The newly independent states faced political and economic struggles under the Articles of Confederation. These challenges resulted in a Constitutional Convention, a debate over ratification, and the eventual adoption of the Bill of Rights.
 - 7.4a Throughout the American Revolution, the colonies struggled to unify their differing social, political, and economic perspectives. The Articles of Confederation created a form of government that loosely united the states, but maintained a large degree of state sovereignty.
 - 7.4b The lack of a strong central government under the Articles of Confederation presented numerous challenges. A convention was held to revise the Articles, the result of which was the Constitution. The Constitution established a democratic republic with a stronger central government.
 - 7.4c Advocates for and against a strong central government were divided on issues of states rights, federal power, and individual freedoms. Compromises were needed between the states in order to ratify the Constitution.
 - 7.4d The Constitution had mixed support among states and delegates. A Bill of Rights was added, enumerating individual freedoms, and helped gain support for the Constitution.

THE CONSTITUTION IN PRACTICE

- 7.5 The United States Constitution serves as a foundation of the United States government and outlines the rights of citizens. The Constitution is considered a “living document” that can respond to political and social changes.
 - 7.5a The Constitution outlined a federalist system of government that shares powers among the federal, state, and local governments.
 - 7.5b The Constitution established three branches of government as well as a system of checks and balances that guides the relationship between the branches.
 - 7.5c While the Constitution provides a formal process for change through amendments, the Constitution can respond to change in other ways.
 - 7.5d Foreign and domestic disputes tested the strength of the Constitution, particularly the separation of powers, the system of checks and balances, and the issue of states rights. The United States sought to implement isolationism while protecting the Western Hemisphere from European interference.

WESTWARD EXPANSION

- 7.6 Driven by political and economic motives, the United States expanded its physical boundaries to the Pacific Ocean between 1800 and 1860. This settlement displaced Native Americans as the frontier was pushed westward.
 - 7.6a Conflict and compromise with foreign nations occurred regarding the physical expansion of the United States during the 19th century. American values and beliefs such as Manifest Destiny and the need for resources increased westward expansion and settlement.
 - 7.6b Westward expansion provided opportunities for some groups while harming others.

REFORM MOVEMENTS:

- 7.7 Social, political, and economic inequalities sparked various reform movements and resistance efforts. Pennsylvania played a key role in major reform efforts.
 - 7.7b Enslaved African Americans resisted slavery in various ways. The abolitionist movement also worked to raise awareness and generate resistance to the institution of slavery.

- 7.7c Women joined the movements for abolition and temperance and organized to advocate for women's property rights, fair wages, education, and political equality.

A NATION DIVIDED

- 7.8 Westward expansion, the industrialization of the North, and the growth of slavery in the South contributed to the growth of sectionalism. Constitutional conflicts between advocates of states rights and supporters of federal power increased tensions in the nation; attempts to compromise ultimately failed to keep the nation together, leading to the Civil War.
 - 7.8a Early United States industrialization affected different parts of the country in different ways. Regional economic differences and values, as well as different conceptions of the Constitution, laid the basis for tensions between states rights advocates and supporters of a strong federal government.
 - 7.8b As the nation expanded geographically, the question of slavery in new territories and states led to increased sectional tensions. Attempts at compromise ended in failure.
 - 7.8c Perspectives on the causes of the Civil War varied based on geographic region, but the election of a Republican president was one of the immediate causes for the secession of the Southern states.