

Grade 8

Grade 8 Social Studies focuses on a primarily chronological study of history and geography in United States and Pennsylvania as well as economic, social, and political trends. The course content is divided into eight Key Ideas, the first seven of which trace the human experience in the United States from after Reconstruction to up to the end of World War II. The last three Key Ideas parallel each other as they trace different themes in United States and Pennsylvania history from the post-War period up to the 1960s.

THE CIVIL WAR

- 8.1 Perspectives on the causes of the Civil War varied based on geographic region,
 - 8.1a The election of a Republican president was one of the immediate causes for the secession of the Southern states.
- 8.2 The course and outcome of the Civil War was influenced by strategic leaders from both the North and South, decisive battles, and military strategy and technology that utilized the region's geography.
 - 8.2a The Civil War impacted human lives, physical infrastructure, economic capacity, and governance of the United States.

RECONSTRUCTION

- 8.3 Regional tensions following the Civil War complicated the effort to reunify the nation and define the status of African Americans.
 - 8.3a Different approaches toward and policies for Reconstruction demonstrated the challenges to reunify the United States.
 - 8.3b Freed African Americans created new lives for themselves in the absence of slavery. Constitutional amendments and federal legislation sought to expand the rights and protect the citizenship of African Americans.
 - 8.3c Federal initiatives begun during Reconstruction were challenged on many levels, leading to negative impacts on the lives of African Americans.

A CHANGING SOCIETY

- 8.4 Changes for African-Americans resulted in limitations of their rights. Industrialization and immigration contributed to the urbanization of America. Problems resulting from these changes sparked the Progressive movement and increased calls for reform.

- 8.4a Continued technological developments that changed the modes of production and access to natural resources facilitated increased industrialization.
- 8.4b The demand for labor in urban industrial areas resulted in increased migration from rural areas and a rapid increase in immigration to the United States.
- 8.4c Population density, diversity, technologies, and industry in urban areas shaped the social, cultural, and economic lives of people in cities.
- 8.4d Increased urbanization and industrialization contributed to increasing conflicts over immigration, influenced changes in labor conditions, and led to political corruption.
- 8.4e In response to shifts in working conditions, laborers organized and employed a variety of strategies in an attempt to improve their conditions.
- 8.4f Muckrakers and Progressive Era reformers sought to address political and social issues at the local, state, and federal levels of government between 1890 and 1920. These efforts brought renewed attention to women's rights and the suffrage movement and spurred the creation of government policies to enact reform.

IMPERIALISM

- 8.5 Beginning in the late 19th century, economic, political, and cultural factors contributed to more aggressive United States foreign policy and a push for westward expansion.
 - 8.5a The Spanish-American War contributed to the rise of the United States as an imperial power.
 - 8.5b Interest in Pacific trade contributed to an increase in United States foreign interactions.
 - 8.5c The Roosevelt Corollary expanded the Monroe Doctrine and increased involvement in the affairs of Latin American nations by the United States. This led to resentment of the United States among many in Latin America, but also paved the way for improved relations.
 - 8.5d Continued westward expansion contributed to increased conflicts with Native Americans.

WORLD WAR I AND THE ROARING TWENTIES

- 8.6 Various diplomatic, economic, and ideological factors ultimately led the United States to enter World War I. Involvement in the war significantly altered the social, cultural, and political lives of Americans. Postwar America was characterized by economic prosperity, technological innovations, and changes in the workplace.
 - 8.6a Militarism, alliances, imperialism, and nationalism grew, uniting and dividing nations around the world and leading to global conflict.

- 8.6b International, economic, and military developments swayed opinion in favor of the United States siding with the Allies and entering World War I. Domestic responses to World War I limited civil liberties within the United States.
- 8.6c New military technologies changed military strategy in World War I and resulted in an unprecedented number of casualties.
- 8.6d Following extensive political debate, the United States refused to ratify the Treaty of Versailles. The United States then sought to return to prewar policies by focusing on domestic rather than international matters.
- 8.6e Following the end of World War I, the United States entered a period of increased economic prosperity and radical cultural change known as the Roaring Twenties. During this time, new opportunities for women were gained, and African Americans engaged in various efforts to distinguish themselves and celebrate their culture.

GREAT DEPRESSION

- 8.7 Economic and environmental disasters in the 1930s created hardships for many Americans. Amidst much debate about the appropriate role of government, President Franklin D. Roosevelt helped to create and enforce intensive government interventions in the United States economy and society.)
 - 8.7a Risky investing, protectionism, and a weak global economy during the 1920s led to the collapse of the stock market, a wave of bank failures, and a long and severe downturn in the economy called the Great Depression.
 - 8.7b The Great Depression affected all American families, but the effects varied across geographic regions and class, race, and gender lines. The Dust Bowl devastated farming regions in the Great Plains and forced thousands to relocate. The federal government responded with environmental conservation legislation.
 - 8.7c President Roosevelt pursued a policy called the New Deal to revive the economy and help Americans deal with the hardships of the Great Depression. These New Deal reforms had a long-lasting effect on the role of government in American society and economic life but did not resolve all of the hardships Americans faced.

WORLD WAR II

- 8.8 The aggression of the Axis powers threatened United States security and led to its entry into World War II. The nature and consequences of warfare during World War II transformed the United States and the global community. The damage from total warfare and atrocities such as the Holocaust led to a call for international efforts to protect human rights and prevent future wars.

- 8.8a Worldwide economic depression, militant nationalism, the rise of totalitarian rule, and the unsuccessful efforts of the League of Nations to preserve peace contributed to the outbreak of war in Europe and Asia.
- 8.8b From 1939 to 1941, the United States government tried to maintain neutrality while providing aid to Britain but was drawn into the war by the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor. The United States fought a war on multiple fronts. At home, the economy was converted to war production, and essential resources were rationed to ensure adequate supplies for military use.
- 8.8c The nature and consequences of warfare during World War II transformed the United States and the global community. The damage from total warfare and human atrocities, including the Holocaust, led to a call for an international organization and protection of human rights.

DEMOGRAPHIC CHANGE

- 8.9 After World War II, the population of the United States rose sharply as a result of both natural increases and immigration. Population movements have resulted in changes to the American landscape and shifting political power. An aging population is affecting the economy and straining public resources.
 - 8.9a The postwar war baby boom had major social and economic consequences. As the baby boom generation has reached retirement years and life expectancy has increased, the demand on resources has increased.
 - 8.9b Postwar America experienced a dramatic population shift through suburbanization. Transportation improvements through the Interstate Highway Act and the expansion of commuter rail service facilitated this demographic trend and contributed to positive and negative economic effects.
 - 8.9c During the postwar years, many Americans left the Midwest and northern industrial states for the Sun Belt. This shifting population caused political power to shift to new parts of the country as well.
 - 8.9d The postwar United States experienced increasing immigration, debates over immigration policy, and an increase in cultural diversity.
 - 8.6e Pollution, population growth, the consumption of natural resources, clearing of land for human sustenance, and large-scale industrialization have put added stress on the global environment.

DOMESTIC POLITICS and REFORM

- 8.10 The civil rights movement and the Great Society were attempts by people and the government to address major social, legal, economic, and environmental problems. Subsequent economic recession called for a new economic program.
 - 8.10a The civil rights movement began in the postwar era in response to the long-standing inequalities in American society and eventually brought about equality under the law but limited economic improvements.