



RADNOR TOWNSHIP SCHOOL DISTRICT  
Course Overview



Grade Level Social Studies 8  
Course #

**General Information**

Credits: N/A  
Weighted: N/A  
Prerequisite: N/A

Length: Full Year  
Format: Meets Daily  
Grade: 8

**Course Description**

This Radnor Middle School Eighth Grade Social Studies course focuses on the period of American History that begins with colonization and proceeds through the United States of America's Civil War and Reconstruction. This course utilizes a variety of teaching strategies to prepare students for high school social studies coursework. Students will conduct independent research and writing tasks and utilize a variety of primary source documents, supplemental readings, and current events assignments while studying the birth and early growth of the United States of America. The curriculum was created in accordance with Common Core Standards and the Pennsylvania Standards for Social Studies: Civics and Government, Economics, History, and Geography. This course is designed to provide a solid foundation for future high school coursework.

**Course Objectives:**

In addition to being able to explain how the 13 British Colonies were established, grew into a major economic and political force, fought for their independence, created their own new form of government, and ultimately evolved into a world power that became engaged in a civil war, students will be able to analyze and discuss the following questions:

- How does the scarcity of resources trigger conflicts?
- What is the appropriate level of government involvement in a nation's economy?
- How does the pursuit of wealth and prosperity impact human behavior and cultivate competing regional interests?
- How does the theory of natural human rights provide a foundation for a republican form of government?
- How does a government balance its power to rule its citizens with its responsibility to protect individual civil liberties?
- What were the driving forces behind the economic and political expansion of westward movement?
- How did sectionalism influence the outbreak of the Civil War?
- What form of resistance is the most effective in a given circumstance?
- How have historical events shaped our world today?
- Why is this important to me today?

Students will also discuss and analyze the following Enduring Understandings:

- Knowledge of the past helps us understand the present and prepares us for the future.
- Individuals can influence history by exercising their rights and responsibilities as citizens in a democracy.
- Historical perspectives are often influenced by cultural perspectives.

The quest for wealth is often the primary motivating factor in historical events.

### ***Common Assessments***

#### **The Role of a Citizen**

*First Marking Period*

Students understand the role of American Citizenship and complete a citizenship assessment.

#### **Current Event**

*Second Marking Period*

Students will read and summarize an assigned current event topic and make connections to current themes and/or course related ideas.

#### **Persuasive Written Language Benchmark**

*Third Marking Period*

Students respond to the persuasive prompt using the Criterion program.

#### **Final Essay**

*Fourth Marking Period*

Students will write a final essay, evaluating the impact of a specific event in history and understand the lasting effects.

### ***Major Units of Study:***

Unit I: Early Colonial Development and the Formation of an American Identity 1492-1763

Unit II: The Road to Revolution & the War for American Independence 1763-1783

Unit III: From Confederation to Constitution 1776-1791

Unit IV: Manifest Destiny & the Rise of Competing Political Ideologies 1789-1860

Unit V: The United States of America's Civil War and Reconstruction 1860-1877

### ***Materials & Texts***

*"History Alive: The United States Through Industrialism."* Teachers' Curriculum Institute, 2011.

Additional Unit Specific Resources

*Summer Assignment*

None