

Grade 8 Social Studies Standards and Expectations

1. Civics

1. Understands major ideas about why government is necessary
2. Knows some of the restraints placed on a limited government's power
3. Understands the possible consequences of the absence of a rule, e.g., anarchy, arbitrary and capricious rule, disregard for established and fair procedures
4. Knows some basic uses of constitutions and how they have been used to protect individual rights and promote the common good and specifically understands the American Constitution
5. Understands the primary responsibilities of each branch of government in a system of shared powers
6. Knows volunteer opportunities that exist in one's own school and community
7. Knows how diversity encourages cultural creativity
8. Knows sources of political conflict that have arisen in the United States
9. Knows some important American ideals

2. Economics

1. Understands that increasing labor productivity is the major way in which a nation can improve the standard of living of its people
2. Knows that inflation refers to a sustained increase in the average price level of the entire economy
3. Understands that international trade is the exchange of goods and services between people and institutions in different nations

3. Geography

1. Uses the tools and concepts of geography including technology-related resources, e.g., variety of internet resources available
2. Understands patterns of land use in urban, suburban, and rural areas
3. Knows the causes and effects of changes in a place over time
4. Knows types of regions such as formal regions, functional regions and perceptual regions
5. Knows the ways in which culture influences the perception of places and regions, e.g., religion and other belief systems, language and traditions
6. Knows the processes that produce renewable and nonrenewable resources, e.g., fossil fuels
7. Understands demographic concepts and how they are related to population characteristics of a country or region
8. Knows the ways in which human systems develop in response to conditions in the physical environment, (e.g., patterns of land use, flow of traffic)
9. Knows historic and current conflicts and competition regarding the use and allocation of resources
10. Understands the possible impact that present conditions and patterns of consumption, production and population growth might have on the future spatial organization of earth

4. Historical Understanding

1. Understands patterns of change and continuity in the historical succession of related events in American history
2. Knows how to periodize events of the nation into broadly defined eras in American history
3. Understands that specific individuals, ideas, events, and decisions had a great impact on American history
4. Understands cultural and ecological interactions in American history
5. Understands the cultural and environmental impacts of European settlements in North America
6. Understands the basic patterns of human settlement and their causes in American history
7. Understands the role of religion in English colonies
8. Understands mercantilism and how it influenced patterns of economic activity
9. Understands the creation of the Declaration of Independence

10. Understands how the ideals of the American Revolution influenced the goals of various groups of people during and after the war (e.g., women, loyalists, Native Americans, enslaved and free African Americans, etc.)
11. Understands the development and impact of the American party system
12. Understands the significance of the Lewis and Clark expedition
13. Understands how major technological and economic influences impacted various groups
14. Understands political issues that were influenced by slavery
15. Understands events and perspectives that influenced slavery in the ante-bellum period
16. Understands the impact of social, economic, and cultural differences between the North and South and how the free labor system differed