

Garden City Middle School
Course: United States and New York State History Social Studies 8

Instructional Philosophy:

The United States and New York State History Social Studies 8 curriculum is the second part of a two-year program designed to provide an overview of United States history from political, social and economic perspective. Students will develop and apply historical skills and concepts, and use a variety of methods to convey their understanding of the past.

Garden City Middle School's United States and New York History curriculum seeks to balance the need for a guaranteed curriculum with flexibility in response to student needs. Aligned with NYS standards in social studies, it is designed to guide teachers yet preserve their autonomy in instructional decision-making. Teachers utilize [essential questions](#) in order for students to grapple with complex historical issues to develop a deeper level of understanding and, ultimately, ownership of the content. The questions that frame the study of seventh and eighth grade social studies are:

- ◆ *Why does history matter?*
- ◆ *To what extent has the history of the United States been a history of progress for all people?*
- ◆ *To what extent did the United States fulfill the ideals of the Declaration of Independence? What does discrimination look like? What keeps it alive?*
- ◆ *What is the purpose of government?*
- ◆ *How do individuals shape history?*
- ◆ *To what extent does contact between cultures result in positive change?*
- ◆ *What is worth fighting for? Can conflict be avoided?*
- ◆ *How does government/governmental decisions both reflect and shape society?*
- ◆ *How should individual liberties be balanced with what is in the best interest of the nation?*
- ◆ *How does geography shape history and culture?*
- ◆ *What makes writing worth reading?*

Overview of American History Social Studies 8

Social studies content in grade 8 is the second year of a two year course focused on a chronologically organized study of United States and New York State history. Course content is divided into 12 units, tracing the human experience in the United States from Reconstruction to the present, and tying political, geographic, economic, and social trends in United States history to parallel trends and time frames in New York State history.

Knowledge and Skills Objectives

1. To develop chronological thinking skills necessary to examine United States history from Reconstruction to the present day.
2. To develop the skills necessary to read and analyze secondary and primary sources.
3. To develop the skills necessary to think critically about historical events.
4. To define, develop and practice writing and research skills.

Units of study:

1. The Reconstruction Era 1865-1877
2. Westward Expansion 1860-1890
3. Industrialization Era 1860-1890
4. Immigration 1865-1914
5. Progressive Era 1876-1920
6. Imperialism 1890-1920
7. World War I 1914-1918
8. Roaring Twenties 1920-1929
9. Depression 1929-1941
10. World War II 1939-1945
11. Cold War 1945-1990
12. Present Day

Materials:

Davidson, James and Michael Stoff. The American Nation, 2005.