

8th Grade U.S. History: First Semester

1. Life in the English Colonies of North America: early 1600s – 1750s

- The 13 English Colonies in North America developed into three unique regions: New England, Middle, and Southern. The Colonies created systems of self-government and maintained allegiance to the British Crown. Eventually, the Colonists' history of independence caused conflict with Britain leading to revolution.

2. The Road to Revolution and the Declaration of Independence: 1750s – 1770s

- Following the French and Indian War (1763), the British tried to exert more control over the 13 Colonies. Britain imposed taxes and restrictions on the Colonists. This led to conflict and demands for self-government within the 13 Colonies. Eventually, protests and violence against British rule led to the Declaration of Independence and the birth of a new nation: The United States of America.

3. The American Revolution: 1775 – 1783

- The American Revolution started in Lexington, Massachusetts with the "Shot Heard Round the World" and ended in Yorktown, Virginia in 1783. The ragtag American army led by General George Washington defeated Britain, the largest empire in the world, to bring forth a new experiment: a nation founded on self-government.

4. Creating a Government: The Constitution and Bill of Rights: 1776 – 1791

- With the Revolution against Britain and its king won, America had to create a new system of government. The Founders created the United States Constitution with a strong national government limited by checks and balances while maintaining state governments. They added a Bill of Rights to insure the precious liberties of Americans, and managed to build a government that has lasted through today.

8th Grade U.S. History: Second Semester

5. The New Nation: The Early American Republic: 1790s – 1820s

- A young America developed political parties and began its movement west across the continent with its first five presidents. With the early presidents, the United States doubled in size, established a foreign policy, and fought the War of 1812, a second conflict against Britain. By the 1820s, America had gained confidence and a pioneering spirit, ready to become the dominant power in North America.

6. Andrew Jackson and the Growth of Democracy: 1828 – 1836

- The Presidency of Andrew Jackson began with an expansion of democracy as more men gained the right to vote and ended with the common man gaining power in governing the nation. Jackson's presidency ushered in an era of democratic reforms and a belief in the common person's ability to control the destiny of America.

7. Manifest Destiny: The Movement West: 1803 – 1853

- Americans of the 1800s believed in "Manifest Destiny," the idea that America had the right to move west and the responsibility to bring democracy and self-government across the continent. While moving west, America purchased land, fought two wars with Mexico, and displaced the Native American population. The relentless push to settle the west led to thousands of explorers and pioneers trekking across the continent as America achieved its goal of expanding from Atlantic to Pacific.

8. The Worlds of the North and the South: 1800 – 1850s

- While Americans moved west, the northern and the southern states developed different economic and social systems. The north became industrialized and urban, while the south maintained an agricultural economy and slavery. Eventually, differences between the north and south, especially over slavery, would lead to conflict and war. At the same time, many Americans attempted to reform society, especially in movements to end slavery and gain rights for women.

9. A Dividing Nation: Countdown to Civil War: 1820s - 1860s

- Conflict over slavery and the movement of slaves into the new western territories led to the deadliest war in American history: The Civil War. The war was fought between north and south, and became a conflict to see if American democracy could survive. The north won the Civil War, preserving the United States and finally ending the shameful institution of slavery. The war caused horrible destruction and death, forever changing the history of the United States.

10. Post Civil War: Reconstruction: 1860s – 1870s

- After the Civil War the United States had to rebuild and reunite the nation. Reconstruction was meant to bring the southern states back into America. Over time, the process reunified the country, but led to segregation and discrimination for African-Americans across the south for years to come.