

2016-2017

Middle School World Studies Curriculum

Topic: Civics with a focus on United States Government, comparative government, economics, and human rights
Instructor: Andrew Loeffler

- The goal in social studies is to support the civic competence of the students through knowledge of our world, historic understanding, critical thinking, multiple perspectives, and community service.
- This year, students will examine the organization and roles of the political, legal, and economic systems in the United States. Students will learn the structure of the U.S. Government, as well as research and compare various governmental structures present around the world. Through the understanding of political, legal, and economic structures, students will consider human rights around the world.
- Students will learn about the differences in economic, legal, and political systems around the world. They will focus on current events that help create the political, social, and economic climate of the world today.
- There will be a focus on National History Day projects. This begins as a research paper in September, and will later be transitioned into a History Day project later in the year. This year's theme is **Taking a Stand in History**. Every student is expected to create a History Day project, though he or she may choose whether to compete in the competition or not.

Calendar: We will focus on the following topics throughout the year (this list may be subject to change):

August-September	September-November	December
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Foundations of Citizenship• History and fundamental principles of U.S. constitutional government• Bill of Rights and Amendments• National History Day Research Project	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Rights, Duties, and Responsibilities of Citizens• Structure of the Federal government• The Legislative and Executive Branches• Elections and Political Parties	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The Judicial Branch• Checks and Balances• State and Local Governments
January-February	March-April	April-May
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Foundations and Principles of Economics• Government and the Economy• Economic and Government systems around the world	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The American Legal System• Civil Justice• Human Rights	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Comparative World Government• The United States and the World• The United Nations• Human Rights

National History Day Research Project Overview:

- Topic choice and narrowed focus
- Research using multiple secondary sources
- Research using primary sources
- Organization of research notes
- Critical analysis of information and thesis generation: essay
- Creation of NHD project conforming to rules
- Presentation of NHD project (competition optional)

Social Studies Skills Focus

The students will study and practice the following skills during the course of the year:

- analyze and interpret historical documents
- consider and share different perspectives and opinions when discussing current and historical events
- develop geographic knowledge of the world today
- develop an understanding of the current events that shape the political, social, scientific, and economic climate of the world today
- take notes from class lectures, peer presentations, and readings
- present information in a variety of forms including posters, power-point presentations, essays, research papers, oral presentations, dramatizations, and other creative projects that will be evaluated
- recall and analyze course content for assessments
- participate in projects, discussions, roleplays, and creating media relating to relevant course topics
- study for and take quizzes and tests that have a variety of formats including multiple choice, matching, fill-in, short answer, essay, and true / false

Writing in Social Studies

Students will be doing a variety of writing throughout the year. Students will write weekly summaries of current event articles with a justification statement regarding the event's significance. There will be research assignments where the students write short expository essays on their findings as well as persuasive essays. Students will be expected to use MLA format and will be graded on standard grammar, organization, spelling, word choice, as well as accurate and informative content. There will be short answer and essay questions on tests as well.

Social Studies Grading Policy

The following shows the categories and weightings used to generate trimester and year-end grades for students:

Organization:	5%
In Class Participation:	10%
Homework Scores:	20%
Quiz and Minor Project Performance:	25%
Test and Major Project Performance:	40%