

8th Grade American Online School

SOCIAL SCIENCES CURRICULUM

Power, People, and Progress: Understanding the Past to Shape the Future

Version May/2025

1. Introduction

The Role of Social Sciences Education in 8th Grade

The 8th Grade Social Science curriculum integrates U.S. history, world history, geography, and civics to equip students with a deeper understanding of political systems, global interdependence, and the power of social movements. Through analysis of historical documents, civic institutions, and global case studies, students build critical thinking and media literacy skills while reflecting on their identity as informed citizens in an evolving world.

By the end of this course, students will:

- ✓ Understand the foundations and functions of democratic government.
- ✓ Analyze key events in U.S. and world history from industrialization to World War II.
- ✓ Interpret geographic and environmental systems through spatial data.
- ✓ Connect historical narratives across continents, cultures, and eras.
- ✓ Investigate ethical and civic dilemmas using historical sources.
- ✓ Engage in thoughtful dialogue and debate about past and present societal challenges.

2. Core Competence Areas

SoSCI.1 U.S. Civics and Constitutional Foundations

Learning Outcomes

By the end of this course, students will be able to:

- ✓ Explain the principles and structure of the U.S. Constitution.
- ✓ Analyze government systems across federal, state, and local levels.
- ✓ Reflect on citizenship and civic engagement in a democracy.

Competencies

SoSCI.1.A.1 – Explaining foundational principles such as separation of powers and federalism.

SoSCI.1.A.2 – Comparing roles and powers of the three government branches.

SoSCI.1.A.3 – Identifying civic responsibilities and rights of American citizens.

SoSCI.1.A.4 – Interpreting key texts such as the Declaration of Independence and Federalist Papers.

SoSCI.1.A.5 – Evaluating the importance of youth civic participation.

SoSCI.2 U.S. and World History: 19th to 20th Century

Learning Outcomes

By the end of this unit, students will be able to:

- ✓ Describe major social, political, and economic developments.
- ✓ Analyze causes and effects of conflict and reform movements.
- ✓ Connect historical moments to global shifts in power and ideology

Competencies

SoSCI.2.A.1 – Analyzing industrialization and its effects on labor, economy, and environment.

SoSCI.2.A.2 – Identifying causes and alliances that led to World War I.

SoSCI.2.A.3 – Describing the interwar period and the rise of authoritarian

regimes.

SoSCI.2.A.4 – Evaluating World War II’s global impact, including the Holocaust.

SoSCI.2.A.5 – Exploring global and domestic civil rights movements and postwar realignments.

SoSCI.3 Africa in Global Context

Learning Outcomes

By the end of this unit, students will be able to:

- ✓ Understand African geography and its global significance.
- ✓ Evaluate the impact of imperialism and colonial resistance.
- ✓ Analyze historical continuities and post-colonial developments.

Competencies

SoSCI.3.A.1 – Describing Africa’s physical geography, climate, and cultural diversity.

SoSCI.3.A.2 – Analyzing the effects of European imperialism on borders and conflict.

SoSCI.3.A.3 – Investigating resistance movements and the process of decolonization.

SoSCI.3.A.4 – Connecting historical legacies to present-day political and economic challenges.

SoSCI.4 Geography and Global Systems

Learning Outcomes

By the end of this unit, students will be able to:

- ✓ Interpret and apply spatial reasoning tools.
- ✓ Analyze interactions between people and their environments.
- ✓ Examine globalization, migration, and resource interdependence.

Competencies

SoSCI.4.A.1 – Creating and interpreting thematic and political maps.

SoSCI.4.A.2 – Describing human-environment interaction in various regions.

SoSCI.4.A.3 – Exploring global networks of trade, migration, and environmental impact.

SoSCI.5 Historical Thinking and Inquiry Skills

Learning Outcomes

By the end of this unit, students will be able to:

- ✓ Evaluate sources and contextualize historical events.
- ✓ Trace cause and effect across time periods.
- ✓ Construct arguments and narratives using evidence.

Competencies

SoSCI.5.A.1 – Asking compelling historical questions and evaluating source credibility.

SoSCI.5.A.2 – Analyzing short- and long-term historical consequences.

SoSCI.5.A.3 – Writing and presenting arguments supported by multiple sources.

SoSCI.5.A.4 – Organizing historical events using timelines and comparative tools.

3. Assessment and Evaluation

Formative Assessments – Checking Progress Through Interactive Learning

- ✓ Socratic seminars and structured debates.
- ✓ Primary source analysis worksheets.
- ✓ Mapping and annotation tasks.
- ✓ Civic simulation journals.

Summative Assessments – Demonstrating Mastery

- ✓ Research-based essays.
- ✓ Timed DBQs (Document-Based Questions).
- ✓ End-of-unit tests and performance rubrics.
- ✓ Oral or digital presentations.

Performance-Based Assessments – Application and Expression

- ✓ Historical inquiry projects.
- ✓ Multimedia exhibitions (posters, videos, podcasts).
- ✓ Action plans for community or school civic engagement.
- ✓ Digital storytelling and timeline projects.

4. Instructional Strategies for Online Learning

Inquiry-Based and Problem-Based Learning

- ✓ Pose essential questions and allow student-led exploration of topics.
- ✓ Integrate themes from literature, environmental science, and digital literacy.

Project-Based Learning (PBL)

- ✓ Use current events, historical cases, and simulated decision-making activities.

Technology-Integrated Learning

- ✓ Interactive mapping (e.g., ArcGIS, Google Earth), iCivics, and documentary analysis.
- ✓ Online research databases and digital annotation tools.