



Constitution Day

September 17, 2012

The History and Social-Science State Standards for grade 8 are addressed in the following:
PowerPoint Presentation
Discussion Questions & Cases
Student Handouts

- The U.S. Constitution-Real Language
- Significant Supreme Court Decisions
- Bill of Rights

History-Social Science Content Standards: Grade Eight

United States History and Geography: Growth and Conflict

Students in grade eight study the ideas, issues, and events from the framing of the Constitution up to World War I, with an emphasis on America's role in the war. After reviewing the development of America's democratic institutions founded on the Judeo-Christian heritage and English parliamentary traditions, particularly the shaping of the Constitution, students trace the development of American politics, society, culture, and economy and relate them to the emergence of major regional differences. They learn about the challenges facing the new nation, with an emphasis on the causes, course, and consequences of the Civil War. They make connections between the rise of industrialization and contemporary social and economic conditions.

8.1 Students understand the major events preceding the founding of the nation and relate their significance to the development of American constitutional democracy.

1. Analyze the philosophy of government expressed in the Declaration of Independence, with an emphasis on government as a means of securing individual rights (e.g., key phrases such as "all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights").

8.2 Students analyze the political principles underlying the U.S. Constitution and compare the enumerated and implied powers of the federal government.

1. Analyze the Articles of Confederation and the Constitution and the success of each in implementing the ideals of the Declaration of Independence.
2. Evaluate the major debates that occurred during the development of the Constitution and their ultimate resolutions in such areas as shared power among institutions, divided state-federal power, slavery, the rights of individuals and states (later addressed by the addition of the Bill of Rights), and the status of American Indian nations under the commerce clause.

4. Understand the significance of Jefferson's Statute for Religious Freedom as a forerunner of the First Amendment and the origins, purpose, and differing views of the founding fathers on the issue of the separation of church and state.
5. Enumerate the powers of government set forth in the Constitution and the fundamental liberties ensured by the Bill of Rights.
6. Describe the principles of federalism, dual sovereignty, separation of powers, checks and balances, the nature and purpose of majority rule, and the ways in which the American idea of constitutionalism preserves individual rights.

8.3 Students understand the foundation of the American political system and the ways in which citizens participate in it.

1. Describe the basic law-making process and how the Constitution provides numerous opportunities for citizens to participate in the political process and to monitor and influence government (e.g., function of elections, political parties, interest groups).
2. Understand the functions and responsibilities of a free press.

8.11 Students analyze the character and lasting consequences of Reconstruction.

1. Understand the Thirteenth, Fourteenth, and Fifteenth Amendments to the Constitution and analyze their connection to Reconstruction.