



Grade 8 Social Studies Checklist

★ Click [here](#) to make an editable copy of this checklist

Related Schoolwide Learner Outcomes

The Founding of the Nation and Events that led to America's Constitutional Democracy

- ☐ 8.1: I can talk to you about the things that happened before the founding of the nation. I can talk about how these events led to America's constitutional democracy.
- ☐ 8.1.1: I can describe the moral and political ideas that came about during the Great Awakening, as well as the revolutionary excitement of this time.
- ☐ 8.1.2: I can look closely at the idea of government as expressed in the Declaration of Independence. I can explain that the government secures individual rights that cannot be taken away.
- ☐ 8.1.3: I can tell you how the American Revolution affected other countries, especially France.
- ☐ 8.1.4: I can talk about America being a blend of different ideas, including civic republicanism, classical liberal principles, and English parliamentary traditions.

Political Principles Underlying the U.S. Constitution

- ☐ 8.2: I can look closely at the political principles underlying the U.S. Constitution and compare the enumerated (listed) powers to the implied powers of the federal government.
- ☐ 8.2.1: I can tell you why the Magna Carta, the English Bill of Rights, and the Mayflower Compact were important.
- ☐ 8.2.2: I can look closely at the Articles of Confederation and the Constitution to see how successfully each one implemented the ideals of the Declaration of Independence.
- ☐ 8.2.3: I can tell you about the major debates that happened when the Constitution was written. I can tell you that these debates resulted in shared powers among institutions, divided state-federal power, slavery, the rights of individuals and states, and the status of American Indian nations.
- ☐ 8.2.4: I can tell you about the political ideas laid out in the Constitution as stated in the Federalist Papers (by James Madison, Alexander Hamilton, and John Jay). I can tell you why leaders like Madison, George Washington, Roger Sherman, Gouverneur Morris, and James Wilson were important in the writing and approval of the Constitution.
- ☐ 8.2.5: I can understand why Jefferson's Statute for Religious Freedom was an important part of the First Amendment. I know that the founding fathers felt differently about the separation of church and state.
- ☐ 8.2.6: I can explain the powers of government described in the Constitution and the fundamental liberties guaranteed by the Bill of Rights.

- ☐ 8.2.7: I can explain the following: federalism, dual sovereignty, separation of powers, checks and balances, majority rule, and how the idea of constitutionalism preserves individual rights.

Foundation of the American Political System and Citizen Participation

- ☐ 8.3: I can understand the foundation of the American political system and the ways in which citizens participate in it.
- ☐ 8.3.1: I can look closely at the state constitutions that came about between 1777 and 1781. I know that these constitutions influenced American political institutions and ideas.
- ☐ 8.3.2: I can understand that the rulings of 1785 and 1787 made national resources private, and transferred federal land into private holdings, townships, and states.
- ☐ 8.3.3: I can explain the advantages of a common market among the states. I know how the Constitution protected interstate business, common currency, and full faith and credit.
- ☐ 8.3.4: I can explain that the conflicts between Thomas Jefferson and Alexander Hamilton led to the formation of two political parties. I can describe their differing viewpoints about topics such as foreign policy, the Alien and Sedition Acts, National Bank, etc.
- ☐ 8.3.5: I can tell you about resistance movements (like Shays' Rebellion and the Whiskey Rebellion) and how the government responded to these movements.
- ☐ 8.3.6: I can describe the basic law-making process. I can tell you how the Constitution gives many opportunities for citizens to participate in and influence their government.
- ☐ 8.3.7: I can understand the functions and responsibilities of a free press.

Aspirations and Ideals of the People of the New Nation

- ☐ 8.4: I can look closely at the aspirations and ideals of the people of the new nation.
- ☐ 8.4.1: I can talk about the country's physical geography, political divisions, and territorial expansion during the terms of the first four presidents.
- ☐ 8.4.2: I can explain why certain speeches were so significant (Washington's Farewell Address, Jefferson's 1801 Inaugural Address, John Q. Adams's Fourth of July 1821 Address).
- ☐ 8.4.3: I can analyze the rise of capitalism. I know about the economic problems and conflicts that came along with the rise of capitalism.
- ☐ 8.4.4: I can tell you about daily life in early America, including art, music, and literature.

U.S. Foreign Policy in the Early Republic

- ☐ 8.5: I can look closely at U.S. foreign policy in the early Republic.
- ☐ 8.5.1: I can discuss the political and economic causes and consequences of the War of 1812. I know the key battles, leaders, and events that led to peace.

- ☐ 8.5.2: I can discuss the way the boundaries of the United States changed. I can tell you about the relationship the U.S. had with Mexico, Canada, and Europe, and how these relationships influenced westward expansion and the Mexican-American War. I can talk about the influence of the Monroe Doctrine.
- ☐ 8.5.3: I can discuss the treaties that occurred with American Indian nations during the time of the first four presidents, as well as the outcomes of those treaties.

Different Paths and Challenges of the American People from 1800 to the Mid-1800s and the Northeast

- ☐ 8.6: I can look closely at the different paths and challenges of the American people from 1800 to the mid-1800s. I can tell you about the Northeast.
- ☐ 8.6.1: I can talk about the ways that industrialization and technology developed in the Northeast. I can explain how humans changed the land and how the physical geography shaped their actions.
- ☐ 8.6.2: I can tell you about the physical obstacles, economic factors, and political factors that were involved with building roads, canals, and railroads.
- ☐ 8.6.3: I can tell you why people immigrated from Northern Europe to the United States. I can explain how cities were arranged and how they grew.
- ☐ 8.6.4: I can talk about black Americans who became free in the North and founded schools/churches to advance their rights.
- ☐ 8.6.5: I can talk about the progression of the American education system, including the roles of religious and private schools. I can talk about Horace Mann's campaign for free public education, and the way public education became a part of American culture.
- ☐ 8.6.6: I can look closely at the women's suffrage movement, including biographies, writings, and speeches.
- ☐ 8.6.7: I can identify common themes in American art, transcendentalism, and individualism.

Different Paths and Challenges of the American People from 1800 to the Mid-1800s and the South

- ☐ 8.7: I can look closely at the different paths and challenges of the American people from 1800 to the mid-1800s. I can tell you about the South.
- ☐ 8.7.1: I can describe the way the agrarian economy in the South developed. I can point out the cotton-producing states and tell you why cotton and the cotton gin were so important.
- ☐ 8.7.2: I can explain how slavery started and developed. I can tell you how slavery affected black Americans, as well as how it affected the region's political, social, religious, economic, and cultural development of the time. I can talk about strategies that were tried to both keep and overturn slavery.

- ☐ 8.7.3: I can look closely at white Southern society. I can tell you how the physical environment influenced events and conditions before the Civil War.
- ☐ 8.7.4: I can compare the lives of, and opportunities for, free blacks in the North with those of free blacks in the South.

Different Paths and Challenges of the American People from 1800 to the Mid-1800s and the West

- ☐ 8.8: I can look closely at the different paths and challenges of the American people from 1800 to the mid-1800s. I can tell you about the West.
- ☐ 8.8.1: I can tell you about the election of Andrew Jackson, Jacksonian democracy, and Jackson's actions as president.
- ☐ 8.8.2: I can discuss westward expansion, including its purpose, challenges, and economic incentives. I can tell you about Manifest Destiny, Lewis and Clark's expedition, the removal of Indians, the Trail of Tears, the settlement of the Great Plains, and the acquisition of land.
- ☐ 8.8.3: I can tell you about pioneer women and their accomplishments, including what specific pioneer women (Laura Ingalls Wilder, Annie Bidwell, etc.) achieved.
- ☐ 8.8.4: I can look closely at the importance of the great rivers and the struggle over water rights.
- ☐ 8.8.5: I can talk about Mexican settlements and their locations, cultural traditions, attitudes towards slavery, the land-grant system, and economies.
- ☐ 8.8.6: I can tell you about the Texas War for Independence and the Mexican-American War. I can discuss land settlements, what happened after the wars, and the effects the wars had on Americans, including Mexican Americans.

Early Attempts to Abolish Slavery and live up to the ideals stated in the Declaration of Independence

- ☐ 8.9: I can look closely at early attempts to abolish slavery and live up to the ideals stated in the Declaration of Independence.
- ☐ 8.9.1: I can tell you about the leaders who worked as abolitionists, including John Quincy Adams, John Brown, Harriet Tubman, Benjamin Franklin, Theodore Weld, William Lloyd Garrison, and Frederick Douglass.
- ☐ 8.9.2: I can talk about the abolition of slavery in early state constitutions.
- ☐ 8.9.3: I can tell you how the Northwest Ordinance was important in education and in the banning of slavery in new states north of the Ohio River.
- ☐ 8.9.4: I can talk about how slavery was addressed by the annexation of Texas and California's admission to the union as a free state under the Compromise of 1850.
- ☐ 8.9.5: I can tell you why the following were important: the States' Rights Doctrine, the Missouri Compromise, the Wilmot Proviso, the Compromise of 1850, Henry Clay, the Kansas-Nebraska Act, the Dred Scott v. Sandford decision, and the Lincoln-Douglas debates.

- ☐ 8.9.6 I can discuss the lives of free blacks. I can tell you the laws that limited their freedom and economic opportunities.

Causes, Events, and Consequences of the Civil War

- ☐ 8.10: I can look closely at the causes, events, and consequences of the Civil War.
- ☐ 8.10.1: I can compare different interpretations of state and federal authority that were spoken and written about by statesmen like Daniel Webster and John C. Calhoun.
- ☐ 8.10.2: I can point out the boundaries between the North and the South. I can tell you about their geographical differences, and the differences between agrarians and industrialists.
- ☐ 8.10.3: I can point out the origins and constitutional issues raised by the doctrine of nullification and secession.
- ☐ 8.10.4: I can talk about Abraham Lincoln's presidency. I can tell you about his important writings/speeches like the "House Divided" speech, the Gettysburg Address, the Emancipation Proclamation, and his inaugural addresses, including how each of these related to the Declaration of Independence.
- ☐ 8.10.5: I can tell you about the lives of leaders and soldiers on both sides of the Civil War (Ulysses S. Grant, Jefferson Davis, Robert E. Lee, black soldiers, etc.).
- ☐ 8.10.6: I can describe key events in the Civil War (important battles, geographical advantages, and obstacles, technological advances, and General Lee's surrender at Appomattox).
- ☐ 8.10.7: I can explain how the war affected soldiers, civilians, the environment, and future warfare.

Character and Consequences of Reconstruction

- ☐ 8.11: I can look closely at the character and consequences of Reconstruction.
- ☐ 8.11.1: I can discuss the goals of Reconstruction and how it affected the politics and social structures of different regions.
- ☐ 8.11.2: I can tell you why former slaves moved to cities in the North and West and how their experiences differed in those regions.
- ☐ 8.11.3: I can tell you about the effects of the Freedman's Bureau. I can talk about restrictions placed on freedmen, racial segregation, and "Jim Crow" laws.
- ☐ 8.11.4: I can talk about the rise of the Ku Klux Klan and its effects.
- ☐ 8.11.5: I can understand the Thirteenth, Fourteenth, and Fifteenth Amendments to the Constitution and show their connection to Reconstruction.

The Industrial Revolution and how it changed the American Economy, Social Conditions, and Political Conditions

- ☐ 8.12: I can look closely at the Industrial Revolution, including how it changed the American economy, social conditions, and political conditions.
- ☐ 8.12.1: I can explain how agricultural and industrial development were related to climate, natural resources, markets, and trade. I can point out this development on a map.
- ☐ 8.12.2: I can tell you why federal Indian policy developed. I can explain why wars with American Indians occurred, and how these were related to agricultural development and industrialization.
- ☐ 8.12.3: I can explain how states and the federal government encouraged business growth through tariffs, banking, land grants, and subsidies.
- ☐ 8.12.4: I can tell you about important entrepreneurs, industrialists, and bankers of the time (Andrew Carnegie, John D. Rockefeller, and Leland Stanford).
- ☐ 8.12.5: I can look closely at the location and effects of urbanization, immigration, and industrialization.
- ☐ 8.12.6: I can tell you about child labor, working conditions, and laissez-faire policies towards big business. I can talk about the labor movement and its important leaders (Samuel Gompers), the demand for collective bargaining, and strikes/protests.
- ☐ 8.12.7: I can point out where new immigrants came from and how they contributed to the building of cities and the economy. I can explain how immigrants were encouraged to assimilate into the mainstream. I can describe nativism.
- ☐ 8.12.8: I can tell you what Grangerism and Populism were and explain their impact.
- ☐ 8.12.9: I can name important inventors and inventions, and how they improved the quality of life (Thomas Edison, Alexander Graham Bell, and Orville and Wilbur Wright).