



# Southmoreland School District

## 8th Grade American Cultures Curriculum Overview

### **American Cultures Overview:**

Eighth grade American Cultures is a comprehensive study of the history of America from the beginning until the Civil War. Main areas of focus include the colonization of America, the American Revolution, the creation of the United States government, the first Industrial Revolution, the spreading of our nation, and the causes of the Civil War. Overall, the goals for this course are to gain a better understanding of our country's history, and to learn what it means to be an American citizen.

### **Module Titles:**

**Module 1: The Americas: Worlds Meet: Beginnings to 1770**

**Module 2: Growing a Nation: 1763-1790**

**Module 3: Launching the Republic: 1789-1825**

**Module 4: Nationalism and Sectionalism: 1820-1853**

**Module 5: The Age of Reform and Toward Civil War: 1820-1861**

### **Module Overviews:**

**Module 1: The Americas: Worlds Meet: Beginnings to 1770**

In this module, students will learn about the arrival of the first Americans, and the development of Native American cultural regions (prehistory to 1492). They will discover the reasons behind the "Age of Exploration" and learn about the key people that explored the Americas (1400-1625). Lastly, the students will focus on colonial America (1587-1770) and the growth of the thirteen English colonies (1607-1770). During this final topic, students will also learn about the French and Indian War (1754-1763).

**Module 2: Growing a Nation: 1763-1790**

In this module, students will learn about the events leading up to the American Revolution (1776-1783). They will study the American Revolution and learn about the key figures, causes, events, and battles related to the war (1776-1783). Students will wrap up the module by discovering how the United States faced many difficulties as a young nation (1777-1790).



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### **Module 3: Launching the Republic: 1789-1825**

The students will learn about the domestic and international situations that the first five presidents (George Washington, John Adams, Thomas Jefferson, James Madison, and James Monroe) faced in this module. This module will be divided into three topics: the Federalist Era (1789-1800), the Jefferson Era (1800-1816), and Growth and Expansion (1790-1825). The War of 1812 is a significant event covered during the last topic.

### **Module 4: Nationalism and Sectionalism: 1820-1853**

This module will cover two areas of American history. The Jackson Era (1824-1845) focuses on the changes that begin to occur in the political atmosphere of the United States and how those changes impacted the U.S. government. The presidencies of John Q. Adams, Andrew Jackson, Martin Van Buren, William Henry Harrison, and John Tyler will be highlighted. Manifest Destiny (1818-1853) will be the second major topic in this module. Students will learn about how the country rapidly grew through compromises and war; specifically the Mexican-American War (1846-1848). James K. Polk's presidency will wrap up this module.

### **Module 5: The Age of Reform and Toward Civil War: 1820-1861**

In the final module, students will take a close look at the "Age of Reform" and the differences between the North and the South (1820-1861). Students will examine how the North and South differed economically, politically, and by their population both ethnically and in size. The presidencies of Zachary Taylor, Millard Fillmore, Franklin Pierce, and James Buchanan will be covered in this module, as well as the election of Abraham Lincoln. The students will also discover how the "Age of Reform" will create unique priorities in different parts of the country. Ultimately this module will end with the first battle of the Civil War at Ft. Sumter in April 1861.