

# Course Syllabus

## Social Studies, Social Studies-Grade 8

Morgan County Curriculum 4.1 Middle Sch., Final  
Morgan County School District

### Government & Civics [30%]

- The learner will be able to compare purposes and sources of power in the most common forms of government (monarchy, democracy, republic).
- The learner will be able to describe and give examples to support how democratic governments in the United States prior to Reconstruction functioned to preserve and protect the rights (e.g., voting) liberty, and property of their citizens by making, enacting, and enforcing appropriate rules and laws (e.g., constitutions, laws, statutes).
- The learner will be able to describe and give examples of the ways the Constitution of the United States is a document that can be changed from time to time through both formal and informal processes (e.g., amendments, court cases, executive actions) to meet the needs of its citizens.
- The learner will be able to identify the three branches of government, describe their functions and analyze and give examples of the ways the U.S. Constitution separates power among the legislative, executive, and judicial branches to prevent the concentration of political power and to establish a system of checks and balances.
- The learner will be able to explain the reasons why the powers of the state and national/federal governments are sometimes shared and sometimes separate (federalism) and give examples of shared and separate powers.
- The learner will be able to explain and give examples of how significant United States documents (Declaration of Independence, Constitution, Bill of Rights) established democratic principles and guaranteed certain rights for all citizens.
- The learner will be able to explain and give examples of how, in order for the U.S. government to function as a democracy, citizens must assume responsibilities (e.g., participating in community activities, voting in elections) and duties (e.g., obeying the law, paying taxes, serving on jury, registering for the military).

### Culture & Society [10%]

- The learner will be able to explain how the elements of culture (e.g., language, the arts, customs, beliefs, literature) defined specific groups in the United States prior to Reconstruction and resulted in unique perspectives.
- The learner will be able to compare how cultures (United States prior to Reconstruction) developed social institutions (family, religion, education, government, economy) to respond to human needs, structure society, and influence behavior.
- The learner will be able to explain how conflict and competition (e.g., political, economic, religious, ethnic) conflict among individuals and groups in the United States prior to Reconstruction.
- The learner will be able to explain how compromise and cooperation were possible choices to resolve conflict among individuals and groups in the United States prior to Reconstruction.

### Economics [10%]

- The learner will be able to explain and give examples of how scarcity requires individuals, groups, and the government in the United States prior to Reconstruction to make decisions about how productive resources (natural resources, human resources, and capital goods) were used.
- The learner will be able to identify how financial decisions (considering-finance and opportunity cost) by individuals and groups impacted historical events in the U.S. History prior to Reconstruction.
- The learner will be able to describe the economic system that developed in the United States prior to Reconstruction.
- The learner will be able to explain how profit motivated individuals and groups to take risks in producing goods and services in the early United States prior to Reconstruction and influenced the growth of free enterprise system.

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- The learner will be able to explain how in the United States prior to Reconstruction, the prices of goods and services were determined by supply and demand.
- The learner will be able to explain how money (unit of account) was used to express the market value of goods and services and how money made it easier to trade, borrow, invest, and save in the United States prior to Reconstruction.
- The learner will be able to explain how competition among buyers and sellers impacted the price of goods and services in the United States prior to Reconstruction.
- The learner will be able to explain ways in which the basic economic questions about the production, distribution, and consumption of goods and services were addressed in the United States prior to reconstruction.
- The learner will be able to describe how new knowledge, technology/tools, and specialization increased productivity in the United States prior to Reconstruction.
- The learner will be able to explain how personal, national, and international economic activities are interdependent in the United States prior to Reconstruction.
- The learner will be able to explain how places and regions in the United States prior to Reconstruction changed over time as technologies, resources, and knowledge became available.
- The learner will be able to describe patterns of human settlement in the United States prior to Reconstruction and explain how these patterns were influenced by human needs.
- The learner will be able to explain why and give examples of how human populations changed and/or migrated because of factors such as war, disease, economic opportunity, and technology in the United States prior to Reconstruction.
- The learner will be able to explain how technology in the United States prior to Reconstruction assisted human modification of the physical environment (e.g., irrigation, clearing land, building roads).
- The learner will be able to describe ways in which the physical environment (e.g., natural resources, physical geography, natural disasters) both promoted and limited human activities (e.g., exploration, migration, trade, settlement, development) in the United States prior to Reconstruction.
- The learner will be able to explain how the natural resources of a place or region impacted its political, social, and economic development in the United States prior to Reconstruction.
- The learner will be able to compare and contrast different perspectives (viewpoints) that people had about how to use land (e.g., farming, industrial, residential, recreational) in the United States prior to Reconstruction.

### Geography [15%]

- The learner will be able to use a variety of geographic tools (maps, globes, photographs, models, charts, graphs, and databases) to interpret patterns and locations on Earth's surface in the United States History prior to Reconstruction.
- The learner will be able to describe how different factors (e.g., rivers, mountains, plains, harbors) affected where human activities were located in the United States prior to reconstruction.
- The learner will be able to describe how regions in the U.S. prior to Reconstruction were made distinctive by human characteristics (e.g., dams, roads, urban centers) and physical characteristics (e.g., mountains, bodies of water) that create advantages and disadvantages for

### Historical Perspective [35%]

- The learner will be able to use a variety of tools (e.g., primary and secondary sources) to describe and explain historical events and conditions, and to analyze the perspectives of different individuals and groups (e.g., gender, race, region, ethnic group, age, economic

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status, religion, political group) in the U.S. prior Reconstruction.

- The learner will be able to explain how history is a series of connected events shaped by multiple cause-and-effect relationships and give examples of those relationships.
- The learner will be able to explain events and conditions that led to the "Great Convergence" of European, African, and Native American people beginning in the late 15th century, and analyze how America's diverse society developed as a result of these events.
- The learner will be able to explain and give examples of how the ideals of examples and personal liberty (rise of individual rights, economic freedom, religious diversity) that developed during the colonial period, were motivations for the American Revolution and proved instrumental in forging a new nation.
- The learner will be able to explain how the growth of democracy and geographic expansion occurred and were significant to the development of the United States prior to Reconstruction.
- The learner will be able to describe the political, social, economic, and cultural differences (e.g., slavery, tariffs, industrialism vs. agrarianism, federal vs. states' rights) among sections of the U.S. and explain how these differences resulted in the American Civil War.