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# Grade 8

In Grade 8, students study the history of the United States from the early colonial period through Reconstruction. The knowledge and skills in subsection (b) of this section comprise the first part of a two-year study of U.S. history. The second part, comprising U.S. history since Reconstruction to the present, is provided in §113.32 of this title (relating to United States History Studies Since Reconstruction [One Credit]). The content builds upon that from Grade 5 but provides more depth and breadth. Historical content focuses on the political, economic, and social events and issues related to the colonial and revolutionary eras, the creation and ratification of the U.S. Constitution, challenges of the early Republic, westward expansion, sectionalism, Civil War, and Reconstruction. Students describe the physical characteristics of the United States and their impact on population distribution and settlement patterns in the past and present. Students analyze the various economic factors that influenced the development of colonial America and the early years of the Republic and identify the origins of the free enterprise system. Students examine the American beliefs and principles, including limited government, checks and balances, federalism, separation of powers, and individual rights reflected in the U.S. Constitution and other historical documents. Students evaluate the impact of Supreme Court cases and major reform movements of the 19th Century and examine the rights and responsibilities of citizens of the United States as well as the importance of effective leadership in a democratic society. Students evaluate the impact of scientific discoveries and technological innovations on the development of the United States. Students use critical-thinking skills, including identifying bias in written, oral, and visual material.

To support the teaching of the essential knowledge and skills, the use of a variety of rich primary and secondary source material such as the complete text of the U.S. Constitution and the Declaration of Independence, landmark cases of the U.S. Supreme Court, biographies and autobiographies, novels, speeches, letters, and diaries, and poetry, songs, and artworks is encouraged. Selections may include excerpts from the letters of John and Abigail Adams, an excerpt from the Seneca Falls Declaration of Sentiments and Resolutions, and poems of the Civil War era. Motivating resources are also available from museums, historical sites, presidential libraries, and local and state preservation societies.

**Samuel Adams** (1722-1803) Born into a Boston family with a heritage of municipal involvement, Samuel Adams naturally became involved in local politics. He was opposed to British taxation in the colonies and believed that the colonial government was capable of self-rule without intrusion by the British monarchy. Adams encouraged cooperation among the colonies by generating and circulating correspondence as the clerk of the Massachusetts General Assembly. He published British documents and decrees for the edifica-

tion of the colonists. Adams played a role in many of the events which contributed to the Revolution including organized opposition to the Stamp Act, protests waged by the Sons of Liberty, and the Boston Massacre. He participated in the Continental Congress and supported the Constitution subject to the addition of the Bill of Rights.

**John C. Calhoun** (1782-1850) John C. Calhoun raised issues which highlighted sectional conflicts and presaged

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the coming of the Civil War. Born in South Carolina, Calhoun served as Secretary of War, Secretary of State, and as Vice-President to two presidents, John Quincy Adams and Andrew Jackson. He supported a system of national improvements to support growth and increase commerce and communication, but by the late 1820s he switched his opinion to favor states' rights. He was an eloquent spokesman for increasing the authority of states, and he led opposition in South Carolina to the protective Tariff of 1828. During 1832, delegates to a state convention in South Carolina declared the tariff null and void in the state and threatened to secede from the union if federal representatives used force to collect duties. Jackson responded to the Nullification Crisis by sending reinforcements and speaking out against the right of any state to ignore a federal law. The crisis ended without incident and Calhoun preserved his status in state politics. He continued to represent South Carolina in the U.S. Senate until his death. In 1860, South Carolina became the first state to secede from the union.

**Henry Clay (1771-1852)** Henry Clay was known as the "Great Compromiser" for his ability to smooth sectional conflict through balanced legislation. First a senator and then a representative to the U.S. Congress from Kentucky, Clay served as Speaker of the House for the majority of his 13 years of service. He favored internal improvements and westward expansion. He sponsored the Missouri Compromise in 1820, admitting Missouri as a slave state and Maine as a free state, preserving the United States for the moment. He also proposed measures which stilled the Nullification Crisis in 1832. He returned to the Senate in 1831 as a Whig and served 11 more years. He died in office during his final term (1849-52).

**Jefferson Davis (1808-1889)** President of the Confederate States of America, Jefferson Davis was educated at West Point and served on the frontier during the 1830s. He also volunteered in the Mexican War. He represented Mississippi in both the U.S. House of Representatives and the Senate and was Secretary of War from 1853 to 1857. He was appointed provisional president and then was elected president of the confederacy. He was demanding, did not tolerate disagreement, interfered in military matters, and did not select effective subordinates. Regardless, he managed to hold the Confederacy together despite the lack of consensus among Southerners. He supported the confederate cause after the war, writing a two-volume history, *The Rise and Fall of the Confederate Government*.

**Frederick Douglass (ca. 1817-1895)** Frederick Douglass was a leading African-American abolitionist in the nineteenth century who captivated his audiences with his strong presence. Born a slave in Tuckahoe, Maryland, Douglass escaped in 1838 to New Bedford, Massachusetts.

He subscribed to *The Liberator*, the publication of abolitionist William Lloyd Garrison, and began lecturing for Garrison on the abolitionist movement in 1841. Douglass was an accomplished orator and writer, both of which developed from his involvement with abolition. His most famous book is his autobiography, *The Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass: An American Slave*, published in 1845. He purchased his freedom in 1847 and continued to speak to issues of civil rights and human freedom until his death.

**Benjamin Franklin (1706-1790)** Benjamin Franklin was born in Boston in 1706, the fifteenth child of a candlemaker. He became a well-known printer in Philadelphia and an active leader in the city. He published *Poor Richard's Almanack* between 1732 and 1758 and his *Autobiography* in 1818. Through these he gained literary distinction. In the *Almanack* he shared with readers bits of wisdom and pithy sayings which helped shape the American character. He founded the first privately supported circulating library in America, in Philadelphia. Franklin was a member of the committee which wrote the Declaration of Independence but spent most of the period of the American Revolution in France. He represented the colonies as the American envoy starting in 1776 and remained until 1785. He negotiated the alliance with France and then the Treaty of Paris which ended the war. He also participated in the U.S. Constitutional Convention in 1787 and earned distinction as the oldest delegate in attendance.

Franklin's many talents earned him a reputation as "the first civilized American." In addition to his political activities, he supported education and was considered a gifted scientist without peer in the colonies. He proved that lightning was a form of electricity, a discovery that earned him international fame. He also invented bifocal glasses, lightning rods, and the Franklin stove.

**King George III (1738-1820)** George III became King of England in 1760, determined to re-assert the constitutional power of the monarchy. He was conservative and moral, and his reign of more than 40 years oversaw considerable political, economic, social, and cultural change. When he was crowned king, Britain was involved in the Seven Years' War (1756-1763). England acquired a large amount of territory in North America and India when the peace treaty was signed with France and Spain. The American Revolution concerned George III and his followers because they feared that the loss of one group of colonies would lead to the loss of others and the eventual decline of the empire. To prevent this the Crown maintained an aggressive policy against colonial resistance. George III struggled to enforce royal authority throughout his reign. After his first attack of mental illness in 1788 he became increasingly dependent on parliament. By 1811 he was permanently insane and his son, the Prince of Wales, acted as regent. Upon George III's death in 1820, his eldest son, George IV, assumed the throne.

**Ulysses S. Grant** (1822-1885) The eighteenth president, Ulysses S. Grant gained notoriety as commander of the Union army during the Civil War. He graduated from West Point, served in the Mexican War, and then resigned from the military after serving in posts on the west coast. He was commissioned as a colonel at the start of the Civil War. By September 1861 he was promoted to general. After a series of victories, including the capture of Vicksburg, Lincoln gave him command of the Union army. He created an overall plan concentrated on Sherman's march through Georgia and his own assault on the Confederate army in Virginia. Grant accepted Lee's surrender in 1865, ending the war. His popularity after the war and the voters' disillusionment with professional politicians following the Andrew Johnson administration led Republicans to nominate Grant for the presidency in 1868. He wanted peace, not continued military reconstruction in the South, but he was unprepared to serve as president. He managed to maintain his personal integrity despite the scandals which racked his administration.

**Alexander Hamilton** (1755-1804) Born on Nevis in the British West Indies, Alexander Hamilton was intelligent and decisive, characteristics which earned him the support of patrons who sent him to the American colonies for his education. He became involved in the Revolution and enlisted in the New York militia in 1776 becoming Washington's aide-de-camp. He married into one of New York's wealthiest families, practiced law, served as a delegate to four Continental Congresses, represented New York in the Philadelphia Convention of 1787, and co-wrote *The Federalist*. Hamilton supported a strong national government and ratification of the Constitution. As the first secretary of the treasury, he established a mint and supported development of a national bank, the Bank of the United States. The Federalist party developed around his approach to managing government.

**Patrick Henry** (1736-1799) Born in Virginia, Patrick Henry taught himself law and developed a promising career. He entered the Virginia House of Burgesses in 1765 and quickly influenced the colonial resistance to British taxation without representation. He was a member of the First Continental Congress in Philadelphia in 1774. In March 1775, in an impassioned speech to the Virginia House of Burgesses, he stated: "Is life so dear or peace so sweet as to be purchased at the price of chains and slavery? Forbid it, Almighty God! I know not what course others may take, but as for me, give me liberty, or give me death!" He was active in Virginia politics, serving as the first governor of the new commonwealth. He did not participate in the Constitutional Convention, and he opposed ratification because of the potential limitations to the rights of states.

**Thomas Jefferson** (1743-1826) The third president, Thomas Jefferson was a founding father and principal author of the Declaration of Independence which rationalized the break with Britain. He also approved the Louisiana Purchase which nearly doubled the area controlled by the United States. Jefferson was born into the Virginia planter class, attended private schools, and entered the Virginia House of Burgesses in 1769. By 1774 he owned 10,000 acres and more than 200 slaves. That same year he wrote the first of many influential political pamphlets. He became an early and effective leader in the American Revolution. He was a delegate to the Continental Congress in Philadelphia and in 1776 he was a member of the committee which wrote the Declaration of Independence. He drafted a plan to organize the territories of the expanding United States, a system based on rectangular surveys. His plan to bar slavery from the territories was incorporated into the Northwest Ordinance of 1787, but Jefferson owned slaves until he died.

In 1785 he replaced Benjamin Franklin as minister to France and was in France when the U.S. Constitution was drafted. Jefferson served as Secretary of State under President George Washington. By 1793, he and James Madison organized opposition to the Federalist's plan for national economic development and foreign entanglements with England. The Republicans emerged to provide an outlet for citizens to oppose office holders they disagreed with and to elect replacements which shared their own concerns. Thus the first political system developed. The Republicans favored state's rights in government in opposition to the strong central government favored by Federalists. Jefferson expressed his concerns about this in the Kentucky Resolutions, written in 1798. Jefferson ran for president in 1796, but earned only enough votes to serve as vice-president to Federalist John Adams. In 1800 Jefferson was elected president and served two terms. He maintained peace and encouraged westward expansion during the first term, completing the Louisiana Purchase from Napoleon in 1803. Foreign affairs clouded his second term as France and England both refused to recognize that the United States was neutral. Jefferson imposed the unpopular Embargo Act of 1807 which paralyzed trade for over one year. It was repealed by Congress days before James Madison assumed the presidency. Jefferson and John Adams both died on July 4, 1826, the fiftieth anniversary of the Declaration of Independence.

**Andrew Jackson** (1767-1845) Andrew Jackson, known as "Old Hickory," contributed to the democratic spirit in America, becoming the symbol of the common man's rise from meager origins to positions of prominence. Born in South Carolina of Irish parents, Jackson was orphaned by age 14. He became a lawyer after apprenticing in a North Carolina firm and traveled to Tennessee in 1788 to earn a living. He rose to national prominence during the War of 1812 as a military leader who challenged the Creek Indians in Alabama, and who fended off the British in the Battle of

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New Orleans. He ran for the presidency in 1824 but was not elected. By 1828, however, a political revolution had occurred and the electorate more than doubled. In an infectious democratic spirit, Jackson was elected in a landslide.

Since the American Revolution, Congress had dominated the federal government, but Jackson favored a powerful presidency. His style of government based in popular support became known as Jacksonian Democracy. He increased the control of the executive branch of government thereby starting a trend toward centralized government. His negotiations of foreign policy generally pleased Europeans, but many in the United States criticized the President for the power he assumed. His Indian Removal Act of 1830 forced the relocation of Native Americans from Florida, Georgia, Tennessee, Alabama, and Mississippi to open these lands for white settlement. More than 100,000 Indians moved over a ten-year period in a process known as the “Trail of Tears.” Jackson appointed political allies to positions in his government, a process called the “spoils system,” and vetoed more bills in his two terms as president than all previous presidents combined.

**John Paul Jones (1747-1792)** John Paul Jones is considered the founder of the U.S. Navy. Born John Paul in Scotland, he was apprenticed to a merchant trading in the West Indies and American Colonies. He changed his name to Jones following the murder of a crew member on his merchant vessel in 1773. He was daring and volatile and led raids on British vessels during the American Revolution. In 1779 he commanded the *Bonhomme Richard* and engaged the British vessel, the *Serapis*, in battle. When the *Serapis* captain asked Jones if he was prepared to surrender, Jones replied, “I have not yet begun to fight.” True to his word, Jones and crew defeated the British, an event which marked the high point of his career.

**Marquis de Lafayette (1757-1834)** Marquis de Lafayette was a French aristocrat who played a leading role in two revolutions in France and in the American Revolution. He respected the concepts of liberty and freedom and constitutional government. Between 1776 and 1779 he fought in the American Revolution, commanding forces as a major-general in the colonial army. He returned to France in 1785 convinced of the value of governmental reform. In 1789, as a member of the Second Estate, the nobility in France, he drafted a version of the Declaration of the Rights of Man and Citizens, which served as the preamble to the French Constitution of 1791. In it, he declared that all men were created equal but that some were meant to govern, and they had a responsibility to protect the common good. His proposed government was divided into executive, legislative, and judicial branches. In 1789 at the start of a revolution, King Louis XVI appointed Lafayette to command the National Guard of Paris. In effect, Lafayette ruled Paris. He worked with the National Assembly of France to complete

the Constitution of 1791. Lafayette opposed Napoleon’s government and rejoined French politics following the Battle of Waterloo and the exile of the emperor. He toured the United States with his son Georges Washington de Lafayette for a year, 1824-5. He returned to lead the French National Guard in the Revolution of 1830 after which he retired from public life, “a hero of two worlds.”

**Robert E. Lee (1807-1870)** Lee gained recognition for his military leadership during the Civil War. A soldier who graduated second in his class at West Point, Lee served in the Mexican War and worked as an engineer with the Army Corps of Engineers. When the South seceded, Lincoln offered Lee the command of Union forces but Lee refused, resigned from the U.S. Army, and returned to Virginia to serve with the Confederate forces. In 1862 Lee was appointed to command the Army of Northern Virginia. His battle strategies are admired to this day, but he was criticized for having a narrow strategy centered on his native Virginia. He surrendered to Ulysses S. Grant at Appomattox Courthouse in 1865. Following the war he urged southerners to pledge allegiance to the north and rebuild the nation. He became president of William and Lee University in Virginia and died there.

**Abraham Lincoln (1809-1865)** Abraham Lincoln served as president of the United States during the Civil War. He managed to preserve the unity of the United States and took steps to abolish slavery, but he was assassinated before he could implement post-war plans. He began his political career by serving four terms in the Illinois state legislature beginning in 1834. He served one term as representative from Illinois to the U.S. House of Representatives. He was elected the sixteenth President in 1860, re-elected in 1864, and assassinated in 1865. He helped build the Republican Party, which replaced the Whig Party in the 1850s, from obscurity to the party of choice by 1860. His Gettysburg Address, delivered in November 1863 at the dedication of the national cemetery at the Civil War battlefield, called for national unity despite obstacles. He began the process of freeing slaves in the Confederate states when he issued his Emancipation Proclamation in 1863.

Lincoln’s most lasting influence remains the Thirteenth Amendment, ratified in December 1865, months after his death. It banned slavery throughout the United States. His likeness is one of four presidents carved into the monument at Mount Rushmore, South Dakota. Presidents’ Day, a federal holiday, occurs on the third Monday in February, near his birthday, February 12.

**James Madison (1751-1836)** Born in Virginia, James Madison played a role in most of the significant political events over a 40-year period from 1776, when he began his political career, to 1817, when he completed his second term as the fourth president of the United States. He participated

in the Continental Congress, and because of his leadership role in writing and ratifying the U.S. Constitution, is considered the “Father of the Constitution.” He was one of three authors of *The Federalist* papers. He supported a strong central government, a political theory that coalesced as the platform of the Federalist party. This party and its opposition, the Federalists, formed the basis of a bipartisan political system which continues today. He wrote the first 12 amendments to the Constitution, ten of which were ratified as the Bill of Rights. One of the two not ratified, regarding congressional pay raises, was later ratified as the 27th Amendment in May 1992. Elected president in 1808, he presided through the War of 1812 and fled Washington, D.C. in August 1814 when the British invaded and set the public buildings, the Capitol, and the White House afire.

**John Marshall** (1755-1835) As a justice in the U. S. Supreme Court, Marshall established the authority of the court in defining the limits of the U.S. Constitution and the authority of the executive branch. He served in the Virginia legislature and was elected to the U.S. House of Representatives as a Federalist. He was appointed Chief Justice by President John Adams and served from 1801-1835. During his tenure he shaped federal law and government. Most important was the *Marbury v. Madison* decision (1803) in which he ruled that the federal courts had the power to determine whether or not congressional legislation was constitutional.

**George Mason** (1725-1792) Born on the family plantation in Virginia, Mason did not seek glory in public service, but his writings influenced those working to develop a new government. He believed in the need to restrict governmental power and supported protection of human rights. His Virginia Declaration of Rights was a model for other bills of rights in the United States and in France where the French Declaration of the Rights of Man and of the Citizen was adopted in 1789. Mason concentrated his political activities to the state of Virginia until 1787. Then he served as a delegate from Virginia to the U.S. Constitutional Convention. He delivered 139 important speeches at the convention, making him one of the most influential of the founding fathers. But he became disgusted as other delegates chose to exclude a bill of rights from the document. He refused to sign the Constitution at the end of the convention and he did not support its ratification. The passage of the Bill of Rights and the adoption of the 10th Amendment, which supported the powers of the states, relieved most of his concerns.

**James Monroe** (1758-1831) Involved in politics most of his life, James Monroe established one of the basic principles of American foreign policy with his Monroe Doctrine. Born in Virginia to a family of Scottish origin, Monroe fought and was wounded in the American Revolution. His political career began when he was elected to the Virginia legislature in 1782, and continued for more than 40 years.

He participated in the Congress of the Articles of Confederation in 1783. As a member of the Virginia convention of 1788, he opposed ratification of the U.S. Constitution fearing that it made the federal government too strong and that this would negatively affect state’s rights. He served as Minister to France from 1794-6 and assisted with the Louisiana Purchase in 1803. He was elected president and served two relatively peaceful terms balancing sectional tensions between 1817-25. During his administration he signed the Missouri Compromise in 1820 and issued the Monroe Doctrine in 1823. In the doctrine, Monroe declared that the European powers should not colonize or interfere in the affairs of nations in the Western Hemisphere.

**Thomas Paine** (1737-1809) Born in England, Thomas Paine contributed to the spirit of revolution in America and France through his influential writings. He moved to the American colonies in 1774 and edited the *Pennsylvania Magazine* in Philadelphia. In January 1776 he wrote *Common Sense*, a pamphlet which attacked the monarchical system, supported independence, and outlined a new form of government. He became the leading propagandist of the American Revolution, publishing his *Crisis* papers. Unable to make a living in the United States following the Revolution, he moved to France. He did not get involved with the French Revolution until he read Edmund Burke’s *Reflections on the Revolution in France* (1790). Then Paine wrote *The Rights of Man*, in two parts (1791-2), in which he urged a radical departure from traditional rule and adoption of a government by the consent of citizens. He was imprisoned in France during the Revolution. During that time, he wrote *The Age of Reason* (1792) which attacked organized Christian religions, refuted biblical passages, and supported deism. His writings at once spoke to and alienated people of all classes in England, France, and America.

**William Penn** (1644-1718) William Penn established a colony in Pennsylvania as a refuge for Quakers and a place where they could create a government based on their own standards. Born in London into a merchant family, Penn joined the Quakers, also known as the Religious Society of Friends, in 1666. The Friends believed in direct guidance from the Holy Spirit, did not recognize the authority of an ordained ministry, believed in simple dress, and opposed war. Penn became a leading Quaker in England by preaching at meetings, publishing religious tracts, and supporting toleration of those who dissented from the teachings of the Church of England. He secured a land grant from the King of England in 1681, and the King called the area “Pennsylvania” or Penn’s Woodland. Penn aggressively advertised his land grant and attempted to treat Native Americans and squatters from other colonies residing in the grant fairly. He rarely visited the colony and lived there only a few years which caused residents of the colony to under appreciate his role in the colony’s development. He supported freedom of wor-

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ship, welcomed immigrants, and did not require residents to serve in the militia.

**Elizabeth Cady Stanton** (1815-1902) Author of the Declaration of the Rights of Women, Elizabeth Cady was born in western New York state, educated at a female seminary, and spent her life seeking equal rights for women. She married Henry Stanton in 1840, and they had seven children. She met Lucretia Mott in England in 1840 and eight years later they organized the first convention of the women's movement, the Seneca Falls Women's Rights Convention. Stanton wrote the Declaration of Rights at this convention and pushed the assembly to adopt a resolution calling for the extension of the right to vote to women. She was the primary thinker in the women's movement while Susan B. Anthony was the organizer.

**Henry David Thoreau** (1817-1862) Thoreau was a leading American essayist, poet, practical philosopher, and transcendentalist. Transcendentalism, one of the most significant literary movements of nineteenth-century America, was based in idealism, the goodness of humankind and the harmony of creation. Thoreau was inspired by leading transcendentalist Ralph Waldo Emerson. The cabin on Walden Pond Thoreau built and lived in for two years was on property Emerson owned. Thoreau's most influential essay was *Civil Disobedience* (1849). He supported abolitionism, lecturing and writing against slavery.

**George Washington** (1732-1799) George Washington became the first president of the United States elected following procedures outlined in the newly ratified Constitution. He served two terms between 1789 and 1797. A resident of Virginia, he was a surveyor, a planter, a soldier in the French and Indian War, a delegate to the First and Second Continental Congresses, commander-in-chief of the Continental Army during the American Revolution, and the chairman of the Constitutional Convention in 1787. His prestige as a southern planter, his strong character, and his heroic military accomplishments ensured his recognition, and the Electoral College unanimously supported him for president in 1789.

During his two terms he started regular meetings of his cabinet and supported Alexander Hamilton's plans to deal with war debts and create a currency system for the new nation. Washington was a Federalist, believing in a strong central government and the responsibility of the wealthy to ensure the wellbeing of all, but he remained open to the opinions of others, especially fellow Virginian Thomas Jefferson. During his second term, an opposition political party solidified as the Jeffersonian Republicans. In 1793 he sought to avoid another war with European powers Britain and France by issuing the Neutrality Proclamation, a move which incensed pro-French Jeffersonians but heartened Federalists. This stands as one of Washington's greatest accomplishments

because it allowed the fledgling United States to build a solid system of government, expand westward, and develop a merchant marine to engage in trade without becoming embroiled in another European war.

His plantation home was Mount Vernon. He is known as the "Father of Our Country" and his likeness is one of four presidents carved into the monument at Mount Rushmore, South Dakota. Presidents' Day, a federal holiday, occurs on the third Monday in February, near his birthday, February 22.

**Daniel Webster** (1782-1852) Daniel Webster was a representative and senator from New Hampshire and then Massachusetts in the U.S. Congress. He served twice as secretary of state and negotiated the Webster-Ashburton Treaty in 1842 which resolved a border dispute with Canada. He was noted for his speaking ability and his commitment to preserving the union of states.