

*Introduction to United States History – Grade 8*  
Curriculum Unit Profiles

New Bedford Public Schools



**“Profiles for Success”**  
**Grade 8 – Introduction to United States History**



**Unit I:**  
**Colonial Settlement**

**Unit Overview:** This unit discusses the competition among European countries for control of the Americas from 1492-1700. It also deals with the English colonization of North America as well as the differences among the three distinct colonial regions.

In this unit, students will master the following **standards**:

**WHI.12, WHI.13, WHI.14, WHI.29, WHI.30, WHI.31; Concepts & Skills (Grades 8-12) – SEE ATTACHED APPENDIX**  
**USI.1, USI.4, USI.5**

**Unit Goal(s):**

1. The students will understand how the British naval defeat of the Spanish Armada affected colonization of the Americas.
2. The students will analyze the early successes and failures of English colonization in North America.
3. The students will understand the establishment of New England, middle and southern colonies by analyzing the religious, social, cultural, and economic differences among each colonial region.

**Unit Essential Question(s):**

1. Did the defeat of the Spanish Armada and European exploration truly lead to the colonization of the Americas?
2. Did basic ideas of freedom, which brought people to America, also become the cause for political conflicts among the colonial assemblies in North America?

**Unit Outcomes:** *The students will be able to...*

1. Analyze how the Renaissance intensified competition among European nations in the search for an all-water route to Asia.
2. Explain the significance of Columbus' voyage.
3. Analyze why England established colonies in North America and the economic and social development of each colonial region.

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**Unit II:**  
**The Road to**  
**Revolution & Change**

**Unit Overview:** This unit identifies the causes of tension between the British government and the colonists (1763-1776). It explains issues and events leading up to the Declaration of Independence from Britain. As these events lead to revolution, the unit will describe the battles, people, strategies and hardships involved in fighting the revolution. Also discussed will be the aftermath of the war and how the newly independent United States will govern itself.

In this unit, students will master the following **standards**:

**USI.1, USI.2, USI.3, USI.4, USI.5, USI.6**

**Unit Goal(s):**

1. Students will understand the events that pushed England and the colonies apart and led to the signing of the Declaration of Independence.
2. The students will organize events of the American Revolution in chronological sequence and analyze the causes that led to an American victory.

**Unit Essential Question(s):**

1. Do governments have the right to tax without the consent of the people?
2. What would you sacrifice to win freedom?

**Unit Outcomes:** *The students will be able to ...*

1. Analyze the chain of events which led to the Declaration of Independence.
2. Analyze the causes leading to the American Revolution (*Proclamation of 1763, Boston Massacre, Stamp Act, etc*)
3. Analyze primary source documents (Declaration of Independence, *Common Sense*)
4. Profile the “Midnight Ride”.
5. Analyze information of the Continental Army as well as problems George Washington faced as commander.
6. Summarize major battles of the American Revolution (Lexington, Concord, Saratoga, Yorktown)

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7. Explain the effects of the Revolutionary War focusing on why the Americans won and the Treaty of Paris (1783).



**Unit III: The  
Constitutional Period**

**Unit Overview:** This unit describes the development of the United States government from the Articles of Confederation to the Constitution. It focuses on the debate between the Federalists and the Anti-Federalists over ratification, including the Bill of Rights focusing on the expansion of rights for all citizens.

In this unit, students will master the following **standards**:

**USI.6, USI.7, USI.8, USI.9**

- Unit Goal(s):**
1. Analyze the strengths and weaknesses of the Articles of Confederation.
  2. Understand the major issues and compromises of the Constitutional Convention.
  3. Appreciate the importance of the Bill of Rights (1791) as well as the significance of the guaranteed personal liberties.

**Unit Essential Question(s):** Use the following quote to respond to the essential question: *"In framing a system we wish to last for ages, we should not lose sight of the changes which ages will produce."* (James Madison, Constitutional Convention)

- Did the framers of the Constitution foresee the inevitable changes that would affect the American people in the future?

**Unit Outcomes:** *The students will be able to ....*

1. Evaluate the inherent weaknesses of the Articles of Confederation and the necessity for a new stronger government under the Constitution.
2. Compare and contrast the views of the Federalists and the Anti-Federalists on the issue of governmental power as represented by Jefferson and Hamilton.
3. Analyze the importance of the Bill of Rights (1791) and analyze and describe the necessity of guaranteed rights for all citizens.

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### APPENDIX: Concepts and Skills (Grades 8-12) – Massachusetts Curriculum Frameworks

#### **History and Geography**

1. Apply the skills of prekindergarten through grade seven.
2. Identify multiple ways to express time relationships and dates (for example, *1066 AD is the same as 1066 CE, and both refer to a date in the eleventh or 11<sup>th</sup> century, which is the same as the 1000s*). Identify countries that use a different calendar from the one used in the U.S. and explain the basis for the difference. (H)
3. Interpret and construct timelines that show how events and eras in various parts of the world are related to one another. (H)
4. Interpret and construct charts and graphs that show quantitative information. (H, C, G, E)
5. Explain how a cause and effect relationship is different from a sequence or correlation of events. (H, C, E)
6. Distinguish between long-term and short-term cause and effect relationships. (H, G, C, E)
7. Show connections, causal and otherwise, between particular historical events and ideas and larger social, economic, and political trends and developments. (H, G, C, E)
8. Interpret the past within its own historical context rather than in terms of present-day norms and values. (H, E, C)
9. Distinguish intended from unintended consequences. (H, E, C)

10. Distinguish historical fact from opinion. (H, E, C)

11. Using historical maps, locate the boundaries of the major empires of world history at the height of their powers. (H, G)

#### **Civics and Government**

12. Define and use correctly the following words and terms: *Magna Carta, parliament, habeas corpus, monarchy, and absolutism*. (C)

#### **General Economics Skills**

13. Define and use correctly *mercantilism, feudalism, economic growth, and entrepreneur*. (E)

14. Explain how people or communities examine and weigh the benefits of each alternative when making a choice and that opportunity costs are those benefits that are given up once one alternative is chosen. (E)

15. Explain how financial markets, such as the stock market, channel funds from savers to investors. (E)

16. Define and use correctly *gross domestic product, economic growth, recession, depression, unemployment, inflation, and deflation*. (E)

17. Explain how opportunity costs and tradeoffs can be evaluated through an analysis of marginal costs and benefits. (E)

18. Explain how competition among sellers lowers costs and prices, and encourages producers to produce more. (E)

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19. Describe the role of buyers and sellers in determining the equilibrium price, and use supply and demand to explain and predict changes in quantity and price. (E)
20. Describe how the earnings of workers are affected by the market value of the product produced and worker skills. (E)
21. Identify the causes of inflation and explain who benefits from inflation and who suffers from inflation. (E)
22. Define and distinguish between *absolute* and *comparative advantage*, and explain how most trade occurs because of comparative advantage in the production of a particular good or service. (E)
23. Explain how changes in exchange rates affect balance of trade and the purchasing power of people in the United States and other countries. (E)
24. Differentiate between fiscal and monetary policy. (E)

**U.S. Economics Skills**

25. Explain the basic economic functions of the government in the economy of the United States. (E)
26. Examine the development of the banking system in the United States, and describe the organization and functions of the Federal Reserve System. (E)
27. Identify and describe laws and regulations adopted in the United States to promote economic competition. (E, H)
28. Analyze how federal tax and spending policies affect the national budget and the national debt. (E)