

8th GRADE SOCIAL STUDIES

CONTENT

TEXTBOOK: Holt Social Studies: United States History

GRADING

Grades are based on testing, pop quizzes, homework, and participation.

- Testing** - Grade 8 will take chapter tests with either short answer and matching questions or tests with multiple choice, matching and completion items. This accounts for 50-65 percent of their grade.
- Notebook** - Each student is expected to keep notes containing the information they are responsible for recording during class (usually in the form of a PowerPoint handout). Students also need to keep a notebook of social studies vocabulary definitions for various key terms, people and places that I will assign. Instead of putting their vocabulary in their notebook students may make flash cards of the terms and definitions with 3x5 index cards.
- Pop Quizzes** - Unannounced quizzes are periodically given over information in the notes. This is to encourage the students to review their notes nightly and not just study the night before the test. Pop Quizzes account for about 5-10 percent of their grade. Occasionally there may be a vocabulary pop quiz to see if students are reviewing their vocabulary each night.
- Homework** - Written homework consists of keeping their vocabulary up-to-date and completing on loose-leaf any questions I might assign from the book. Occasionally there might be a worksheet that needs to be completed. Written homework accounts for 10-20 percent of their grade. The most important homework is reading the book, reviewing their notes and studying their vocabulary (15 to 20 minutes should be devoted to this most every night during the week)
- Participation** - Participation accounts for about 5 percent of the grade. Students are expected to study over each day's notes and/or vocabulary in preparation for oral reviews given the next day. I keep track of who participates in these reviews and award points accordingly.
- Extra Credit** - I am not a great believer in extra credit assignments. I believe that the grade should be based on the regularly assigned work. I do sometimes include extra credit questions on tests and on some types of assignments.

LATE ASSIGNMENTS

Penalties are placed on late assignments based on the typed of assignment and its percentage of the overall grade. Normal procedure on worksheet and loose-leaf assignments is to lower the grade 10 percentage points or more depending on the lateness of the assignment. Major assignments (such as a PowerPoint presentation or a written report) are usually lowered a step (B+ to B) at a time depending on the lateness of the assignment.

COMMUNICATION

I ask that you regularly check FastDirect in order to keep track of your child's progress and assignments. You can find any information you might need about your child's assignments or what we are doing each day in class on my bulletin board. Also, I will have a link to a website where you can download a copy of any handouts I give out in class. This can come in handy when an assignment is due the next day and a student has misplaced the worksheet or handout necessary to do the homework. If you have any questions please message me in FastDirect, and I will get back to you within 24 hours. I do not regularly send home tests or student work for parents to view or sign, but I do keep all work for each student the entire year. You are more than welcome to make an appointment to see me and go over your child's work. I can stay after school as late as 5:00 PM if necessary and if the need is great enough I can make arrangements to meet in the evening.

SPECIAL PROJECTS

Students will be doing a Persuasive Essay Paper during the course of the first semester. It will count 25 percent of their 2nd Quarter Grade

EXAMS

An exams will most likely be given at the end of the second semester. The exam will cover all material presented over the course of the semester. Special emphasis is placed on the people, places and terms, but there are also questions to see if students understood the basic ideas.

GENERAL EXPECTATIONS

The student is expected to read all assignments and participate in the discussion-lectures that follow. The notes taken during these discussions will contain the key information on which all tests will be based. **Students are expected to review these notes and their vocabulary nightly - not just the night or two before the test.** Vocabulary terms and their definitions should be mastered by third or fourth day of a chapter. Participation enhances understanding and keeps the student actively interested in the material being presented. It is difficult to participate if the student has not carefully read the assignment.

STUDYING TIPS

A well-prepared student:

- **Reads all assignments**
- Participates in class discussions
- Reviews each day's notes that night (with the book - if necessary)
- Completes all assignments on time and according to directions
- Masters the definition to all vocabulary words at least 3 days before testing
- Reviews the vocabulary and studies the notes the night before or if necessary two nights before the test.