

NETCONG

ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

Middle School Social Studies

Mr. Salerno

8th Grade – The American Experience: Freedom and Equality

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Dear 8th Grade Students:

Welcome, 8th Graders, back to Middle School Social Studies! I hope you will find our class interesting, exciting, and a lot fun! This school year we will be working hard to develop new skills in order to learn about how the history of our nation continues to impact issues in our modern society. This syllabus will give you some excellent information that will help you to become an important member of our classroom community, so please review this packet very carefully and keep it at a safe place at home. Some of the information is *brand new*. I am looking forward to another outstanding year together!

What Are We Going To Learn About?

8th Graders will spend the year learning about the evolution of freedom and equality in the United States of America, from the Revolutionary War to the Civil War and beyond. In between, we'll learn about the birth of our nation, the American Constitution, political parties, Washington DC, the War of 1812, slavery, the Civil War, reconstruction, and *at least eighteen* Presidents of the United States. Along the way, we will be discussing several reoccurring themes in American History, such as equality and inequality, human rights, the nature of government and liberty, safety and security, the impacts of technology on society, and the distribution of resources. We'll also spend a great deal of time discussing

strategy and strategic thinking! Even though we'll spend much of our time learning about things that have happened in the past, we'll also spend a lot of time learning about how historical events influenced (and continue to impact) our country today. Most importantly, we'll discuss *current events* and debate *contemporary issues* in order to accomplish our main goal: to discover connections between our nation's history and our experiences today, in the twenty-first century.

Also, we will explore Washington D.C., our nation's capital, together on your 8th Grade Class Trip and apply all of what you have learned throughout 6th, 7th, and 8th Grade Social Studies! It will be awesome!

In order to accomplish this goal, we will spend the year thinking about these three BIG questions:

First, we'll ask *what* does it mean to be an American in the 21st Century? How has our nation's history shaped our shared values and attitudes? Second, we'll question *how* do current events and contemporary issues impact our nation and connect to our shared past? And finally we'll wonder, *how can* United States Citizens effectively engage with 21st Century Issues, Challenges, and Dilemmas?

What Supplies Will We Need?

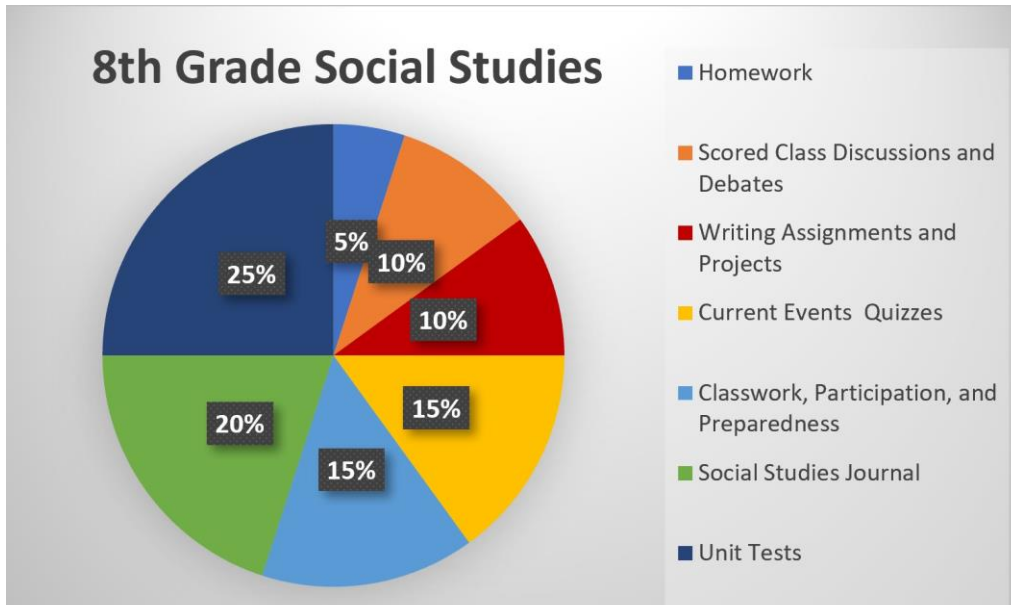
- 1 Composition Notebooks (*The kind with hard front and back covers work best!*)
- 1 One-Subject Spiral Notebook (*The kind with hard front and back covers work best!*)
- 1 Plastic Folder
- 2 Pens (Blue or Black Ink) and a few Pencils with Erasers
- 2 Highlighters (*Whichever color you prefer is fine with me*)
- 1 One-Inch Round Ring Binder
- 1 Standard Set of Earbuds (*For the Google Chromebook*)

Optional Gear:

- Personal Arts & Crafts Supplies (*Such as Colored Pencils and Markers*)
- Hand Sanitizer

Of course, if you have *any trouble* getting any of the items listed above, please just let me know!

How Will I Earn My Grade?



Homework – 5%

Scored Class Discussions and Debates – 10%

Writing Assignments and Projects – 10%

Current Events Quizzes – 15% (*8th Graders Watch A Student Newscast Every Night!!*)

Classwork and Participation – 15%

Social Studies Journal – 20%

Unit Tests and Projects – 25%

What Should I Do If I Have Questions or Need Help?

If you are having trouble, need some help, or have questions, I am here for you! Here are some strategies we can use to help you be as successful in 6th Grade Social Studies as possible.

- If you have a question, chances are that someone else might have the same question! Visit www.SocialStudieswithMrSalerno.com to see if I already tweeted out a helpful reminder!
- You can also send me **an email!** I usually respond to emails within 24 hours during the week!
- I am also available for extra help every day before school (*no appointment needed in the morning*) and most days after school (*make an appointment ahead of time for the afternoon*)

What Classroom Rules Will We Follow?

“Work hard. Don't quit. Be appreciative, be thankful, be grateful, be respectful. Also, never whine, never complain. And always, for crying out loud, keep a sense of humor” - Michael Keaton

- **Be Respectful**
- **Work Hard**

The most important rule in Social Studies is that everyone is **entitled** to be treated with Respect. In our Social Studies Class, we treat ourselves, our classmates, our school work, our resources, and our teachers with Respect in order to make our classroom a positive place for learning. Getting in the habit of treating others with respect takes a lot practice and we can demonstrate respect for others in many different ways! For example, in class we can show respect by...

- Raising our hands and waiting to be called upon before speaking
- Actively listening when others are speaking without interrupting
- Following instructions carefully
- Taking care of shared classroom materials and resources (Chromebooks)
- Using appropriate language for school
- Keeping cell phones and other personal belongings in our locker
- Not bringing food or drinks (*except water*) to class

What Classroom Routines Will We Use?

Our time together is very valuable so it is important that we follow a few routines in order to use our class time as wisely as possible. Here are a few of the most important routines for Social Studies ...

- Please arrive to class on time, ready to learn, and with all necessary materials
- Follow the “traffic flow” and pick up the day’s handouts as you pass the **HANDOUTS** table
- Find your Social Studies Journal in your class’ bin and then find your seat
- Open your Social Studies Journal and start working *on your own*.

How Will We Deal With General Inappropriate Behavior?

Although we expect that everyone will *choose* to demonstrate respect, everybody makes mistakes from time to time. In order to deal general inattentive or inappropriate behavior, we will use the following:

- **Strike One** – Student will be made aware of their inappropriate or inattentive behavior and will be encouraged to make a better behavioral choice
- **Strike Two** – Student will be asked to switch seats to minimize class disruptions and will meet with Mr. Salerno after class to have a one-on-one conversation about expectations
- **Strike Three** – Student will be asked to leave the classroom to meet with Mrs. Walsh or Mr. Ceresnak to discuss their behavior, actions, choices, and decisions

Four Specific Regulations and Consequences

In an effort to provide fairness and consistency, the following rules will be in effect and strictly enforced

Regulation #1: Students are not to enter the area surrounding Mr. Salerno's Desk ("Crossing the line")

Consequence – Afterschool Detention the following afternoon (3:00pm-3:30pm in Room 201)

Regulation #2: Students are to carefully return their shared Chromebook to the Chrome Cart after each use and ensure that they are in the correct slot, plugged in, and charging for the next user

Consequence – Afterschool Detention the following afternoon (3:00pm-3:30pm in Room 201)

Regulation #3: Students are expected to show respect by following all clear and direct instructions

Consequence – Afterschool Detention the following afternoon (3:00pm-3:30pm in Room 201) and Contact Home (via Email or Phone). This is typically done before the end of the school day

Regulation #4: Students are expected to comply with the Anti-Bullying Bill of Rights and Policy 5512

Consequence – Reported to Mrs. Walsh or Mr. Ceresnak that day, as required by the ABR Act, and Afterschool Detention the following afternoon (3:00pm-3:30pm in Room 201)

Anything Else We Should Know?

Absences and Make-Ups – If you are absent, it is your responsibility to find out what you missed the day you return to class. First, check Google Classroom for a brief update of what we learned about in class that day. Next, check the **EXTRA HANDOUTS** Basket to find any handouts, worksheets, or assignments you might have missed. Finally, ask a trusted classmate if you missed any notes. Of course, if you missed a Test or Quiz, you will need to make that up as soon as possible.

Late Work– Late work will *always* be accepted for partial credit. All Social Studies Assignments are worth doing, even if they are done late.

Getting Grades Back – Unless otherwise noted, you can expect to receive graded work back within 48 hours of handing it in (*on time*) and your grades will be posted to Genesis in a timely manner. It is very important to me that you receive feedback on your work as soon as possible. However, your grades are **private**. When we receive grades in class, please do not share your grades with classmates.

Life Happens – Sometimes life happens! If there is something going on in your life that is making it difficult for you to do your very best work, let me know and we'll figure out a plan that works for everybody. You can always expect to be treated with Kindness, Fairness, and Respect! Just make sure you reach out and let me know in advance—I won't be able to help unless you ask for my help!

There will be a few more routines and expectations that we will learn throughout the year, such as our expectations for Journal Writing, however this is an excellent start. We are going to have a fantastic year together! Please take this packet home, read it carefully, and return it after it has been signed by a parent or guardian at home. As always, please let me know if you have any questions!

Dear 8th Grade Parent(s) and Guardian(s),

Happy September! Welcome back for another exciting school year at Netcong Elementary School! My name is Tom Salerno and I will be, once again, your 8th Grader's Middle School Social Studies Teacher for the 2018-2019 School Year. I am very much looking forward to another outstanding year here!

This year our 8th Graders will be learning about the History of the United States from the American Revolution to the Civil War, and beyond. Along the way, we will be discussing several reoccurring themes in American History, such as equality and inequality, human rights, the nature of government and liberty, safety and security, the impacts of technology on society, and the distribution of resources. My goal is to create a positive, enriching, and fun learning environment that helps students to recognize the deep connections between our past, our present, and our future.

I strongly believe that respect-driven conversations regarding contemporary issues and current events are essential for fostering the critical thinking skills needed for meaningful participation in our democracy! In addition, I believe that Social Studies, founded on a deep appreciation of History, provides students the opportunity to grapple with societal issues, using our past as a framework for examining current social issues. Our 8th Grade Social Studies Course is largely built around these contemporary issues and our students will be expected to view a daily student news broadcast online as their regular homework assignment. When we discuss current events in class, students will be encouraged to develop their own opinions and perspectives. In addition, all material will be presented by me in an utterly **fair** and **unbiased** fashion. My personal opinions will not be shared with the students.

In Social Studies, you can rest assured that all students will be treated with **kindness**, **fairness**, and **respect**! When questions, comments, or roadblocks come up, please feel free to reach out to me at any time. I am committed to providing the best experience for your 8th Grader as possible!

Sincerely,

Tom Salerno