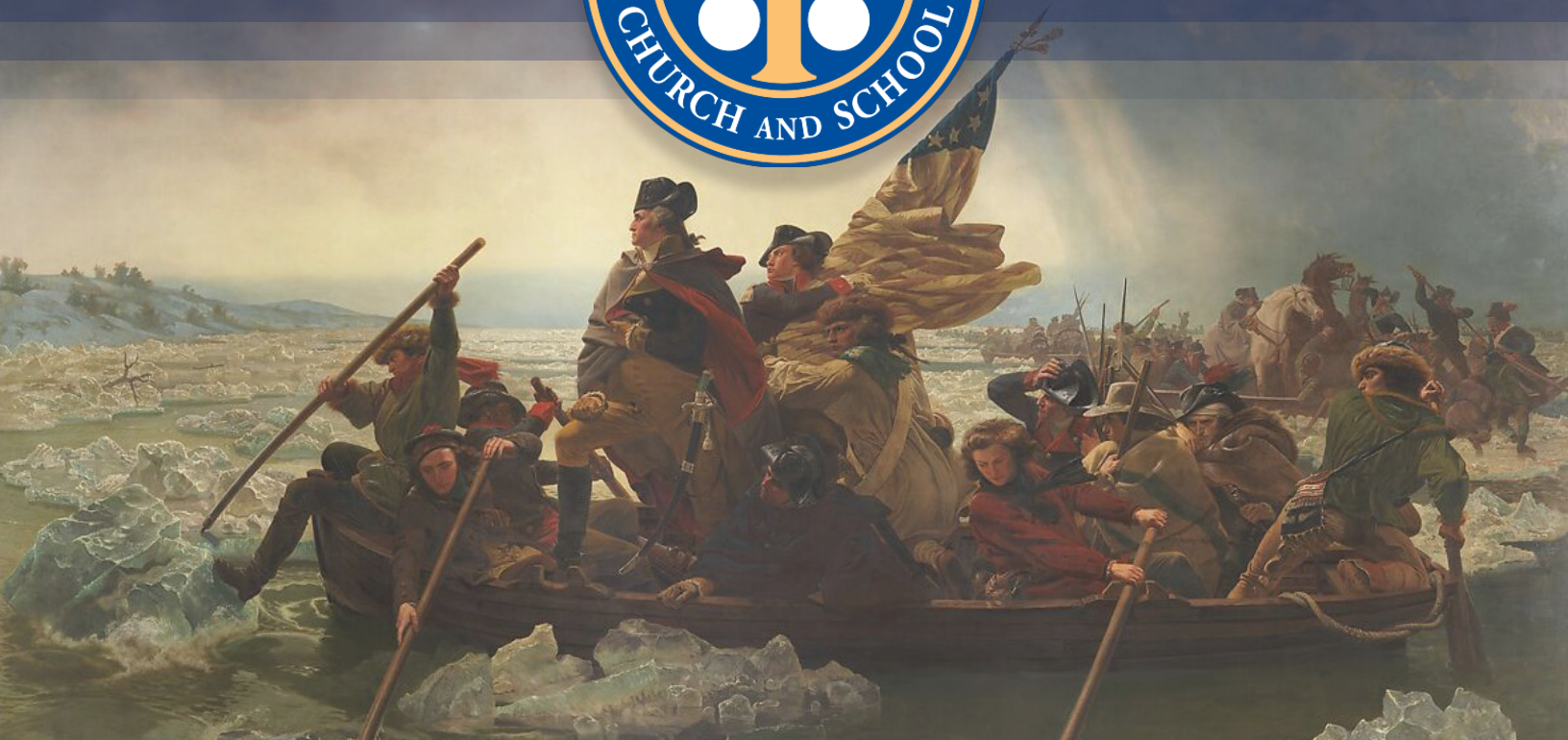
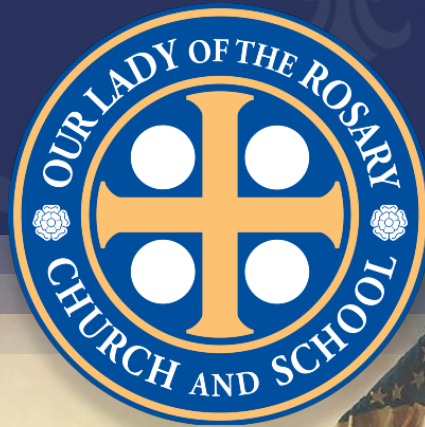




U.S. History Curriculum

Grade 11



Course Overview

Course Description



This course aims to provide students with a deep understanding of the philosophical and constitutional foundations of American government, rooted in natural law, human equality, and civic virtue. Students will study the structure and function of political institutions, the moral and religious principles essential to self-government, and the evolution of American political thought from the Founding through modern times. Emphasizing classical texts and Catholic social teaching, the course prepares students for responsible citizenship through rigorous engagement with history, political theory, and civic practice.

Why We Teach It...

We teach American Government to cultivate informed, virtuous citizens who are prepared to participate meaningfully in public life. As Wilfred McClay writes, “*Citizenship...means a vivid consciousness that one is a member of a great historical enterprise in human history: the astonishing, perilous, & immensely consequential story of one’s country.*” Through the study of our nation’s founding principles, constitutional structures, and moral foundations, students come to see their role in preserving liberty and justice. This course equips them not only with knowledge, but with the character and sense of duty









Course Objectives

By the end of this course, students will be able to:

-  Compare & contrast the reasons for exploration and the pros and cons of cultural diffusion between European, Native, & African groups.
-  Analyze the causes, key events, & political ideas of the emerging republic as well as the effects of the American Revolution and later independence.



Course Objectives | Continued...

-  Explain how the U.S. developed in its early years in regards to federalism, border expansion, nationalism, and population increase.
-  Analyze causes and effects of the Civil War as well as the various aspects of Reconstruction in regard to politics, economics, and social concern.
-  Analyze how the U.S. became the economic power of the world with reference to border expansion, industrialization, “big business,” & technological innovations
-  Analyze the pros & cons of Progressive & Imperial developments in the U.S. including its’ involvement in World War I.
-  Analyze cultural developments of the “Roaring” Twenties as well as causes & effects of the Great Depression & resulting New Deal.
-  Analyze the causes, battles, and effects of WWII on U.S. society & its’ role in the world.
-  Analyze aspects of Cold War foreign policy & its’ effects on politics abroad and cultural revolution at home.
-  Analyze the importance of significant events since the fall of the Berlin Wall that have defined present day America, including diplomacy with the Middle East, changes in immigration, & the relationship between government decisions & society.

Source Material

McClay W.; Land of Hope: An Invitation to the Great American Story









Addison, J.; Cato: A Tragedy

Primary Source Documents (see scope and sequence for full list of sources)

Hillsdale 1776 Curriculum Primary Source Booklet (see scope and sequence for full list of sources)



Central Themes

-  Providence guides the American story.
-  The American Republic is rooted in the inheritance of Western civilization.
-  History honors statesmanship and the classical virtues in times of trial.
-  American history is marked by cycles of crisis, renewal, and fidelity to founding principles.
-  Faith and moral conviction are essential to public life and reform.
-  Self-government is a noble but fragile experiment requiring civic virtue.
-  America's ideals carry global responsibility and consequence.
-  Historical study fosters gratitude, identity, and responsibility for the future.

Key Concepts

<i>Providence</i>	<i>Rule of Law</i>	<i>The Federalist Papers</i>
<i>Natural Law</i>	<i>Religious Liberty</i>	<i>Separation of Church and State</i>
<i>Imago Dei</i>	<i>Abolitionism</i>	<i>Christian Humanism</i>
<i>Republicanism</i>	<i>Reconstruction</i>	<i>Western Heritage</i>
<i>Constitutionalism</i>	<i>Civil Rights</i>	<i>Civic Friendship</i>
<i>Separation of Powers</i>	<i>Industrialization</i>	<i>Democratic Equality</i>
<i>Federalism</i>	<i>Progressivism</i>	<i>American Identity</i>
<i>Bill of Rights</i>	<i>American Exceptionalism</i>	<i>Checks and Balances</i>
<i>Virtue (Prudence, Justice, Fortitude, Temperance)</i>	<i>Isolationism / Interventionism</i>	<i>The Founding Fathers</i>
<i>Statesmanship</i>	<i>Cold War</i>	<i>The Declaration of Independence</i>
<i>Self-Government</i>	<i>Moral Order</i>	<i>The U.S. Constitution</i>
<i>Civic Duty</i>	<i>Great Awakening(s)</i>	
<i>Natural Rights</i>	<i>Manifest Destiny</i>	
	<i>Checks and Balances</i>	



On Writing

All written work in this course integrates Our Lady's Writing Curriculum, a program rooted in the tradition of the classical oration and the progymnasmata—the ancient exercises that trained students in the art of eloquence, clarity, and persuasion. Students will be guided through structured stages of composition, learning to narrate, describe, argue, and exhort with both precision and grace.

Writing is not treated as a mere skill, but as a moral and intellectual discipline—a means of pursuing truth and communicating it rightly. In keeping with the classical model, students will imitate excellent forms, internalize timeless principles, and ultimately express their own judgments with charity, courage, and rhetorical power.

Assessments

Summative: 45%

- Unit Exams
- Midterm Exam
- Essays
- Recitations

Formative: 35%

- Oral Forms Recitation
- Artifacts
- Weekly Writing Assignments
- Expository Essays

Conscientiousness 20%

- Professionalism
- Homework
- Classwork



Scope & Sequence

Unit 1

The British Colonies
Of North America (1492-1763)

3 Weeks

Week 1-3 Overview

Students will explore the diverse landscapes and native civilizations of the continent, the European age of exploration, and the establishment of the British colonies. They will analyze how religious motives, economic pursuits, and political arrangements shaped colonial life and identity.

Theme

Exploration and settlement in North America laid the foundations of American identity, culture, and faith, rooted in both the land and the traditions of Western Christendom.

Key Terms, Events, & People

Age of Exploration, Spanish, French, and British Empires, Mercantilism, Quakers, Religious Freedom, Puritans / Pilgrims, Jamestown, Plymouth Colony, New England Colonies, Middle Colonies, Southern Colonies, Transatlantic Trade, Atlantic Slave Trade, Great Awakening, Colonial Self-Government, French and Indian War, Treaty of Paris (1763)

Sources: *Letter to Raphael Sanchez, Christopher Columbus; Letter to King Ferdinand II, Christopher Columbus; Laws of Virginia; The Mayflower Compact; A Model of Christian Charity, John Winthrop; Fundamental Orders of Connecticut; Preface to the Frame of Government of Pennsylvania; An Act for Freedom of Conscience in Pennsylvania; Magna Carta; Act of the General Court of Massachusetts; English Bill of Rights; Second Treatise of Government, John Locke; Albany Plan of Union*



Unit 2 | The Founding of America (1763-1788)

3 Weeks

Week 4-6 Overview:

The American Founding was a struggle to secure liberty through self-government, culminating in the Declaration of Independence, the Revolutionary War, and the drafting of the Constitution.

Theme

The Founding established a republic rooted in natural rights, ordered liberty, and the consent of the governed.

Key Terms, Events, & People

Natural Rights, Consent of the Governed, Declaration of Independence, Tyranny, Revolutionary War, Taxation Without Representation, Articles of Confederation, Constitutional Convention, United States Constitution, Stamp Act, Boston Tea Party Patriots, Loyalists, Sons of Liberty, Continental Army, Anti-Federalists, Federalists

Sources: *An Inquiry into the Rights of the British Colonies*, Richard Bland; *Letter to Lord Kaims*, Benjamin Franklin; *Virginia Resolves of 1769*, Virginia House of Burgesses; *A History of the Dispute with America*, No. VII, John Adams; “Give Me Liberty or Give Me Death!,” Patrick Henry; *Speech on Conciliation with the Colonies*, Edmund Burke; *Common Sense*, Thomas Paine; *Olive Branch Petition*; *Declaration of Independence, First Draft*; *Declaration of Independence*; *Orders of July 2*, George Washington; *Resignation Speech*, George Washington; “Liberty and Peace,” Phillis Wheatley; *The Northwest Ordinance of 1787*, Article III; *The Articles of Confederation*; *The United States Constitution*; *The Federalist*, Nos. 9, 10, 51; *The Bill of Rights*



Unit 3

The Early Republic (1789-1848)

4 Weeks

Week 7-10 Overview

Students will explore the diverse landscapes and native civilizations of the continent, the European age of exploration, and the establishment of the British colonies. They will analyze how religious motives, economic pursuits, and political arrangements shaped colonial life and identity.

Theme

Exploration and settlement in North America laid the foundations of American identity, culture, and faith, rooted in both the land and the traditions of Western Christendom.

Key Terms, Events, & People

Age of Exploration, Spanish, French, and British Empires, Mercantilism, Quakers, Religious Freedom, Puritans / Pilgrims, Jamestown, Plymouth Colony, New England Colonies, Middle Colonies, Southern Colonies, Transatlantic Trade, Atlantic Slave Trade, Great Awakening, Colonial Self-Government, French and Indian War, Treaty of Paris (1763)

Sources: *Thanksgiving Proclamation, George Washington; Letter to the Hebrew Congregation, George Washington; Fragment on the French Revolution, Alexander Hamilton; Farewell Address, George Washington; First inaugural address, Thomas Jefferson; On the Amendment to the Missouri Statehood Bill, James Tallmadge; Fourth of July address, John Quincy Adams; Monroe Doctrine, James Monroe; Democracy in America, Volume I, Alexis de Tocqueville; Webster-Hayne debate, Daniel Webster and Robert Hayne; Speech on the Indian Removal Bill, Theodore Frelinghuysen; Address to the People of the United States, John Ross; Annual message to Congress, 1830, Andrew Jackson*



Week 11-14 Overview

This unit examines the growing sectional conflict over slavery, the outbreak of civil war, and the nation's effort to reunify and redefine freedom during Reconstruction.

Theme

The Civil War was a test of the American commitment to liberty, union, and human dignity.

Key Terms, Events, & People

Compromise of 1850, Fugitive Slave Act, Kansas-Nebraska Act, Dred Scott v. Sandford, Abraham Lincoln, Frederick Douglass, Jefferson Davis, Battle of Gettysburg, Emancipation Proclamation, Thirteenth Amendment, Reconstruction Acts, Black Codes, Fourteenth Amendment, Fifteenth Amendment, Radical Republicans

Sources: *Speech on the Oregon Bill, Calhoun; Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass, Frederick Douglass; Peoria speech on the Kansas-Nebraska Act, Abraham Lincoln; Uncle Tom's Cabin, Harriet Beecher Stowe; Dred Scott Case; "House Divided" speech, Abraham Lincoln; The Seventh Lincoln-Douglas Debate; "The Constitution of the United States: Is It Pro-Slavery or Anti-Slavery?," Frederick Douglass; Fragment on the Constitution and Union, Abraham Lincoln; First inaugural address, Abraham Lincoln; Emancipation Proclamation, Abraham Lincoln; Gettysburg Address, Abraham Lincoln; Second inaugural address, Abraham Lincoln; Civil Rights Act of 1866; Black Code from Opelousas, Louisiana*



Week 15-18 Overview

This unit explores America's rapid industrial growth, social reform movements, and emergence as a global power during World War I.

Theme:

Amid great change and conflict, Americans debated how best to achieve justice, progress, and national purpose.

Key Terms, Events, & People

Gilded Age, Industrialization, Andrew Carnegie, Labor Unions. Immigration and Urbanization, Progressive Movement, Theodore Roosevelt, Trust-Busting, Women's Suffrage Movement, W.E.B. Du Bois & Booker T. Washington, 16th–19th Amendments, Woodrow Wilson, World War I (The Great War), Zimmermann Telegram, Treaty of Versailles / League of Nations

Sources: *Surrender, Chief Joseph; Wealth, Andrew Carnegie; The Triumph of America, Andrew Carnegie; The Mission of the Populist Party, William A. Peffer; The Cross of Gold, William Jennings Bryan; The March of the Flag, Albert J. Beveridge; Platform, American Anti-Imperialist League; Atlanta Exposition Address, Booker T. Washington; The Significance of the Frontier in American History, Frederick Jackson Turner; What Is Progress?, Woodrow Wilson; Natural Law, Oliver Wendell Holmes Jr.; The Presidency, Theodore Roosevelt; The Talented Tenth, The Souls of Black Folk, W. E. B. DuBois; War Message to Congress, Woodrow Wilson; Fourteen Points, Woodrow Wilson; League of Nations Speech, Henry Cabot Lodge*



Unit 6

The Interwar Years & World War II (1919-1945)

4 Weeks

Week 19-22 Overview

This unit traces the cultural dynamism of the 1920s, the economic collapse of the Great Depression, and America's role in the global struggle for freedom during World War II.

Theme

In a time of crisis and total war, Americans were called to defend liberty, renew civic unity, and confront tyranny at home and abroad.

Key Terms, Events, & People

Roaring Twenties, Harlem Renaissance, Prohibition / 18th Amendment, Stock Market Crash of 1929, Great Depression, Franklin D. Roosevelt, New Deal, Dust Bowl, Rise of Totalitarianism, Pearl Harbor (1941), Winston Churchill, D-Day / Normandy Invasion (1944), Holocaust, Hiroshima and Nagasaki, United Nations (1945)

Sources: *The Inspiration of the Declaration of Independence, Calvin Coolidge; Commonwealth Club address, Franklin Roosevelt; First inaugural address, Franklin Roosevelt; Democratic Convention address, 1936, Franklin Roosevelt; The Conservative Manifesto, Josiah Bailey; The Dominant Dogma of the Age, Walter Lippmann; Annual Message to Congress, 1944, Franklin Roosevelt; Fifty Years Hence, Winston Churchill; Fireside chat on National Security, Franklin Roosevelt; Annual Message to Congress, 1941, Franklin Roosevelt; Atlantic Charter, Franklin Roosevelt and Winston Churchill*



Week 23-26 Overview

This unit examines America's rise as a global superpower, the pursuit of the American Dream, and the foreign and domestic upheavals that challenged national unity.

Theme

In an age of prosperity and tension, Americans struggled to balance security, freedom, and justice at home and abroad.

Key Terms, Events, & People

Cold War, Iron Curtain, Harry S. Truman, Marshall Plan, Korean War, Dwight D. Eisenhower, Suburbanization, Civil Rights Movement, Martin Luther King Jr., John F. Kennedy, Cuban Missile Crisis, Vietnam War, Lyndon B. Johnson / Great Society, Richard Nixon / Watergate, 1960s Counterculture

Sources: *The Sinews of Peace*, Winston S. Churchill; *The Sources of Soviet Conduct*, George F. Kennan; *A Fateful Hour*, Harry S. Truman; *The Cold War*, Walter Lippmann; *Resolution 68*, National Security Council; *Farewell Address*, Dwight D. Eisenhower; *Inaugural Address*, John F. Kennedy; *I Have a Dream*, Martin Luther King Jr.; *Nonviolence: The Only Road to Freedom*, Martin Luther King Jr.; *Remarks at the University of Michigan*, Lyndon B. Johnson; *Port Huron Statement*, Students for a Democratic Society; *Message to Grassroots*, Malcolm X; *A Time for Choosing*, Ronald Reagan; *Peace without Conquest*, Lyndon B. Johnson; *Soviet Military Might: Western Made*, John Ashbrook



Week 27-28 Overview

This unit explores how America responded to political, economic, and cultural challenges at home and abroad, entering a new era of uncertainty & global influence.

Theme

At home and on the world stage, modern America has faced the test of renewing its ideals in a time of rapid change.

Key Terms, Events, & People

End of the Cold War (1991), Gulf War, Ronald Reagan, September 11, 2001, Globalization; Barrack Obama, Libertarianism, Donald Trump,

Sources: *First Inaugural Address, Ronald Reagan; Remarks at the Brandenburg Gate, Ronald Reagan; Remarks at Moscow State University, Ronald Reagan; Contract with America, Republican National Committee; Address to a Joint Session of Congress, George W. Bush; Address at Cairo University, Barack Obama; Remarks to the People of Poland, Donald Trump; Remarks at Mount Rushmore, Donald Trump*



Course Catechism

This section is structured as a series of questions and answers—intended to cultivate wisdom, virtue, and a love of tradition in the soul of the reader. Drawing from classical education, Christian orthodoxy, and the accumulated insights of Western civilization, this catechism aims to form not only the mind but the moral imagination.



Each question is crafted to provoke contemplation, and each answer is more than mere information—it is a small liturgy of truth, designed to be memorized, internalized, and lived. In the tradition of ancient catechisms, this section assumes that learning is not just for passing tests, but for becoming someone.

Section I | To Whom Much Is Given...

Q: What is the story of American history?

A: *It is the story of a people striving to live in freedom under God, often falling short, yet repeatedly called to repentance, renewal, and hope.*

Q: What does history teach us?

A: *That liberty cannot survive without virtue, and that nations, like souls, are judged by how they uphold truth, justice, and the dignity of the human person.*

Q: What is our inheritance?

A: *A republic grounded in natural law, built by sacrifice, and entrusted to us for safe-keeping.*

Q: What must we remember?

A: *That we are citizens of both the City of Man and the City of God, and must live with courage in both.*

Q: What is our task?

A: *To love our country wisely, serve it humbly, and seek the common good with a heart formed by faith and reason.*



Section II | Foundations in a New World

Q: Why did explorers cross the ocean to the New World?

A: *To seek wealth, land, and liberty—and, in many cases, to spread the Gospel.*

Q: What did the settlers find when they arrived in North America?

A: *A land of immense beauty, native peoples, and hardship that tested their faith and virtue.*

Q: What role did religion play in colonial life?

A: *Religion shaped law, education, family life, and the colonists' understanding of liberty.*

Q: What is the legacy of the colonial era?

A: *A people prepared to govern themselves under God, shaped by both hardship and hope.*

Section III | The Birth of a Republic

Q: Why did the colonists declare independence from Britain?

A: *They believed tyranny had violated their God-given rights to life, liberty, and self-rule.*

Q: What is the Declaration of Independence?

A: *A statement of timeless truths about natural rights and the proper end of government.*

Q: Who secured our independence?

A: *Farmers, soldiers, and statesmen who believed freedom was worth dying for.*

Q: What is the Constitution?

A: *A covenant of self-government ordered by law and sustained by virtue.*

Q: What did the Founders believe about man and government?

A: *That man is fallen, government must be limited, and liberty must be guarded.*



Section IV | A House Divided

Q: What divided the nation before the Civil War?

A: *The great contradiction of slavery in a land founded on liberty.*

Q: What did Abraham Lincoln believe about the Union?

A: *That it was a sacred trust worth preserving in justice and mercy.*

Q: What cost did the nation pay for its sins?

A: *A bloody war that claimed hundreds of thousands and revealed the weight of injustice.*

Q: What was Reconstruction?

A: *An imperfect attempt to heal the Union and extend the promise of liberty to all.*

Q: What does the Civil War teach us?

A: *That a house divided cannot stand, and that truth must be reconciled with charity.*

Section V | Progress & Its Perils

Q: What marked the Gilded Age?

A: *Great wealth, deep poverty, and a longing to reform society and the soul.*

Q: Who were the Progressives?

A: *Reformers who sought justice but often misunderstood the limits of government.*

Q: How did America change in this era?

A: *It became an industrial power, a global actor, and a more diverse society.*

Q: What did World War I demand of Americans?

A: *Sacrifice for freedom and a deeper reflection on the cost of progress.*

Q: What temptation accompanied this growth?

A: *To believe that material success could replace moral virtue.*



Section VI | The Challenges of Post-Modernity

Q: What defined the 1920s?

A: *Celebration, innovation, and spiritual drift beneath the surface of prosperity.*

Q: What caused the Great Depression?

A: *Greed, speculation, and disordered priorities in economy and society.*

Q: How did FDR respond to crisis?

A: *With sweeping reforms and appeals to hope, work, and shared sacrifice.*

Q: Why did America fight in World War II?

A: *To defend human dignity and crush tyranny on a global scale.*

Q: What did the war reveal about America?

A: *That our strength lies in unity, and our challenge is to remain just in victory.*

Section VII | Promise & Paradox

Q: What was the Cold War?

A: *A long conflict between liberty and tyranny, fought without open war.*

Q: What was the American Dream?

A: *A hope for prosperity and peace, grounded in faith, work, and family.*

Q: What tested America during this era?

A: *The struggle for civil rights and the burden of foreign war.*

Q: What did the Civil Rights Movement demand?

A: *Equal dignity and justice for every person, without violence or hate.*

Q: What did the 1960s question?

A: *Authority, tradition, and whether America still believed in its founding truths.*



Section VIII | The Dates That Defined Us

Q: What happened in 1492?

A: Christopher Columbus sailed west across the Atlantic, opening the way for European exploration and evangelization in the New World.

Q: What happened in 1607?

A: Jamestown, the first permanent English colony in America, was founded in Virginia.

Q: What happened in 1620?

A: The Pilgrims landed at Plymouth and signed the Mayflower Compact, pledging to govern by just laws under God.

Q: What happened in 1776?

A: The Declaration of Independence was signed, proclaiming the self-evident truth that all men are created equal.

Q: What happened in 1787?

A: The United States Constitution was written in Philadelphia, establishing a new framework for ordered liberty.

Q: What happened in 1791?

A: The Bill of Rights was ratified, securing the liberties of religion, speech, and due process for all Americans.

Q: What happened in 1803?

A: The Louisiana Purchase doubled the size of the United States and affirmed the nation's expanding destiny.

Q: What happened in 1861?

A: The Civil War began as Southern states seceded from the Union, igniting the nation's greatest crisis.

Q: What happened in 1863?

A: Abraham Lincoln issued the Emancipation Proclamation, declaring freedom for enslaved people in rebel states.



Section VIII | The Dates That Defined Us (cont.)

Q: What happened in 1865?

A: *The Civil War ended, slavery was abolished by the Thirteenth Amendment, and Lincoln was assassinated.*

Q: What happened in 1917?

A: *The United States entered World War I, defending democracy and shaping the modern world order.*

Q: What happened in 1929?

A: *The stock market crashed, ushering in the Great Depression and testing the endurance of American society.*

Q: What happened in 1941?

A: *The attack on Pearl Harbor brought the United States into World War II against tyranny in Europe and the Pacific.*

Q: What happened in 1964?

A: *The Civil Rights Act was signed into law, outlawing segregation and affirming the equal dignity of every citizen.*

Q: What happened in 1973?

A: *The United States withdrew from the Vietnam War, after years of divisive conflict at home and abroad.*

Q: What happened in 1974?

A: *President Richard Nixon resigned following the Watergate scandal, showing the need for virtue in public office.*

Q: What happened in 1989?

A: *The Berlin Wall fell, symbolizing the collapse of Soviet communism and the nearing end of the Cold War.*

Q: What happened in 1991?

A: *The Gulf War demonstrated America's military dominance and the new global order after the Cold War.*



Section IX | Recitations

Q: What does it mean to be truly free, even in the face of death—and how should a citizen of a republic face tyranny?

A: *“It is not now time to talk of aught / But chains or conquest, liberty or death.”* (-Cato: A Tragedy, II.i.95)

Q: What kind of spirit animated the hearts of early patriots fighting for their king and country?

A: *“God save great George our King, / Long live our noble King...”* (God Save the King, 1745)

Q: How did British seamen learn to endure danger with courage and resolve?

A: *“Heart of oak are our ships, heart of oak are our men...”* (Heart of Oak, 1759)

Q: When Americans began to resist tyranny, what did they declare about liberty?

A: *“Then join hand in hand, brave Americans all! / By uniting we stand, by dividing we fall!”* (The Liberty Song, 1768)

Q: How did the patriots resolve to fight for their new nation, even in hardship?

A: *“Let tyrants shake their iron rod, / And slavery clank her galling chains...”* (Chester, 1770)

Q: What vision of America stirred hearts in the early republic?

A: *“Columbia, Columbia to glory arise, / The queen of the world and the child of the skies!”* (Columbia, the Gem of the Ocean, 1843)

Q: What did early Americans ask of God for their beloved country?

A: *“Protect us by Thy might, / Great God, our King.”* (My Country, 'Tis of Thee, 1831)

Q: How did the faithful founders of the republic invoke divine guidance?

A: *“God of our fathers, whose almighty hand / Leads forth in beauty all the starry band...”* (God of Our Fathers, 1876)



Section IX | Recitations (Continued...)

Q: What song inspired troops to see judgment and glory even in war?

A: *“Mine eyes have seen the glory of the coming of the Lord...”*

(Battle Hymn of the Republic, 1861)

Q: How does love of country endure in the hearts of children?

A: *“You’re a grand old flag, you’re a high-flying flag / And forever in peace may you wave...” (You’re a Grand Old Flag, 1906)*

Q: What cry stirred America to join the great fight across the sea?

A: *“Over there, over there / Send the word, send the word over there...”*

(Over There, 1917)

Q: In times of peace and peril, how have Americans blessed their land?

A: *“God bless America, / Land that I love...” (God Bless America, 1938)*

Q: What did faithful soldiers sing as they braved war with trust?

A: *“Praise the Lord and pass the ammunition / And we’ll all stay free!” (Praise the Lord and Pass the Ammunition, 1942)*

Q: What vision of America combines beauty, bounty, and virtue?

A: *“America! America! / God shed His grace on thee...” (America the Beautiful, 1893)*

Q: How did those fighting for civil rights declare hope in the face of injustice?

A: *“We shall overcome / We shall overcome / We shall overcome someday...”*

(We Shall Overcome, 1963)



Week 1

Weekly Logos

What is a Civilization?

“To know a civilization, we must understand what it worships. Every culture is built on a vision of the good, the true, and the beautiful.”

This week, students explore the geographic and cultural foundations of North America before the founding of the United States. They will study the land itself, the native peoples who inhabited it, and the first European explorers who came seeking wealth, glory, and God. Students will begin to grasp how civilizations are shaped by what they believe about man, nature, and the divine.

What Are We Assessing?

The Facts

Major physical regions of North America

Differences between the Spanish, French, and British colonial models

Key native civilizations and their social, political, and religious practices

Introduction to mercantilism and transatlantic trade

What Are We Assessing?

The Skills

Identify and describe the major indigenous cultures of North America

Compare and contrast early imperial and missionary strategies

Locate and describe physical regions and their influence on culture

Use primary sources to evaluate cultural encounter and exchange

Explain motives for European exploration and colonization



What Are We Assessing? | The Truths

“Every civilization reflects a belief about man and his destiny.”


These truths unify every element of the lesson:

The land and its people were made by God for stewardship and communion


Exploration and empire are morally complex and spiritually consequential


True civilization unites justice, order, and worship

Assessments | Suggested Types

 Map Identification: North American regions, tribes, and early European settlements

 Short Reflection: What makes a culture civilized?

 Reading Annotation: Excerpts from Columbus’s journal and Bartolomé de las Casas

 Discussion: “Did early European exploration serve God or man?”

Pacing | By Week

<i>Day</i>	<i>Focus</i>	<i>Homework</i>
Monday	Introduction to Geography & Native Civilizations: The Land and Its Peoples	Read: Overview of major native cultural regions; complete map labeling
Tuesday	What Is a Civilization? Indigenous Cultures and Worldviews	<i>Excerpts from de las Casas; write paragraph on native virtue & order</i>
Wednesday	European Exploration Begins: Spain, France, and Britain	Begin vocabulary list (5 terms); timeline of major explorers
Thursday	The Columbian Exchange & Evangelization	Read: Columbus's journal; prepare discussion notes on faith and conquest
Friday	Review and Seminar: "What makes a civilization?"	Review terms for Monday quiz; short reflection: "The land as gift or prize?"



Teacher Tips

Use Visual Aids: *Maps, tribal regions, explorer routes, and trade flows help root understanding in the physical world.*

Recite Terms Often: *Reinforce key vocabulary such as “mercantilism,” “evangelization,” and “culture.”*

Make the Questions Moral: *Ask not only what happened—but what should have happened.*

Highlight Worship: *Every people worships something. Ask, “What did this culture value above all?”*





Link Geography to Virtue: *Discuss how the natural world forms habits of resilience, beauty, and belonging.*

Appendix

Capstone Research Paper | Overview

As the culmination of the year's study, each student will research and write a 10–12 page capstone paper that explores a major theme, question, or controversy in American history. This project will require students to think historically, argue persuasively, and write with clarity, integrating both factual knowledge and moral reflection shaped by the Catholic intellectual tradition.

Students must submit a formal research proposal for approval (*a proposal form will be given beforehand*), which will include the following:

-  Research Question – A clear, historically grounded question that guides inquiry.
-  Thesis Statement – A precise, arguable claim that responds to the research question.
-  Preliminary Sources – A list of at least five scholarly or peer-reviewed secondary sources and two primary sources drawn from course materials.
-  Students are expected to write with clarity, order, and persuasive force, employing the Classical Oration form:
 - Exordium* – The introduction that gains attention and builds ethos
 - Narratio* – Background/context, statement of facts/narration
 - Divisio* – Outline of major arguments
 - Confirmatio* – 3 Proofs & Sub-Proofs (body paragraphs)
 - Refutatio* – Address and refute opposing arguments
 - Peroratio* – The conclusion: moving the heart, restating the truth



Research Paper Questions

“We are not makers of history. We are made by history.”

Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.

Students may choose to write on a topic not appearing on this list. If they desire to choose a question of their own, they must get permission from the instructor beforehand. These are not thesis statements; the thesis statement is the question to the question chosen from below.

1. Were the Pilgrims pioneers of religious freedom, adventurous heroes, plundering thieves, genocidal villains, or something else?
2. Is the popularly accepted story of the first Thanksgiving bogus?
4. To what extent did the Puritans achieve their vision of a “City Upon a Hill”?
5. Why was indentured servitude replaced by African slavery?
7. Was the Sons of Liberty a domestic terrorist organization?
8. What was Benjamin Franklin’s most significant contribution to American history?
9. Were colonial protests, such as the Boston Tea Party, effective?
10. How did the Great Awakening of the 1740s affect American religious practices?
11. How were the Americans able to win the American War for Independence?
12. Were Americans justified in fighting for independence?



Research Paper Questions | Continued...

13. To what extent did colonial American women enjoy equal rights to men?
14. Were Daniel Shays and Nathaniel Bacon justified in their rebellions?
15. Which of the Founders had the most significant impact on the history of the United States? Evaluate his/her actions.
16. What connection existed between the ideas of the Enlightenment and the protest movement in the Colonies against British imperial policy?
17. What rights, claimed by the Declaration of Independence to be the inalienable rights of all men, were denied to those held in slavery, and how was that justified?
18. In what ways was the American War for Independence a civil war?
20. What were the historical origins of the Second Amendment's protection to keep and bear arms?
22. What ideas were debated, and ultimately left out of, the Constitution, and why?
24. Why was the Lewis and Clark expedition considered so important in America's westward expansion?
25. What affect did the Barbary Pirates have on American foreign policy?
26. Why was the John Adams presidency less successful than the presidency of George Washington?
27. Which First Lady had the greater impact, Martha Washington, Abigail Adams, or Dolly Madison?



Research Paper Questions | Continued...

28. Was Alexander Hamilton the most important person in the Washington administration?
29. Why were the Federalists so successful in directing the formation of the government of the United States?
30. Why was the election of 1800 called “The Revolution of 1800”?
31. Did Thomas Jefferson remain consistent with his political views when he became president?
32. Was John Quincy Adams the greatest Secretary of State of all time?
33. Was the War of 1812 necessary?
34. To what extent was the conflict between white Americans and Native Americans the fault of the whites?
36. How did Andrew Jackson change the role of the American president?
37. How did the Tariff of 1828 and the Nullification Crisis lead to the Civil War?
38. What affect did William Lloyd Garrison have on the abolition of slavery?
41. What role did northern women play in the abolition movement?
44. Was Manifest Destiny a positive good or an evil imperialist land grab?
45. What battle played the greatest role in the Texas war for independence?
46. Was the war with Mexico justified?



Research Paper Questions | Continued...

47. What role did women play in the development of the West?
50. Why is James K. Polk considered by some to be the most underrated president?
51. How did the Gold Rush contribute to America's moving frontier?
52. Why did Lincoln's election cause southern states to secede?
53. What role did slavery play in the election of 1860?
54. What were the most important battles of the Civil War?
55. Did the major congressional compromises of the early 19th century enhance or slow the spread of slavery?
56. Which economy was more successful, the northern industrial or the southern agricultural?
57. Which of Eli Whitney's innovations had a greater impact on history, interchangeable parts or the cotton gin?
58. What effect did Uncle Tom's Cabin have on slavery?
59. Was Sherman's March to the Sea necessary to end the Civil War?
61. Did Reconstruction increase or decrease states' power?
62. Did industrialization and the growth of cities improve and worsen the quality of American life?
63. How did rapid growth and increased immigration contribute to corruption in American cities in the late 1800's?



Research Paper Questions | Continued...

64. Were the experiences of immigrant groups between 1820-1860 similar or different? Focus on the Germans, Chinese, and Irish.
65. How were the reform movements of 1820-1860 related to the growth of industry and urban life?
66. “Instead of uniting the country, the economic changes brought about by the developments in industry, agriculture, and transportation from 1820-1860 produced more sectional conflicts and divisions.” Do you agree?
67. Did the South even have a chance to win the Civil War?
68. Did the Southern States have any justification or precedent for seceding from the Union?
69. How did the Federalist Papers, the Anti-Federalists, and the compromise on the Bill of Rights help bring about the ratification of the Constitution?
70. To what extent was the “early part of the 19th century marked by strong pressures to force Native Americans from their lands”?
71. To what extent was guerilla warfare a successful tactic for the South during the Civil War?
72. Were there “war crimes” committed by the combatants in the Civil War?
73. Which Supreme Court case (1803-1865) had the greatest impact on American history, and why?
74. Has there been a guiding architectural philosophy in the government buildings and monuments in Washington, D.C.? If so, what has it been?
75. Who was the worst president before 1870?