

Fifth Grade History Curriculum

Overview for Parents

Teacher: Dr. Freeberg

Content or Content Goals

The 'Core Knowledge Sequence' for fifth grade history is an ambitious series of topics in European, world, and U.S. History. Topics in European and world history include the Renaissance, Reformation, and the Scientific Revolution, the age of exploration, England during the reign of the Tudors and the Stuarts, the Meso-American civilizations of the Maya, Aztec, and Inca, and developments in feudal Japan. Topics in U.S. history include westward expansion, Native American cultures and conflicts, slavery, and the Civil War. In each of these domains of history the fifth grade curriculum picks up where the previous year leaves off. For example, in European history our study of the Renaissance and Reformation follows the study of the Middle Ages in fourth grade, which follows the study of Classical Rome in third. The goal of the curriculum is to expose students to the whole story of human civilization in its broad outlines before they leave Crossroads to enter high school. This will give students a narrative framework within which to locate and make sense of texts and ideas they encounter in high school and beyond. In addition to providing this broad frame of reference, the study of history will help to build reading, writing, speaking, and critical thinking skills. It will also promote a respect for other cultures, an appreciation of the debts we owe to the past and an understanding of how we arrived where we are as a civilization.

Expectations for Students

Students will need their history textbook and homeroom binder for each class. They should complete all homework assignments in a thoughtful and timely manner. In class students are expected to make corrections and enhancements to written answers to homework questions, to take careful notes when asked to do so, to listen attentively and contribute meaningfully during class presentations and discussions, and to work productively in small groups.

Homework Requirements

History will be combined with geography as much as possible, and there will be four history/geography blocks per week. There will usually be a reading lesson assigned in preparation for each class. Some of these assignments will be completed in school and the rest will need to be completed for homework. Most homework assignments will be drawn from the textbook. In class the textbook will be supplemented with primary source documents, slides, and film clips.

Reading lessons will generally be accompanied by assigned reading questions, and a complete set of questions for all lessons will be given out at the beginning of each unit. Students should

endeavor to provide thorough answers to all questions. Providing written answers to questions will promote an active approach to reading and will build reading comprehension over time. The questions will serve as a springboard for class discussions. They will also be a valuable resource in preparing for tests. For this reason, students are urged to remedy any inadequacies in their answers as we discuss the questions in class. Review sheets will be provided before unit tests and both class time and homework time will be allotted for test preparation.

Contacting the Teacher

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