

8th Grade United States History
7th Grade Washington State History & World Geography
-Syllabus-

Teacher: Justin Nelson

E-Mail: justin.nelson@ridgefieldsd.org

Phone: (360) 619-1400 ext. 6360

My name is Justin Nelson. I teach 8th grade US History and 7th grade Washington State History & World Geography. The 2025-2026 school year will be my 16th year at View Ridge and I am thrilled to be a part of this community. This year, in my classes, every student will be focusing on growing academically and personally. In addition, we will be creating a classroom of support to help each other embrace the challenges and growth this school year will present.

Throughout the school year, if you want to know what is happening in your student's class, I encourage you to use this Website and Google Classroom. For each class you will find due dates, project directions, weekly assignment updates, resources, and an online textbook.

I look forward to working with you throughout the school year to increase our students' success!

Course Description

Major Units of Study of 8th grade US History:

Our major unit of study will be as follows-

1. Colonization of the 13 Colonies and Separation from England
2. National History Day Project
3. The Declaration of Independence & US Constitution
4. Westward Expansion
5. Civil War
6. Reconstruction
7. Industrialization

Major Units of Study of 7th grade Washington State History: *Please Note: Washington State History (Semester 1) is a high school requirement. Students must pass the class with a "D" or better. Students who do not pass must retake the class in high school. Semester 2 is a World Geography class.*

1. Washington's Geography
2. Early Washington History
3. Indigenous People of Washington
4. Washington's Statehood and the Era of Treaties
5. Washington's Government
6. Early 19th Century State History/ *Boys in the Boat*

*Class Novel: *Boys in the Boat*

Major Units of Study of 7th grade Geography:

1. Map Skills
2. Global Perspectives & UN Countries
3. *Refugee* and Migration Past and Present
4. Global Issues Research Project
5. Capstone Project: Relocation Project

*Class Novel: *Refugee*

Course Materials

All students are expected to come prepared each day for class. Students must bring their View Ridge Binder, Planner, and Chromebook daily.

Other supplies suggested:

- Binder tab divider for History specifically
- Spiral notebook
- Looseleaf paper in History section
- Wired headphones
- Pencils, pens, & highlighters
- Sharpies
- Colored Pencils

Textbook

8th Grade US History:

The main text for this class is TCI's *History Alive! US History through Industrialism*. There will be a class set of books in the room so students do not have to transport them. In addition to the class set of books, students can check one out from the library or use the online book. To access the online textbook students will need to login using their "Clever" bookmark provided by the district.

7th Grade History: *The Washington Journey*- Available in class only (students can check one out at the library)

Grading Criteria

Grades are based on state standards and will be divided into two categories: Practice and Assessment. Please check Skyward regularly for student progress. Missing work will be entered as missing until the late work due date has passed, then it becomes a zero.

Class Grades are determined by two categories:

- Assessments: 90%
- Practice: 10%

Assessment Examples:

- Quizzes
- Unit, Midterm, and Final Exams
- Research Projects
- Presentations

Practice Examples:

- Homework Assignments
- In Class Routines; notes, weekly journals, notebook checks, etc.

- In-Class Activities

Grading Scale:

VRMS Proficiency Level Definitions

Letter Grade	Description of Understanding	Defining Characteristics	Scale
A	Highly Proficient Understanding	The student demonstrates highly proficient understanding of the required course standards based on content rubrics. The student comprehensively grasps and applies the key concepts, processes and/or skills.	5
B	Proficient Understanding	The student demonstrates proficient understanding of the required course standards based on content rubrics. The student grasps and applies the key concepts, processes and/or skills.	4
C	Approaching Understanding	The student is approaching proficient understanding of the required course standards based on content rubrics. The student grasps and applies some key concepts, processes and/or skills.	3
D	Minimal Understanding	The student demonstrates minimal understanding of the required course standards based on content rubrics. The student struggles to grasp and apply the key concepts, processes and/or skills.	2
F	Insufficient Understanding	The student is not demonstrating sufficient understanding of the required course standards based on content rubrics, and/or student has difficulty applying key concepts, processes and/or skills.	1
N/A	Missing	Student(s) refused to participate or did not attempt the assessment.	0

Late Work Policy:

Assignments should be submitted on time. Late work will be subject to the following penalties: Any student that misses class due to an excused absence will receive at least 1 day (per day missed) to make up their work. If you miss three days, then you would get at least three days to make up for the missing work!

- 1 day late: 10% deduction
- 2 days late: 20% deduction
- 3 days late: 30% deduction
- More than 3 days late: Up to 50% deduction, at the discretion of the teacher

Retake Policy:

We adhere to standards-based grading practices. If a student doesn't demonstrate proficiency in an assessment, they may retake it to exhibit their understanding. Please see the last two pages of this syllabus for our retake procedure.

Classroom & School Guidelines:

1. Show respect to yourself, your teacher, school property, and your classmates!
2. Cell phones are not allowed to be used during the school day (7:55-2:30).
3. **Please do not spray perfumes or aerosol deodorant in class (some students are allergic).**
4. No eating in class, water is ok!
5. Put borrowed supplies or books back where you got them.
6. Students may not pack up until instructed to (I will make sure you have time!).
7. No lining up at the door. Students are to remain at their desks until the bell rings. This is a safety issue.
8. Bring your binder, a pencil/pen, your planner, and a charged Chromebook **EVERY** day.

Communication:

- Email is the primary method for questions and concerns.
- We will be using Parent Square for all of our communication this year, please create your parent account here! parentsquare.com>signin
- We use Google Classroom here at VRMS. If you would like to have the parent view of our class, send me your email address with the subject line "Please add me to your Google Classroom."

Unexcused Tardiness/Absences

View Ridge Middle School Tardy Policy: **Students must be in their assigned seat with their materials when the bell rings or they are considered tardy.** Running into the class as the bell rings or walking around the room at the start of class is not on-time and ready to learn. ***Make sure you get a late note from your previous teacher if you are running late.***

Unexcused absences are referred to the office. Students will be disciplined according to the school's tardy and absence policies outlined in the student handbook.

It is imperative that you attend class regularly. It is your responsibility to make sure you receive, complete, and hand in any missed work during an absence. If you miss an assessment, arrange a time with me to make it up. If you have a planned absence that conflicts with a due date, the assignment should be turned in prior to the absence. Extreme situations such as long term illness or family emergencies will be dealt with on a case-by-case basis. Check Google Classroom or my school website for posted assignments.

Homework

You are expected to be prepared to improve as a learner inside and outside of the classroom. Strong reading comprehension is valuable in life and nightly reading is encouraged. Homework will consist of preparing for assessments, working on projects, and also to complete daily work as needed. Check Google Classroom for posted assignments.

Multiple Assessment Opportunities

An important piece of standards-based grading includes multiple assessment opportunities for each content standard taught in the classroom. When students do not meet standard, they need opportunities to retake assessments in order to show their own growth in learning over time. **All teachers at View Ridge Middle School will allow some form of retake opportunity for each reporting standard. The teachers will use their discretion to determine the exact nature of the retake opportunity, the timing of the retake opportunity, and the range of standards needing to be re-assessed..**

View Ridge staff will utilize the form on the following page to solicit student retake attempts. They are encouraged to coach students through this process.

Re-assessments of this nature should take place after a series of embedded classroom assessments have occurred over the unit of study and a final assessment of the standard(s) has been administered. Retake opportunities are expected to be completed within two weeks following the final assessment in that unit.

Suggested Strategies for Retakes

- Ask students who redo assignments to submit the original attempt with the new one and to write a brief letter comparing the two. What is different, and what did they learn as a result of redoing the assignment? Teachers are encouraged to use this strategy of error analysis to assist students in strengthening their ability to self-assess and self-correct their assessments. Teachers may also have the student create a SMART goal for how the standard could be reassessed.
- Reserve the right to give alternative versions of the assessment, especially if you think students will simply memorize a correct answer pattern or set of answers. Teachers are encouraged to develop retakes based only on the standards not yet met by the student. Teachers may set parameters regarding timing of the retake opportunity.
- Teachers may choose to employ a spiral assessment protocol that allows the students multiple opportunities to demonstrate proficiency on each standard. This option allows all students to retake each standard on in-class assessments without having to stay after school.

For example:

Quiz 1 assesses Standard 1 and Standard 2.

Quiz 2 assesses Standard 1, Standard 2 and Standard 3.

Quiz 3 assesses Standard 1, Standard 2, Standard 3 and Standard 4.

The final assessment assesses all previous standards.

Optional: If students earn an A consistently on one standard, that A carries forward and the student does not need to complete that standard on the final assessment.

View Ridge Middle School Unit Reassessment Form

Student name: _____ Date: _____
Class: _____ Teacher: _____
Assessment/Standard(s): _____ Original Grade: _____

Reflection: How did you prepare for this assessment? Check all that apply.

- | | |
|---|---|
| ☐ Read the notes | ☐ Completed homework on time |
| ☐ Made flashcards | ☐ Completed online review |
| ☐ Attended study session | ☐ Completed graphic organizer |
| ☐ Re-read the text | ☐ Studied multiple times prior to assessment |
| ☐ Studied with someone | ☐ I did not prepare |
| ☐ Completed study guide | ☐ Other _____ |

To be successful on future assessments, I will do the following three things...

- 1) _____
- 2) _____
- 3) _____

(this side completed by student)

(this side completed by teacher and student)

Action Plan: Complete the checked expectations below.

- ☐ Attend a review session (include date/time) _____
- ☐ Do additional studying at home (see reflection for study ideas)
- ☐ Complete the review material
- ☐ Finish assignments from the unit (see Google Classroom/Skyward for incomplete/missing work)
- ☐ Make corrections to assessment
- ☐ Record retake information in assignment notebook
- ☐ Retake work and form are due back on _____
- ☐ Other _____

Student will complete the retake _____

We understand the expectations of this retake opportunity, and have discussed this reflection form.

X _____

Signature of Student

X _____

Signature of Parent/Guardian