

**8M Social Studies - Mrs. Sullivan**  
**2025-2026**

**December:**

This month, we will begin our study of the Civil War and Reconstruction with a study of sectionalism, the experiences of the Civil War, and the Reconstruction era. Students will engage with primary and secondary sources to tackle two challenging questions: How did the Civil War impact the United States socially, politically, and economically? Did the United States government uphold its promises during Reconstruction to its citizens and the nation? While this is a short unit, it is a powerful one that builds on our previous studies of Westward Expansion and Enslavement during Unit 2. On the horizon...an inquiry-based project about the Progressive Era!

**November:**

Students will begin the month of November by writing their first full length argument essay on the topic: *In the pursuit of Manifest Destiny, was the process and the result of expanding west an American triumph or tragedy?* To prepare for this essay, students participated in inquiry, research, and writing lessons with both the other two 8th grade Social Studies teachers and the LMC specialists. Students thoughtfully analyzed a variety of primary and secondary sources from different perspectives to craft and support a nuanced claim.

After completing their essays, students will continue learning about the expansion of the United States in the 19th century with a study of enslavement and the expansion of the domestic slave trade. To grow their understanding and to think deeply on this topic, students will synthesize information from primary sources, essays, timelines, and documentary excerpts. In addition, students will read *Day of Tears* as a class, which explores themes of freedom, power, dehumanization, and oppression.

**October:**

In U.S. History, we will begin to wrap up our study of the founding documents. After having engaged in inquiry around the American Revolution and Declaration of Independence we recently shifted our focus to the Constitution and Bill of Rights. Students will learn about the foundations of the U.S. government and then will engage with the following statement: *The Constitution is a living document*. After we complete our study of the Constitution and Bill of Rights, we will begin our next unit of study. The next unit involves the expansion of the United States. Students ultimately will analyze why settlers traveled west and will evaluate the impact that Westward expansion had on indigenous people and on other racial and ethnic groups.

**September:**

Welcome to 8th grade Social Studies! It has been a pleasure to meet the 8M students this month and to begin our study of U.S. History. This month, students began to examine how the nation's founding documents, the American Revolution, and the government's structure created the identity of the United States. Students studied the causes of the American Revolution by analyzing primary sources, such as letters, laws, and speeches to examine the roles of resistance and agency in revolution. Currently, students are analyzing the Constitution and how it connects to our lives today as a living document. Looking forward to a wonderful year together!

\*Note: Mrs. Sullivan will return from maternity leave in early October. We are incredibly fortunate to have retired RLMS Social Studies teacher, Mrs. Jones, as the 8M Social Studies teacher!