

Middle School Social Studies Summer Assignments

Sixth grade students will study the beginning of early civilizations through the fall of the Roman Empire. Seventh grade students will explore the social, cultural, geographical, political and technological changes that occurred after the fall of the Roman Empire and in Medieval Europe. Eighth grade students will study the European exploration of North America, along with the geographic features that influenced early settlements and colonies.

TASK: Choose a topic or required reading from below. Write a five paragraph expository essay. Expository essays require students to explore an idea, evaluate the evidence, elaborate on the main idea, and state their argument on the idea in a coherent manner. In short, the main focus is to explain the facts and provide detailed analysis of the events and places. Your essay must be neatly written in black ink or typed. You must cite evidence and include a reference sheet for the sources used. This assignment should be turned in to your social studies teacher by the end of the 1st week of class.

6TH Grade Social Studies Summer Reading

Human Origins in Africa through the Neolithic Age:

Ancient Egypt: c. 3000-1200 BC/BCE

Mesopotamia: c. 3500-1200 BC/BCE

Ancient India: c. 2500-400 BC/BCE

Ancient China: c. 2500 BC/BCE-200 AD/CE

Ancient Israel, c. 2000 BC/BCE-70 AD/CE

Ancient Rome, c. 500 BC/BCE-500 AD/CE

Ancient Greece, c. 800-300 BC/BCE

Optional: Egypt, China, Greece and Rome will be heavily weighed – SO FOR MY GO GETTERS – learn as much about those topics before starting your 6th grade school year.

- excerpts from The Mandate of Heaven: The Classic of History; excerpts from Confucius' The Analects,
- excerpts from The Lament of the Nomad Flute by Lady Wenji
- excerpts from Homer's Iliad and the Odyssey; excerpts from Pericles' Funeral Oration; excerpts from Alexander by Plutarch; excerpts from Aesop's Fables (or the Aesopica); excerpts from Aristotle's The Athenian Constitution; excerpts from The Battle of Marathon; excerpts from Everyday Life in Ancient Greece (4th Century BC)
- excerpts from Roman Literature, including Ovid's Metamorphoses, excerpts from the Dead Sea Scrolls,
- excerpts from The Essenes' Manual of Discipline, excerpts from Plutarch's The Assassination of Julius Caesar, (44 BC), excerpts from Plutarch's writings on Spartacus and Seneca's descriptions of gladiators;
- excerpts from the New Testament; Items to view: art sculptures depicting Romulus and Remus, Ancient bust of Julius Caesar, discovered by French archaeologist divers scouring the bottom of the Rhône in the southern town of Arles, which Caesar founded in 46 B.C., digital collections of authentic ancient Roman Art and Architecture, including: the Colosseum, arches, arenas, aqueducts, baths, and bridges

7th Grade Social Studies Summer Reading

- *The Fall of the Roman Empire*
- *Islamic World, 400 A.D./C.E. – 1500s*
- *China, 400 A.D./C.E. – 1500s*
- *Africa, 400 A.D./C.E. – 1500s*
- *Japan, 400 A.D./C.E. – 1500s*
- *Middle Ages in Western Europe, 400 A.D./C.E. – 1500s*
- *The Renaissance and Reformation*
- *The Enlightenment and Scientific Revolution*
- *The Age of Exploration*

Optional

1. Write an argumentative essay either condemning or condoning the practice of buying/selling indulgences.
2. How do you think Martin Luther felt when his 95 Theses were translated into the common language and distributed across Germany without his knowledge or permission? Happy? Sad? Angry? Surprised? Concerned? Write an essay that reflects your answer.
3. Research and write about one aspect of life in the Middle Ages. Possible topics include food, clothing, religion, education, family life, government, warfare, feudalism, health, the Black Death, etc.
4. Research, write, and illustrate a timeline of the Protestant Reformation.

- excerpts from Eusebius of Caesarea, "Ecclesiastical History," that describes Constantine
- excerpts from The Hadith, Muhammad; excerpts from The Book of Golden Meadows, Masoudi
- excerpts from Sundiata: An Epic of Old Mali
- excerpts from The Analects, Confucius
- excerpts from The Tale of Genji
- excerpts from The Life of Charlemagne: The Emperor Himself, Einhard; selected accounts of the Black Death; excerpts from Summa Theologica, Thomas Aquinas
- excerpts from "Frank-land": An Islamic View of the West, Al-Qazwini; excerpts from Walter of Henley's Husbandry (describes manor life)
- excerpts from "Ninety-Five Theses", Martin Luther; excerpts from The Travels of Marco Polo
- excerpts from In Praise of Folly, Erasmus; selected pieces from William Shakespeare; excerpts from The Prince, Machiavelli
- excerpts from Two Treatises of Government, John Locke; excerpts from The Spirit of Law, Montesquieu
- excerpts from Galileo Discovered the Moons of Jupiter, Galileo Galilei; excerpts from The Principia and The Correspondence of Isaac Newton, Sir Isaac Newton
- excerpts from the journals of Christopher Columbus
- excerpts from Indigenous Peoples of North America, James D. Torr

8th Grade Social Studies Summer Reading

Colonialism (1600-1750)

Development of a New Nation (1720-1787)

The Constitution and Foundation of the American Political System (1777-1789)

Growth of the Young Nation (1789-1849)

The United States' Role on the World Stage (1789-1849)

The Sectionalism of the American North, South, and West (1800- 1850)

Slavery in America (1800-1850)

Civil War (1830-1865)

Reconstruction (1865-1877)

Westward Expansion after the Civil War (1865-1890)

Optional

- European settlement in the New World proved disastrous for Native Americans. They had no immunity to diseases, like measles, flu, and smallpox that were carried over by Europeans. Historians estimate that 90% of the Native American population in North America died due to disease. In your opinion, what can we/should we learn from this horrific loss of life?
- In your opinion, what were the three most challenging things about being a colonist in the New World? Explain.
- In the discussion of Patriots vs. Loyalists, colonists who were neutral are often overlooked. Why might a colonist have chosen to remain neutral while people around him/her were choosing the Loyalist or Patriot point of view? Explain.
- As you know, the Bill of Rights comprises the first 10 Amendments to the Constitution. Do you think the rights that Americans are granted in the Bill of Rights are sufficient for today's world? Should we add rights, remove rights, or leave them as is? Explain.
 - excerpts from The First Virginia Charter, 1606; The Mayflower Compact, 1620; excerpts from the Charter of Massachusetts Bay Colony, 1629;
 - excerpts from The Fundamental Orders of Connecticut, 1639; excerpts from The Maryland Toleration Act, 1649; excerpts from The New England Articles of Confederation; excerpts from A Historie of Virginia, ("starving time") John Smith; excerpts from Of Plymouth Plantation, William Bradford
 - excerpts from "Give Me Liberty or Give Me Death" speech, Patrick Henry; The Declaration of Independence; excerpts from "Common Sense" and "The Crisis," Thomas Paine; excerpts from Autobiography of Benjamin Franklin
 - excerpts from Andrew Hamilton's closing argument in the trial of John Peter Zenger; excerpts from John Donelson's journal
 - excerpts from The Articles of Confederation; the U.S. Constitution; The Federalist Paper # 10 and #51; The Bill of Rights; Washington's Farewell Address
 - excerpts from The Kentucky and Virginia Resolutions, Thomas Jefferson and James Madison; Patrick Henry's arguments against ratification
 - excerpts from the journals of Lewis and Clark; excerpts from decision in Marbury vs. Madison, John Marshall
 - excerpts from John Marshall's decisions in Gibbons v. Ogden and McCulloch v. Maryland; excerpts from "Rip Van Winkle" and "The Legend of Sleepy Hollow", Washington Irving; excerpts from The Deerslayer series, James Fenimore Cooper
 - excerpts from The Monroe Doctrine
 - excerpts from "The Declaration of Sentiments," Seneca Falls Convention; excerpts from "Nature" and "Self-Reliance, Ralph Waldo Emerson; excerpts from "Walden" and "Civil Disobedience," Henry David Thoreau; excerpts from "Ain't I A Woman," Sojourner Truth translated by Frances Dana Barker Gage; excerpts from Eliza Bryan of the New Madrid Earthquakes
 - excerpts from Roughing It, Mark Twain; excerpts from A Narrative in the Life of David Crockett of the state of Tennessee, David Crockett
 - excerpts from Uncle Tom's Cabin, Harriet Beecher Stowe; excerpts from the Lincoln-Douglas Debates; excerpts from Roger Taney's decision in the Dred Scott case; excerpts from The Autobiography of Frederick Douglass, Frederick Douglass.
 - excerpts from the "House Divided" speech in 1858, Gettysburg Address in 1863, Emancipation Proclamation in 1863, and Inaugural Addresses in 1861 and 1865, Abraham Lincoln; excerpts from The Respective of Co. Aytch, Sam Watkins
 - excerpts from the 13th, 14th, and 15th Amendments to the Constitution
 - excerpts from Black Codes and Jim Crow Laws
 - excerpts from A Century of Dishonor, Helen Hunt Jackson.