**Welcome to 8th Grade Social Studies!!**

Congratulations on reaching your final year of elementary school! You are almost on your way to high school and beyond, but before you get there, we must have a successful 8th grade year across the board. This informational paper will let you know what we will be covering this year in Social Studies, what projects we will be potentially completing, and what supplies you will need. Enjoy!!

**What we will be learning**

We will begin our Social Studies year picking up where you left off last year, after the Civil War and Reconstruction. We will begin focusing on Americans’ movement West and the challenges they faced, and end the year with the current events of global terrorism and America in 2013. We will also be learning about the history of Chicago throughout the year as well.

Every Friday we will work on Current Events, looking at magazines or newspaper articles to keep in touch with what is going on in the world around us.

Also we will be learning about the Illinois Constitution in December, as well as taking an assessment on it.

Below is a brief outline of each unit and what will be covered from the text book…

**Unit 19 Growth in the West 1860-1900**

Students will explore America’s westward expansion and the roles of miners, ranchers, and cowhands in that expansion, as well as the struggles of Native Americans during this time. We will also cover farming and agriculture.

**Unit 20 An Industrial Society 1860-1914**

On the opposite of Unit 19, we will look at the growth of industry in America, and how it gave rise to the railroads, big business, and labor unions. We will also learn about the beginnings of Chicago and the Great Chicago Fire.

**Unit 21 Changes in American Life 1880-1914**

Continuing our focus on the industrialization of America, we will be looking at the growth of major American cities and the problems that arose from overcrowding and segregation. We will also look at the arrival of the millions of new immigrants that came to America, especially Chicago. We will also learn about Chicago’s amazing transformation and recovery after the Great Chicago Fire and the hosting of the World’s Fair.

**Unit 22 The Progressive Era 1890-1920**

In this unit we will learn about the gains made in society by women, as well as the influence of Presidents Roosevelt, Taft, and Wilson. We will also look at the expansion of the city of Chicago as it begins to resemble the city we know today.

**Unit 23 Becoming a World Power 1880-1917**

This unit concentrates in the growth of America’s military might and international influence in regards to overseas expansion and the Spanish-American War. We will also begin to prepare ourselves for the First World War.

**Unit 24 World War I 1914-1920**

World War I was the first world wide battle, and this unit will go into great detail explaining the causes, the fighting, the weaponry, and the legacy of this war. We will also learn about Chicago’s role in helping America prepare for and fight in the war.

**Unit 25 The Roaring Twenties 1919-1929**

This unit details the boom of American business and society in the 1920’s. We will focus much on the growth of jazz and the Harlem Renaissance as well as great Chicago musicians and artists of the time, as well as the organized crime in Chicago.

**Unit 26 The Great Depression and the New Deal 1929-1940**

**Unit 27 The Rise of Dictators and World War II 1931-1945**

We will be looking at these two units in tandem and extensively, focusing on how the Great Depression in America affected people and in turn brought rise to dictators overseas. Then we will go through the events of World War II in detail.

**Unit 28 The Cold War and the American Dream**

**Unit 29 The Civil Rights Era**

**Unit 30 The Vietnam War Years**

All three of these units will be covered together, with our focus being on the boom of America after World War II, the end of segregation, and the Vietnam War.

**Unit 31 Years of Doubt 1969-1981**

**Unit 32 Entering a Millennim 1981-today**

Finally, we will cover America from the 1970s until today, looking especially at modern events such as 9/11, the Iraqi-Afghani War, and global terrorism and its effect on American society.

**Assignments**

Homework assignments will be given 2-3 days a week. These will be a variety of assignments. Some will be reading a short, extension passage based upon the day’s lesson and completing a short activity, some will be based upon a short video the students will watch on their own and completing a short activity.

**Projects**

Throughout the year we will be completing many different projects. Many of these projects will be small research on important people, events, places, or inventions from the time period we are learning about. We will also be doing many role playing and dramatization activities to actively “participate” in history, as well as constructing time lines, creating power points, and even dressing as great people in history.

**Supplies**

You are expected to come prepared to class every day. You will need: a folder, a spiral notebook, pens/pencils, your planner, markers/crayons, and index cards daily. You will be using a text book that will be kept in class.

**All assignments, projects, and class news can be found on jportala.weebly.com!**

**I can also be reached at 708-424-0148 Extension 2283 or at jportala@d124.org**