

MACOPIN MIDDLE SCHOOL

SYLLABUS

I. COURSE TITLE:

American Citizenship - Grade 8

II. TEXTBOOKS:

We the People: The Citizen and the Constitution. Commission on the Bicentennial of the United States Constitution. Calabasas, CA: Center for Civic Education, 1995.

American Civics. Hartley, William H. and Vincent, William S. Austin, TX: Holt, Rinehart, and Winston, Inc., 1998.

III. COURSE DESCRIPTION:

This course introduces students to the study of American government. Students will learn about the origins of the United States Constitution and government, as well as the structure of the federal government. In addition, the course will stress civic education, the rights and responsibilities of citizenship, and citizenship skills. Finally, the course will emphasize study skills, library research skills, critical thinking, and reading and writing skills.

IV. COURSE OBJECTIVES:

- A. Explain the concepts of constitutional government and compare those with the ideals of typical governments with unlimited power.
- B. Identify the characteristics of constitutional government and explain how the Founders' fear of an unlimited government motivated them to establish a constitutional government.
- C. Explain how social, economic, and political differences between colonial America and Europe affected the Founders' beliefs about rights.
- D. Explain the significance, major ideals, arguments and complaints embodied in the Declaration of Independence and how the document reflects the ideals of basic rights.
- E. Identify the Anti-Federalists, explain their arguments against the ratification of the Constitution and how debate with Federalists led to the adoption of the Bill of Rights.
- F. Identify the Federalists and the Federalist Papers and explain their arguments for ratification of the Constitution.
- G. Explain why the Constitution limits the powers of the federal government.
- H. Identify the branches of federal government and their powers.

V. COURSE CONTENT OUTLINE:

- | | | |
|----|-------------------------------------|--------------|
| A. | Foundations of American Government | (3-4 weeks) |
| B. | Formation of U.S. Constitution | (8 weeks) |
| C. | Government and Citizenship | (4 weeks) |
| D. | The Legislative Branch | (4 weeks) |
| E. | The Executive Branch | (4 weeks) |
| F. | The Judicial Branch | (4 weeks) |
| G. | The Election Process | (2 weeks) |
| H. | Research and Decision-Making Skills | (throughout) |
| I. | Study Skills | (throughout) |
| J. | Information Processing | (throughout) |

VI. STUDENT ACTIVITIES:

- A. Oral reports
- B. Debates
- C. Role-playing
- D. Simulations
- E. Homework
- F. Cooperative learning activities
- G. Seat work
- H. Class participation
- I. Essays
- J. Library research
- K. Current events
- L. Written reports

VII. EVALUATION OF STUDENT LEARNING:

Each student is responsible for daily preparation; i.e., pencil, notebook, textbook, homework, etc. Daily attendance is an important factor for the continuity of the course. Students are responsible for making up all missed work.

- A. Text, quizzes, exams, and project reports - 70%
- B. Homework, class work, and notebooks - 30%

VIII. TEACHING AIDS AND MATERIALS:

- A. Library and departmental videos
- B. Blackline Masters
- C. Resource Books
- D. News weeklies and periodicals
- E. Library and departmental books
- F. Multimedia resources