



## Curriculum Snapshot/Cover Page for American Studies

### Unit 1: The American Identity

40  
Days

Students will be able to study and understand what it means to be an American through three sub-units: Founding Principles, Individualism vs. Collectivism, and The Two-Party System. In each sub-unit, students will read and analyze a variety of texts, ranging from more historical texts such as John Winthrop's "A Model of Christian Charity" and the Declaration of Independence, to more contemporary texts like *The Catcher and the Rye* excerpts and *Pleasantville* clips. Each sub-unit will culminate with a formal assessment such as writing an editorial, engaging in a Socratic seminar, or practicing civil discourse in a large class discussion. An art liaison will push into each sub-unit, using visuals and digital media to enhance the students' understanding of the content.



### Unit 2: The American Dream

40  
Days

Students will be able to interpret what the American Dream means to them by exploring the American Dream through three different sub-units: Immigration, Industry, and *The Great Gatsby*. Students will have the opportunity to compare their idea of the Dream with ideas from works such as Emma Lazarus' poem, "The New Colossus," by creating a political cartoon as their final assessment. Students will study the evolution of industry in America and how it has led to American attitudes and work ethics and perform a skit, highlighting a major industrial theme as the final assessment for the sub-unit. Students will also engage in an all-class novel and film analysis with Fitzgerald's *The Great Gatsby* as well as Baz Luhrmann's film adaptation to enhance their understanding of the American Dream, which they will write about in a literary and film analysis essay at the end of the sub-unit. An art liaison will push into each sub-unit, using visuals and digital media to enhance the students' understanding of the content.



## Unit 3: Oppression in the U.S.

40  
Days

Students will be taught the five faces of oppression: powerlessness, exploitation, marginalization, violence, and cultural dominance, and asked throughout this unit to identify when a particular group is or has been experiencing one of the five. Throughout the unit, students will analyze memoirs, speeches, artwork, hollywood clips, and fictional pieces highlighting various oppressed groups in the U.S. throughout four subunits: Native Americans, Black Americans, women, and the LGBTQ+ community. Texts will include excerpts from *The Absolutely True Diary of a Part-Time Indian*, *The Hate U Give*, and the short story "The Yellow Wall Paper." Students will have a variety of formal assessments to check for understanding of each sub-unit's core concepts, ranging from creating a group mural, writing a textbook section, and presenting on a modern, feminist hashtag. An art liason will push into each sub-unit, using visuals and digital media to enhance the students' understanding of the content.



## Unit 4: Modern Conflicts

30  
Days

Students will be able to analyze modern warfare and hostilities and connect these modern issues to their historial origins. The unit will focus on two primary subunits: the Korean conflict and the US relationship with the Middle East. Using primary documents, as well as modern media clips and texts, such as Mark Twain's "War Prayer" and Richard Engle's *My Five Years in Iraq*, students will be able to explain where America's tensions with particular countries derive from as well as the motivation behind them. Each sub-unit will culminate with a final assessment: a class discussion regarding the effectiveness of using social media to communicate with political enemies as well as a film project. An art liason will push into each sub-unit, using visuals and digital media to enhance the students' understanding of the content.



## Unit 5: The American Identity Revisited

20  
Days

This unit will present students with the opportunity to connect the ideologies studied in unit one and unit four to ideologies of the 20<sup>th</sup> and 21<sup>st</sup> century, focusing on Cold War ideologies and current ideologies from the most recent election and onward. Students will read/act out Arthur Miller's *The Crucible*, comparing the Salem Witch Trials to McCarthyism and more modern "witch hunts." An art liason will push into each sub-unit, using visuals and digital media to enhance the students' understanding of the content.