

## **Team 8 Red**

### **Grade 8 Social Studies: World Cultures**

World Cultures is a year-long course featuring in-depth units on **China**, the **Middle East**, and **India**. As the year opens, students work with me and their other team teachers to reestablish guidelines for teamwork and a supportive learning environment, reinforcing and expanding on concepts learned last year. Students define “culture” by identifying “cultural universals”—a wide range of activities common to *all* humans—and thereby help develop a productive, objective approach to the study of cultures as well as a basis for appreciating their common bonds and individual uniqueness in our comfortable classroom environment. The Five Themes of Geography (Location, Place, Human-Environment Interaction, Movement, and Regions) are introduced and later applied in the major units. Specific thinking and study skills introduced in grade 7 (forming conclusions, making inferences, providing supporting evidence) are reinforced and applied throughout the year, and students are expected to maintain an organized social studies notebook.

Each of the major cultures studied has a rich and complex history and features prominently in current events. Students begin each major unit by learning important elements of the physical and human geography of each location. They next explore unique aspects of each culture, including some of the traditions, major belief systems, and forms of artistic expression. They learn the contributions that each culture has made to world culture. Aspects of contemporary life, including roles of young people, are also considered, and highlights of past and recent history are surveyed.

It is hoped that by studying the peoples of these particular cultures, students will enrich their own points of view and face the future knowledgeably as world citizens. Hopefully, too, students will become more interested in (and even excited about) world culture as a whole, and their opportunities to make positive connections and build productive relationships with peoples all over the globe.

Thank you, parents and guardians, for your interest, support, and encouragement. It is a pleasure to have your child in social studies class, and I hope the year continues to go well!

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