

August 21, 2023

Dear Students & Families,

Welcome to 7th Grade at Duncan Lake!

My name is Mrs. Van Wagoner and I teach 7th grade Ancient World History. While this will be my 18th year of teaching, it is only my 6th year DLMS and Caledonia Community Schools. Becoming a part of this incredible school system and community has been one of the best decisions of my life. Before getting started, I want to share a little bit about myself with you.

First of all, you need to know that I LOVE teaching. Ever since the 2nd grade, I knew I wanted to be a teacher. I am an alumni of Comstock Park High School where I played basketball, volleyball, and golf. After high school, I received my bachelors degree in Elementary Education from Oakland University. I was hired at Mill Creek Middle School in Comstock Park in the fall of 2006. During that time, I went on to earn my masters degree in Reading & Language Arts from Grand Valley State University. I have had many different roles throughout my teaching career. I have taught 6th, 7th, and 8th grade language arts, 6th and 7th grade social studies, and I have also been a reading interventionist. This year, I am thrilled to be teaching 7th grade Ancient World History (it really isn't as boring as it sounds, I promise!). I am also the Varsity Girls Golf Coach for Caledonia HS and an 8th grade girls basketball coach at DLMS.

I currently live in Walker with my husband Mike and two daughters Brielle (12) and Sienna (10). We also have two dogs--a chorkie named Diego and a pomsky named Roxy.

I love to read, cook/bake, watch movies, and travel. My absolute favorite thing to do is to spend quality time with my family and friends.

Attached to this letter are some additional pages of information about this class. This information is extremely important, so please have your child return the last page with a parent/guardian signature (keep the rest in case you need to review later). If you would prefer to sign electronically you can do so by filling out the form here:

<https://forms.gle/HwQupmELivTYUh5i8>. I know you are likely getting a lot of school information to read through, so please take your time. I would love to have all signatures completed by Thursday, August 31st. Please contact me if you have any questions or concerns.

I am so excited to start working with your child and you!

Warm Regards,

Veronica Van Wagoner

Veronica Van Wagoner

Webpage: <http://vvanwagoner.weebly.com>

Email (preferred method): vvanwagonerv@calschools.org

Phone: (616) 891-1380 ext. 7126

ANCIENT WORLD HISTORY

7TH GRADE SOCIAL STUDIES • MRS. VAN WAGONER • ROOM 126

STAY IN THE LOOP

- 1 MRS. VAN WAGONER'S WEBPAGE
<http://vvvanwagoner.weebly.com>
- 2 REMIND APP (NOTIFICATIONS/TEXTS)
Text @VAN7SS to the number 81010
- 3 EMAIL
vanwagonerv@calschools.org
- 4 PHONE
(616) 891-1380 ext. 7126

GRADING

70%

Students will be given the opportunity to retake tests

30%

ASSESSMENTS

CLASSWORK

CHECKING GRADES

We use PowerSchool to post grades. Both students and parents can have their own accounts and there is also an phone app you can download. I recommend students check their grades weekly.



Please contact the office for help logging in if needed!

SUPPLIES

Most of our work in this class is electronic through Google Classroom. Students still need the following materials for class:

<input type="checkbox"/>	Small Binder or Pocket Folder for this class ONLY
<input type="checkbox"/>	A good pair of headphones
<input type="checkbox"/>	Colored Pencils
<input type="checkbox"/>	Pencils/Erasers
<input type="checkbox"/>	Pens
<input type="checkbox"/>	Highlighters

COURSE INFORMATION



The seventh grade social studies curriculum focuses on early world history and geography. In this course, we will investigate human history from the beginning until around 1500. Students will explore major and significant events/changes in each era through a chronological organization.

We will begin our exploration of world history with a focus on historical thinking and learning the processes that historians use. Students will learn how to ask questions and frame problems to drive inquiry. We will also learn that historians must have evidence to support the claims they make in their accounts. There will also be an introduction to the “invisible” tools that historians use to create historical accounts.

From there, students will learn about the earliest humans and explore early migration and settlement patterns. In studying the origins of farming and its impact upon emerging human cultures, students will analyze evidence from the fields of archaeology and anthropology. We will also analyze a wide range of data sources including artifacts, photographs, and geographic information.

Students will also study various world religions and the rise and fall of empires throughout the world from the beginning until around 1500. In regards to world religions, students will examine the development of each belief system within its historical context. They will learn how these new belief systems had distinctive beliefs, texts, and rituals and how each shaped culture(s).

Throughout the course, students will expand their view of human history and begin to see the story of the United States in a more global context.



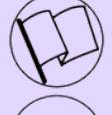
Unit 1: Historical Thinking



Unit 2: The First Civilizations



Unit 3: Classical Civilizations



Unit 4: Political Powers and Achievements



Unit 5: Social and Cultural Growth and Conflict



Unit 6: The Americas Pre-1600



INTERACTIVE NOTEBOOKS

Students will be creating electronic interactive notebooks throughout the school year for each unit of study. These notebooks contain notes, some of their classwork, maps, graphic organizers, etc.

The fact that they are electronic means that they cannot be lost or destroyed; and, the best part is that they are in the "cloud" which means they can be accessed anywhere!

These notebooks are the best resource when preparing for assessments!

HOMEWORK

Students who are productive in class will have much less homework to complete than those who are not. Much of the assigned "homework" is simply to finish work we start in class.

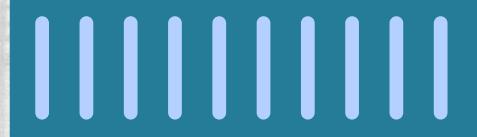
Electronic work assigned via Google Classroom should be complete and submitted by 7:35 am on the due date. Paper/Pencil work should be complete at the beginning of the hour on the due date.

Students should not be completing previously due work during class time unless they are finished with that day's work. This work will not be accepted.

Fully complete, late work, will be accepted but will follow the late work policy.

INCOMPLETE WORK & CORRECTIONS

Please do not turn in poor-quality work or work that is incomplete. This work will be marked incomplete and returned to you with comment(s) for required corrections or completion. Work will need to be finished/redone and resubmitted before a grade is determined. Resubmitted work will be accepted but will follow the late work policy.



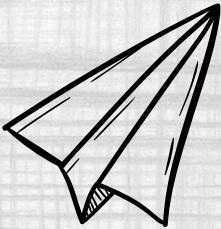
ABSENT WORK

If absent, students are required to makeup what they missed in class. A teacher video will be posted via Google Classroom daily designed to virtually teach each day's lesson. It is extremely important that students do not skip watching the video (otherwise it is very likely they will miss required work).

If there are questions about virtual/makeup work, please be sure to ask--either through email or during the next in-person class.

Extra time will be given for the completion of any missed assignments and/or tests, generally, equal to the student's time of illness.

COMMUNICATION



I believe it is very important to keep open lines of communication between myself, students, and parents throughout the year. I send out an email message through PowerSchool every Monday called the "Monday Message." It contains reminders and a look at our content for the upcoming week. I also send our homework notifications through an app called Remind (<https://www.remind.com/join/van7ss>). In addition, I have a classroom webpage that I update on a weekly, sometimes daily, basis. Please be sure to add it to your web bookmarks. I prefer to communicate directly with your child when issues arise. However, if you have something more serious that needs to be discussed/resolved, I kindly ask that you please observe the 24-hour rule.

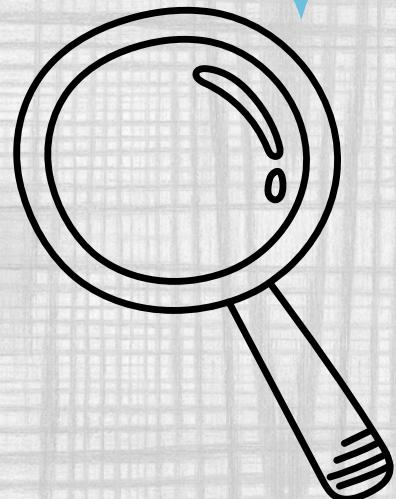
CURRENT EVENTS

We watch a daily 10-minute current event program in class. The study of current events helps students see the connections between our history content, themselves, and the world while promoting critical thinking and civil discourse.

This program's mission is to identify stories of national and international significance and then clearly describe why they're making news, who is affected, and how the events fit into a complex, international society.

Students will learn from every story. The show maintains a neutral position on controversial topics. It seeks to provide multiple viewpoints, clear illustrations, and general overviews instead of graphic descriptions.

If you would like to learn more about this program, I encourage you to watch it yourself for a week or two. It might even drive some conversations between you and your child at home.



Dear Parent or Guardian,

This year in 7th grade social studies, we will be learning about ancient world history. One of the awesome things about teaching and learning about history is that there are many resources for us to view that will enhance what we are already learning about in the classroom. Throughout the year, there may be times where our class views portions of the following docuseries (both from The History Channel):

Engineering an Empire:

<https://www.commonsensemedia.org/tv-reviews/engineering-an-empire>

Mankind: The Story of All of Us:

<https://www.commonsensemedia.org/movie-reviews/mankind-the-story-of-all-of-us>

I feel that these docuseries are very well made and provide an excellent supplement to our curriculum. Rest assured, however, that this viewing experience is not solely based upon entertainment, as in-class discussion and activities will relate the film back to the curriculum.

I want to make sure I cover my bases with you--the parent. Above, I have included a link to the Common Sense Media reviews for both of these docuseries. Please review and make an educated decision on whether or not you are ok with your child viewing them. I will provide an alternative learning activity if you would prefer your child not watch. Please contact me if you have any questions.

Warm Regards,

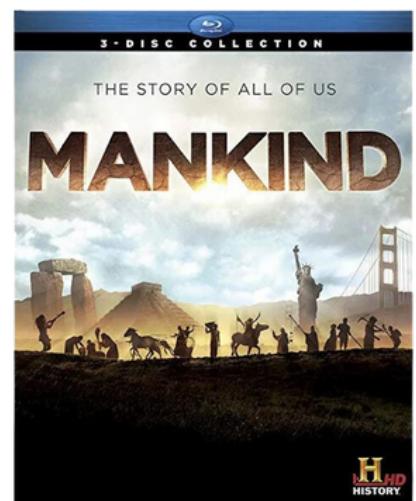
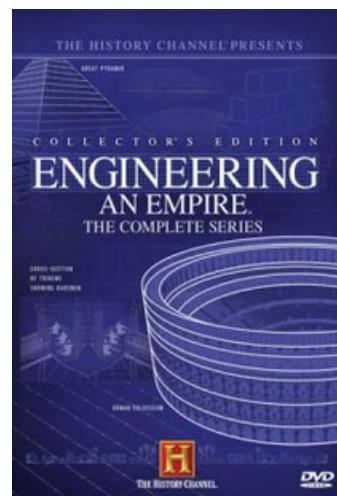
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RETURN THIS PAGE ONLY

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Print Student Name: _____



My child has permission to view the docuseries listed on the previous page.



My child does not have permission to view the docuseries listed on the previous page. I understand that my child will be provided an alternative learning activity during this time.

By signing below, you are acknowledging that you have read and reviewed the information about 7th Grade Ancient World History (in this syllabus) with your son/daughter. Please contact me as soon as possible if you have any questions or concerns.

X

Parent/Guardian Signature

Date

THANK YOU!