

November 2015



High School Social Studies Family Newsletter

Curriculum News from our Classes

Global History and Geography I

The first marking period went well for students in 9th grade Global History. As the second marking period begins, it is really important for students to get off to a good start. In class we are in the midst of a unit on early China, India, Greece, and Rome. This large unit will include an in-class DBQ essay and will culminate in a unit test. It is very important for students to see their teachers if they are struggling in specific areas of the class. In particular, seeking extra help with writing and test-taking are important to confront earlier than later in the year.



10th Grade Global History and Geography

10th Grade Global classes are in the middle of a unit about Political Revolutions. Class work and homework assignments are focusing on: the American Revolution; the causes and different stages of the French Revolution; and the effects of the French Revolution on 19th century Europe and Latin America. For one assignment, students will write a take-home argumentative essay about whether Napoleon was a friend or foe of the French Revolution. Another assignment will require students to create a political cartoon about the goals of the European powers at the Congress of Vienna in 1815.

As assessments for this unit, students will take a multiple choice test and will write an in-class essay about the effects of the French Revolution. Please keep an eye out for the Fall Term Project, a long-term independent research & writing project that will be assigned in late October and due in late November. Also please remember that students will be taking the New York State Regents' Exam in Global History and Geography in June 2016.

US History

Students in U.S. History classes are studying the early national period of the United States and the "Era of Good Feelings," a time in our nation's past filled with pride, optimism, and nationalism. Toward the end of November we will be looking at

IMPORTANT DATES

Parent Teacher Conferences

November 19

Please register for appointments at

www.rka141.org

READING
is the  to
SUCCESS

TEACHER SPOTLIGHT

Mr. Paul Sforza

After graduating from the University of Michigan with a degree in History, Mr. Sforza began teaching at RKA in 2004. While completing his Masters at Lehman College, he spent two years substitute teaching at a variety of grade levels before officially joining the High School Social Studies Department in 2006. He taught U.S. Government and Economics for one year before happily arriving at his favorite subject, Global History, in 2007. Since then, he has enjoyed eight full years of experience teaching 9th Grade Global, 10th Grade Global and AP World History.



Mr. Sforza says his favorite parts of teaching are: 1) watching students' analytical & writing skills develop; and 2) watching students experience that "A-ha!" moment when achieving a higher level of understanding. He enjoys the close-knit, 'neighborhood' feel of RKA, and names several of his fellow department members among his closest friends. He lives in Upper Manhattan with his new wife and his collection of house plants. In his free time, he enjoys singing, writing songs, and playing guitar.

Curriculum News (continued)

the Age of Jackson. We are paying particular attention to the growth that America experienced in many facets from population, economics, wealth and even suffrage.

Our work will culminate in a

DBQ - an essay based on primary source documents - and we will also be having our a multiple-choice test at the end of the unit. Students should have their binders prepared (3

sections for U.S. History, as outlined in the syllabus), as we will have a binder check that will account for a portion of the second marking period grade.

Reach us any time via Jupiter Grades or via the email addresses posted @RKA141.org

Curriculum News (continued)

Participation in Government

We have just completed our study of the creation of the U.S. Constitution, The Bill of Rights, Federalist and anti-Federalist debates. We are currently working on writing and performing political debates on controversial topics from a Federal and State perspective. As we continue our study of the Constitution in more depth, we will write and perform persuasive speeches supporting various political positions. Towards the end of November students will be writing a paper on politics and government based on a documentary film. In December we will be studying the judicial system and landmark Supreme Court cases. We will be completing several “mock trial” group projects involving Civil Rights issues.



Social Studies Parent Engagement Plans

The high school social studies department is planning a Fall 2015 parent engagement event that will bring parents into RKA to celebrate exceptional students. Teachers will choose students who exemplify leadership and academic traits, or who serve as role models for their fellow students. Some examples awarded would include essay expert, homework heroes, and talented talkers for best class participation. Each teacher will select up to three students per class. The date of the awards is still to be determined. Stay tuned.