

Winter Recess Activities for Social Studies, Grades 9-12



**Miami-Dade County Public Schools
Department of Social Sciences**

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Winter Recess Activities Social Studies, Grades 9-12

The student activities in this packet are designed to reinforce major social studies concepts and skills, while also being fun and interesting. The activities are differentiated by grade level: K-2, 3-5, 6-8, and 9-12. It is also hoped that these activities will encourage family interaction over the winter break. Please note that elementary-level activities will require greater parent/family supervision or assistance.

If you are in need of additional information about the Winter Recess Activities for Social Studies, please contact the Department of Social Sciences, at 305-995-1982.

Winter Recess Activities
Social Studies
Senior High School – Grades 9-12

Objectives

- Understand current and historic events from the perspective of diverse cultural and national groups.
- Identify/describe people and events of time periods in history.
- Compare major individuals, events, and characteristics of historical periods.
- Recognize that personal experience and frame of reference influence the interpretation of historical events.
- Describe aspects of United States culture which represent the blending of various immigrant cultures; e.g., music, language, foods, art, and literature.
- Describe the role of political parties in the democratic process.
- Discuss ways by which citizens exercise their political rights.
- Compare and contrast the media's coverage of selected events and issues in the United States and other nations.
- Promote involvement in civic participation and community service.

Activities

- Write a 1-2 page journal entry about an event in history from a person who lived during that event. For example, President Abraham Lincoln deciding whether to fire on Ft. Sumter, South Carolina, the first shots fired in the Civil War, or President Truman deciding whether to use the atomic bomb on Japan during World War II.
- History provides virtually unlimited opportunities to “imagine” hypothetical discussions. Write a dialog between two imaginary or real people in history that focuses on their discussion of an important historical event. For example, an imaginary discussion between British Prime Minister Winston Churchill and United States’ President Harry Truman on whether or not to drop the atomic bomb on Japan during World War II.
- Oral histories provide us with the opportunity to preserve the personal histories and memories of individuals who have experienced important events in history. For example, it is important to record the oral history of WWII veterans, Holocaust survivors, and immigrants, to name a few. Select a person in your family who has a story to tell and interview them about his/her experiences. Prior to the interview, research the events you know the person experienced and develop questions to be asked. With the person’s permission, record or videotape the interview.
- Select a conflict in history, past or present, that you have studied as part of your current social studies class. Develop a chart that outlines the basic

causes of the conflict. Write a summary of the generalized point of view of each side in the conflict.

- Draw a two-column chart and label the columns “credits” and “debits”. Define and discuss both. Chart your household income and expenditures for a two-week period. List the date and identify the source of each entry. Create a circle graph indicating (1) the amount of money spent on goods as opposed to services, (2) a circle graph comparing income to expenditure, and (3) a circle graph that provides percentages of expenditures on specific goods (examples: fast food, CDs). Write a paragraph explaining the insights gained by charting income and expenditures.
- Research the concept of “public policy.” Draw a political cartoon that addresses a need in your local community that requires a public policy solution. For example, if graffiti is a concern in your neighborhood, or if more parks are needed, then consider drawing a political cartoon with this focus.
- Research the concept of “separation of church and state” derived from the First Amendment to the U.S. Constitution. Explain what is meant by the phrase “separation of church and state.” Explain how this concept affects how “winter holidays” are celebrated in schools.
- Study the Bill of Rights, the first 10 amendments to the U.S. Constitution. Develop an illustration for one or more of the 10 amendments in the Bill of Rights using original drawings or by cutting pictures from magazines, etc.
- Find a current events news article that relates to one of the rights in the Bill of Rights, and write a paragraph to explain how the Bill of Rights relates to the current event.
- Research and analyze the viewpoints of the Republican and Democratic parties. Compare these views to other American political parties, such as the Tea Party movement. Create a new political party which reflects your own viewpoints and platform. Develop a political symbol and a platform of the 5 most important positions you wish to promote (i.e., the party’s platform). Develop a poster that includes the new political symbol and the platform.
- The media has been accused of being biased toward one political philosophy or another. To see if this accusation is accurate, select one major news story to follow for one week. Monitor the coverage of the news story for one week on at least: one cable news network; one local news broadcast; one daily newspaper; and one weekly news magazine. Note any bias in the reportage or in editorial policy.

- Voter turnout in most elections in the United States is very low. Local elections typically have lower voter participation than national elections that are held every two or four years. However, even elections at the national level often have a low voter turnout. If you had the power to make change, what would you do to increase voter turnout for national elections in the United States? Describe your plan in a 1-2 page paper.
- Discuss: What single technological advance made in the last few decades do you think is the most important? Explain your choice. Think about advances in worldwide communication; biological and chemical research; and discoveries above and beyond Earth. Create an ad for a magazine promoting the technological advance selected.

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