TEN (10) KEY DATES, & EVENTS IN EARLY AMERICAN HISTORY & THEIR SIGNIFICANCE

1. EVENT NAME - Christopher Columbus
   a. DATE – 1492
   b. DESCRIPTION – the existence of two continents - the New World – became famous.
   c. SIGNIFICANCE – European countries raced to gain the riches of the New World. This would, one day, lead to the creation of our nation.

2. EVENT NAME – Jamestown, Virginia
   a. DATE – 1607
   b. DESCRIPTION - the first permanent English settlement in the New World.
   c. SIGNIFICANCE – With Jamestown’s success English businessmen as well as the English government continued to invest money and resources into creating settlements in what would, one day, become the USA.

3. EVENT NAME – The House of Burgesses
   a. DATE – 1619
   b. DESCRIPTION - beginning of representative democracy in America.
   c. SIGNIFICANCE – The settlers of Jamestown got to choose/elect who would help to make the settlement’s decisions. This practice of self-government/democracy would, one day, spread to every settlement and colony in America and become the American way of governing.

4. EVENT NAME – Mayflower Compact
   a. DATE – 1620
   b. DESCRIPTION – Written by the Pilgrims – this was the first written plan for government ever created by common people. This plan created a direct democracy in America.
   c. SIGNIFICANCE – The writers of the Mayflower Compact were the Pilgrims who were common working people – not highly educated or wealthy. Its success led to the belief we have in America that the common person is capable of governing himself=democracy and that governments can and should be created by legal document – a constitutional democracy.

5. EVENT NAME – The Proclamation of 1763
   a. DATE – 1763
   b. DESCRIPTION - after several Indian attacks on settlers the British government made it illegal for colonists to settle west of the Appalachian Mountains.
   c. SIGNIFICANCE – This law angered American colonists since they had never been stopped from settling new land on the frontier. By 1763 it had become understood throughout the world that America was the one place on the earth where common people could own their own land and improve their lives.

6. EVENT NAME – Battles of Lexington and Concord
   a. DATE – 1775
   b. DESCRIPTION - These battles started the American Revolution. The first shot is known as the “Shot heard round the world!”
   c. SIGNIFICANCE – This was the first time in the history of the world that a colony tried to break-away from its mother country to become its own nation. This led to the birth of the USA and many future revolutions by common people against monarchies around the globe.
7. EVENT NAME – The signing of the Declaration of Independence
   a. DATE – July 4, 1776
   b. DESCRIPTION – This document, adopted in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania by the 2nd Continental Congress, announced to the world that the American colonies were now a free and independent nation from its mother country – England.
   c. SIGNIFICANCE – This document had many things that were significant.
      i. It gave birth to the USA.
      ii. It established the idea that people were born with inalienable rights.
      iii. It established the idea that people had the right to rebel against their government if their government became destructive of their inalienable rights and then create their own government to protect their inalienable rights.

8. EVENT NAME – Creation of the U.S. Constitution
   a. DATE – 1787
   b. DESCRIPTION – This document created our nation’s government – a government that we still have today - over 220 years later.
   c. SIGNIFICANCE – It established that a nation should be run by a written plan for government. By creating a written plan a government’s power would be limited to only those powers listed in the constitution. This was radically different from the rest of the countries of the earth all of which had kings.

9. EVENT NAME – The U.S. Bill of Rights
   a. DATE – 1791
   b. DESCRIPTION – The first ten amendments/changes to the U.S. Constitution.
   c. SIGNIFICANCE – This listed 10 specific rights every person was guaranteed. Rights that governments can’t take away or harm.

10. EVENT NAME – The U.S. Civil War
    a. DATE – 1861 - 1865
    b. DESCRIPTION – a war fought in the USA between northern and southern states. 620,000 Americans died in four years.
    c. SIGNIFICANCE –
       i. The Civil War began over the question “Do the people of a state have the power to vote themselves out of the union of U.S. states?” The southern states fought for the right of each individual state being able to govern itself without the intervention of the national government. The northern states fought to preserve and defend the union of United States in America known as the USA. Underneath this argument was the future of slavery in America. Southern states wanted the slave question to be answered within the boundaries of each individual state. They felt that, with the election of Lincoln that he was going to force the end of slavery even though he had stated that he only wanted to prevent the spread of slavery into western territories and would not interfere with slavery in the South.
       ii. Ultimately with the Northern/Union Army winning the Civil War the union of states, that makes us the United States of America, was preserved. The southern states were welcomed back into the union and slavery was abolished.