

# History At Our House

The Ultimate History Resource for Homeschoolers



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### *American History*

Elementary Grades Syllabus

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## Introduction

This syllabus presents the general objectives for an academic year of American History with HistoryAtOurHouse for both the Lower Elementary and Upper Elementary classes. Its purpose is to give parents an overview of what will be covered during the year, and thus to facilitate the purchase or borrowing of books and other resources (both non-fiction and historical fiction) to match with your children's studies in the program.

Various aspects of the HistoryAtOurHouse program remain, and will likely always remain, a work in progress. Since I continually teach a range of clientele spanning age six to sixty, I am always learning new things about history, and new ways to teach it. To meet my clients' and my own needs, I find it essential as a historian to broaden and intensify my understanding of history on a continual basis. I am regularly reassessing the nature and precision of the information I present, as well as the role and significance of historical knowledge in a broader education. Consequently, I am always making pedagogical adjustments to the various programs I offer, and occasionally they are major ones.

In calendar years when I am not teaching live American history classes, this guide will be a fully accurate reflection of the material that is present for the already completed product. In years (such as 2010-11) where the classes are being given anew, the general outline below should serve as a reliable guide for the year to come, though I may choose to depart from it in minor ways as the year progresses.

One issue that will interest parents of Lower Elementary students is the choice to match the sequencing of the presentation in the Lower Elementary curriculum with that of the Upper Elementary. All elementary grade students will receive instruction in the same basic content, and at the same pace, which is why this syllabus is relevant to both levels. Years of teaching experience have led me to maintain a close match between the two programs as there is no evident pedagogical reason not to, and it has many practical benefits. For one, it is possible for a student to transition from one program to the other (either by increasing the level of difficulty, or by decreasing it) at any time during the year. This can be extremely valuable to a parent whose child is not responding well to a particular level, and who could be well served by a change to a higher or lower level.

I am very excited about the year to come, and I look forward to working with you to make this academic year a terrific success.

Best regards,



Mr. Powell

## Course Outline

### The European Background, 1400-1648 (Weeks 1-4)

- Why History?
- Before 1492
  - The Reconquista
  - England and France: The Hundred Years' War and After
    - Joan of Arc
  - The Holy Roman Empire (Papacy and Empire)
  - The Reformation and Religious Wars
    - Martin Luther and John Calvin
    - Henry VIII and the English Reformation
    - "Bloody Mary" and Elizabeth

### The Great Explorers and the Age of Discovery (Weeks 5-7)

- Before the Age of Discovery: Leif Ericson and Vinland
- Marco Polo and China
- The Age of Discovery
  - Prince Henry, the Navigator
  - Christopher Columbus
  - Magellan and Del Cano, and Sir Francis Drake
  - Search for Northern Passages
- TEST 1: TEST FOR WEEKS 1-7

### The Conquest and Colonization of the New World (Weeks 8-14)

- Life in the Aztec and Inca Civilizations
- The Conquistadors: Cortes and Pizarro
- The Idea of Colonization
- The First English Colonies
  - John Smith, Pocahontas, John Rolfe
- The story of the English Parliament and Virginia House of Burgesses
- The Puritans and New England
- Growth of the English Colonies
- Indian Wars and Early Colonial Times
- New France
  - Jacques Cartier, Samuel de Champlain, Marquette, Joliet, LaSalle
- Colonial Wars
- TEST 2: TEST FOR WEEKS 8-14

### The American Revolution (Weeks 15-20)

- Coming of the American Revolution
  - James Otis and the Writs of Assistance
  - Stamp Act
  - Boston Tea Party
  - Patrick Henry: "Give me liberty, or give me death!"
- The Revolutionary War
  - Thomas Jefferson and the Declaration of Independence
  - George Washington
- TEST 3: TEST FOR WEEKS 15-20

**Independent America (Weeks 21-25)**

- Creating the Constitution
  - Federalists and Anti-federalists
  - The Bill of Rights
- George Washington as President
- Jefferson and the Barbary Pirates
- Louisiana Purchase
- Madison and the War of 1812
- James Monroe and the Monroe Doctrine
- TEST 4: TEST FOR WEEKS 21-25

**Decline of the Union into Civil War (Weeks 26-29)**

- Slavery and the Separation of Powers
- Missouri Compromise
- South Carolina Nullification Crisis
- William Lloyd Garrison and Abolitionism
- Texas and the Mexican-American War
- The Kansas-Nebraska Act
- The Election of Abraham Lincoln and Secession of the South
- The Civil War (1861-65)
  - Ulysses S. Grant, Robert E. Lee, William Tecumseh Sherman
- TEST 5: TEST FOR WEEKS 26-29

**America Since the Civil War (Weeks 30-36)**

- Reconstruction
- The Industrial Revolution
  - The Textile Revolution
  - The Transportation and Communication Revolutions
- The Spanish-American War
- Woodrow Wilson and World War I
- America Reacts against War
- America in World War II
- The Cold War, and After
- TEST 6: TEST FOR WEEKS 31-35
- REVIEW OF THE YEAR (Week 36)