

# History At Our House

The Ultimate History Resource for Homeschoolers



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### *American History*

High School Syllabus

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## Introduction

This syllabus presents the general objectives for an academic year of American history with HistoryAtOurHouse for the High School class. Its purpose is to give parents and students 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 students' studies in the program.

The 2010-11 academic year is the first year that HistoryAtOurHouse will be offering an American history high school program, thus, inevitably, the curriculum at this level represents a work in progress. In certain regards the High School program will mirror the Junior High program for the next few years—until highly experienced students begin to move up through the HistoryAtOurHouse program. There will, however, be some significant differences at the outset.

The basic similarity between the programs is that the sequencing of the material will be essentially the same. Thus High School students in the program will study the Age of Discovery, Colonization, and the American Revolution, and other major topics at approximately the same time during the school year as students in the Junior High class. The sequencing of the presentation is outlined in the included “Course Outline.” The differences, however, are numerous.

**The High School program is 5 hours/wk, vs. 3 hours/wk for the Junior High class.** This allows and necessitates a number of changes to the curriculum. Given the additional class time available, it is possible within each particular topic area to treat of the same material in greater depth. It is thus possible, for instance, while studying the American Revolution, to spend additional time looking at the important documents, such as the Declaration of Independence and the Bill of Rights. In addition, within any particular historical period, it is possible, given the additional time and the higher abilities of the students, to discuss certain topics which are more intellectually demanding. For instance, when discussing the Age of Discovery, it is possible at the High School level to discuss the concept of the wealth in greater depth, and to examine if and how it might be related to subsequent developments such as the mercantilism of the British Empire and to American governmental responses to the “Era of the Industrial Problem (1862-1914).”

The additional in-class time available at the High School level also permits us to look at more History Through Art, and to do in class readings and seminars. At the High School level, students will be introduced to “primary” and “secondary” sources pertaining to the narrative history they are studying. They will, for instance, be able to read short biographies (such as the “Visual Biographies” of Prince Henry, John Cabot, and Columbus), or famous speeches (such as Patrick Henry's famous speech before the House of Burgesses), letters, and other documents (such as the Federalist and Anti-Federalist papers). These materials will be read in class either in part or in full. Some readings will be assigned as homework. A list of anticipated readings in the program is also included in this document, in the section entitled “Course Readings.” (It will not be necessary for parents to purchase most of these readings. They are all either available for free on-line, or I will make them available to students via the

class web page.)

Some of the additional in-class time will be dedicated to individual study projects that the students will be tasked with. Each of the students in the live High School class will have to prepare a number of short essays, called “pearls,” over the course of the year, in addition to regular paragraph writing assignments, and periodic essays and tests.

Evidently, all the differences discussed in the foregoing are reflections of one general truth: the level of difficulty of the High School program will be higher. The material will be more abstract; there will be more of it; and there will be more work required of the students to grasp and retain it.

In addition to all the things that the High School program will include that the Junior High class does not, there are some things that the Junior High program includes but that the High School program will *not* include. First, there are no geography lessons at the High School level. Students will be expected to know their American political geography ahead of time, and if they are in need of a refresher, this will primarily be their own responsibility. (I will assist them in this area by occasional testing, including graded “pop quizzes”!) There will also not be any class notes provided to students at the High School level. Students will be expected to take notes independently in class. They will receive guidance from me on how to do so, and I will perform periodic checks on their note-taking to assist them in this area as well. Finally, students will not receive “test preparation sheets” for tests. There will be in-class review for tests, and students will be given explicit guidance on what the tests will contain and how to prepare for them, but they will have to prepare for them independently. (It will also be necessary for parents to coordinate with me in conducting the tests and submitting them to me, to insure the integrity of the testing process. This will be addressed as the school year proceeds.)

Finally, as a special segment of the academic year, which will serve as a general replacement for History Through Art, there will be one textbook used to teach the economic history of the United States. The book is entitled “How an Economy Grows and Why it Crashes” by Peter Schiff. Parents should purchase a copy of this book before January.

I am very excited about the year to come. In creating the HistoryAtOurHouse curriculum, I have striven to offer world-class history instruction for my homeschooling students. I believe the High School program will meet that standard as well, 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

### 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) and FINAL EXAM

## Course Readings

The following is a list of possible readings to be used over the course of the year. Not all the listed items will necessarily be used, nor is the list exhaustive. It is merely offered as an indication of the types of materials that students will be working with.

### **Textbook for Economic History**

Schiff, Peter, *How an Economy Grows and Why It Crashes* (John Wiley & Sons, Hoboken, 2010)

### **Age of Discovery**

W.J. Jacobs, *Prince Henry the Navigator*

Susan Heimann, *Christopher Columbus*

Thomas Bowden, *The Enemies of Christopher Columbus*

### **Conquest and Colonization**

King James I of England, *Basilicon Doron*

1606 Charter of the Virginia Company of London

*The Mayflower Compact*

1651 Navigation Acts by the Parliament of England

### **American Revolution and Founding Era**

*The Virginia Resolves*

Thomas Paine, *The American Crisis*

Ralph Ketcham, ed., *The Anti-Federalist Papers and the Constitutional Convention Debates*

Clinton Rossiter, ed., *The Federalist Papers*

*The Declaration of Independence*

*The Constitution of the United States of America*

*The Bill of Rights*

Joseph Story, *A Familiar Exposition of the Constitution of the United States*

Felix Gilbert, *The Beginnings of American Foreign Policy*

W.F. Reddaway, *The Monroe Doctrine*

### **Decline of the Union, Civil War, and Reconstruction**

*Daniel Webster's Second Reply to Hayne*

First Issue of *The Liberator*

Chief Justice Taney, *Dred Scott v. Sanford*

Abraham Lincoln, *The Emancipation Proclamation* and the *Gettysburg Address*

**The Long Twentieth-Century (1877-2010)**

Burton W. Folsom Jr., *The Myth of the Robber Barons*

Woodrow Wilson, *The Fourteen Points*

Franklin Delano Roosevelt, *The "Four Freedoms" Speech*

*The Atlantic Charter and the Truman Doctrine*

George Lenczowski, *American Presidents and the Middle East*