

History At Our House

The Ultimate History Resource for Homeschoolers



History At Our House

American History

Junior High Syllabus

September 5, 2010

Prepared by:
Scott Powell

Introduction

This syllabus presents the general objectives for an academic year of American History with HistoryAtOurHouse for the Junior High class. 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. 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.

In a general way, the Junior High program will mirror the elementary grades for the next few years—until more and more students begin to move up through the HistoryAtOurHouse program. At that point the program will evolve to reflect the context of knowledge that students will be expected to have when entering the program. For now, since students are not yet armed with that context—certainly, I'm not aware of any significant exceptions to date—a more basic approach is mandated. There are, however, significant differences between the Junior High and Elementary classes, apart from the general difference that our discussions will be conducted at a higher level of abstraction. The key difference is that students will be taught an integration and learning method known as periodization. For students continuing at the Junior High level, this will not be new, and they will be expected to rework and retain their prior knowledge of European history over the course of the year as well as add to it. Students moving up from the Upper Elementary class will only be responsible for American history material. In relation to this approach, another difference between the Junior High and the Elementary classes is that the Junior High level features a *final exam*, which is a required exercise for any student intending to move up to the live High School class.

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) and FINAL EXAM