

# History At Our House

The Ultimate History Resource for Homeschoolers



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### *Ancient History*

High School Syllabus

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Prepared by:  
Scott Powell

## Introduction

This syllabus presents the general objectives for an academic year of Ancient 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 2011-12 academic year is the first year that HistoryAtOurHouse will be offering an Ancient 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 in the years to come—but since some students have spent more than one year in the HAOH high school program already, there will 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 ancient Egypt, Mesopotamia, Greece and Rome 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 of Ancient history 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 Athenian Golden Age, to spend additional time looking at the important documents, such as Thucydides' *History of the Peloponnesian War* and Pericles' Funeral Oration. 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 Athenian Empire, it is possible at the High School level to discuss the concept of the mercantilism and militarism (both ancient and modern) in greater depth, and to examine if and how it might be related to subsequent developments such as current American foreign policy.

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 surviving portions of Plutarch's *Lives*), or famous speeches (such as Demosthenes' *Philippics*), letters, and other documents (such as Julius Caesar's reports on the *Conquest of Gaul*). 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 may be dedicated to individual study projects that the students will be tasked with, possibly including the preparation of 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 present-day 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.)

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,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Scott Powell". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, prominent "S" and "P".

Mr. Powell

## Course Outline

### Ancient Egypt, c.3000-664BC (Weeks 1-6, September to Mid-October)

- Why History?
- The nature and challenges of Ancient history
- Egypt Emerged Into history
  - Napoleon's expedition to Egypt
  - Champollion and the Rosetta Stone
  - The Narmer Palette
- The First Thousand Years
  - Unification
  - Pyramids and Egyptian Religion
  - Kingdom Periods and Intermediate Periods in Egyptian history
- The Middle and New Kingdoms
  - Engineering accomplishments other than pyramids
  - Akhenaten and the failed Egyptian Reformation
  - King Tut
  - Egypt and its Neighbors
- TEST FOR WEEKS 1-6

### Ancient Mesopotamia (Weeks 7-11, Mid-October to Thanksgiving)

- The Behistun Inscription and Assyriology
- Sumer and Akkad
- Gutian Period and Dark Age
- Old Babylonian Empire
- The Kassites
- Assyrian Empire
- Neo-Babylonian/Chaldean Empire
- Persian Empire
  - Persian Kingship and Imperial institutions
  - Zoroastrianism
- TEST FOR WEEKS 7-11

### Ancient Greece (Weeks 12-28, December-February)

- Minoan and Mycenaean Greece
- The Greek Dark Ages
- Rise of Greece (750 BC – 500 BC)
  - Sparta
    - military life
    - Spartan government
  - Athens
    - Draco's Laws
    - Solon
    - Birth of Democracy
  - Greek Colonies
- TEST FOR WEEKS 12-18

**Ancient Greece (continued)**

- The Greco-Persian Wars
- Athenian Empire
- Peloponnesian Wars (431-404BC)
- The Spartan and Theban Supremacies
- Alexander the Great
- The Hellenistic World
- TEST FOR WEEKS 19-23

**Ancient Rome (Weeks 23-37, March-June)**

- The Etruscans
- Legendary Origins of Rome
- The Tarquin Kings
- The Roman Republic (c.509 BC – c.146 BC)
  - Roman Society and Government
    - Patricians and Plebeians
    - The Twelve Tables
  - Licinian Laws
  - Conquest of Italy
    - Roman Municipal System
  - Punic Wars
    - Background: the Phoenecians
    - Hannibal and Scipio Africanus
    - Rome's triumph and its significance
- TEST FOR THE ROMAN REPUBLIC (Weeks 23-28)
- Decline of the Republic
  - Social Wars
  - Reforms of the Gracchi
  - Julius Caesar, Marc Antony, Cleopatra
- Early Empire
  - The Age of Augustus
  - Nero
  - Early Rise of Christianity
  - The Five Good Emperors and the extension of empire
- Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire
  - The Barrack Emperors
  - Diocletian
  - Constantine
  - Theodosius
- Barbarian Invasions (c. AD 376 – 476)
- TEST FOR THE ROMAN EMPIRE (Weeks 29-36)
- REVIEW OF THE YEAR (Week 37)

## 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.

### Egypt and Mesopotamia

Ian Shaw, *The Oxford History of Ancient Egypt*  
Marc Van de Mieroop, *King Hammurabi*  
Bill Manley, *The Penguin Historical Atlas of Ancient Egypt*  
Norman Bancroft Hunt, *Historical Atlas of Ancient Mesopotamia*

### Ancient Greece

Raphael Sealey, *A History of the Greek City States*  
*Pericles' Funeral Oration*  
*Herodotus' Histories*  
*Thucydides' History of the Peloponnesian War*  
*Demosthenes' Philippics*  
Philip Wheelwright, *The Presocratics*  
*Plato's Republic and Phaedo* (and other select dialogues)

### Ancient Rome

Chris Scarre, *The Penguin Historical Atlas of Ancient Rome*  
J-L Strachan Davidson, *Cicero and the Fall of the Roman Republic*  
*Plutarch's Lives*  
*Cicero's Catiline Orations*  
*Caesar's Conquest of Gaul*  
*Theodor Ayrault Dogde, Caesar*  
Michael Grant, *The Roman Emperors*

### Other

Carl J. Richard, *The Founders and the Classics*  
Meyer Reinhold, *Classica Americana*  
Herbert Butterfield, *The Origins of History*  
P.V.N. Myers, *A Short History of Ancient Times*