

Ready to Homeschool — Six Month Countdown

www.hilarioushomeschooling.com

Content by Rachel Masters, ©2023

WEEK 23: SOCIAL STUDIES AND HISTORY

HISTORY covers people and events from the past, usually in chronological order....

Social Studies is a broader term that can include any or all of the following concepts:

- Geography
- Government, Political Science, and Law
- Civics and Citizenship
- Anthropology
- Archaeology
- Economics
- Sociology
- Culture (as defined by many people groups)
- Religion
- Personal identity and psychology
- **CONTENT** — Learning a body of knowledge
AND **SKILLS** — a way of thinking which addresses their own civilization's issues

History Rotation: four to six years, repeated throughout their homeschooling years

1. Ancient History (Creation through Ancient Greece and Rome)

2. Medieval History (Christ through Renaissance)

3. American (and beyond) History, Part 1 (Exploration through 1850-ish)

4. Optional — Pioneer History (using *Prairie Primer* and *Little House on the Prairie* series)

5. American (and beyond) History, Part 2 (Civil War through the present)

6. Optional — Geography of the Eastern Hemisphere (using Sonlight Core F)

Use historical time periods as the “spine” and — since values impact culture — include Humanities alongside: Literature, Art, Music, Architecture, Religion, Philosophy, etc.

HIGHLY recommend timelines and maps, to visually represent a TIME and a PLACE

Prepare throughout the preschool years — Gently introduce that the world does not revolve around them.

This is usually a stage where they are consumed by “self”

Just developing the idea that there are other people around them in the larger community

Understanding that history even exists

Goals in the early elementary years:

Community-based (field trips to “community helpers”)

Studying all 50 states is a great project for this age OR researching your family tree

Start a History Rotation using very simple books

Explore Google Earth

Later elementary/middle school years

Continue History Rotations, expecting more out of older students — memorize countries

High School/College years

Usually students need **THREE** years of Social Studies and/or History for high school

Specifically **ONE** full year of American History and **1/2** year American Government

Consider doing college credit classes or CLEP, as these are often required in college too

For Week 24, we will be discussing *Teaching from Rest* by Sarah Mackenzie. This is a more recent release that helps homeschool moms come to grips with the fact that they cannot do it all, and gives advice on how to get rid of worry and anxiety. Use this link to purchase the book, and I will benefit as an Amazon affiliate: <https://amzn.to/3BKTFkk>

Resources:

(if you purchase through the suggested links from Amazon, I will benefit as an affiliate)

BiblioPlan by Rob and Julia Nalle

The original BiblioPlan was just a four-year plan, outlined for you by week, including book suggestions to incorporate history, literature, and a few writing prompts. NOW, it has mushroomed to a newer version which includes several workbooks at each stage AND an online version of their history program, *Zoom Through the Ages*.

<https://www.biblioplan.net/>

Sonlight (aka BookShark) by John and Sarita Holzmann

This is a Literature-Based curriculum, but the spine (driving organization) of most “Cores” is the chronological history narrative. You can easily combine multiple grade levels using their tips. The Instructor Guide is a huge 3-ring binder with weekly lesson plans, and discussion questions for each book included in the year’s package. Sonlight reflects a Christian worldview, BookShark is secular (and offers a virtual program as well).

<https://www.sonlight.com/>

<https://www.bookshark.com/>

My Father’s World

A thoroughly planned Preschool-12th grade Christian curriculum, integrating Bible, History, Science, and Reading. It takes students through the History Rotation twice, from 4th to 12th grade.

<https://www.mfwbooks.com/about/scope-and-sequence>

Beautiful Feet by Rea Berg

Literature-based curriculum on a variety of subjects (history, science, classical music, geography, the horse). Maps, “notebooking,” research projects, discussion questions, suggestions for online documentaries, hands-on history projects — all are interwoven to help guide families through an in-depth study of the topic at hand.

<https://www.bfbooks.com/>

Story of the World by Susan Wise Bauer

These four volumes tell brief historical stories from around the entire globe in a MOSTLY chronological order. Easy to read and understand, I would recommend these as reference even if you aren’t using them as your spine. There are accompanying Activity Books, Tests and Answer Key books, and audiobooks.

<https://amzn.to/3NyNhDp>

Mystery of History by Linda Lacour Hobar

A set of four volumes filled with color pictures cover world and US history — each lesson in the Student Reader is accompanied by activities at three different levels (in the Companion Guide) which means you can use this curriculum for all grade levels, teaching the same history time-period to all of your kids at the same time. Weekly mapping exercises incorporate geography into every volume. There are extra Video Lectures with bonus material available for purchase on the website for Volumes III and IV.

<https://themysteryofhistory.com/>

Resources:

(if you purchase through the suggested links from Amazon, I will benefit as an affiliate)

History Revealed by Diana Waring

Diana has chosen to divide world history into THREE years instead of four. Her books present the material from a Christian worldview in each of nine units, and then give a variety of ideas to inspire further learning that incorporate several learning styles and even multiple intelligence theory. She also has several CD's (called *What in the World?*) that students can listen to on their own, even if they aren't using the rest of the curriculum. She has also developed online courses using her materials.

<https://www.dianawaring.com/homeschool-history-curriculum/>

TruthQuest by Michelle Miller Howard

These guides are meant to encourage families to dive deep into each time period, looking for the TRUTH that all history is ultimately ordained by God. The lessons consist of a short "commentary" that is a springboard for further learning from good books (which you must locate on your own). There are also questions for discussion or writing prompts in the guides, AND separate "companions" to facilitate further learning. The guides themselves are a very affordable option if you have access to a large public or lending library.

<https://www.truthquesthistory.com/>

Notgrass History by Ray and Charlene Notgrass

These textbooks are designed to incorporate history with Bible, language arts, literature, and hands-on projects. They do an especially good job of including "primary source documents" to help your students become better historians. One of their unique offerings is an app (not free) called "Homeschool History" that can help you locate resources (even field-trip destinations) based on what you are currently studying.

<https://shop.notgrass.com/>

A History of US by Joy Hakim

This eleven-volume set is designed to give learners the entire breadth of United States history in bite-sized, engaging chapters, which read more like magazine articles, with sidebars that highlight interesting facts or excerpts of primary source documents. Supplemental workbooks are available from Oxford University Press OR from Johns Hopkins University.

<https://amzn.to/440yNBK>

Uncle Josh's Outline Maps by George Wiggers and Hannah Gullett

This book is for making copies of outline (blank) maps to aid in the study of geography. Each state is included separately, as well as each continent. There is also a CD version available with PDF files, which is easier for printing (instead of making copies).

<https://amzn.to/3NyXDTK>

The Ultimate Geography and Timeline Guide by Cindy Wiggers

This is not curriculum per se, but more of an inspirational guide for teaching parents. It gives the foundation for teaching using maps and timelines, and lets you as the parent decide how to incorporate these things into your history studies.

<https://amzn.to/42HipoB>

Resources:

(if you purchase through the suggested links from Amazon, I will benefit as an affiliate)

Maps, Charts, and Graphs — workbook series by Modern Curriculum Press

These eight workbooks (Levels A through H) are now out of print, but they can be found on the second hand market. They are ideal for teaching basic map-reading skills. I used Book F to go along with our Eastern Hemisphere year.

A Child's History of the World by V. M. Hillyer (1924)

Written in a conversational tone in short chapters to young children, this book attempts to cover world history from the very beginning of the world to the author's time almost 100 years ago. You can buy a printed version OR it is available as a free download through Project Gutenberg.

<https://www.gutenberg.org/ebooks/67149>

The Landmark History of the American People, Volumes 1 (1968) **and 2** (1970)

This two-volume set by Daniel and Ruth Boorstin organizes American history by theme instead of strictly chronologically. This can be helpful for kids who like to get the big picture and the “spirit of the times” instead of a blow-by-blow account. There is a large paperback book that combines the two volumes, which is available on the second-hand market for less. The links below are for updated editions with more pictures, timelines, and maps.

Volume 1: <https://amzn.to/3PhQsR7>

Volume 2: <https://amzn.to/42Mndt0>

Dover Coloring Books

Dover has a LARGE collection of coloring books that help kids slow down enough to absorb the information being presented. Specifically, there are coloring books that correspond with many history topics and people of the past. They even have Paper Doll books that illustrate the fashion of various eras, and Map Sticker books which can make geography more entertaining for the littles. Two examples from Amazon follow, but I encourage you to Google whatever you are studying to see what's available.

Glamorous Fashions of the Gilded Age Paper Dolls: <https://amzn.to/441iuVh>

Map of the United States Sticker book: <https://amzn.to/3qP87FR>

Geography Games and Puzzles

Studying geography using puzzles will reinforce the visual-spatial feel of the shapes of countries and their orientation on a map in relation to other neighboring countries. Geography games are designed to help children learn by repetition as they compete to win on gameboards that resemble maps. Two of our favorites are:

10 Days in Europe: <https://amzn.to/3NeTBPO>

TransAmerica: <https://amzn.to/445cY48>

National Geographic (Vintage Magazine Series)

Were these not in every home just 50 years ago? The familiar yellow-bordered covers just screamed “you will get smarter if you open me.” Besides being time machines for us now, they often feature lengthy articles for older students that are based on history or geography. Often the magazines included a map insert that could be unfolded and used for reference.

Resources:

(if you purchase through the suggested links from Amazon, I will benefit as an affiliate)

U. S. History Map Activities by E. Richard and Linda R. Churchill

World History Map Activities by Marvin Scott

Designed for advanced students, these two resources are supplements to any history curriculum.

The maps are presented with a series of instructions to color each item of interest specifically. They are designed to help students see political conflicts and boundaries in a new light after becoming more familiar with the geography of the region. You will need to locate excellent reference maps (especially a “historical atlas”) in print or online, as there are no answer keys.

US History Map Activities: <https://amzn.to/43QAySw>

World History Map Activities: <https://amzn.to/43HuknV>

Google Earth

This is a free interactive website/app that is absolutely amazing. EVERYONE can now visualize coming in for a landing from outer space on any point on our globe. The visual images clearly show rivers, lakes, mountains, and forests. Labels give us the current names for these features. Political boundaries are overlaid as dotted lines. 3D renderings show topographical images as a bird’s eye view. You can custom-create presentations or projects that correlate with your studies. And “Voyager” on the Google Earth platform has partnered with National Geographic to bring interactive map-based stories to the viewer.

<https://earth.google.com/>

The Story of the USA by Franklin Escher, Jr.

These four workbooks are designed for 4th-8th grade, and present vocabulary words, a short reading assignment, and brief sections of questions related to the reading. Easily done by independent learners and a great foundation for further research.

Book 1: Explorers and Settlers — <https://amzn.to/42JQxjB>

Book 2: A Young Nation Solves its Problems — <https://amzn.to/3phb3KN>

Book 3: America Becomes a Giant — <https://amzn.to/3PfQOrs>

Book 4: Modern America — <https://amzn.to/3CvVu50>

History Games

Much of history feels like trivia — unrelated bits of knowledge. But as kids study a time period and the stories become more familiar, the names and dates start to fall into place in their brains. To celebrate this, play a few games that allow them to show off their knowledge of history. Our favorite are Professor Noggin (almost 40 collections! But not all are history), which each come in a small box with cards and one dice. And RISK is an excellent simulation to understand within your own soul how power-hungry a dictator can be.

Professor Noggin’s History of the United States: <https://amzn.to/3XekB67>

Risk: <https://amzn.to/43YBL9G>

Uncle Eric books by Richard Maybury (**And Bluestocking Guides**)

These books are written as a series of letters to give background and advice on topics such as economics, civics, justice, capitalism, politics, philosophy, religion, and history. The Bluestocking Guides by Jane A. Williams and Kathryn Daniels offer reinforcements to the corresponding Uncle Eric books.

<https://amzn.to/3X8ltcp>

Other Suggestions:

Geocaching

This is a recent development using GPS technology to find treasures that other people leave behind on purpose — you either discover it and log your discovery, or you discover an object and move it to a new location and post that you have done so. Every region has its own set of policies — you will need to create an account to participate. Also available as an app on your mobile device.

<https://www.geocaching.com/play>

Reenactments, Landmarks and Museums

There are now historical reenactments of important historical events across the world — I have attended a Civil War Reenactment myself. There are also attempts to re-create historical objects (The Ark Encounter) and commemorate landmarks (The Liberty Bell). Often these are scattered throughout the world, so consider looking for what's available along the route to your vacation destinations. If your kids enjoy imaginary play, encourage them to stage their own reenactments at home.

Take time to find museums as well. Yesterday's hoarders are today's heroes as they are able to donate the most unusual items that keep our collective culture alive. If you get to Washington, D.C., be sure to visit as many Smithsonian Museums as you can!!

Documentaries

The History Channel has popularized our fascination for watching documentaries about all eras of history and many unsung heroes — people who would otherwise be forgotten in spite of their contributions to society. Watching documentaries together gives you great opportunities for discussions about how historians sometimes re-interpret history in light of their own opinions and biases. Don't blindly swallow everything that is presented!

Primary Source Documents

The internet has connected us with MILLIONS of artifacts that were hidden from previous generations. There are numerous databases that can help you find Primary Source Documents to correlate with the study of many history topics and help you and your kids become historians with your OWN theories.

Current Events

Today's Current Events are tomorrow's HISTORY. As seems appropriate for your kids' ages and stages, consider adding in a study on current events, gathering multiple viewpoints from news sources. Many newspapers are now available online. For a Christian worldview on current events, check out WORLDkids and WORLDteen for articles, OR WORLD Watch for a subscription to watch the news in 10 minutes (some families do this during lunch and discuss what was presented).

Project Gutenberg

This website provides access to thousands of free e-books, most of which have expired copyright dates. This allows you to read directly from old textbooks or obscure (auto)biographies. Use the search engines and see what you find!

<https://www.gutenberg.org/ebooks/>

Worldview

The culture in which we are raised can affect the way we perceive the world. Other cultures may be very different! Take time to discuss this and teach kids to identify when an argument stems from a fundamental difference in worldview. [Young Historian's Guide to Worldview, or anything by Chuck Colson]