

Fostering Wonder

History Grade 2 — American History Sample

Information Pages · Week 1 Lessons · Sample Term Celebration Week

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HISTORY — GRADE 2

Open-and-Go Format | 2 Lessons per Week | Estimated to be 20 minutes each

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This curriculum uses living books to bring history alive for young learners. Each lesson includes a short preparation, a brief reading, and oral narration.

About This Curriculum

Lesson Structure (20 minutes total): - **Pre-Reading (3–5 minutes):** Introduce vocabulary, show a map or image, set the scene - **Reading (10–12 minutes):** Parent reads aloud while child listens attentively - **Narration (5 minutes):** Child tells back what they heard in their own words

About Pre-Reading Activities: The pre-reader activities at the beginning of each lesson are brief preparations meant to help the child attend to the reading with understanding.

- **Vocabulary:** Prepares words from the reading that may be unfamiliar, could become stumbling blocks to attention, or are important to the passage. Some entries also identify key figures who will appear in the assigned reading. Writing only the key figures' names on a classroom blackboard or whiteboard before the lesson can give the student a clear visual reference for the people they will encounter in the passage.
- **Map Activity:** Gives simple geography practice so the student can picture the locations named in the reading.

- **Image Activity:** Appears in selected lessons when additional images may be helpful. These suggested images provide optional visual support and may be found and printed in advance or displayed on a digital device before the reading. Previewing a relevant image can help the student form a clearer mental picture of the people, places, or events in the passage and support understanding as the text is read aloud.
- **Engaging Thought:** Gives the student one simple idea or question to listen for during the reading.

Charlotte Mason wrote in *Home Education* (Volume 1, p. 145), "Attention is hardly even an operation of the mind, but is simply the act by which the whole mental force is applied to the subject in hand." She continued, "This act, of bringing the whole mind to bear, may be trained into a habit at the will of the parent or teacher, who attracts and holds the child's attention by means of a sufficient motive."

Picture Study Suggestion: Picture study is an easy lesson to pair with history. Choose one artist for each 12-week term and place one or more pictures of that artist's work where the student can study them. These may include paintings, drawings, sculptures, or other art pieces. Once a week, have the student look carefully at one work for about 1–2 minutes. Then hide the picture and invite the student to recall as much as possible: colors, shapes, people or animals, landscape, posture, facial expressions, and other details.

For this sample, one Grade 2 American History picture study selection is shown:

- **Picture Study: Donatello**

The full curriculum includes two additional picture study selections for the other terms.

Optional picture study resources for these artists may be purchased separately from A Humble Place if desired; families may also use public-domain images or other art resources.

Parent discretion: Some works by the suggested artists—and some images or biographical commentary on linked third-party websites—may include nudity or mature subject matter. Parents should preview all artwork, text, and external links before sharing them with children and choose only selections appropriate for their child's age and their family's values. These resources are optional; families may substitute other child-appropriate or public-domain images.

Charlotte Mason wrote in *Home Education* (Volume 1, p. 309), "When children have begun regular lessons (that is, as soon as they are six), this sort of study of pictures should not be left to chance, but they should take one artist after another, term by term, and study quietly some half-dozen reproductions of his work in the course of a term." She also wrote, "We cannot measure the influence that one or another artist has upon the child's sense of beauty, upon his power of seeing, as in a picture, the common sights of life; he is enriched more than we know in having really looked at even a single picture."

For the term celebration week, the student may choose a favorite work from that term's artist and try to recreate it. This recreation is not meant to look exactly like the original; instead, give the student about 7–10 minutes to focus on one specific section of the painting or artwork and try to create that portion, knowing it may not look exactly like the artist's creation. The point of this activity is for the student to notice details and begin to understand the artist's style. This may be done by using the same medium when practical, sketching or modeling the work, copying the art piece with tracing paper and a light box, or creating a new piece inspired by the artist's technique.

Composer Study Suggestion: Composer study is another simple lesson that pairs naturally with history. Choose one composer for each 12-week term and listen to a few pieces of that composer's music during the term. This may be done through any music streaming app, by watching a choir, early music ensemble, lute or consort performance, or orchestra performance on YouTube, or by attending a live performance when possible. The parent may briefly name the composer, the country or place connected with him, and the broad time period in which he lived, but the main work is simply to listen attentively and grow familiar with the music.

For this sample, one Grade 2 American History composer study selection is shown:

- **Composer Study: Giovanni Pierluigi da Palestrina** (Renaissance/exploration era, c. 1525–1594)

The full curriculum includes two additional composer study selections for the other terms. After listening, the student may share what they noticed: instruments, voices, mood, tempo, repeated melodies, quiet or loud moments, or the kind of scene the music brought to mind. These composers are chosen to follow the broad movement of the Grade 2 American History course, from exploration into early American and Lincoln-era history. The goal is not formal music analysis, but regular acquaintance with beautiful music connected to the period.

Using the Century Chart: The century chart included with the Grade 2 History curriculum package should be used as a tool to better help the student place the events and people studied this year in their mind. The parent may be the one to enter the information while the child watches and learns alongside you. It is a good idea to place this chart somewhere visible in the schoolroom so that your student may refer to it whenever needed.

The **Teacher Resources** file that comes with this curriculum is included to support the century chart work. It gives parents a simple date reference for the people, places, and events studied in the lessons, so entries can be placed in the correct century without interrupting the flow of the living-book reading. Families do not need to add every date or event listed; instead, parent and student may choose the people, places, and events that seem most meaningful or valuable to remember. Use this resource as a quiet parent aid, not as extra memorization work for the student.

Charlotte Mason wrote in Volume 1: "Then let the child himself write, or print, as he is able, the names of the people he comes upon in due order, in their proper century. We need not trouble ourselves at present with more exact dates, but this simple table of the centuries will suggest a graphic panorama to the child's mind, and he will see events in their time-order."

About Narration Prompts: The narration prompts in this curriculum are only suggestions. They are meant to spark conversation about the passage, not to be followed word for word. If your child naturally begins talking about what they heard, you do not need to use the prompt at all. The goal of narration is simply for the child to tell back what they experienced in the reading, in their own words and in their own way. Any prompt that opens that door is enough.

Educationally Appropriate Content

All books in this curriculum carry strong academic credentials and are appropriate for educational purposes.

Why American History in Grade 2?

Charlotte Mason wrote in *Home Education* (Volume 1) that "the early history of a nation is much better suited for children than more recent history because events move in a few broad, simple lines, like an adventure." She recommended that young children begin with vivid stories of people, places, courage, hardship, discovery, and national beginnings rather than abstract outlines or memorized dates.

This Grade 2 American History route gives children a broad first encounter with the early American story. Students begin with Leif Erikson and Columbus, then move into Pocahontas and the Jamestown world, Benjamin Franklin and colonial life, George Washington and the founding era, the Declaration of Independence, and Abraham Lincoln.

Mason also emphasized that young children should "linger happily with the life history of one man living in a single time period until he's practically thinking the same thoughts as that man." This curriculum follows that principle through living biographies and narrative history. Children dwell with Leif, Columbus, Pocahontas, Franklin, Washington, and Lincoln — not racing through outlines, but coming to know real people in real times.

Meeting these American historical figures personally through living books in Grade 2 also prepares students for the fuller American history study they will encounter in Grade 3. When they later read more about exploration, settlement, the founding of the nation, and the Civil War, these men and women will not be only names in a timeline. The student will already have a first picture of who they were, what kind of lives they lived, and how their choices helped shape America.

This separated American History route is designed for families who want Grade 2 to focus fully on early American history after a year of British history. It keeps the history stream simple, story-centered, and developmentally appropriate for young learners.

Academic skills addressed:

- Historical thinking and chronological understanding
- Narrative comprehension and oral narration
- Vocabulary acquisition through context
- Map skills and geographical awareness

- Character study and moral reasoning
- Understanding of cause and effect in history
- Exposure to classic biography and historical narrative
- Broad familiarity with early American exploration, settlement, founding, and national life

Parent Preparation for the End-of-Year Project

Week 36 includes a simple end-of-year research and presentation project. Before Week 36, purchase one freestanding trifold presentation board for the student.

Required Books

Affiliate disclosure: Some links below are Amazon affiliate links. As an Amazon Associate, Fostering Wonder may earn from qualifying purchases.

Book	Author	Format	Link
<i>Leif the Lucky</i>	Ingri & Edgar d'Aulaire	Hardcover (52 pp) — Weeks 1–6	Amazon
<i>Columbus</i>	Ingri & Edgar d'Aulaire	Hardcover (56 pp) — Weeks 6–13	Amazon
<i>Pocahontas</i>	Ingri & Edgar Parin d'Aulaire	Hardcover / paperback — Weeks 14–18	Amazon
<i>Benjamin Franklin</i>	Ingri & Edgar d'Aulaire	Book — Weeks 18–23	Amazon
<i>George Washington</i>	Ingri & Edgar d'Aulaire	Book — Weeks 25–29	Amazon
<i>Abraham Lincoln</i>	Ingri & Edgar d'Aulaire	Book — Weeks 30–35	Amazon

Note for parents using *Leif the Lucky*: The counted page references in this curriculum begin with the title page as page 1.

Leif the Lucky — Ingri & Edgar d'Aulaire (1941). The story of the Viking who discovered America 500 years before Columbus. Introduces Norse culture, exploration, and the concept of discovery.

Columbus — Ingri & Edgar d'Aulaire (1955). The classic picture-book biography of Christopher Columbus and his Atlantic voyages.

Pocahontas — Ingri & Edgar Parin d'Aulaire (1946). A picture-book biography introducing Pocahontas, Powhatan, Jamestown, John Smith, John Rolfe, and the early Virginia settlement story.

Benjamin Franklin — Ingri & Edgar d'Aulaire (1950). Caldecott Honor-winning biography. Introduces colonial life, printing, invention, public service, and the founding era through a living-book biography.

George Washington — Ingri & Edgar d'Aulaire (1936). Caldecott Honor-winning biography and foundational text in American history education. Introduces Washington's childhood, military life,

leadership during the Revolution, and role as the first President.

Abraham Lincoln — Ingri & Edgar d'Aulaire (1939). Caldecott Medal winner and one of the most celebrated children's biographies ever published. Introduces perseverance, self-education, moral courage, the Civil War era, and Lincoln's national legacy.

WEEK 1

Lesson 1 — Leif the Lucky Pages: 3–7 (counting from the title page as page 1)

Pre-Reading:

Vocabulary:

Viking (a Norse sea-traveler), fjord (a narrow arm of the sea between steep land), thrall (a servant or slave), outlaw (a person forced to live outside the law), homestead (a family's home and land), Erik the Red (the Norse explorer who settled in Greenland and was Leif's father), Leif (Erik the Red's son, who grew up in Greenland)

Map:

Show Norway, Iceland, and Greenland on a map.

Image:

Search the web for: Lofotr Viking Museum longhouse Norway photograph. Invite the child to notice the timber walls, turf roof, and great hall where a Viking family and household could gather.

Engaging thought:

"Listen for the kind of world that shapes a brave explorer."

Read aloud pages 3–7.

Narration prompt: "Tell me how the story begins a thousand years ago when the Vikings roamed the seas and Erik the Red lived in Norway, then continue narrating the rest of the story from there."

Lesson 2 — Leif the Lucky Pages: 8–13 (counting from the title page as page 1)

Pre-Reading:

Vocabulary:

proW (the front of a ship), headland (a piece of land jutting out into the sea), pasture (grassy land for animals to feed in), spirits (unseen beings people believed lived in the land), heathen (someone who does not worship the true God), Leif (Erik the Red's son, who grew up in Greenland), Erik the Red (the Norse explorer who settled in Greenland and was Leif's father)

Map:

Find Iceland and Greenland.

Image:

Search the web for: Saga Oseberg Viking ship replica sailing photograph. Invite the child to notice the carved prow, square sail, open deck, and the small ship against the wide water.

Engaging thought:

"Listen for the wonder and danger of traveling into an unknown land."

Read aloud pages 8–13.

Narration prompt: "Tell me how the story begins as they sailed for days through mountains of waves and valleys of water, then continue narrating the rest of the story from there."

SAMPLE TERM CELEBRATION WEEK

No new readings are assigned during the term celebration week. This week gives the student time to review the stories, people, and places that have been met during the term.

Lesson 1 — Review Term Readings

In the actual curriculum, four narration prompts are given in Lesson 1 of each term celebration week. The student chooses one prompt from the term's readings and tells back what they remember. The goal is not to quiz the student on every detail, but to give them an opportunity to recall and narrate a favorite person, event, or story from the term.

Lesson 2 — Map Review

In the actual curriculum, the map locations from that term's readings are listed in Lesson 2 to make them easier to locate. The student locates as many of those places as they can. The parent may invite the student to begin from memory, then use a globe, atlas, or wall map for help. The purpose is gentle review and growing familiarity with the places connected to the stories.

In the full curriculum, term celebration weeks are placed at the end of each term and reflect the readings and map work completed during that term.