

Fostering Wonder

History Grade 5 Sample

Information Pages · Week 1 Lessons · Sample Term Celebration Week

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HISTORY — GRADE 5

Open-and-Go Format | 2 Lessons per Week | 30 Minutes Each

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This curriculum uses living books to bring history alive. Grade 5 continues written narration alongside oral narration.

How to Use This Curriculum

Lesson Structure (30 minutes total): - **Pre-Reading (3–5 minutes):** Introduce vocabulary, show a map or image, set the scene - **Reading (20 minutes):** Parent reads aloud while child listens attentively - **Narration (5–7 minutes):** Child narrates orally OR writes a short narration

About Pre-Reader 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.
- **Map Activity:** Gives simple geography practice so the student can picture the locations named in the reading.
- **Engaging Thought:** Gives one simple idea or question to listen for; it does not summarize the passage or tell the child what to narrate.

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, prints, or other art pieces from the same broad historical period as the lessons. 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, clothing, landscape, posture, facial expressions, and other details.

For this sample, one Grade 5 picture study selection is shown:

- **Picture Study: J.M.W. Turner** (British, 1775–1851)

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 note for picture study: Parents are advised to preview and carefully select artwork that is appropriate for their student's age.

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 an orchestra performance on YouTube, or, better yet, by attending a live orchestra 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 5 composer study selection is shown:

- **Composer Study: Ludwig van Beethoven** (German, 1770–1827)

The full curriculum includes two additional composer study selections for the other terms. After listening, the student may share what they noticed: instruments, mood, tempo, repeated melodies, quiet or loud moments, or the kind of scene the music brought to mind. These composers belong to the same broad historical world studied in Grade 5. The goal is not formal music analysis, but regular acquaintance with beautiful music from the period.

Optional parent resource: [Tillberry Table](#) offers composer study resources that may help the parent better understand each composer and guide the student toward appreciation of the composer's work. This resource is not meant to turn composer study into a large biography lesson, but to support familiarity with the composer's music and style.

Written Narration: - One written narration per week, alternating between books as appropriate - At this grade, a student may be ready to write a paragraph or more for written narration, but go at the child's pace. If this is the student's first time doing written narration, ease into it gently. As the student grows more accustomed to writing thoughts down on paper, written narrations will naturally expand in depth and detail. - Students should write their narrations on separate paper or, preferably, in a notebook kept specifically for written narrations so they stay organized over the year. A notebook option I like for this is [this one](#). *Affiliate disclosure: This notebook link is an Amazon affiliate link. As an Amazon Associate, Fostering Wonder may earn from qualifying purchases.* **For beginners or students who need support:** - **Option A:** The student begins narrating orally; the parent gently pauses them partway through and asks

them to write the remainder. - **Option B:** The student writes for 5 minutes, then switches to oral narration for the remainder.

Important: The parent does not correct spelling or content during or immediately after a written narration. The goal is for the child to internalize what they heard and make it their own. If there are errors — a name misspelled, a detail confused — address them gently at the start of the next lesson that opens that same book. For example: “Last time we read this book, you told me about [event]. Let’s remember together — what was the character’s name?” Work together to recall and correct. Keep it warm and collaborative, never critical.

About Written Composition

Charlotte Mason understood composition to grow naturally through rich reading, oral narration, and written narration. As the student matures, continued contact with living books gives them ideas worth expressing, while regular narration helps them practice ordering their thoughts clearly.

To help families using charter school programs or other public-school-aligned requirements, Fostering Wonder also includes a brief written composition activity during the Term Celebration weeks, usually in Lesson 1. These prompts address grade-level writing skills while still attempting to preserve a Charlotte Mason spirit: the student is given a clear writing purpose, but not so much direction that the work becomes formulaic or disconnected from the term's reading.

Parents may choose to use the written composition prompt as written, adapt it lightly, or simply ask the student to narrate orally or in writing from the term's readings. The goal is not to replace narration with a separate writing program, but to offer a gentle bridge between Charlotte Mason practice and common school writing expectations.

Keeping a Book of Centuries:

"If the children do not live in the times of his history lesson ... these lessons will fail of their purpose." — Charlotte Mason

A Book of Centuries helps the student place people and events in their proper time instead of meeting them as disconnected stories. In Grade 5, this can remain simple: after a history lesson, present the option to the student to add **one or two names, events, or discoveries** that truly stood out to them. The goal is not to crowd the page or record everything, but to help the student quietly notice relationships across time.

This curriculum comes with a Book of Centuries that you may print and put into a folder or bind it into a notebook. You may choose to use our Book of Centuries or another one purchased from another company. The student is not required to write an entry in their Book of Centuries for each lesson, but the option should be made available to them. As the student matures, they will take ownership of their Book of Centuries and begin jotting down events and people they want to remember without being prompted to do so.

The **Teacher Resources** file that comes with this curriculum is included to support the Book of Centuries 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.

Using a Blank United States Map: Some families may also enjoy keeping a blank United States map on the wall during the year and adding each state name as it appears in the history readings. This helps the student feel that he is discovering the country along with the book, not merely hearing about it. A laminated wall map that works well for this kind of activity can be found here: [Amazon blank laminated United States map](#). *Affiliate disclosure: This map link is an Amazon affiliate link. As an Amazon Associate, Fostering Wonder may earn from qualifying purchases.*

This Grade 5 map activity continues the same activity begun in earlier Fostering Wonder history curriculum. If your student did not complete Grade 3 or Grade 4 History with Fostering Wonder, you may begin the year by helping them label the states already discovered in previous years: **Florida, Virginia, New York, Massachusetts, Rhode Island, Maine, New Hampshire, Connecticut, Maryland, Georgia, Louisiana, and Vermont**. Then, as new states appear in Grade 5, the student can continue adding them to the same blank map.

At the end of Terms 1 and 2, students will also complete focused map review activities. A separate PDF file, **History-Grade5-Map-Review.pdf**, is included with this curriculum for those activities. This file provides checklists of the Week 12 and Week 24 map activity locations, along with one blank United States map and one blank world map for each term. The goal is not to fill in every location from the list at once. The student should spend 5–10 minutes labeling as many places as they can from memory, then spend 5–10 minutes using an atlas, wall map, or globe to check their work and add more locations. It is okay if they do not find every place during the review, since these locations will continue to come up in future lessons.

About Narration Prompts: The narration prompts in this curriculum are suggestions only. They are meant to spark conversation about the passage being read — 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 the right one.

Educationally Appropriate Content

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

This Country of Ours, Volume 3 — H.E. Marshall, adapted/edited by Donna-Jean A. Breckenridge. Classic narrative United States history used in living-books settings. Grade 5 begins with the early United States under the Constitution and continues through the nineteenth century.

Content note for parents and students: Because *This Country of Ours, Volume 3* covers war, slavery, westward expansion, political conflict, and other difficult parts of American history, parents may wish to preview sensitive chapters and pause briefly to explain historical language or context when needed.

Abraham Lincoln's World — Genevieve Foster. Narrative world history centered on Abraham Lincoln's lifetime, helping students connect American events with people and movements across the wider world.

Content note for parents and students: Because *Abraham Lincoln's World* places nineteenth-century history in a global setting, it includes references to slavery, war, political revolutions, executions, colonialism, and other difficult historical realities. These topics are generally presented as historical facts rather than graphic descriptions. Parents may wish to preview sensitive sections and briefly explain historical language in context.

Academic skills addressed: - Historical thinking and chronological understanding - Narrative comprehension through living books - Oral narration and written narration - Vocabulary acquisition through context - Map and globe skills - Biographical understanding - Understanding of cause and effect in history - Recognition of history in a wider world context

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>This Country of Ours, Volume 3</i>	Donna-Jean A. Breckenridge / H.E. Marshall	Print edition	Amazon
<i>Abraham Lincoln's World</i>	Genevieve Foster	Print edition	Amazon

Optional Book Basket Suggestions

These optional books may be placed in a book basket for independent or family reading during the year. They are not required for the lessons; they are simply additional living-book suggestions that may enrich the history study.

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

Book	Author	Link
<i>Johnny Tremain</i>	Esther Forbes	Amazon
<i>Poor Richard</i>	James Daugherty	Amazon

Coordinating Written Work Across Subjects

If written narration is also assigned in another Fostering Wonder subject on the same day, the parent may choose one written narration assignment for the student to complete. The goal is steady practice, not unnecessary duplication.

WEEK 1

Lesson 1 — This Country of Ours *Pages: 1–11* (Chapter 64: “Washington—First in War, First in Peace”)

Pre-Reading:

Vocabulary:

commission (an official position or duty), constitution (a written plan for government), preamble (the opening part of an important document), Federal Hall (the New York building where Washington took the oath), tyranny (harsh rule by someone with too much power), treaty (an agreement between nations)

Map/Globe:

Find New York City, where Washington said farewell to his officers and later became President. Then find Annapolis, Maryland, where he resigned his command before Congress, and Mount Vernon, Virginia, his home. Today Kentucky officially enters our map story! Find Kentucky on your blank United States map and write its name there.

Engaging thought:

Listen for how Washington gave up power when he might have kept it, and how the new country tried to become truly united.

Read aloud pages 1–11.

Narration prompt: "Tell me how Washington said farewell to his officers, then continue narrating the rest of the story from there."

Lesson 2 — This Country of Ours *Pages: 15–23* (Chapter 65: “Adams—How He Kept Peace with France”; Chapter 66: “Jefferson—How the U.S. Territory Doubled”)

Pre-Reading:

Vocabulary:

ambassador (a person sent to represent one country to another), bribe (money or a gift offered dishonestly), patriotic (showing love and loyalty to one’s country), territory (land belonging to a country but not yet a state), Sachems (leaders among some Native nations), guile (trickery)

Map/Globe:

Find France across the Atlantic, then find Washington, D.C., the new capital. On a United States map, find the Ohio River, Marietta, Ohio, and New Orleans near the mouth of the Mississippi River. Today Tennessee and Ohio officially enter our map story! Find Tennessee and Ohio on your blank United States map and write their names there.

Engaging thought:

A young nation had to decide when to stand firm, when to keep peace, and when to seize a rare opportunity.

Read aloud pages 15–23.

Written Narration: Write a narration about how John Adams tried to keep peace with France, 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, places, and ideas that have been met during the term.

Lesson 1 — Written Composition Activity

In the actual curriculum, Lesson 1 of each term celebration week gives the student a written composition activity based on the term's history readings. The student may be asked to write an opinion essay, informative essay, or another short composition connected to the people, events, inventions, conflicts, or changes studied that term. The goal is to help the student organize and express ideas from the living books in their own words.

Lesson 2 — Term Review or End-of-Year Project

In the actual curriculum, Lesson 2 gives the student a gentle review activity. In Terms 1 and 2, this includes a focused map review using the separate map review PDF. At the end of the year, Lesson 2 becomes an end-of-year display project that lets the student show what they learned through maps, labels, captions, copied quotations, drawings, written narrations, and favorite details from the year's history readings.

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.