

Early American History

A LITERATURE APPROACH FOR INTERMEDIATE GRADES

SAMPLE

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Early American History, A Literature Approach for Intermediate Grades

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Rabbit Trails

Where the Buffaloes Begin

by Olaf Baker and illustrated by Stephen Gammell

Olaf Baker's first-person account of life among the Blackfoot captures the strength, resilience, and independence of this Indigenous tribe.

We Asked for Nothing: The Remarkable Journey of Cabeza de Vaca by Stuart Waldman

In 1528 the conquistador Alvar Núñez Cabeza de Vaca was shipwrecked on Texas's coast and rescued by Karankawa Indians. For eight years he shared life with various Southwestern tribes and survived because of them. Returning to Spain, De Vaca became an advocate for the New World's Indigenous people. Highly recommended.

Gift Horse: A Lakota Story by S. D. Nelson

As a member of the Standing Rock Sioux Tribe, Nelson drew inspiration for this story from his great-great-grandfather. Young Flying Cloud and his horse Storm go through tests of stamina, courage, and faithfulness.

Turtle Island: The Story of North America's First People

by Eldon Yellowhorn and Kathy Lowinger &

The Girl Who Helped Thunder: And Other Native American Folktales by Joseph Bruchac

Both anthologies present traditional folktales and myths of America's Indigenous people teaching humility, respect, and gratitude.

Before Columbus: The Americas of 1491 by Charles C. Mann
Building from archeological artifacts and DNA evidence, the story of Indigenous Peoples in the Americas becomes ever more complex and fascinating. From genetic engineering of maize to remarkable structures like the Cahokia Mounds, America's first inhabitants' stories make up a valuable part of our American heritage.

Indians written and illustrated by Edwin Tunis

Mr. Tunis has recreated here, in spectacular detail, every meaningful aspect of a past way of life. The author's devotion to honoring and recording the customs, arts, and traditions in 245 accurate drawings is a treasure store that continues to speak over 60 years after its original publication.



Character Connection: *imago Dei*

Imago Dei is a foundational Christian idea stretching back to the earliest writings of Judaism, the historical and theological ancestor of Christianity. Genesis 1:27 reads:

So God created mankind
in his own image,
in the image of God
he created them;
male and female
he created them.

This passage is the foundation for the idea that all people bear God's image or imago Dei. This idea is the foundation for a Christian understanding of human worth and dignity. Since every human being is an image-bearer of God, every life is precious, and every person is inherently valuable and worthy. Sadly, because we live in a fallen world and evil is very present and real, the imago Dei is often violated and ignored. We will read stories that bear witness to the suffering that comes when imago Dei is violated, as well as learn about heroic individuals who risked everything to stand up for human dignity. We will see the world-changing power of defending the imago Dei in all people.

As you read the literature in this section, look for examples of when the imago Dei is respected and when it is violated. What are the outcomes? How does reverence for imago Dei lead to better relationships and a better world? When is it difficult for the characters in the story to live by the idea of imago Dei even though they may not believe in this specific principle?

Crafts & Projects

Make a Model 15th-Century Sailing Ship

Easy print-and-paste paper model *Santa Maria*: www.papertoys.com/santamaria.htm

Instructions for a wide variety of options for making replicas of Columbus's ships, including a ship in a bottle! <https://toy-models.wonderhowto.com/how-to/recreate-models-christopher-columbuss-sailing-ships-from-1492-0121462/>

Make a Ship's Hourglass

Directions for making an hourglass out of jars. Parental help required: www.theshabbycreekcottage.com/diy-hourglass.html

Make an hourglass out of soda bottles: www.wikihow.com/Make-a-Sand-Timer-from-Recycled-Plastic-Bottles

Write a News Broadcast

Instruct your student to write and act out a news broadcast for October 12, 1492. There will be several roles, so recruit siblings, family members, and friends. Roles to cast are newscaster, reporters, and witnesses/interviewees. Determine if the newscaster will report from the Taino or Spanish perspective. Include interviews with both Taino and Spanish witnesses. If desired, use costumes for added authenticity. Perform for family and friends.

Character Connection: Patience

Have your student define patience using a dictionary. Discuss the meaning of patience in the context of the following verses:

Proverbs 14:29
Proverbs 25:15
1 Corinthians 13:4

Proverbs 15:18
Ecclesiastes 7:8
Colossians 3:12

Proverbs 19:11
Romans 12:12

As you read through these stories, look for examples of patience. When did someone demonstrate patience and understanding? How can patience produce understanding? What happens when someone lacks patience? People are complex and can be patient in some situations and impatient in others. Do you see any examples of this in these stories?

Online Resources

The Powhatan and their culture:

www.historyisfun.org/learn/learning-center/who-were-the-powhatan-indians-and-how-did-they-live-2/

“‘People of the River: Powhatan Indians’ Henricus Historical Park Educational film”
on the LionHeart FilmWorks YouTube channel.

The Lost Colony of Roanoke is a puzzle that has fascinated historians for centuries. In 2020 archaeologists working in North Carolina believed they may have found an explanation! Read about it at the following links:

www.nationalgeographic.co.uk/history-and-civilisation/2017/11/first-english-settlers-survived-and-joined-native-americans

www.nationalgeographic.com/history/2020/11/newfound-survivor-camp-may-explain-lost-colony-roanoke/

Watch the following videos from the Fairfax Network–Fairfax County Public Schools YouTube channel to learn more about how language and culture made communication between the English and the Powhatan people challenging:

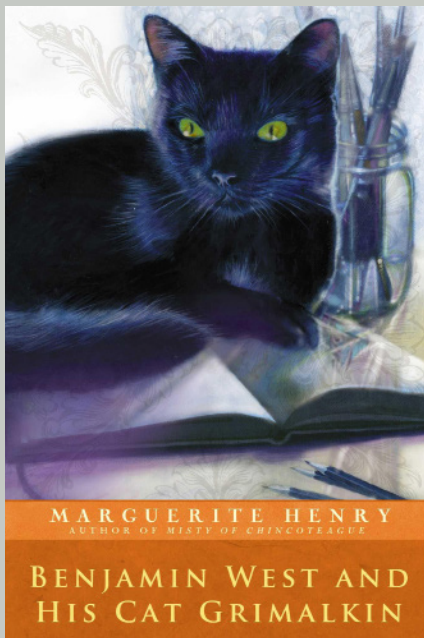
“Virginia’s First People: The Powhatan–The Language Barrier”

“Virginia’s First People: The Powhatan–The Culture Barrier”

Learn about the Mayflower Compact: “The Pilgrims: Mayflower Compact” available at pbslearningmedia.org/collection/americanexperiencethepilgrims/

Take virtual field trips of Plimoth Plantation. These engaging videos allow you to tour the *Mayflower*, meet Wampanoag and Pilgrim actors, and visit the Pilgrim and Wampanoag villages. www.scholastic.com/scholastic_thanksgiving/webcast.htm

Watch a video on William Penn: “In Penn’s Shadow: Philadelphia: the Great Experiment” available on YouTube.



Benjamin West and His Cat Grimalkin
by Marguerite Henry

This is the delightful story of the Quaker boy who loved to paint so much that “he dug his colors out of the earth and made his brushes from his cat’s tail.” Unfortunately for Benjamin, Quakers forbade the creation of “images” and paintings were seen as worldly distractions. This presented Benjamin’s father with a thorny religious problem. Happily, for posterity, the Quaker leadership recognized the beauty of West’s gift and voted to allow him to study art. As a child, Benjamin learned from Native Americans how to make paints by mixing clay and bear grease, and he never forgot his humble beginnings. He maintained to the end of his life that “a kiss from my mother made me a painter.” Benjamin went on to become a court painter for King George III, the only American ever appointed president of the Royal Academy of England, and is known as the father of American painting.

LESSON 36

1. Read Chapter 4 of *A Child's First*.

a. What were some of the reasons Britain chose to start a colony in America? *Britain wanted to turn the natural resources of the New World into wealth back home. It also wanted to prevent Spain from laying claim to this new territory. The Church of England also wanted to spread Christianity to the Natives, and many Englishmen wanted adventure, freedom, and the opportunity to start a new life.*

b. Why is Jamestown called "the cradle of our liberties"? Jamestown was built on what principles? *Jamestown was the first permanent English settlement, and it is remembered as the cradle of our liberties for legislating the following: 1) Respect for church and God, 2) trial by jury, and in time, 3) representative government.*

c. What obstacles did the British face in Jamestown? *Jamestown colonists faced infighting, disease, shortages of food and supplies, and attacks from the Powhatan people.*

2. Have your student begin a new section in the notebook titled "The Colonies." The first colony featured in this section will be Jamestown. Have your student cut out the Chesapeake Bay region map from the Picture Packet and paste it into the notebook. Label the following:

Atlantic Ocean
Chesapeake Bay

Jamestown

Roanoke

LESSON 37

1. We will now learn about the Jamestown colony, which was established in the territory of the Powhatan people. This confederation of 30 Algonquian-speaking tribes was ruled by Wahunsenacawh, Pocahontas's father! The English called him Powhatan, which was one of his many titles. To avoid confusion, Powhatan will be referred to by this title, and the people will be referred to as the Powhatan people.

2. Introduce *Pocahontas and the Strangers* by Clyde Robert Bulla. Read Chapters 1-4.

a. Were the Jamestown settlers the first white people to come to the land of the Powhatan people? *No. There had been previous exploratory visits and attempts at colonization, but they had all failed.*

3. The eagle that Pocahontas rescued was a golden eagle. Cut out the golden eagle picture from the Picture Packet, and have your student add it to the notebook along with a few facts about these birds of prey.

LESSON 38

1. Read Chapters 5-8 of *Pocahontas and the Strangers*.

a. Why were the Powhatan people uneasy about the intentions of the settlers? *They believed that the settlers would attack them.*

2. The only first-hand historical account of Pocahontas rescuing John Smith comes from Smith himself. The lack of collaborative accounts has caused some to question the story. If desired, research this historical controversy. Once the research is complete, have your student write or narrate the event twice: once from Pocahontas's perspective and once from John Smith's. Discuss the importance of multiple eyewitness accounts both in supporting history and in the courtroom. See the following scriptures: Deut. 19:15, 2 Cor. 13:1.

3. The historical site where John Smith met Powhatan has been recently discovered! Learn about it at the following link, and have your student mark this geographical site on the map in the notebook:
www.nps.gov/cajo/playourvisit/werowocomoco.htm



1. *The Coronation of Powhatan* by John Gadsby Chapman, 1835
2. Algonquian village of Pomeoic, 1585

LESSON 70

1. Finish reading *A Voice of Her Own*.

2. Read and discuss the following excerpt from a letter Wheatley wrote to Reverend Samson Occom:

"Otherwise, perhaps, the Israelites had been less solicitous for their Freedom from Egyptian Slavery: I don't say they would have been contented without it, by no Means, for in every human Breast, God has implanted a Principle, which we call Love of freedom; it is impatient of Oppression, and pants for Deliverance; and by the Leave of our modern Egyptians, I will assert that the same Principle lives in us." Letter to Reverend Samson Occom and published in Boston newspapers in 1774.

3. Read and discuss Wheatley's poem on George Washington. You will see that Wheatley's legacy lives on in the name of our nation's capital, Washington, District of Columbia. Wheatley personifies the United States as a classical goddess she calls Columbia. This image entered the American imagination quickly, and when the leaders were debating names for the capital district, they selected Columbia.

"His Excellency General Washington"

by Phillis Wheatley

Celestial choir! enthron'd in realms of light,
Columbia's scenes of glorious toils I write.
While freedom's cause her anxious breast alarms,
She flashes dreadful in refulgent arms.
See mother earth her offspring's fate bemoan,
And nations gaze at scenes before unknown!
See the bright beams of heaven's revolving light
Involved in sorrows and the veil of night!

The Goddess comes, she moves divinely fair,
Olive and laurel binds Her golden hair.
Wherever shines this native of the skies,
Unnumber'd charms and recent graces rise.

Muse! Bow propitious while my pen relates
How pour her armies through a thousand gates,
As when Eolus heaven's fair face deforms,
Enwrapp'd in tempest and a night of storms;
Astonish'd ocean feels the wild uproar,
The refluant surges beat the sounding shore;
Or think as leaves in Autumn's golden reign,
Such, and so many, moves the warrior's train.

In bright array they seek the work of war,
Where high unfurl'd the ensign waves in air.
Shall I to Washington their praise recite?
Enough thou know'st them in the fields of fight.
Thee, first in peace and honors—we demand
The grace and glory of thy martial band.
Fam'd for thy valour, for thy virtues more,
Hear every tongue thy guardian aid implore!

One century scarce perform'd its destined round,
When Gallic powers Columbia's fury found;
And so may you, whoever dares disgrace
The land of freedom's heaven-defended race!
Fix'd are the eyes of nations on the scales,
For in their hopes Columbia's arm prevails.
Anon Britannia droops the pensive head,
While round increase the rising hills of dead.
Ah! Cruel blindness to Columbia's state!
Lament thy thirst of boundless power too late.

Proceed, great chief, with virtue on thy side,
Thy ev'ry action let the Goddess guide.
A crown, a mansion, and a throne that shine,
With gold unfading, WASHINGTON! Be thine.

For analysis, visit:

www.encyclopedia.com/arts/educational-magazines/his-excellency-general-washington.

LESSON 120

1. The Missouri Compromise and the Kansas-Nebraska Act were crucial pieces of legislation that tried to deal with the spread of slavery in the U.S. and its territories. To learn more, watch the following videos:

"How one piece of legislation divided a nation—Ben Labaree, Jr." on the TedEd YouTube channel

"The Ultimate Guide to the Presidents: The Civil War & A Nation Divided (1849-1865)" on the History YouTube channel.

2. Read Chapters 3-4 of *Lincoln: A Photobiography*.

a. What were the two political parties at this time, and what were their positions on the role of the federal government? To which party did Lincoln belong? *The two parties were Whig and Democrat; the former supported a strong federal government, while Democrats believed in strong state governments free of interference from Washington. Lincoln was a Whig.*

b. How did Lincoln's stand on principle regarding the Mexican War cost him politically? *The Mexican War was a political war designed to grab Mexican territory for the United States. Lincoln's willingness to speak out against it—calling the war "immoral and unnecessary" cost him his congressional seat.*

c. Why was Lincoln a much sought-after lawyer? *Lincoln mastered every detail of his cases before going to court, he seasoned his arguments with wit and humor, and he reduced complex issues to simple forms.*

d. Lincoln stated, "It is my pleasure that my children are free, happy, and unrestrained by parental tyranny. Love is the chain whereby to bind a child to its parents." Discuss Lincoln's perspective on parenting and family relationships.

e. How did the passage of The Kansas-Nebraska Act affect Lincoln? *Lincoln was "thunderstruck and stunned," and seeing that slavery would not "die a natural death" compelled him to reenter politics.*

3. Have your student record in the notebook some of Lincoln's statements on page 55 of *Lincoln: A Photobiography* concerning slavery and the Union.

4. Have your student cut out, color, and paste the Civil War picture on the timeline.

LESSON 121

1. Read Chapter 5 of *Lincoln: A Photobiography*. **Note:** page 88 contains a disturbing photo of war casualties.

a. The U.S. Capitol building was heavily defended during Lincoln's inauguration. In more recent history, defenses were set up for President Biden's inauguration in 2021. Discuss the circumstances surrounding both these events and the similarities and differences. Points of discussion: In both instances, the city was on edge in the weeks leading up to the inaugurations due to rumors, incidents of violence, assassination plots, and the spread of misinformation.

b. After the inauguration, Southern states began to secede from the Union. While Stephen Douglas had been Lincoln's political rival, he showed graciousness when he visited Lincoln at the White House. What is remarkable about his visit? *Though Douglas was pro-slavery, he denounced the rebels who had seceded and offered Lincoln his support in upholding the Union.*

c. Describe some of the challenges Lincoln faced as commander in chief of the armed forces. *Lincoln lacked military experience and had a string of ineffective military commanders who shrank from making decisions and going into battle. Even when the Union forces won a battle, casualties were horrific.*



Abe Lincoln's Favorite Almond Cake

Mary Todd made this cake for Lincoln when they were courting, and it became one of his regular favorites. Notice there is no leavening, as it was not available until the late 1860s.

1/2 cup (8 tablespoons) butter, melted
1/4 cup crème fraîche (or sour cream)
1 cup sugar
2 eggs
1 cup sifted all-purpose flour
1/2 cup almond flour
1 pinch salt
1 teaspoon almond extract
1/3 cup sliced or slivered almonds toasted
Powdered sugar to dust cake

Preheat the oven to 350° F. Combine the butter, crème fraîche, and sugar, and mix until well-combined. Add the eggs one at a time, mixing until well-incorporated. Add the flours, salt, and almond extract. Mix well and then pour into a greased tarte or cake pan. Shower the cake with almonds. Bake for 25 to 35 minutes, until golden brown. Let the cake cool slightly. Dust with powdered sugar. If desired, top with lightly sweetened whipped cream. Lingonberry jam makes a wonderful topping too.