

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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Table of Contents

How to Use This Guide	2
Literature Used in This Study	4
Study Notes	
The Indigenous Peoples of North America and First Encounters	6
Indigenous Peoples Rabbit Trails	
Character Connection	
Crafts & Projects	
Viking Rabbit Trails	
Lessons	
Historic Table	
The Golden Age of Discovery	36
Rabbit Trails	
Crafts & Projects	
Character Connection	
Lessons	
Historic Table	
The Colonies	48
Rabbit Trails	
Crafts & Projects	
Character Connection	
Lessons	
Historic Table	
The Revolutionary War	76
Rabbit Trails	
Crafts & Projects	
Character Connection	
Lessons	
Historic Table	
The Young United States	102
Rabbit Trails	
Crafts & Projects	
Character Connection	
Lessons	
Historic Table	
The Civil War	122
Rabbit Trails	
Crafts & Projects	
Character Connection	
Lessons	
Historic Table	
In Conclusion	138
Credits	140

How To Use This Guide

Welcome to the fascinating world of our nation's founding. Covering over a thousand years, this study encompasses Native cultures, the Vikings, the Age of Discovery, colonial settlements, revolution, slavery, civil war, and emancipation. It may seem daunting to cover all this history in a year, but this guide is your tool, designed to educate and delight your student.

Grade Level and Overview: This is a one-year study appropriate for 4th through 6th grade. The heart of this study is reading aloud great literature with your students. Exploring the world through story is often one of the most cherished experiences shared by homeschooling families. The guide is inspired by the Charlotte Mason method of education: reading, reasoning, relating, and recording.

This course can be used for a broad grade range so we want to provide some guidelines for the assignments. For younger students, simply reading, narrating, notebooking, and having discussions about the readings is enough. Older students should begin developing research and writing skills. Being able to combine reading aloud, history, vocabulary, geography, literature, and more is one of the benefits of homeschooling! Writing prompts are provided to encourage the development of research and writing skills. These are just basic recommendations and should be scaled based on the child's age, ability, and learning style. You're the teacher and parent—you know best!

Content: Livy, the ancient Roman historian, said:

“What makes the study of history so valuable, is the fact that you can behold, displayed as on a monument, every kind of conduct. Thence you may select for yourself and your country, that which you may imitate, thence note what is shameful in the undertaking, and shameful in the result, which you may avoid.”

As Livy notes so well, there are triumphal and disappointing events in history. While this study introduces hard topics, it does so only with age-appropriate detail, recognizing that as students mature there will be ample opportunity for expanding their knowledge. This gives you, the teacher, the option to choose when that time comes. Topics like slavery and the mistreatment of Native Peoples are covered both for historical accuracy and to help cultivate compassion and empathy. The resources in Rabbit Trails offer curated selections to expand on these topics. **Note:** *Lincoln: A Photobiography* includes two photographs of battleground casualties on pages 88 and 100. These photos are disturbing and teachers may want to consider covering them for younger or sensitive students.

Historical perceptions of unknown or unfamiliar cultures and people change over time as knowledge and respect overcome ignorance and prejudice. This process repeats itself throughout history and is preserved in historical documents and texts. Rewriting and erasing this evidence to suit modern taste does not provide the opportunities for correction and instruction we believe to be such a valuable aspect of learning history. Recognizing human brokenness and seeing the failings of the past is part of the reason we study history and we see the hard parts of it as inescapable and valuable in the lessons they teach. As you read through the literature included in this study you will encounter a few instances where these historical attitudes and descriptions will be offensive. We have provided discussion questions to help you navigate these topics as well as content warnings on specific lessons.

Pace: This study contains 129 lessons; if you are planning on the standard 180-day school year, complete 3-4 lessons each week. If you are teaching younger students or using it across a range of ages, work at your own pace. There is no pre-set schedule. When life gets busy or the holidays are approaching, slow down. If your students are intrigued by a certain subject, follow those rabbit trails. Our guides are designed to support your teaching style, not dictate it. One of the greatest gifts of homeschooling is the flexibility and freedom that is built into setting your own schedule. This teacher guide is designed to be a tool, not a taskmaster.

Activities: This guide includes some recommended hands-on activities. We also link to websites that have further activities. None of these are required. Do what adds enjoyment to your study.

Student Notebook: Each student should have a notebook that they are comfortable working with. We suggest a composition notebook. All written work, coloring pages, reports, and mapping activities, will be added to this notebook. At the end of the year, your student's notebook will be a wonderful portfolio of what they've learned.

Picture Packet: Throughout this study you will be referred to the Picture Packet—a free download available on our website: www.bfbooks.com/Info-FAQ/Free-Downloads. These pages are to be printed and copied for use in the student notebook.

Comprehension and Discussion Questions: As you read through the literature with your students, use the questions to help spur conversation and verbal processing, unless you are following a Charlotte Mason narration model. There are some comprehension questions with specific answers provided to check reading comprehension, but one of the main goals of this program is creating conversations. The discussion questions are designed to encourage critical thinking.

Websites: Throughout the study you will find a curated selection of websites. These specific website pages have all been viewed and deemed appropriate and accurate at the time of printing. Potential objectionable material has been noted. The recommendation of one page on a website is not an endorsement of the entire contents of that website. Always use the internet with care and under adult supervision. Simply type in the title as it appears to find the correct information. If a web link is no longer working, don't give up. Simply use the words in the web address to guide your search.

Nature Study: This component enhances the study with images of native birds and animals! These images are included in the downloadable Picture Packet referenced above. Student are instructed to research the animals and record facts in the notebook along with the pictures. Sites like www.allaboutbirds.org, nationalgeographic.com, and www.fws.gov are very helpful.

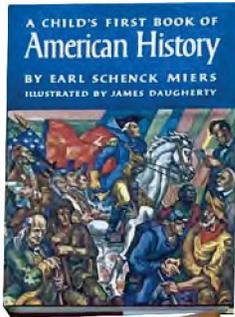
Rabbit Trails: At the beginning of each section, you will find a list of additional recommended books to check out from your local library. None of these titles are required, we simply provide these lists in order to help you sift through the hundreds of books available on the many topics covered in this study. However, if you have a voracious reader or if a certain topic proves especially interesting, these curated selections will allow your student to choose titles for themselves. This empowers them to develop agency in their own education.

The Historic Table: These sections offer you and your students a fun way to celebrate the completion of each section. We have gathered recipes that are either culturally or historically accurate to give students a taste for the culinary element of history. Some of the recipes are updated to make them more appealing to our 21st-century palates. Enjoy!

Do I Have to Do Everything in Every Lesson? No! Again, this is a tool, not a taskmaster. Everything in this guide is provided to make your job easier and save you time. Every lesson, assignment, and activity is here to help you expand the literature, pull out historical content, and provide structure and guidance, but feel free to skip steps when it suits your family.

Lastly, share your work on social media and tag us at [#beautifulfeetbooks](https://twitter.com/beautifulfeetbooks). We love seeing your creativity.

Literature Used In This Study



Resource

A Child's First Book of American History
by Earl Schenck Miers, illustrated by James Daugherty

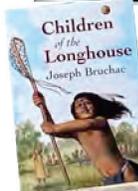
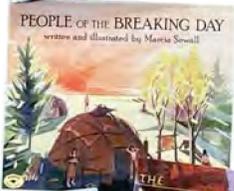
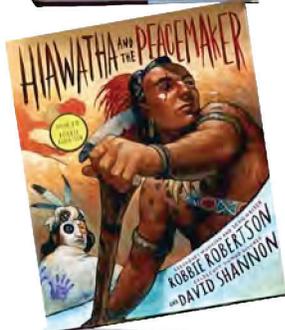
Indigenous Peoples of North America & First Encounters

People of the Breaking Day
written and illustrated by Marcia Sewall

The Vikings
by Elizabeth Janeway

Hiawatha and the Peacemaker
by Robbie Robertson, illustrated by David Shannon

Children of the Longhouse
by Joseph Bruchac



The Golden Age of Discovery

Where Do You Think You're Going, Christopher Columbus?
by Jean Fritz, illustrated by Margot Tomes

Pedro's Journal
by Pam Conrad, illustrated by Peter Koeppen

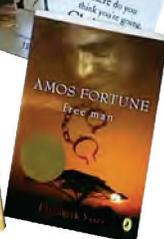
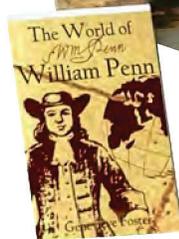
The Colonies

Pocahontas and the Strangers
by Clyde Robert Bulla, illustrated by Peter Burchard

The Landing of the Pilgrims
by James Daugherty

The World of William Penn
written and illustrated by Genevieve Foster

Amos Fortune, Free Man
by Elizabeth Yates, illustrated by Nora S. Unwin



The Revolutionary War

A Voice of Her Own: The Story of Phillis Wheatley, Slave Poet
by Kathryn Lasky, illustrated by Paul Lee

George vs. George: The American Revolution as Seen From Both Sides
written and illustrated by Rosalyn Schanzer

Toliver's Secret
by Esther Wood Brady

Why Not, Lafayette?
by Jean Fritz, illustrated by Ronald Himler

Remember the Ladies: A Story About Abigail Adams
by Jeri Chase Ferris, illustrated by Ellen Beier

Shh! We're Writing the Constitution
by Jean Fritz, illustrated by Tomie dePaola

The Young United States

How We Crossed the West: The Adventures of Lewis & Clark
written and illustrated by Rosalyn Schanzer

Heart of a Samurai
by Margi Preus

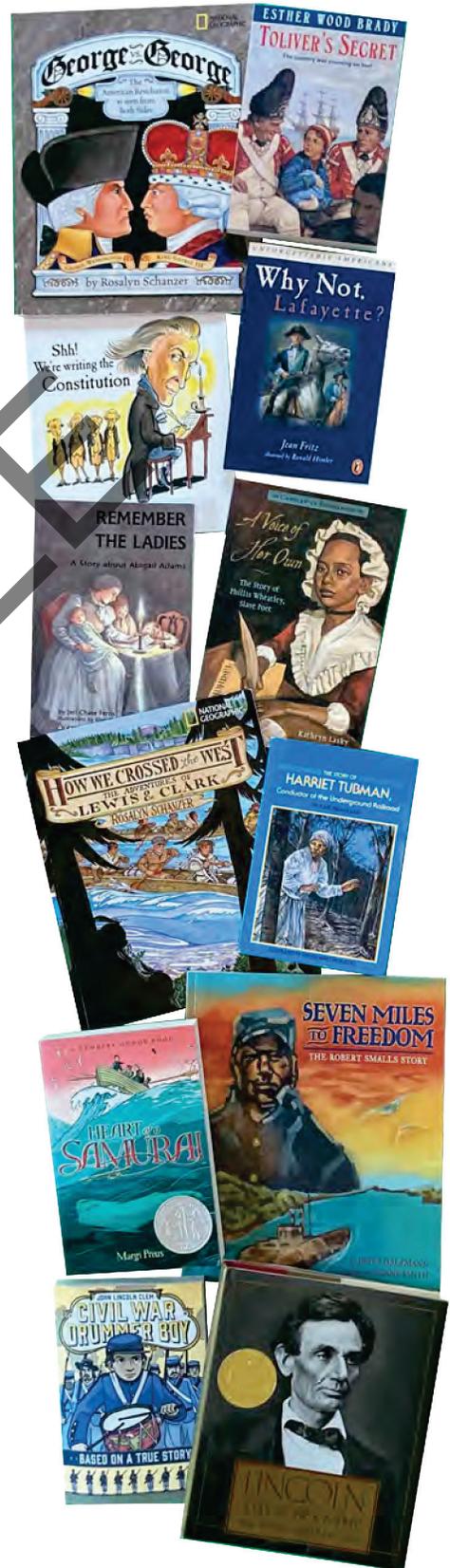
The Story of Harriet Tubman, Conductor of the Underground Railroad
by Kate McMullan, illustrated by Steven James Petruccio

The Civil War

Lincoln: A Photobiography
by Russell Freedman

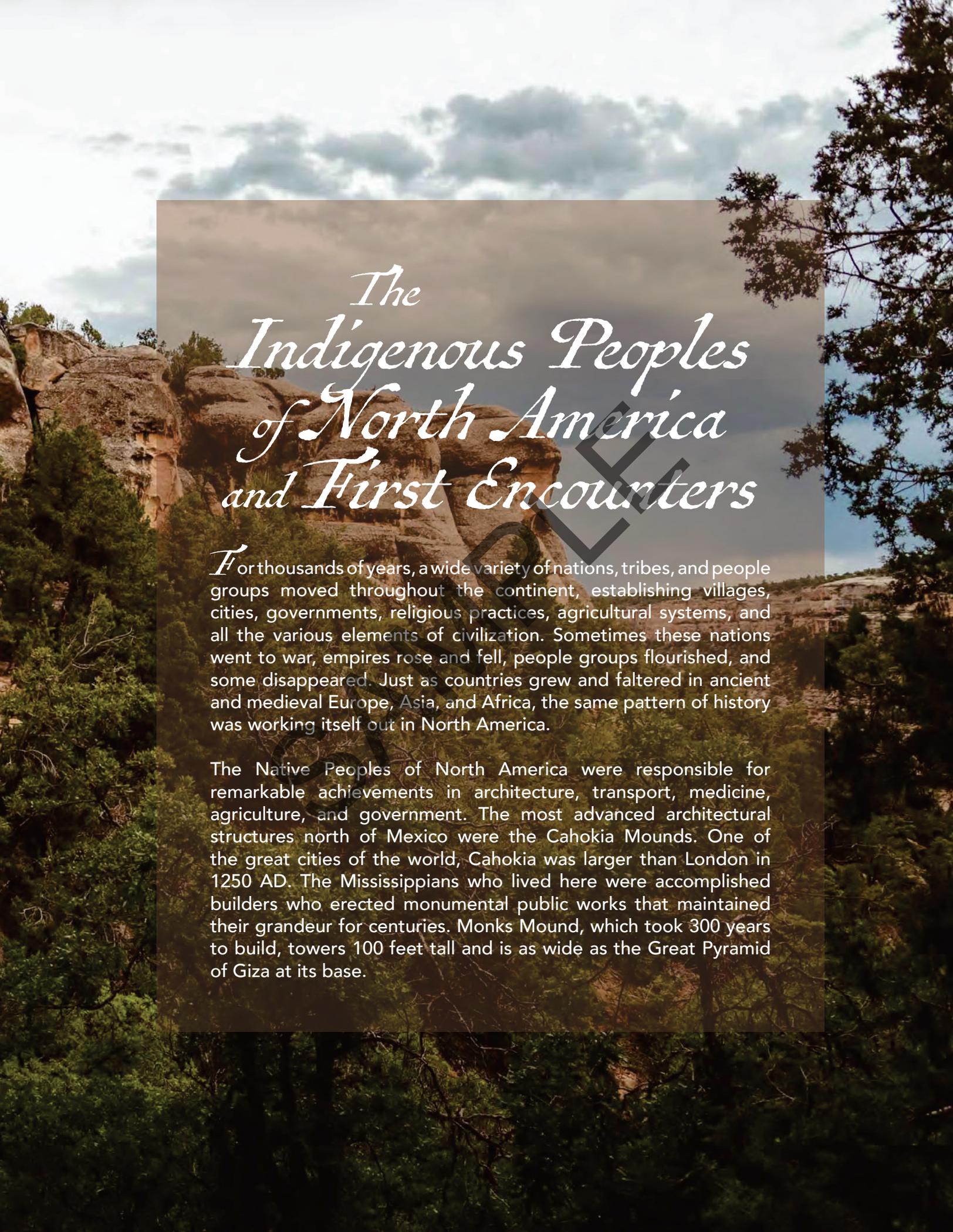
John Lincoln Clem: Civil War Drummer Boy
by E. F. Abbott, illustrated by Steven Noble

Seven Miles to Freedom: The Robert Smalls Story
by Janet Halfmann, illustrated by Duane Smith





Ancestral Puebloan cliff dwellings at Mesa Verde National Park in Colorado



The Indigenous Peoples of North America and First Encounters

*F*or thousands of years, a wide variety of nations, tribes, and people groups moved throughout the continent, establishing villages, cities, governments, religious practices, agricultural systems, and all the various elements of civilization. Sometimes these nations went to war, empires rose and fell, people groups flourished, and some disappeared. Just as countries grew and faltered in ancient and medieval Europe, Asia, and Africa, the same pattern of history was working itself out in North America.

The Native Peoples of North America were responsible for remarkable achievements in architecture, transport, medicine, agriculture, and government. The most advanced architectural structures north of Mexico were the Cahokia Mounds. One of the great cities of the world, Cahokia was larger than London in 1250 AD. The Mississippians who lived here were accomplished builders who erected monumental public works that maintained their grandeur for centuries. Monks Mound, which took 300 years to build, towers 100 feet tall and is as wide as the Great Pyramid of Giza at its base.

introduction continued ...

The California Ohlone used advanced agricultural practices like controlled burns to clear dense underbrush, reducing the risk of wildfires and increasing crop yields. For hundreds of years, Iroquois and Wampanoag increased crop yields by planting multiple crops closely together in a practice known as intercropping, based on how various plants complement one another, improving health and growth. The Three Sisters—corn, beans, and squash—would be planted closely together, the corn providing the structure upon which the squash and beans could grow. Native Peoples first cultivated tobacco 1000 years before Europeans arrived.

Native Peoples' vast knowledge of the healing and nutritional properties of roots and plants enabled them to effectively treat common sicknesses and viruses. Native Americans utilized more than 200 botanicals, which have been or are still in use in pharmaceuticals.

In transportation, birchbark canoes made by Algonquin and Ojibwa tribes were perfectly adapted to summer travel through the network of shallow streams, ponds, lakes, and swift rivers of the Northeast. Their lightness, easy maneuverability, and beauty are still prized today. The California Chumash's remarkable canoe-making skills enabled them to travel great distances out to sea to pursue large fish such as swordfish. The canoes were fashioned from redwood that drifted to shore from northern forests which, when pitched with tar, could carry up to 20 men. Native Peoples invented snowshoes and ice fishing and were the first to make maple syrup.

Natives also developed sophisticated methods of governance. The Iroquois Confederacy was so inspiring to the founding fathers that aspects of it were incorporated into the Articles of Confederation and U.S. Constitution. Indeed, in 1751 Benjamin Franklin described the need for the 13 colonies to form a "voluntary Union" similar to that of the Iroquois Confederacy. We will learn more about this in the book *Hiawatha and the Peacemaker* by Robbie Robertson.

While much of the history of the Americas has been lost or blotted out through conquest, the work of historians, anthropologists, archaeologists, and Native storytellers continually adds to our knowledge. One of the challenges in learning about these various cultures comes from language barriers and a lack of written records. Most Indigenous American peoples had a strong and robust tradition of oral storytelling. These oral histories were passed down from generation to generation and, as cultures disappeared, merged, or were conquered, some of these stories and records disappeared. But not all was lost.

Today there is a renaissance in Native storytelling. Native scholars and historians track down these histories, stories, and legends, giving us a greater knowledge of the past. In this section, we will learn about a few of the nations or tribes that flourished in North America before Europeans arrived. These provide just a small sampling of the Indigenous Peoples. As you learn more about the Mohawk, Longhouse, Wampanoag, Seneca, and others, do some research on the tribes that lived in your area. There are probably local museums dedicated to preserving the cultures and traditions they have passed down to their descendants. See if you can learn more about your local tribes at powwows.com. We also encourage you to use the Rabbit Trails to explore further.

We will be reading about the Wampanoag, Iroquois, and Mohawk in this section, as well as the first Europeans to make their way across the Atlantic over 1000 years ago.

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

Build a Model Native Home

Instructions to build a very simple model longhouse:
<https://classroom.synonym.com/make-longhouse-school-project-5836407.html>.

Video from the Homeschool Scene YouTube channel, "Homeschool with me: DIY Longhouse".

Printable templates for Iroquois longhouse, Plains tipi, Ohio houses, or Northwest Coast cedar house:
www.susankae.com/free_resources.htm.

Wampum Activities

Explore symbols and design of wampum belts with this craft from the American Revolution Museum:
www.amrevmuseum.org/make-your-own-wampum-belt-craft.

Create a virtual wampum belt:
www.nativetech.org/beadwork/wampumgraph/index.html.

Native American Diorama

Instruct your student to research a Native tribe and build a shoebox diorama incorporating the following elements: traditional housing, food, dress, and other distinguishing features.

Find inspiration at the following sites.

<http://mrscohxces.blogspot.com/2013/01/native-american-dioramas.html>

<http://theartoflearning-bermingham.blogspot.com/2014/12/project-annual-native-american-dioramas.html>

Make a Talking Stick

Learn about talking sticks and follow the instructions to create your own:
<http://homeschoolfridays.com/make-your-own-talking-stick/>.

Draw a Viking Ship

Introduction to drawing a simple Viking longboat:
<https://drawinglessonsfortheyoungartist.blogspot.com/2011/11/how-to-draw-viking-ship-lesson-for.html>.

An inspiring blog post for creating gorgeous 3D Viking ship paintings:
<https://cassiestephens.blogspot.com/2013/11/in-artroom-4th-grade-viking-ships.html>.

Create a Viking ship collage:
<https://cassiestephens.blogspot.com/2013/10/in-art-room-viking-ship-collages.html>.

Build a Viking Longboat

"DIY: Viking Longship" on Wesprout YouTube channel

Simple print-and-paste template for building a basic Viking longboat using paper, cardboard, and glue:
www.crayola.com/free-coloring-pages/print/viking-ship-coloring-page/.

Free download of printable Viking longboat model:
www.forbicolla.it/res/site118454/res771747_pagina-A4-gratis-5.jpg.

Dress Up Like a Viking

A very simple Viking costume reference sheet:
<https://vikingschoolvisits.com/wp-content/uploads/2018/12/Viking-day-dressing-up-sheet.pdf>.

Make a Viking Shield

This website provides instructions to make wood and metal Viking shields in various degrees of difficulty. These are definitely advanced.
<https://sonsofvikings.com/blogs/vikings-tv-series/how-to-make-your-own-viking-shield>.

A very basic and simple Viking shield project:
www.hobbycraft.co.uk/ideas/kids/how-to-make-a-viking-shield.

Upcycled Viking craft project using common household items:
<https://deceptivelyeducational.blogspot.com/2013/01/viking-shield-upcycled-history-craft.html>.

Rabbit Trails: Vikings

The D'Aulaires Book of Norse Myths by Ingrid and Edgar Parin d'Aulaire

This classic will enrich your study by introducing the colorful characters of Norse mythology. Students will delight in getting to know Thor the thunder god, Odin the All-father, Loki (the Jotun's mischievous god), the beautiful Freya, and the kind and just Balder, who is so full of light that he simply cannot be unhappy.

Hakon of Rogen's Saga by Erik Christian Haugaard

The author delved into several volumes of the Icelandic sagas to understand the background of the story he wanted to write, but it was camping in the Norwegian fjords that brought true inspiration. In the tale, we meet Hakon, whose mother dies giving birth to him and whose tragic childhood gives him wisdom beyond his years. Seeking to claim his birthright, Hakon must confront the violence and deceit so rife in the Viking era.

Sword Song by Rosemary Sutcliffe

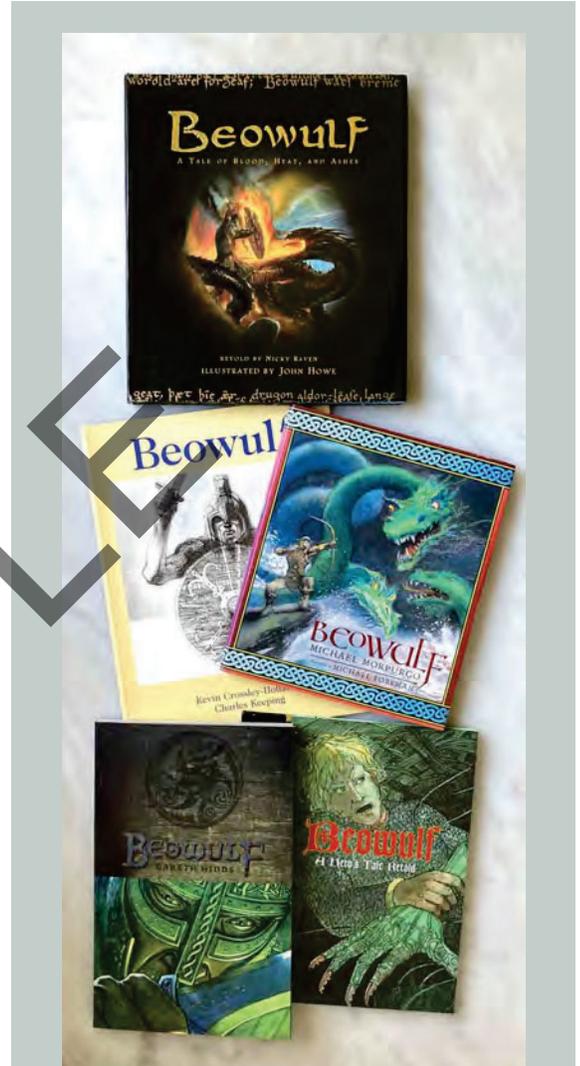
The young Norseman Bjarni Sigurdson is just 16 when he is charged with manslaying and banished from his Northern Ireland settlement. For five years, he makes his way alone in the world, selling his sword-service (fighting ability) to willing chieftains who make their fortunes by pillaging and raiding villages in the scattered isles of the North Sea.

Across a Dark and Wild Sea by Don Brown

In the year 521 in Ireland, a young boy named Columcille was born into a princely tribe but forsook his pagan heritage to join the church and devote his life to learning. He was so enamored with a borrowed book of Psalms that he painstakingly copied it out in secret. When the owner discovered the copy, he demanded it. Columcille's refusal resulted in a battle, which cost 3000 lives.

Barbarians! by Steven Kroll and illustrated by Robert Byrd

Goths, Huns, Vikings, and Mongols are featured here in an engaging text with delightfully detailed illustrations.



Beowulf

Any study of the Vikings would hardly be complete without an introduction to the most famous epic of the Viking era—*Beowulf*. Considered the first epic in English, *Beowulf*'s adventures follow the hero's journey as he seeks to rescue the Danes from the monster Grendel's ravages. Look for the editions featured above by the following authors: Nicky Raven, Michael Morpurgo, James Rumford, Gareth Hinds, and Kevin Crossley-Holland. The illustrations in the Morpurgo edition are exquisite, but if you have a sensitive student, perhaps use either the Rumford or the Crossley-Holland edition. Fans of graphic novels will enjoy Gareth Hind's work. As the epic contains violence, please preview any edition beforehand.



Ball-play of the Choctaw by George Catlin, c. 1846–1850

LESSON 1

1. Introduce *A Child's First Book of American History* by Earl Schenck Miers, hereafter referred to as *A Child's First*. Read "A Call to Adventure" on pages 8-9.

a. On page 9, Miers presents a list of ideals commonly held by citizens of the United States. Define *ideals* and discuss why it is important for a nation to have them. Are there any you would add to Miers' list? How do you think our country has lived up to those ideals?

b. What do you think the author meant when he wrote that the U.S. "now stands at its most challenging moment"? What challenges do you believe our nation faces?

c. It has been said that the purpose of studying history is to "instruct and inform." How can learning about the past be helpful for the present moment? Discuss these ideas in light of the following quotes:

"The past is always a rebuke to the present." Robert Penn Warren

"A country without a memory is a country of madmen." George Santayana

"History teaches everything including the future." Lamartine

"We are not makers of history. We are made by history." Martin Luther King, Jr.

2. Teach your student "The Continents" song. Watch "Seven Continents" on the Rachel Coleman YouTube channel.

3. Have your student cut out the world map from the Picture Packet and paste it into the notebook. Have your student color and label each continent.

LESSON 2

1. Have your student begin a new section in the notebook titled "The Indigenous Peoples of North America" and cut out Early Localization of Native Tribes map from the Picture Packet and paste it into the notebook. This map documents what we know about the locations of Native tribes and nations just before European arrival.

2. We will now begin reading about the Wampanoag. Locate their lands on the map in the notebook near Cape Cod, Massachusetts. Study the other areas of the map and see if you can recognize familiar tribes. Introduce *People of the Breaking Day* by Marcia Sewall and study the cover artwork. Read pages 5-15.

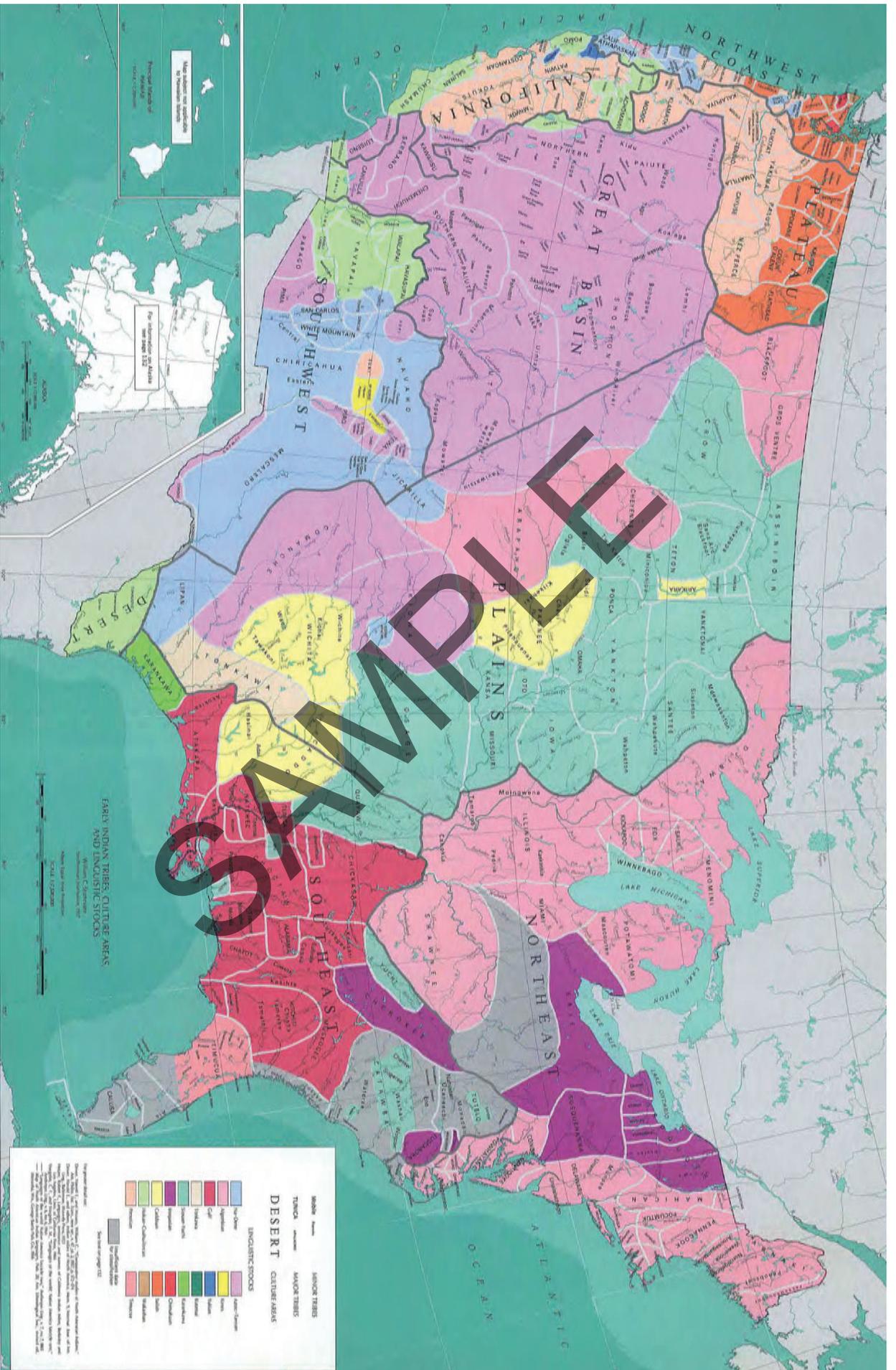
a. Why do the Wampanoag call themselves "People of the Breaking Day"? What do they call the sun and how do they greet it? *The Wampanoag live on the coastline of Massachusetts where they can see the sun's first beams as it rises each morning. The Wampanoag greet the Nippa'uus, or sun, by thanking it for its "warmth and light and beauty."*

b. What do the Wampanoag call God? *Kiehtan, which translates as "the Great Spirit."*

c. Are the Wampanoag hunter-gatherers? *The Wampanoag hunt and gather, but they are not solely hunter-gatherers since they also cultivate crops.*

d. What is the Neepunnakee'wush moon, and how is it celebrated? *The Neepunnakee'wush moon is the harvest moon, marked by a week of feasting, dancing, games, and song.*

e. Who was the great sachem of the Wampanoag? What were his duties? *Massasoit was the great sachem, and he was responsible for finding the best hunting, fishing, and farming areas; he mete out discipline for lawbreakers and decided when to go to war.*



Early Localization of Native Americans

LESSON 3

1. Read pages 16-32 of *People of the Breaking Day*.

a. What are some of the responsibilities of the father of the family? How are these similar or different from modern-day fathers? *The Wampanoag father had similar duties to modern fathers. He selected the best habitation for his family, provided food, set up the wetu framework, and provided transportation by making a dugout canoe for fishing and trading. Wampanoag fathers are different from modern fathers in that they must study nature, watch the seasons, know the plants and animals upon which their lives depend, and be proficient at all the skills necessary to hunt, fish, and trap.*

b. Who does the farming in the Wampanoag family? What crop do the men insist on growing themselves? *The women are the tribe's farmers, but the men insist on growing the ottomma'ocke-tobacco.*

c. Why do Wampanoag families keep their babies' names secret? *In the Wampanoag belief system, names are sacred. If names are used openly, they lose their power.*

d. What role do the children play in providing for their families? *Wampanoag children help with fetching water, gathering firewood, digging clams, helping plant crops, shooting birds away from newly planted fields, and tending the fires that smoked fish, clams, eel, and meats like venison and turkey.*

e. How do the Wampanoags fertilize their crops? *The women place a herring or chopped-up horseshoe crabs in the soil to fertilize it.*

f. How do the Wampanoag know that winter is near? *When the locusts begin to sing, the Wampanoag know that winter is near.*

2. The Eastern chipmunk was, and continues to be, widespread in the areas settled by the Wampanoag. Cut out the Eastern chipmunk image from the Picture Packet and have your student color and add it to the notebook along with a few facts from your research.

LESSON 4

1. Read pages 33-45 of *People of the Breaking Day*.

a. Why do the Wampanoag men hunt deer in the fall? *Deer are hunted in the fall because they are the fattest at that time.*

b. Before winter sets in, where do the Wampanoag go? *The Wampanoag move inland, away from the sea with its cold winds and storms.*

c. How are young Wampanoag boys prepared for manhood? *Wampanoag boys must spend a winter alone in the deep forest and learn how to survive there.*

2. To conclude your study of the Wampanoag, have the student write and illustrate brief report on the Wampanoag. If desired, have your student copy some of the Wampanoag words from *People of the Breaking Day* into the glossary.