

YEAR 2 HISTORY READ-ALOUD SUGGESTIONS

As part of the history course, you are encouraged to select and read four books to the children, one to go along with each of the four units in the course. It is recommended that you read for at least 20 minutes at the end of each lesson. However, to finish most read-aloud books by the end of the unit, a longer reading time will be required. Some parents choose to do history lessons twice a week but the read-aloud book each day.

Books on this suggested list are ordered by Jenny Phillips' top picks, with #1 being the most highly recommended in each age category. Each book suggestion includes a review by Jenny.

Year 2 History Book Pack

To make your homeschool experience easier and less expensive (two of the main goals of The Good & the Beautiful), we offer a *Year 2 History Book Pack*. This pack includes the following top-recommended book for each unit, each of which is recommended for all ages (Grades 1-12):

Unit 1: *Daughter of the Mountains*

Unit 2: *Beorn the Proud*

Unit 3: *Peter and the Pilgrims*

Unit 4: *The Singing Tree*

Unit 1 Suggested Books

Younger Children Only (Grades 1-4)

1. *The Spartan Twins* by Lucy Fitch Perkins

This short book is a wholesome, fun story of twin siblings that live in ancient Greece. Lucy Fitch Perkins is a wonderful writer, and the book has good education value. The plot is simple and would likely be more interesting to children nine and under. The book is available for free on gutenberg.org. Greek mythology is referenced in the book.

All Ages (Grades 1-12)

1. *Daughter of the Mountains* by Louise S. Rankin

This fictional Newbury Honor Book from 1948 starts in the mountains of Tibet and follows the journey of young Momo's journey into India to find her stolen dog Pempa. The story is engaging and fascinating as well as wholesome and educational. This well-written story is very highly recommended! (Note: Unit 1 covers ancient Asia. This book is set in 19th century Asia, and is a great extension study to ancient Asia.)

2. *Archimedes and the Door of Science* by Jeanne Bendick

Although this book is non-fiction, it is written in a way that holds the interest of younger readers. Readers learn not only about the ancient Greek mathematician and scientist Archimedes, but they also learn about history and science.

Older Children Only (Grades 7+)

1. *The Golden Hawks of Genghis Khan* by Rita Ritchie

This treasure of a book is out of print, but it is available on Audible. I listened to it in the car with my kids, and it was fantastic. The plot is compelling and brilliant, and the writing is wonderful. The story takes place in the year 1218 as Jalair travels with a Mongol caravan to the land of Genghis Khan while trying to hide his identity and true purpose for his travels. The story also has messages of kindness, forgiveness, and loyalty. This book goes along well with the unit's study of Genghis Khan and ancient Asia.

Unit 2 Suggested Read-Alouds

Younger Children Only (Grades 1-6)

1. *Viking Adventure* by Clyde Robert Bulla

Even though this is only a Level 3 reading level, I found this book interesting and full of educational value. This would be a good book for reluctant readers. The writing is good but easy, the story is exciting, and the educational value is high.

All Ages (Grades 1-12)

1. *Beorn the Proud* by Madeleine Pollard

In this fictional story, a Christian young woman, Ness, is captured by Vikings on the Irish coast. Ness' faith helps sustain her during her captivity. This book is very engaging and relates powerful messages about reliance on God, courage, patience, and avoiding greed for power and wealth. The book is a fairly easy read that should be enjoyed even by reluctant readers. This book does not have as high educational value as other books on this list, as the focus is more on the plot and characters than the historical time period.

2. *The Corn Grows Ripe* by Dorothy Rhoads

This engaging, beautifully written book gives good insight into the ancient Mayan culture. The book also teaches great lessons as a lazy boy learns how to face overwhelming challenges with perseverance and experiences the rewards of hard work.

3. *Raiders from the Sea* by Lois Walfrid Johnson

This is part of a 5-book series (Viking Quest Series). Each book leaves you hanging. If you start the series, you will likely want to finish all five books. In this fictional story, a Christian brother and sister from Ireland are captured by Vikings. A strong emphasis is placed on faith in God. This book does not have as high educational value as other books on this list, as the focus is more on the plot and characters than the historical time period. The literary merit is fair.

Intermediate Ages and Older (Grades 5-12)

1. *Black Fox of Lorne* by Marguerite De Angeli

This wonderful Newbury honor novel is out of print but worth finding if you can. The plot is engaging, and the writing has very high literary, moral, and educational value. In the tenth century, two Viking twins shipwreck on the Scottish coast. When one of the twins finds himself in the hands of enemies, a series of adventures are set in motion. This wholesome book contains messages about faith, Christianity, forgiveness, mercy, loyalty, and strong family bonds.

2. *Ernest Shackleton* by Janet & Geoff Benge

This book tells the remarkable, true story of Ernest Shackleton and his famous Arctic expeditions in the early 1900s. I enjoyed learning more about this good man and the Heroic Age of Antarctic Exploration. Ernest Shackleton is not discussed in the history course. This book would make a good extension to Unit 2, which covers other explorers.

Older Children Only (Grades 7+)

1. *The King's Fifth* by Scott O'Dell

This book tells a fictional, engaging story that takes place in the age of exploration. Esteban de Sandoval, a young mapmaker in the mid-1500s, is to stand trial for withholding "the king's fifth" of the gold he found and supposedly has hidden. The book switches back and forth between the current day (as Esteban stands trial) and his journey through the mythical seven cities, supposedly filled with gold. This enveloping, suspenseful story gives a look at the time of early exploration and will make readers think twice about setting their hearts on riches. Children under 12 will most likely not understand the symbolism nor the complex plot. The cover of this book may not be exciting or interesting, but the book is very engaging, although it is challenging reading!

Unit 3 Suggested Read-Alouds

Younger Children Only (Grades 1-6)

1. *William Bradford: Pilgrim Boy* by Bradford Smith

The engaging style of writing will pull even young readers into the story of William Bradford, who becomes a Separatist and travels with the Pilgrims to the New World where he becomes governor of Plymouth Plantation. Most of the story focuses on his childhood. This book is a wonderful tool to make history come alive for children. However, because it is written for a lower level reader, it might not be as interesting for children over 12 years old.

2. *Squanto, Friend of the Pilgrims* by Clyde Robert Bulla

This short chapter book, based on the true story of Squanto, is written at a level for younger readers, and yet, it totally engaged me as an adult. I personally feel the white men of that era were represented accurately: there were great and kind white men, but there were also some white men who were cruel. Be aware that there are sad parts of the book, although the author does a great job of showing Squanto's enduring spirit. Children will learn much about the historical time period.

All Ages (Grades 1-12)

1. *Peter and the Pilgrims* by Louis A. Vernon

Louis A. Vernon is a great writer of historical fiction for youth. In this book, Vernon creates a plot so captivating that readers hardly realize just how much they are learning about history. The book works great as a read-aloud for the whole family, young and old. As an adult, I thoroughly enjoyed this book and was surprised about how much historical knowledge I gained. This will be a must-read book for all of my children. The back cover reads: "Peter Cook has a good life as a bound boy. Although a youth who has to do hard labor, he is treated like a son by his master. Everything changes the day that Peter discovers his master has died of the dreaded disease, the black plague.

Because Peter touched the corpse he is thrown out of the great house and left on his own."

2. *Landing of the Pilgrims* by James Daugherty

Award-winning author James Daugherty is a fantastic writer. In this book—part fiction and part nonfiction—Daugherty uses a rich vocabulary and has a way of writing that makes the content interesting and easy to understand for younger children while also being engaging for older children. Daugherty does a great job of describing the hard work and strong faith of the pilgrims. I highly recommend this book!

3. *Stories of the Pilgrims* by Margaret B. Pumphrey

Originally published in 1912, this wonderful book gives vignettes of life of the Pilgrims, starting from the early days in Scrooby. The writing is beautiful. The stories are told from the point of view of children and are interesting. However, because the writing is elevated, and there are many different, short stories, some children may tire of the subject matter before the entire book is read, or they may struggle with long periods of reading this book. I suggest just reading a select number of stories from the book—or reading the stories here and there over an extended period of time. There are several versions of the book. A quick study of the different versions shows that they are all very similar. Some go by the title *Pilgrim Stories*.

Intermediate Ages and Older (Grades 5-12)

1. *The Iron Peacock* by Mary Stetson Clarke

This historical fiction novel, published in 1966, is lesser known but is a fantastic book. While 16-year-old Joanna and her father are sailing from England to Boston in 1650, her father dies on the ship, leaving her orphaned. Joanna is forced to become an indentured servant working for the master of the Iron Works in Saugus, Massachusetts. This book gives a good picture of what it was like

to be an indentured servant in Colonial America. Positive messages include finding contentment in any situation, courage, and kindness. Parents should be aware that there is a slight bit of romance in this book. However, it is very pure and wholesome, and there is not even any kissing. I really loved this book. Note: If this book is unavailable on Amazon.com, try Sonlight.com.

2. *Calico Bush* by Rachel Field

Originally published in 1931, this Newbury Honor Book is a fantastic and worthwhile book. Orphaned in a strange country, French girl Marguerite is forced to become an indentured servant. Readers learn much about life in the mid-1700s in Maine as they follow Marguerite's story of strength, hard work, endurance, courage, and kindness. The first chapter or two is a little difficult to get into, but don't give up because the book quickly becomes intriguing. I loved the description in the book and the insights into human life. I also felt like I gained a lot of knowledge from the book. This one is highly recommended!

3. *William Penn* by Janet & Geoff Benge

Janet and Geoff Benge really have of making history come alive through their fictionalized biographies. *William Penn* is an interesting and inspiring story packed with educational insights. William Penn was a man with many admirable character traits—a man worthy of study. So far, I have read five books in this series (*Christian Heroes: Now & Then*), and I have liked all of them. The book is nicely written and would probably be enjoyed best by children ages 11 and older.

4. *In the Reign of Terror: A Story of the French Revolution* by G. A. Henty

The official description reads: "Return to the tumultuous days of the French Revolution with this captivating tale of adventure and courage. Join Harry Sandwith, a young Englishman, as he accepts a job as a companion to the sons of a French marquis. Follow Harry and his aristocratic friends

as they're swept from their idyllic life at a country estate to the riotous streets of Paris and the very gates of the Bastille. Can Harry rescue the marquis' family from imprisonment and certain death at the hands of the merciless mob?" G. A. Henty is known for his fantastic historical novels, and this one does not disappoint. It is one of my favorite of his novels. The writing is elevated and would likely be enjoyed as a read-aloud for ages 11 and older. The French Revolution is not taught in the course book; it is included in the Grades 10-12 Student Explorer.

5. *Once Upon a Time: The Way America Was* by Eric Sloane

This 64-page book is overflowing with educational value. The information is fascinating and the writing fantastic. Readers learn about the principles of frugality, home, and hard work in early America. I highly recommend this wonderful book for ages 10 and up. It would make a great family read-aloud for older children, as it is likely to spark some great discussions.

6. *Carry On, Mr. Bowditch* by Jean Lee Latham

This Newbury Award-winning fictionalized biography tells the true story of Nathaniel Bowditch, an American mathematician, astronomer, and navigation expert. "Nat" faces hardships as a young boy and is forced into an apprenticeship, but he remains cheerful and perseverant as he educates himself until he achieves his dreams. This inspiring story is skillfully written yet easy to read, with great descriptive language and imagery.

7. *William Bradford* by Janet & Geoff Benge

This is another great book by Janet and Geoff Benge. This part nonfiction, part fiction story tells the story of William Bradford who came to America on the *Mayflower* and showed steadfast leadership that blessed the Plymouth Colony. The book would likely be enjoyed best by children ages 12 and up.

Unit 4 Suggested Read-Alouds

All Ages (Grades 1-12)

1. *The Singing Tree* by Kate Seredy

The Singing Tree is a sequel to *The Good Master*, but it works wonderfully as a stand-alone as well. The story explores life on the Hungarian plains during World War I. The writing and the messages are powerful. I loved *The Good Master*, but I like *The Singing Tree* even more! There is not a lot of historical information about World War I, but it does illustrate how normal life was affected by the war.

2. *Esperanza Rising* by Pam Muñoz Ryan

Written in 2000, this book has won several awards. I found no objectionable language or content. The story is beautiful and very engaging. Esperanza has a life of wealth and comfort on her family's ranch in Mexico. But, when tragedy shatters Esperanza's world during the Great Depression, she and her family are forced to flee to California and settle in a camp for Mexican farm workers. This story is packed with educational value about the Great Depression and has uplifting messages about family, loyalty, hard work, attitude, gratitude, enduring trials, friendship, honesty, kindness, and more.

3. *Anna's Fight for Hope* by Joann A. Grote

If you are looking for a wholesome, engaging book that takes place during the Great Depression, this is a great option. It's a sweet and engaging story. The official description reads: "Follow the fictional story of Anna Harrington to see how this time of upheaval affected a twelve-year-old girl who saw her friends and acquaintances devastated by economic

events. This very personal story shows the beauty of friendship while at the same time teaching important lessons of Christian faith and American history." The book is available as a Kindle version.

Intermediate Ages and Older (Grades 5-12)

1. *A Cup of Cold Water* by Christine Farenhorst

This book tells the true story of the faithful, courageous British nurse Edith Cavell during World War 1. Caught in the turmoil of the war while working in Belgium, Edith shows tremendous faith, courage, and selflessness as she helps others, even through she is surrounded by spies. The first half of the book is a little slower paced, but beautifully written. The second half is much more engaging.

Older Children Only (Grades 7+)

1. *The Forgotten Founding Father* by Joshua Kendall

This book gets 5 out of 5 stars from me in each category: moral merit, literary merit, and educational value. It would be a very challenging read, however, and require daily reading of 40+ minutes to finish by the end of the unit. With skillful and elegant writing, Joshua Kendall tells the lesser-known but deeply inspiring story of Noah Webster. This is a wonderfully challenging, true biography, not a fictionalized biography. This worthwhile read is packed with the highest moral, literary, and educational value, making it one of the "best" books, in my opinion.