

HEROES OF HISTORY

**Homeschool Overview for
Unit Study Curriculum Guides**



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Introduction

This overview guide is designed to help you make the most effective use of the Heroes of History biographies and Unit Study Curriculum Guides in your homeschool. Each Unit Study is based on a corresponding Heroes of History biography that brings to life an individual who powerfully impacted a particular time and place in American history. Whether you are interested in using the complete Heroes of History program as the core of your U.S. history curriculum or you plan to use parts of the program to enhance another curriculum, the Heroes of History biographies and Unit Study Curriculum Guides are a flexible resource that you will not want to be without.

Rich with options designed for the homeschool learning environment, the Unit Study Curriculum Guides are

- full of opportunities to integrate social studies, language arts, and character education as well as other curriculum areas related to the historical figure;
- designed for a wide variety of learning styles, grade levels, and abilities;
- easily adaptable for both individual and group study;
- fully flexible, so that you can choose from an array of options to tailor a meaningful curriculum just right for your children.

Building on the foundation of an informative and memorable biography, each Unit Study

- explores important social studies concepts;
- provides activities for studying the times and places in which the hero lived;
- includes chapter questions, vocabulary exercises, and a variety of language arts projects;
- presents valuable character qualities;
- supplies an annotated list of books, articles, movies, and websites for further study.

Browse the sections below to see the variety of ways you can use the Heroes of History program to accomplish your homeschooling goals.

If you have a Unit Study Curriculum Guide available, we recommend that you first read the introduction and scan the chapters before continuing to read this overview, so that you are familiar with the contents of each Unit Study.

Using Heroes of History Biographies and Unit Studies in Your Homeschool

Each Unit Study Curriculum Guide corresponds to a Heroes of History biography. The engaging narrative biographies unlock centuries of history, from Christopher Columbus's voyages across the ocean to Alan Shepard's voyages into space. The biographies also provide memorable introductions to a variety of other social studies topics central to the characters and are a powerful means to explore important character qualities. The following sections describe the variety of ways you can use the Heroes of History program in your homeschool.

Using the Heroes of History Program as Your U.S. History Curriculum

Using it as your core curriculum

You can join the growing number of homeschoolers who are taking advantage of the memorable panorama of American history presented by the Heroes of History biographies and Unit Study Curriculum Guides. When this reading-based program is used as a core U.S. history curriculum, students read biographies from each time period (see Table 1 on page 6) and complete a variety of related projects from the Unit Study Curriculum Guides over the course of one or two years (see Suggested Curriculum Timeline on page 10). As a result, students gain a meaningful understanding of the European exploration of the continent, the American Revolution, the expansion of the country, the Civil War, Reconstruction and the economic growth of the nation, World Wars I and II, and beyond.

Through this unique and enjoyable reading-based program, students also gain insight beyond the events of history and into the lives, characters, and motivations of individuals who influenced the course of our nation. This not only makes history come alive as students read the exciting true stories of historical figures, but also shows the relevance of one's own character and actions in the present. To take advantage of this, you may integrate character education with your study of history (see page 5 for more information on character education).

Unlike most standard U.S. history curriculums, the Heroes of History curriculum enables students to assimilate U.S. history through multiple perspectives. For example, if you are studying the Civil War period (The Fracturing of a Nation), you might assign your child to read *Abraham Lincoln: A New Birth of Freedom*, followed by *Harriet Tubman: Freedombound*. As your child reads about this period in history from the perspective of a president and of a former slave and completes Unit Study activities, he or she will gain a broad perspective on the Civil War time period. Another way to provide multiple perspectives on a time period is to read aloud one book while your child reads another book from the same period and completes the Unit Study activities for that book. You could also have your child read the second book as an independent study. Either of these methods would allow him or her to learn about multiple perspectives without having to complete assignments or activities for two different books.

Using it to complement another curriculum

If you are already committed to a different U.S. history curriculum, you can benefit from using the Heroes of History biographies and Unit Study Curriculum Guides as a complementary curriculum. The narrative biographies enable students to experience and understand history from the perspective of a key historical figure, making a particular time period or event more understandable and memorable for your child. Therefore you may choose to have your child read select biographies and complete select Unit Study activities at a pace that your core curriculum allows. For more information, see Teaching Social Studies with Unit Study Curriculum Guides on page 15.

Using the Heroes of History Program to Enhance Other Subject Areas

The Heroes of History biographies and Unit Studies support learning in subject areas other than history and can be powerful tools to enhance specific classroom themes.

Social studies. In addition to history, the Heroes of History program strengthen student learning in other social studies areas, including geography and government. A full range of content and skill areas are discussed at length in the section Teaching Social Studies with Unit Study Curriculum Guides beginning on page 15.

Language arts. This integrated reading-based program can also be used to teach essential writing and reading comprehension skills and strategies. With the Unit Study activities, students practice and apply a wide range of language-arts skills as they learn about important historical topics and character qualities. For more information, see Teaching Language Arts with Unit Study Curriculum Guides beginning on page 19.

Character development. The Heroes of History program provides excellent material for encouraging character development, giving your children the opportunity to be influenced by people like George Washington and Harriet Tubman and make the personal life stories of these heroes part of their own story. Therefore you might choose to focus on a different character quality for each biography you read. Upon the completion of each chapter, you could discuss the ways this quality was demonstrated in the character's life and how students might demonstrate the quality in their own lives. In addition, you could select Unit Study activities that explore the hero's character and choices. For example, if your child is reading *Clara Barton: Courage Under Fire*, you can select questions and activities that focus on themes of character. The following Chapter Question highlights character: "Clara changed from a timid young girl into a woman of extraordinary courage. In what way would you like to change as you grow older?" The following Student Explorations activity also highlights character: "What do you think were the strongest characteristics of Clara's personality? Clara could be described in many ways, including shy, shrewd, brave, adventurous, hard-working, smart, and compassionate. Choose three words that you think describe Clara best and, using examples from the book, write an essay to show how Clara exemplified those qualities."

Subject integration. This program can also be used to support themes you are studying in other subject areas. For example, if your child is studying electricity as part of a science unit, you might have him or her read *Benjamin Franklin: Live Wire* or *Thomas Edison: Inspiration and Hard Work*. Either book would add greater depth to the student’s understanding of electricity and would reinforce what the student has learned in the science unit.

Student interests and independent study. The Heroes of History biographies can also capture the personal interests of a student and increase learning in an area of independent study. For example, if your child has an interest in aviation, you might assign the book *Orville Wright: The Flyer*, along with some Unit Study questions or activities geared toward aviation.

Using Heroes of History Biographies for Family Read-Alouds

Because of the engaging stories, compelling figures, and important historical themes that are part of the Heroes of History biographies, the books make excellent family read-alouds. Younger siblings may simply enjoy the exciting story, while older children will benefit from learning about the important historical events during our country’s founding and growth. The books may spur engaging family conversations around the dinner table about important American values. Your family may enjoy discussing the key character qualities evident in the life of a character you are reading about or the effects of historical events on our country today. Also, younger family members may enjoy reading or hearing the stories of several Heroes of History characters in the picture book format of the parallel Heroes of History for Young Readers series.

Biography Time Periods, Social Studies Topics, and Character Qualities

The following table lists each Heroes of History biography with the time period it covers in American history, the numerous social studies topics it emphasizes, and the character qualities the historical figure demonstrated. The table also reflects the seven periods of U.S. history that this curriculum employs, beginning with “The Beginnings of a Nation” and ending with “The Future of a Nation.”

Table 1 Heroes of History biographies

Biography Title	Time Period	Social Studies Topics	Character Qualities
The Beginnings of a Nation			
<i>Christopher Columbus: Across the Ocean Sea</i>	1451–1506	Exploration of the world; indigenous peoples; early mapmaking; early trade routes; navigation; shipbuilding; sea adventures; monarchies in Spain, Portugal, and Italy; 15th-century religious conflicts; islands in the Caribbean Sea	Vision, perseverance

<i>John Smith: A Foothold in the New World</i>	1580–1631	Exploration of the world; the Jamestown colony; Native Americans; war; early trading practices; sea adventures; England	Initiative, endurance
<i>William Bradford: Plymouth's Rock</i>	1590–1657	England; Church of England; Puritans; religious freedom; the <i>Mayflower</i> ; Plymouth Colony; Native American tribes; history of Thanksgiving	Conviction, servanthood, dependability
<i>William Penn: Liberty and Justice for All</i>	1644–1718	The fight for religious freedom; colonial times; 17th-century religious conflicts and convictions; the Black Plague; England; Pennsylvania	Tolerance, fairness
The Establishment of a Nation			
<i>Benjamin Franklin: Live Wire</i>	1706–1790	Diplomacy; American Revolution; Declaration of Independence; colonial times; electricity; inventions; printing business; journalism; Boston	Creativity, diplomacy
<i>George Washington: True Patriot</i>	1732–1799	American Revolution; Declaration of Independence; Constitutional Convention; the presidency; the French-Indian War; military strategy; Native American relations; plantations; surveying; leadership; Virginia; Thirteen Colonies	Loyalty, discernment, humility
<i>John Adams: Independence Forever</i>	1735–1826	Colonial times; British Acts (Stamp Act, etc.); Continental Congress; Declaration of Independence; American Revolution; forms of government; Treaty of Paris; early diplomacy with Europe; vice-presidency and presidency; Alien and Sedition Acts; practice of law; women's rights; Massachusetts	Integrity, vision, commitment

The Exploration of a Nation			
<i>Meriwether Lewis: Off the Edge of the Map</i>	1774–1809	The Louisiana Purchase; Native American relations; the early military; the Corps of Discovery; life on the frontier; exploration; navigation; botany; animal identification	Courage, alertness
<i>Daniel Boone: Frontiersman</i>	1734–1820	Colonial and Revolutionary War times outside main action; Native American relations; the French-Indian War; Proclamation Line of 1763; exploration and settlement of Kentucky; Wilderness Road; frontier life; Appalachians; woodsmanship; surveying; exploration; hunting	Passion, courage
<i>Davy Crockett: Ever Westward</i>	1786–1836	Tennessee; militias; native American relations; Indian Removal Act; U.S. House of Representatives; Texas Revolution; Battle of the Alamo; woodsmanship; exploration	Conviction, hope, determination
The Fracturing of a Nation			
<i>Abraham Lincoln: A New Birth of Freedom</i>	1809–1869	Civil War; Confederate States; slavery; Abolitionists; the presidency; trial law; public speaking; political parties; elections; expansion of the railroad; Kentucky; Indiana; Illinois	Eloquence, conviction, justice
<i>Harriet Tubman: Freedombound</i>	1820?–1913	Civil War; slavery; Underground Railroad; Reconstruction; civil rights; women's rights; Maryland; Delaware; New York	Boldness, commitment
<i>Clara Barton: Courage Under Fire</i>	1821–1912	Red Cross; Geneva Conventions; Civil War; Civil War nurses; medicinal practices in 1800s; women's opportunities in 1800s; slavery; natural disasters; Maryland; Virginia; Washington, D.C.	Compassion, courage, self-development

The Growth of a Nation			
<i>Theodore Roosevelt: An American Original</i>	1858–1919	Fighting political corruption; conservation; Spanish-American War; 19th-century immigration; American foreign relations; exploration; U.S. railroads; Panama Canal; New York; the Badlands	Curiosity, justice
<i>Laura Ingalls Wilder: A Storybook Life</i>	1867–1957	Homestead Act; life of pioneers; diseases of the 1800s; forms transportation at the turn of the century; Osage and Dakota Indians; government policy concerning Native American tribes; literature; writing; the Midwest	Resilience
<i>Douglas MacArthur: What Greater Honor</i>	1880–1964	World War I & II; Korean War; military life; military technology; democracy and monarchy; United Nations; the Philippines; Japan	Honor, loyalty, confidence
The Inspiration of a Nation			
<i>Thomas Edison: Inspiration and Hard Work</i>	1847–1931	Invention of light bulb and motion pictures; X-ray imaging; patents; manufacturing; other scientists and inventors; World War I; New Jersey; New York	Creativity, diligence
<i>Milton Hershey: More Than Chocolate</i>	1857–1945	History of chocolate; business and enterprise; production/manufacturing; apprenticeships in American history; Mennonites in America; the Great Depression; U.S.-Cuba relations	Determination, generosity
<i>George Washington Carver: From Slave to Scientist</i>	1864?–1943	Slavery; Reconstruction; racial equality; education; ecology; plant science; innovation; Great Depression; Alabama	Creativity, benevolence, resourcefulness
<i>Orville Wright: The Flyer</i>	1871–1948	Aviation; weather forecasting and measurement; natural disasters; history of the Smithsonian Institution; North Carolina	Perseverance, curiosity, organization

The Future of a Nation			
<i>Ronald Reagan: Destiny at His Side</i>	1911–2004	Cold War; communism; economics; democracy; immigration; U.S. foreign relations	Boldness, steadfastness
<i>Louis Zamperini: Redemption</i>	1917–2014	Track and field; Olympic Games; World War II; prisoners of war; Japan; community service; underprivileged youth	Redemption, tenacity
<i>Billy Graham: America's Pastor</i>	1918–	Religion and revival in America; civil rights movement; U.S. presidents; broadcasting and publishing; public speaking; North Carolina	Integrity, humility
<i>Alan Shepard: Higher and Faster</i>	1923–1998	World War II; Korean War; Vietnam War; military life; aeronautics; space travel; history of NASA; history of the Naval Academy; the baby boom	Discipline, enthusiasm
<i>Ben Carson: A Chance at Life</i>	1951–	Science and medicine (neurosurgery); education and universities; poverty; writing and speaking	Diligence, ingenuity

Suggested Curriculum Timeline

If you are using the Heroes of History program as the core component of your social studies curriculum, you will find the following curriculum timeline helpful to map out which books your child will read and when, to ensure that you cover every period of American history. If you are using the Heroes of History resources as supplemental materials, you have greater flexibility regarding how many biographies your child reads and when he or she reads them.

The following table outlines two learning tracks from which to choose. The *one-year track* is intended for those who have set aside one year to study U.S. history. The *two-year track* is intended for those who wish to devote two years to studying U.S. history and may be a better alternative if you want a more in-depth study of history, geography, and other social studies topics.

For the *one-year track* students select one book for each section. This allows the student six weeks to complete each book, giving time for thorough reading and discussion of each chapter and completion of related projects and a culminating event (of course, you have the flexibility to complete the track more quickly or slowly). For the *two-year track* students select two books for each section. This allows the student three months to complete two book (again, about six weeks per book).

Table 2 Curriculum Timeline

One-Year Track: Month/Section Students select one book per section	Biography Titles	Two-Year Track: Month/Section Students select two books per section
September to mid-October The Beginnings of a Nation	<i>Christopher Columbus: Across the Ocean Sea</i> <i>John Smith: A Foothold in the New World</i> <i>William Bradford: Plymouth's Rock</i> <i>William Penn: Liberty and Justice for All</i>	Year 1: September through November The Beginnings of a Nation
Mid-October through November The Establishment of a Nation	<i>Benjamin Franklin: Live Wire</i> <i>George Washington: True Patriot</i> <i>John Adams: Independence Forever</i>	Year 1: December through February The Establishment of a Nation
December to mid-January The Exploration of a Nation	<i>Meriwether Lewis: Off the Edge of the Map</i> <i>Daniel Boone: Frontiersman</i> <i>Davy Crockett: Ever Westward</i>	Year 1: March through May The Exploration of a Nation
Mid-January through February The Fracturing of a Nation	<i>Abraham Lincoln: A New Birth of Freedom</i> <i>Harriet Tubman: Freedombound</i> <i>Clara Barton: Courage Under Fire</i>	Year 2: September through November The Fracturing of a Nation
March to mid-April The Growth of a Nation	<i>Theodore Roosevelt: An American Original</i> <i>Laura Ingalls Wilder: A Storybook Life</i> <i>Douglas MacArthur: What Greater Honor</i>	Year 2: December through February The Growth of a Nation
Mid-April through May The Inspiration of a Nation	<i>Thomas Edison: Inspiration and Hard Work</i> <i>Milton Hershey: More Than Chocolate</i> <i>George Washington Carver: From Slave to Scientist</i> <i>Orville Wright: The Flyer</i>	Year 2: March through May The Inspiration of a Nation
June The Future of a Nation	<i>Ronald Reagan: Destiny at His Side</i> <i>Louis Zamperini: Redemption</i> <i>Billy Graham: America's Pastor</i> <i>Alan Shepard: Higher and Faster</i> <i>Ben Carson: A Chance at Life</i>	Year 2: June The Future of a Nation

Adaptations for the Parent's Role

Every homeschool operates differently. In some, parents are involved with and direct every aspect of their child's study, while in others, students work more independently. The Unit Study Curriculum Guides allow you to decide how much involvement you want to have with your child's study of the Heroes of History character. Depending on your preferences and your child's needs, you may choose to guide each part of the reading and study, or you may allow your child to work independently. Or you may mix the two approaches, providing the opportunity for independent work in some areas and greater support in others. The following are guidelines and suggestions for parent-directed study, student-directed study, and working with children of varying ability levels and learning styles.

Parent-Directed Study

If you want to have a high level of involvement in your child's study of the Heroes of History character, the Unit Study Curriculum Guides will provide a foundation from which you can teach social studies, language arts, and more. Here are some ways you can use each chapter.

- **Key Quotes.** Display selected quotes and discuss their meaning and relevance to the historical character with your child.
- **Display Corner.** Collect items and present them as an introduction to the time and place in which the character lived. You may want to create a display of the items in a corner of your teaching area.
- **Chapter Questions.** Have your child answer the questions listed for each chapter and then use the answer key in the back to help correct the first four questions. You will need to evaluate the last two on your own since answers will vary. After your child has answered the chapter questions, discuss the chapter with him or her, using the questions as discussion starters.
- **Student Explorations.** Based on your child's learning style and ability level, assign or give him or her options for a project from this chapter. Set aside structured time for your child to complete the project, provide the necessary materials, and offer assistance along the way.
- **Community Links.** Using ideas from this section, arrange for a guest speaker or set up a field trip.
- **Social Studies.** Using the maps and timeline provided, have your child mark the locations listed in the book and record the list of events on the timeline. You may choose to do this together or ask your child to do it individually and check his or her work later. Use the list of terms to play one of the suggested games.

- **Related Themes.** This section may be helpful to reference as you plan future units of study.
- **Culminating Event.** Use the suggestions in this section (or come up with your own) to organize an event that will wrap up your study of the Heroes of History character and allow your child to share his or her completed project.
- **Books and Resources.** Use the listed resource to collect books, articles, and movies for your child's study of the Heroes of History character and related social studies topics. Your child can use these outside resources for projects or for independent reading.

Student-Directed Study

If you are a homeschooling parent whose child needs minimal direction and you have elected to take a more student-directed approach, the Unit Study Curriculum Guides will help you to create a meaningful curriculum. Each chapter of the Unit Study can be easily adapted to allow your child to work independently.

- **Key Quotes.** Have your child memorize and illustrate the meaning of one of the quotes independently. When completed, he or she can share the illustration with you and explain the quote's relevance to the character.
- **Display Corner.** Have your child locate some of the listed items from around the house or library. Ask him or her to explain the significance of these items in relation to the character of study.
- **Chapter Questions.** Have your child answer the first four questions listed for each chapter and check his or her own answers, using the answer key in the back of the guide. You may choose not to assign either of the last two questions for each chapter or just assign one, since they will require your time for evaluation. However, since the final questions generally require the highest level of thinking, it is recommended that your child complete these questions as often as possible.
- **Student Explorations.** Based on your child's learning style and ability level, assign or allow him or her to choose a project from this chapter, assigning a due date when you will review the project.
- **Community Links.** Using ideas from this section, schedule a guest speaker or set up a field trip.
- **Social Studies.** Copy the maps and timelines from this section or allow your child to work directly in the guide. Have him or her mark the listed locations on the map and events on the timeline. You will need to check the work against an outside source.
- **Related Themes.** This section may be helpful to reference as you plan future units of study.

- **Culminating Event.** For a simpler culminating event, you may choose to ignore the suggestions for food, clothing, and music and just make this a time for your child to share his or her completed projects with neighbors, friends, or relatives.
- **Books and Resources.** Your child can review this list independently and check out resources for his or her project. You could also use this section to help your child find an independent reading book.

Working with Children of Varying Ability Levels and Learning Styles

The Unit Study Curriculum Guides are intended to address a wide range of ability levels and learning styles. Every parent knows that children of the same age often have very different abilities. Some children are able to work independently and seem to pick up important academic skills naturally. Others need more instruction. Also, in many homeschool classrooms, siblings of different ages are working together. The Unit Study Curriculum Guides can be used to support children of varying ability levels.

You can ensure that the needs of each child are met by *adjusting the level of support* or *varying the assignments* given, depending on what benefits the child the most. For example, when working with a younger sibling, you might give him or her the same assignment as an older child but provide more support while you allow the older child to work more independently. Alternatively, you may choose to adjust the assignments you give to a child, depending on his or her ability level. For example, when working with the Key Quotes section, you could assign older or advanced learners longer and more complex quotes.

In addition to the varying ability levels in your homeschool group, some children may have non-typical learning styles. For example, consider the assignment of chapter questions. The basic purpose of having students complete the questions is to check their understanding of the chapter they have just read. However, it is not necessary that all children complete this task in writing. Some children may have much success communicating their understanding of a chapter through a detailed drawing that captures the characters and events. Others may benefit most from working through their thoughts about the chapter in a group discussion, while still others may find it easiest to express their understanding by recreating the events in a short skit.

Here are some ways you can adapt activities in the Unit Study Curriculum Guides:

- **Key Quotes.** Assign shorter or less complex quotes to younger children. Higher-level students may memorize several of the quotes and also demonstrate their meaning through an illustration or skit.
- **Chapter Questions.** Questions for each chapter are arranged from simpler to more complex. Assign lower-level students to work on the first three questions independently and then complete the last three questions with assistance. Older children may be able to complete all of the questions independently.

- **Student Explorations.** Projects in each section are arranged from simpler to more complex. Assign projects based on your knowledge of your child’s learning styles and ability level, or create a list of projects suited for your child and allow him or her to choose a project from that list.
- **Books and Resources.** Each resource in this section lists the appropriate age level and gives an idea for which types of students the book or movie would be most appropriate. Use this information to select specific books for your child or to offer an alternative biography of the character for a younger sibling or lower-level student to read.

Teaching Social Studies with Unit Study Curriculum Guides

The National Council for the Social Studies (NCSS) is the largest association in the United States devoted solely to the content area of social studies. Regarding the place of social studies in the school program, NCSS states, “Social studies provides coordinated, systematic study, drawing upon such disciplines as anthropology, archaeology, economics, geography, history, law, philosophy, political science, psychology, religion, and sociology, as well as appropriate content from the humanities, mathematics, and natural sciences. The primary purpose of social studies is to help young people develop the ability to make informed and reasoned decisions for the public good as citizens of a culturally diverse, democratic society in an interdependent world.” You may also have other goals for your child’s study of social studies, such as understanding the character and motivations of people who have shaped history.

Given the diversity of lives and experiences covered by the Heroes of History biographies, the series naturally lends itself to the study of social studies. All Heroes of History books can be used as jumping-off points for further study in one of the other disciplines encompassed by or naturally integrated with social studies. For example, if your child is reading *John Adams: Independence Forever*, the book can serve as an excellent introduction to further study of political science and the American form of government. If your child is reading *Benjamin Franklin: Live Wire*, you might choose to devote a week to science, studying ocean currents, since Franklin was instrumental in charting the Gulf Stream.

The following sections discuss key social studies themes and skills and how these are integrated into the Heroes of History program.

Key Social Studies Themes

Following is a list of general themes or concepts that a quality social studies program includes. An example question or exercise from a Unit Study Curriculum Guide is provided after each concept listed, demonstrating how naturally these themes are incorporated into every Heroes of History biography and Unit Study.

- **Culture and heritage.** Example: “Using the book *In Their Footsteps*, locate a site in your community that is significant to black history and make a mini-documentary about it.” (From *Harriet Tubman Unit Study*, Student Explorations audio/visual project)
- **Time, continuity, and change.** Example: “Plot these important events from history and Abraham Lincoln’s life on the timeline above.” (From *Abraham Lincoln Unit Study*, Social Studies activity)
- **People, places, and environment.** Example: “Draw a journey map for George Washington Carver, showing the chronological order of the places he lived and the dates of his stay in each location. Explore how some of the place names have changed since the time of the story, and give reasons for such changes.” (From *George Washington Carver Unit Study*, Social Studies activity)
- **Individual development and identity.** Example: “Read *The Adams Chronicles: Four Generations of Greatness*. How did John’s character and legacy contribute to the success of his son, John Quincy Adams?” (From *John Adams Unit Study*, suggested Books and Resources discussion question)
- **Individuals, groups, and institutions.** Example: “Discuss the meaning of the following quote by Clara Barton: ‘An institution or reform movement that is not selfish must originate in the recognition of some evil that is adding to the sum of human suffering, or diminishing the sum of happiness.’” (From *Clara Barton Unit Study*, suggested Key Quotes assignment)
- **Power, authority, and governance.** Example: “Do you think a government benefits its people by supporting certain religions and repressing others? Explain your answer.” (From *William Penn Unit Study*, Chapter Questions)
- **Production, distribution, and consumption.** Example: “Visit a local power plant to find out how electricity is distributed in your community. Many traditional power plants have been shut down or are under security restrictions, but some have been turned into museums and are open for tours. Speak with your local chamber of commerce or go to www.google.com and search for ‘power plant,’ ‘electricity company,’ ‘museum,’ and the name of your city to find possible sites to visit.” (From *Thomas Edison Unit Study*, Community Links field trip)
- **Science, technology, and society.** Example: “Display photographs of each of the Wright model flyers from 1899, 1900, 1902, and 1903 (available at www.wright-brothers.org in the ‘Aviation Hanger’) and current newspaper articles about recent advances in aviation technology.” (From *Orville Wright Unit Study*, Display Corner)
- **International relations and interdependence.** Example: “Upon Douglas’s departure from Japan, a newspaper wrote, ‘What he gave us was not material aid and democratic reform alone, but a new way of life, the freedom and dignity of the individual.’ Describe the ways that Douglas brought new life to Japan.” (From *Douglas MacArthur Unit Study*, Chapter Questions)

- **Civic ideals, principles, and practices.** Example: “What conditions and laws did William Penn encounter as a child and young man that may have influenced the type of colony he wanted to lead in the ‘New World’? How did his principles for governing Pennsylvania address those issues? Write an essay using references from the text to support your argument.” (From *William Penn Unit Study*, Student Explorations essay question)

Although every Heroes of History biography covers each of the social studies themes in some way, the following table indicates which books most naturally integrate the specific themes.

Table 3 Social studies themes

Theme	Relevant Heroes of History Figures
Culture and Cultural Diversity	Christopher Columbus, John Smith, William Penn, Meriwether Lewis, Daniel Boone, Harriet Tubman, George Washington Carver, Douglas MacArthur
Time, Continuity, and Change	All characters
People, Place, and Environment	Christopher Columbus, Meriwether Lewis, Daniel Boone, Davy Crockett, Harriet Tubman, Laura Ingalls Wilder, Theodore Roosevelt, Louis Zamperini
Individual Development and Identity	All characters
Individuals, Groups, and Institutions	William Penn, John Adams, George Washington, Benjamin Franklin, Clara Barton, George Washington Carver, Theodore Roosevelt, Douglas MacArthur, Billy Graham
Power, Authority, and Governance	John Smith, William Penn, George Washington, John Adams, Benjamin Franklin, Abraham Lincoln, Davy Crockett, Theodore Roosevelt, Ronald Reagan
Production, Distribution, and Consumption	Christopher Columbus, Orville Wright, Thomas Edison, Milton Hershey, George Washington Carver
Science, Technology, and Society	Benjamin Franklin, George Washington Carver, Thomas Edison, Orville Wright, Alan Shepard, Ben Carson
Global Connections and the Interdependence of the World	Christopher Columbus, John Adams, Benjamin Franklin, Clara Barton, Theodore Roosevelt, Milton Hershey, Orville Wright, Douglas MacArthur, Alan Shepard, Louis Zamperini, Ronald Reagan
Civic Ideals and Practices	William Penn, John Adams, Benjamin Franklin, Abraham Lincoln, Clara Barton, George Washington Carver, Douglas MacArthur, Ronald Reagan

By using the table above to select the books your student will read, you can ensure that he or she will gain experience with each of the key social studies themes. If you don't plan to have your student read the entire chronology (i.e., one or more books from each time period) and are choosing a few books as supplemental reading, you can select titles based on themes you feel are most important to study and discuss.

Key Social Studies Skills

(Material in this section is adapted from *Curriculum Standards for Social Studies*, produced by the National Council for the Social Studies, the largest association in the country devoted solely to social studies education.)

In addition to the integrated study of the above themes, the National Council for the Social Studies suggests that social studies programs allow students to practice and grow in the following areas:

- **Acquiring information and using data.** The program should increase the student's ability to read, study, search for information, use social science technical vocabulary and methods, and use computers and other electronic media.
- **Developing and presenting policies, arguments, and stories.** The program should increase the student's ability to use the writing process and to classify, interpret, analyze, summarize, evaluate, and present information in well-reasoned ways.
- **Constructing new knowledge.** The social studies program should increase the student's ability to understand unfamiliar categories of information, establish cause/effect relationships, determine the validity of information and arguments, and develop a new story, model, narrative, picture, or chart that adds to the student's understanding of an event, idea, or persons.
- **Participating in groups.** The program should increase the student's ability to express and advocate reasoned personal convictions within groups, participate in negotiating conflicts and differences or maintain an individual position because of its ethical basis.

Many opportunities to practice social studies skills are integrated into the chapter activities in each Unit Study. Consider the following examples:

- **Key Quotes.** Either individually or in a group, students can research the context of a selected quote, interpret its meaning, make a case for its relevance to the character under study, and present findings to others.
- **Display Corner.** Either individually or in a group, students can research the context of an item included in the display, make a case for its significance to the character of study, and present findings to a larger group.

- **Chapter Questions.** After students complete their responses to the questions, a discussion of the chapter gives them an opportunity to explain their reasoning and allow opportunities for debate and construction of new ideas.
- **Student Explorations.** Most project options in this section require students to analyze and synthesize information and insights gained from the book and demonstrate understanding of its themes. For example, if students choose a writing activity, they will practice the writing process, asserting an opinion or developing a relevant narrative, and demonstrating their mastery of related technical vocabulary, all while consulting the Heroes of History biography and citing outside resources.
- **Social Studies.** The activities in this chapter require students to search the book and outside resources to find geographical features, complete a timeline, learn technical terms related to the character of study, and apply their new geography knowledge to conceptual questions.

Note: You may also want to consider using the Heroes of History *Maps of the United States* reproducible workbook. This companion resource will give students opportunities to research and gain additional information about the relevant state, including its major industries and natural resources, its rank in population and total area, and much more. Learning these additional facts about the state of interest will give students a more complete understanding of the area from which the Heroes of History character came as well as the development of the state since the time of the character's residence there. Mapping activities and student explorations for the states are also included, as are mapping exercises for the contemporary United States and the historical periods of the Thirteen Colonies, Louisiana Purchase, and Civil War. Additional student explorations and conceptual social studies exercises provide many opportunities for critical thinking. A resources section highlights other useful resources for studying the fifty states.

An answer key for *Maps of the United States* is available online at <http://www.ywampublishing.com/c-78-heroes-series-bonus-material.aspx>.

- **Books and Resources.** Students who read one or more books or articles listed in this section can compare the information to the Heroes of History biography or contrast author perspectives on a historical figure or event.

Teaching Language Arts with Unit Study Curriculum Guides

In addition to providing material for teaching social studies concepts and skills, the Heroes of History biographies and Unit Study Curriculum Guides support the teaching of language arts skills and strategies for students of varying ability levels.

Chapter Questions. The Chapter Questions section offers the most natural place for students to practice and demonstrate language arts skills. Students will be asked to interpret vocabulary, search the text for answers, make inferences, and connect the text to their own life. After students have completed the questions for each chapter, you may also wish to have them answer additional teacher-created questions in a separate journal, giving them regular practice in using some of these essential skills and strategies. This could be as simple as using one of the sample questions below (see Essential Reading Comprehension Skills and Strategies on page 20) as a template to create a question appropriate to the book being read.

Student Explorations. The Student Explorations section also offers opportunities for students to practice language arts skills. A variety of writing options give students the opportunity to demonstrate their ability to compare and contrast, express an opinion, sequence events, and understand theme. In order to produce a quality piece of writing, students will gain practice with going through the writing process and consulting and citing outside resources. Many of the other sections (Hands-On, Arts and Crafts, Media) also require students to synthesize the information acquired from the book.

Books and Resources. The Books and Resources listings can also contribute to increasing students' abilities with language arts skills. By reading one of the additional books listed in this section, students have opportunities to make connections between the texts and compare and contrast author purposes and themes for each book. In addition, watching educational movies or reviewing websites will require students to employ important media literacy skills as they learn to distinguish between helpful, relevant information and that which has more “fluff” than substance.

Essential Reading Comprehension Skills and Strategies

(Material in this section is adapted from Washington State Grade Level Expectations for Reading; California Academic Content Standards for English Language Arts; and Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills for English Language Arts and Reading.)

Below is a list of essential skills and strategies that *all* children should master, along with sample questions for practice with these skills.

- **Understand theme/main idea and supporting details**
 - What was the main idea or key concept of this chapter?
 - What is the lesson or theme of this story?
- **Summarize with evidence from the reading**
 - Tell what happened in this chapter in twenty words or less.
 - Tell the five most important events from this chapter in order.

- **Make inferences or predictions based on the reading**
 - (Before reading) What do you think will happen in this chapter? Use evidence from the previous chapters to support your prediction.
 - (When an idea or cause is not clear) Why do you think [the character] did [an action]? Support your answer with evidence from the book.

- **Interpret vocabulary important to the meaning of the literary text**
 - What does [vocabulary word] mean? What words or phrases around this word helped you to figure out its meaning?
 - Use [vocabulary word] in a sentence. Include words or phrases in your sentence that will give clues about the word's meaning.

- **Sequence events or steps from the reading**
 - Describe the events of this chapter, using sequence words (first, next, then, finally).
 - Tell the steps that [the character] took to accomplish [an event].

- **Compare and contrast elements within and between texts**
 - How is [character/idea #1] like [character/idea #2]? How are they different?
 - How was the [event/character/idea] in this story similar to the [event/character/idea] in another story?

- **Make connections within and between texts (cause and effect)**
 - What was the cause of [event]?
 - How did [character/event/idea] affect [another character/event/idea]?

- **Analyze the author's purpose**
 - Why do you think the author wrote this book? To inform? Entertain? Persuade? Explain your answer.
 - Why do you think the author wrote the chapter in this style?

- **Understand literary elements (genres; story elements such as plot, character, setting; stylistic devices; problem/resolution)**
 - What was the problem in this chapter and how was it solved?
 - What kind of person is [character]? What actions or words from the book show you this person's character?

- **Extend information beyond text (apply information, give a response to reading, express insight gained from reading)**
 - What lesson do you think [character] learned? How do you think he will act differently in this situation next time?
 - Do you agree with [character's] actions? Why or why not?

Essential Writing Skills and Strategies

(Material in this section is adapted from Washington State’s Assessment of Student Learning Writing Checklist.)

Writing for a variety of purposes

During the course of the Unit Study, your child will have the option to write in a variety of forms. It is important that your child gain experience in each of these genres of writing and learn to appropriately adjust his or her style depending on the purpose of the writing and the intended audience. For example, in writing a letter a child will use different styles depending on who will be reading the letter. Whereas a letter to a friend would use personal/informal language, a letter to a museum would use more formal and businesslike language. In another instance, for writing assignments the form of the writing will change depending on whether the task is answering chapter questions or completing an informational report.

The Unit Study Curriculum Guides give your child opportunities to

- **Inform** (reports, newspaper articles)
- **Persuade** (essays, advertisements, brochures)
- **Tell a story** (fictional stories, accounts of a real event)
- **Respond to literature** (chapter questions, poetry)
- **Summarize** (résumés, parts of essays)
- **Entertain** (poetry, humorous stories)
- **Communicate** (letters, e-mails, journal entries)

Going through the writing process

Some of these tasks will require more time than others. For chapter questions and other shorter assignments, your child may simply think through the question, reference the Heroes of History text, and write his or her response in an organized and coherent manner. More extensive tasks may require that he or she reference and cite outside sources and/or go through the entire writing process, as listed below. Note that writing assignments can be adjusted for age and ability level.

- **Prewriting.** The student generates ideas and makes a plan for how the writing will be organized.
- **Rough draft(s).** The student puts ideas down on paper in draft form. When the draft is finished, the teacher gives encouragement and suggestions for improvement.
- **Revising.** The student improves the content, style, and organization of the paper, based on feedback.

- **Proofreading.** The student corrects any spelling, grammatical, or punctuation errors, based on feedback.
- **Preparing final draft.** The student prepares a final copy of the paper to share with an audience.
- **Evaluation.** The student reflects on the writing process, considers parent and audience feedback, and adjusts writing process in the future as necessary.

Considering the traits of good writing

A strong piece of writing includes many elements woven together. As with reading comprehension, some students seem to pick up writing skills naturally and can easily produce engaging, organized pieces of writing. For most students, however, it takes many years of instruction and practice to gain some level of mastery and control over these essential writing skills. For students just learning to write, the task can be overwhelming. As they write, they must consider the content of their message, the appropriateness of the style in which they are writing, the grammatical correctness of their writing, and organize all of this in a clear and logical manner. Below is a list of elements that are a part of all strong writing, along with some guiding questions the writer may employ:

- **Content**
 - Did I answer the question that was given?
 - Did I stay focused on my main ideas?
 - Did I give enough specific details and examples to support my ideas?
 - Did I include information that is interesting and necessary for my reader to know?
- **Organization**
 - Does my writing have an opening/introduction, a middle, and a conclusion?
 - Is my writing organized into paragraphs?
 - Did I use words that help show how my ideas are connected (e.g., “first,” “another reason,” “in contrast”)?
- **Style**
 - Did I show that I care about this topic?
 - Did I use language that fits my audience and purpose (e.g., formal vs. informal, narrative vs. informational)?
 - Did I use a variety of sentences types (e.g., some short, some long, beginning with different words)?
 - Did I use a variety of words?
- **Writing Conventions**
 - Did I follow the rules of correct English grammar (e.g., correct pronoun for subject, subject-verb agreement)?

- Did I spell all of the words correctly?
- Did I use correct capitalization and punctuation (e.g., periods, commas, quotation marks)?
- Did I write complete sentences?

Conclusion

This overview guide has been designed to help you make the most effective use of the Heroes of History biographies and Unit Study Curriculum Guides. This powerful and flexible program can be used as your core U.S. history curriculum or to enhance another curriculum. Filled with opportunities to integrate social studies, language arts, and character development, it can be tailored to meet the specific needs of your homeschool learning environment. With it you can unlock centuries of history for your children, providing an unforgettable learning experience that will shape the rest of their lives.

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