**Classical Historian Teacher Newsletter**

**Week 1**

Dear Teachers of The Classical Historian,

Congratulations on completing all of the work necessary to begin teaching history! If you are a teacher in a private setting, you’ve explained your classes to parents, promoted your teaching style, the curriculum, and you have established meeting times. If you are in a charter school, you’ve obtained approval to receive payment from the school. All of this background work is necessary…but if you are like me, you never imagined how much work it would take in order to teach. Congratulations. The real work of teaching history has finally begun. Hurrah!

This newsletter is created for you, the teacher, to give you teaching tips on how to teach history, the Socratic discussion, how to engage students, and very importantly, how to convey what you are doing to the parents of your students. Very often, history is not respected as much as other subjects, such as Language Arts or Math. History is thought of as a by-product of reading, and adults do not see how much we are doing as history teachers.

This Teacher Newsletter will help you communicate effectively with the parents of your students, letting them know what is being taught each week of class, and informing them of the thinking, reading, and writing skills your students are learning. The newsletter will also help you provide to Educational Specialists a review of what is being taught. And, we will offer teaching tips regarding curriculum and discipline/behavior.

Please let us know what you think of the Teacher Newsletter, adding any suggestions to what you’d like to see in it where you see appropriate. Here is to a great year!

**Teaching Tips for Week 1**

One of my goals for the first week is to build a positive working atmosphere among my students. For my homeschool class of four junior high students and my junior high public school classroom of 38 students, my students play a game called, “Two Truths and a Lie.” Students write two things they did over the summer and one they didn’t. The others attempt to find out which one was a lie. I have found this allows students to speak in class about something they know and the game helps create a positive atmosphere.

Another thing I do the first week of school is draw a timeline and explain briefly how historians divide history into the ancient, medieval, and modern period. We discuss shortly what students will be studying for the year.

Because this is the first week, you are receiving a few more tips than what will be normal. I very strongly recommend that you create a “Student of the Week” award for each of your classes. When announcing the “Student of the Week,” you let your students and parents know the criteria you used to choose the student. Highlight all of the good qualities the student exhibited that week. This will reward the good student, AND it will encourage all other students to work towards becoming a future Student of the Week. Having a “Student of the Week” also keeps your class positive and uplifting. My experience tells me that positive students learn better than negative students.

**Ancient History**: 3,000 B.C. (the invention of writing) through A.D. 476 (the fall of the Roman Empire)

**Medieval History:** A.D. 476 to about 1300 (the beginning of the Renaissance)

**Modern History:** 1300 through today

**Classroom Management Tip for Week 1**

Order is important in every great endeavor. In the history class, whether it is a class of four students or 38, it is necessary to create rules that are administered consistently and evenly. The teacher should be ready for students creating a problem because of a behavioral issue or just because young people (and old people, too!) make mistakes. Perhaps the most important rule in my class is “If you want to speak, you must wait for the teacher to call on you.” This rule makes sure that whoever is speaking will be respected and given time to speak. This rule is essential to establish a friendly environment where students will not be intimidated. It is up to the teacher to remind the students of this rule, especially during the first few weeks.

**Classical Historian Parent Newsletter**

**Week 1**

Dear Parents!

Welcome to our history course. I am honored and excited to teach your child history. This weekly newsletter is meant to let you know what is happening in your child’s history class, what is being taught and learned, and what is the homework of the week. Please feel free to communicate with me any questions you may have about this week or about any part of the class.

In our first class, students played a game where they shared what they did over the summer. One goal of the game is for students to become comfortable speaking in class about a topic that they know well. Students also learn each other’s names. A third goal I have during this game is for students to learn a primary rule of the class is to respect other students when they are speaking.

**Junior High Ancient Civilizations**

**Student of the Week:**

**History**

Students began reading The Fertile Crescent and the Sumerians from *World History Detective*. Students were also introduced to the Grammar for this first lesson located in the *Take a Stand!* book. On the website: <https://www.classicalhistorian.com/free-primary-sources.html> students were introduced to *A Sumerian Schoolboy’s Tale*.

Ancient Civilizations begins with the end of prehistory and the beginning of history, that is, the advent of writing when the Sumerians invented cuneiform (3,000 B.C.). Students learn about the first civilizations of the Fertile Crescent, specifically the Sumerians.

For our first class, we played an introductory game to get to know each other’s names and to help students feel comfortable with speaking in class.

**History Thinking Skills Learned**

Students learned how to distinguish between opinion and fact, how to analyze arguments in history, how to spot a weak and a strong argument, and how to form judgment in history. These thinking skills will help the students throughout the year as they not only learn history but learn how to form good judgement and how to spot poor judgment.

**Homework**

1. Lesson 1. The Fertile Crescent and the Sumerians, from World History Detective. Have students read and answer all the questions to this lesson.

2. Study for a five-question quiz that will take place the next time class meets. The quiz will be based on the Grammar from Week One.

3. Read the primary source lesson, A Sumerian Schoolboy’s Tale, located at this address: https://www.classicalhistorian.com/free-primary-sources.html . Answer the three questions at the end of the lesson.

**Junior High Medieval Civilizations**

**Student of the Week:**

**History**

Students begin their studies by reading Lesson 48 Geography of Arabia and Lesson 49 The Beginnings of Islam in their World History Detective. Students are also introduced to the Gramma for these lessons that is located in the *Take a Stand!* book.

Medieval Civilizations begins with the end of the Roman Empire (A.D. 476) to about the beginning of the Renaissance (1300). For our class, we begin with Medieval Civilizations in Arabia.

For our first class, we played an introductory game to get to know each other’s names and to help students feel comfortable with speaking in class.

**History Thinking Skills Learned**

Students learned how to distinguish between opinion and fact, how to analyze arguments in history, how to spot a weak and a strong argument, and how to form judgment in history. These thinking skills will help the students throughout the year as they not only learn history but learn how to form good judgement and how to spot poor judgment.

**Homework**

1. **Read Lessons 48 and 49 from *World History Detective*. Complete question 10 for lesson 48 and answer all questions for lesson 49.**
2. Study for a five-question quiz that will take place the next time class meets. The quiz will be based on the Grammar from Week One.

**Junior High American History *The Story of Liberty***

**Student of the Week:**

**History**

*The Story of Liberty* is a unique American history course because it not only teaches American history, but it tells the story of liberty over time, from the ancient civilizations through the medieval civilizations. In this first week of class, students learn about the beginnings of civilization in the Fertile Crescent. Students learn about the polytheistic peoples and the first monotheistic people in the world, the Hebrews.

**History Thinking Skills Learned**

In the Story of Liberty course, students are asked to read the text closely, looking for inference and carefully trying to find the author’s intent. In the activities in the Student Workbooks, students not only have to find the answers, but they have to show they know from which sentences they found the answers. This helps them greatly in their reading comprehension skills.

**Homework**

1. Complete the homework for chapters 1 and 2 in the Student Workbook.

2. Study the Grammar for chapters 1 and 2 for next week’s five-question quiz.

**High School American History**

**Student of the Week:**

**History**

This course will take the students from the discovery of America by Christopher Columbus through at least the Reagan Presidency. In this first class, students will read excerpts of Columbus’ diary and ponder the debatable question, “Was Columbus a hero?” We begin with this question as Columbus has become a spark of historical debate, and many American textbooks portray him as an evil character in history.

**History Thinking Skills Learned**

Students learned how to distinguish between opinion and fact, how to analyze arguments in history, how to spot a weak and a strong argument, and how to form judgment in history. These thinking skills will help the students throughout the year as they not only learn history but learn how to form good judgement and how to spot poor judgment.

**Homework:**

1. Read A Patriot’s History of the United States of America, Chapter I.

2. Direct students to read as much of Columbus’ diary as possible. 3. Prepare for a short discussion for the following week, “Was Columbus a hero, a villain, or neither?” Complete the activities in the Take a Stand! Book regarding this question. Use evidence to support your conclusion. 4. Have students choose 10 important words or terms from Chapter 1 and define them.

**High School World History**

**Student of the Week:**

**History**

This class covers from the beginning of history, 3,000 B.C., when the Sumerians introduce cuneiform (writing) into the world, all the way through the 1980s. It is an exciting course that covers all of the major debatable issues in history. Students like this course because although it covers a great deal of time, it does so by not inundating students with countless numbers and facts, but instead focuses on big ideas. In this first week, students learn the beginnings of Western Civilization.

**History Thinking Skills Learned**

Students learned how to distinguish between opinion and fact, how to analyze arguments in history, how to spot a weak and a strong argument, and how to form judgment in history. These thinking skills will help the students throughout the year as they not only learn history but learn how to form good judgement and how to spot poor judgment.

**Homework**

1. Read chapter 1.
2. Answer the Focus Questions for chapter 1, found on page 4.
3. Complete all activities of the open-ended questions for this chapter except the Reflection.

**Government and Economics**

**Student of the Week:**

**Academics**

This course is very intriguing in that it not only teaches the basics of the American government and free market economics, it also points out the debatable topics involved in these subjects. When students learn about the liberties Americans have due to the Constitution, they also question what is the proper role of government, whether Americans should have the right to bear arms, and they question if the American government has become too big. When students learn about economics, they learn about the basics of free market principles, compare these to communist and other totalitarian economic systems, and decide which one is better.

**History Thinking Skills Learned**

Students learned how to distinguish between opinion and fact, how to analyze arguments in history, how to spot a weak and a strong argument, and how to form judgment in history. These thinking skills will help the students throughout the year as they not only learn history but learn how to form good judgement and how to spot poor judgment.

**Homework**

1. Complete reading Chapter 1 of Basic American Government.

2. Answer the Socratic Discussion Open-Ended question #1. Be prepared to discuss in class. Please note that you may need to use other chapters of the Basic American Government book or outside sources to find the answers to the research activities