

# **The Classical Historian**

## **Medieval Civilizations**

**One Complete Year of History  
32-Week Guide**

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## I. What is The Classical Historian?

The Classical Historian teaches students how to strive for the truth in history and trains teachers to challenge students to become their best as historians and people. The Classical Historian encourages teachers and students to systematically learn and practice the highest academic ideals, such as honesty, virtue, patience, and logical analysis.

The Classical Historian teaches students history with lessons that are age-appropriate. As Dorothy Sayers in the 1940s wrote, a student's educational life can be separated into three phases: Grammar, Logic, and Rhetoric. In the Grammar stage of history, students ages 3-11 memorize facts such as dates, events, and biographies. In the Logic stage, ages 12 to 14, students learn the tools of the historian: how to analyze history and the basics of writing and speaking. In the Rhetoric stage, 14 and older, students work on perfecting oral and written expression.

For young students, The Classical Historian teaches basic facts through history flash cards, and fun and educational games. Children ages 3-11 love to memorize and play games. They also love repetition, and are most comfortable when the educational lessons rely on games with clear rules. Older students, ages 12-18, enjoy to argue, like to analyze, and are eager to express themselves. The Classical Historian uses these natural aspects of the young student to promote the academic study of history. The aim of the study of history is discover not only what happened, but to strive to understand why it happened.

The Classical Historian uses a five step program to teach history. The first step is the “Grammar of History.” Steps two through five are the “Dialectic and Rhetoric of History”:

1. The Grammar of History
2. The Tools of the Historian
3. Research
4. The Socratic Discussion
5. Analytical Essays

### **The Grammar of History**

The grammar of history refers to basic facts of an historical event and does not require analytical thinking. Answers to the questions of “who, what, when, and where” constitute the grammar of history. It is essential for a historian to know the grammar of history, and it is a perfect level for kids in pre-k through grade 5. Students at this age (3-11) are eager to memorize, parrot, and recite. Even so, learning the grammar of history never stops at a certain age. Even an adult can benefit by adding historical knowledge through reading, lectures, visits to museums, and discussions.

Young children love games that have clear rules for all, and games where it is possible to improve and become a master at playing. The [Classical Historian games](#) not only teach basic



## **Homework**

At the beginning of the year, the number of minutes spent on homework will be under one hour. As we progress, the number of minutes per week spent on homework will grow to 2-4 hours per week, depending on how fast or slow a writer the student is.

## **Length of Lessons**

The lessons designed in this booklet are created for the one hour class. In the classes that I teach, classes last for 1 ½ hours, because I like to have extra time where I can add other elements to each class. Because I enjoy having at least some part of my lesson plan open for spontaneity, I did not include these parts in the planning of each of the lessons that are in this guide. Some ideas for what you can do to enrich this class are included in the section below.

## **Ideas to Enrich This History Class**

### ***Games***

Some kids may remember more from the history games they will play than from our lessons we spend so much time on. And, other students may start to like history and get involved in doing more academic work because their interest is piqued by history games. I use the following three games in each of my history classes I teach.

#### **Classical Historian History Memory Game: Categories**

Following the instructions found in the game, place the tiles under their correct category. Give students two minutes to study/memorize where the tiles are. Have all students leave the room. Mix up all of the tiles. Have one student return. Time one student, as he places the tiles in the correct place. Take turns until all students have tried this. If you have a larger class, split the kids up into teams. Try to play this game at least once a month. This simple and fun game will teach your students geography or chronology.

#### **Classical Historian Go Fish Game: Go Fish**

Following instructions from the game, students play go fish, and become familiar with historical names and images. I recommend you play this game only once or twice as part of your class. After, move onto the next game, using the same Go Fish box of cards.

#### **Classical Historian Go Fish Game: Collect the Cards**

Follow the game instructions. This game teaches the students inductive thinking, and it teaches historical facts. You will be amazed how fast the students will learn to associate the hints with the images and events on the cards. At first, the reader will win most cards, but after a few games, the other participants will capture the cards. Throughout the year, your students will benefit by having these pieces of knowledge (signposts) in their memory. Students will be able to attach new learning onto their signposts.

### ***Literature***

Students are strongly encouraged to read works of fiction and biography that correlate to the history period they are studying. When we discuss these books, focus is placed on the overall

meaning of the books, instead of on vocabulary. When I think of the U.S. in the 1800s, I think of Mark Twain and Herman Melville's stories. When I think of the ancient times, I think of the stories of the Old Testament. There are so many great stories about historical time periods, it is hard to limit your choices. Choose a few books for the year, and every month or so, discuss these books.

### ***Art Assignments***

Some students enjoy creating art, and many home school families train their children in the arts. Depending upon my students, I adjust the extra activities we do in the classroom. I am not extremely interested in spending much time in creating art, however, currently I am teaching five girls who love art. Because of this, I am assigning a few more art assignments as they relate to history.

### ***Drama***

Many kids love to perform. If they do not like to perform, they are at least very excited (apprehensive!) about getting in front of others. An easy assignment to give students is to have them take a historical event, write a simple play, and to perform this in front of their classmates. This activity may be one where the kids will love to meet each other during the week to work on.

### ***History Party***

Would you like your students to have good friendship with each other, and at the same time encourage the study of history? Plan a history party. The most challenging part of this is choosing a date, or dates, for the event. Once that is done, assign students homework to prepare for the History Party. The History Party could be the event where the students act out their play they have been working on. Students could display any art work they have made. Students could play multiple history games. After hours on these fun and educational activities, the students will surely suggest that a history movie be shown. You choose the movie, so that it is educational. Food should be a part of this party. If you are the teacher, you can suggest this idea to the parents of the students. One parent may love to host parties and take care of the food. Asking for help may provide someone with a chance to help out in the class.

## **PLANNING NOTES FOR TEACHERS**

Read all Teacher Notes one week before and then again, one day before you meet with your students.

**Semester Final:** Some time before the end of 16 weeks announce to the students that they will be responsible to present to the whole class, and to their parents, two of their essays from the first semester. No note cards are to be used. Students do much better in short presentations when they are not reading from notes. One week or two weeks before the presentation, have students do a trial run and present to the class. After each student presents, ask



each listening student to say one thing that the presenter did well, and one thing he could improve on. Pay attention to how much time lapsed during the presentation, to make sure the student is relaying enough information. For the first semester, a 2-5 minute presentation is fine. Also, in the presentation, the student should not only speak about his perspective, but he can also speak about an opposing perspective, and add the reason why he does not agree with this. The goals of the presentation are 1. Practice public speaking 2. Share with the parents and students the knowledge the student has obtained 3. Advertise to the parents what your students are learning 4. Highlight and honor students publicly for their work. All should get dressed up nicely.

**Year Final:**

I strongly recommend that in the spring, the students, in addition to completing regular class assignments, choose one topic from semester 2 to be an “expert” in. The student should read a biography from this time period and should also be compelled to research from at least three primary sources not found in the textbook. The student should also know they are responsible for about a 5-10 minute final presentation (or two five minute presentations). Much like the semester final, this final looks the same, however, the student will only present one topic in depth.

**A Note on the Presentations:**

When you announce the requirements for the presentations, realize that at first, the assignment may scare your students. This is normal. Once they present at the semester final, they will see they can do it and it will boost their confidence. Also, because some students excel, or are more academically developed than others, be very gentle during the actual presentation. If the student stumbles, the teacher or the students may ask questions to help the presenter speak. And, do not focus on the number of minutes initially. Basically, whatever the student gives you, acknowledge their work.

**LESSON THREE**

1. Review all homework with the students. Have students read out loud the questions and read out loud the answers.

Time to Complete: 15-20 minutes

**DVD 2**

2. Using Quotes, page 18 in *The Socratic Discussion in History*, and Lesson 5 on DVD 2.

a. DVD time: 36:56 – 45:17

b. Time to Complete Lesson: 15-25 minutes

3. Paraphrasing, page 19, and Lesson 6 on DVD 2.

a. DVD time: 45:17 – 52:33

b. Time to Complete Lesson: 15–25 minutes

4. Homework

- a. Read Lessons 37 and 38 in *World History Detective*. Complete all work, including answering the questions and completing the Concept Map.

## **LESSON FOUR**

1. Review History Homework  
10-15 minutes.

2. Read Chapter V. Open-Ended History Questions (Teacher Only)  
Read pages 20-21

3. The Assignment (Teacher and Students)

Go to page 22. Follow along with the DVD 2, lesson 7.

The Teacher and Students then read pages 22 - 25 in the *The Socratic Discussion in History* out loud. After watching the DVD, and reading pages 22 – 25, students complete the activities on page 25.

- a. DVD time: 52:33 – 59:20

Approximate time to complete the lesson: 45-60 minutes

Optional Homework: Students may do additional research on the fall of the Roman Empire, and they may add the evidence they found onto their answers on page 25. Tell the students that in the next lesson students will discuss this question.

## **LESSON FIVE**

1. Read Chapter VII (Teacher Only)

2. Read page 28 out loud (Teacher and Students)

With your students, read “Student Rules for a Socratic Discussion in History” on page 28 and review it. Watch the DVD as Mr. De Gree reviews these rules.

- a. DVD Time: 59:21 – 1:05:13

Time to complete this lesson: 15-20 minutes

3. The Socratic Discussion/ The Fall of the Roman Empire (Teacher and Students)

Watch DVD 2, lesson 8 and 9 with your students. With your students, watch Jessica and Anezka have their Socratic Discussion on The Fall of The Roman Empire. Your students will need to have their readings and the prewriting activities they did for this assignment, pages 22-25, in front of them while they watch the discussion. Tell your students that they may take notes of the discussion, and that they may use the arguments Jessica and Anezka use.

DVD Time: 1:05:13- 1:19:51 (15 minutes)

4. After watching Anezka and Jessica discuss, discuss with your class what they thought. Ask them these questions:

- a. Was this discussion what you had expected?
- b. Who do you think had stronger arguments? Why?
- c. Did anything in the discussion surprise you? How?
- d. How did Jessica change her mind in the discussion?

- e. Why did Jessica change her mind?
- f. Who expressed herself better? How?

Time for Complete Lesson: 20 minutes

6. Conduct your own Socratic Discussion on the Fall of the Roman Empire with your Students

a.. Time for Complete Lesson: 15-20 minutes

7. Homework: Assign students to read lesson 39 and complete all activities from *World History Detective*.

## **LESSON FOURTEEN**

\*Note to the Teacher: Please read this lesson carefully as it has important reminders regarding the Mid-Year Presentation.

1. Review the homework. Have students read out loud their essays. Let each student give one positive comment and one constructive criticism on each essay. Collect the essays to read and grade. Turn back to the students the next week.

Time: 15-20 minutes

2. *Take a Stand!* Lesson Four. Read lesson four with students out loud. Instruct students that all of their readings should be done with the idea that they are looking for answers to the *Take a Stand!* activities.

5-10 minutes

3. *World History Detective*, Lessons 66-68. Begin reading these lessons. You may read one or two out loud and discuss the discussion questions together. The discussion questions are questions number 10. Have students work on all activities.

Time: Remainder of the Class

4. Homework

- a. Research in an encyclopedia about Medieval Africa.
- b. *Global History and Geography, Readings and Documents*, “An Arab Traveler in Mali.”
- c. *Global History and Geography, Readings and Documents*, “A Muslim Traveler Observes Hindu Customs.”

### **Ideas for family discussion:**

Have the child present their findings to the family. Ask them about the history of slavery in the world. Many American children falsely believe slavery has always been based on race. This is a good moment to teach them it was not, and that slavery has existed since the beginning of man.

Slavery is based on power. If you want, you may inform them of the prevalence of slavery in the world today.

\*\*\*\*\*

Announce that there will be a mid-year presentation where parents will be invited. (You will have to arrange the date and time with the parents) I recommend choosing a date where most (hopefully all) parents can attend. Each student will choose two essays to present to the parents and other classmates. Each presentation will include one visual, either a map, or a picture of someone who lived during the time the essay topic is about, or anything else that the student would like to share that would help the classmates and parents learn about these topics. Students should wear their best clothes to present.

One year, students asked me if they can do a power point presentation. They arranged for the technology and presented. My only rules were that on each slide, there could be no more than three bullet points, and students were not allowed to read off of the slides. For the most part, it was quite enjoyable. The one thing we need to guard against is students typing amazing amounts of text on the slide show, and just reading.

Homework for Mid-Year Presentation: Students should practice presenting their work, and should have their visuals. \*\*\*\*Important: Students are not allowed to use any notes or flash cards during their presentation. They are allowed to hold a map, or their visual, to show others. Over my 20 years of teaching experience, I have learned that students present much better when they know they will not be able to use notes or flash cards. They will surprise themselves at what they know. Have kids choose two lessons they will present. Because all students have only been writing one paragraph assignments, this means their presentations will only last 1-3 minutes.

Parents should volunteer to bring refreshments to celebrate after the Mid-Year. This will also help let parents know that the presentation is important.

## **LESSON FIFTEEN**

1. Review the homework. Start with the *Take a Stand!* book activities for lesson four. Then, move on to the other homework. Spend about 15-20 minutes on this. If you do not finish reviewing all the homework, that is alright.

Time: 15-20 minutes

2. Socratic Discussion on Lesson Four. Give students 5 – 10 minutes to prepare. Then, lead them in the Socratic discussion.

Time: 10-15 minutes

3. Watch the Socratic Discussion on the DVD.

Time: 10 minutes

4. Homework may be begun in class:

- a. Assign students to write the outline.
- b. Assign the rough draft
- c. Assign the finished essay
- d. Remind students about the revision lesson in *Take a Stand!* Remind them that next week, you will be collecting all work, stapled together.

### **LESSON TWENTY-THREE**

1. Have each student read out loud their essay. Have each student give a positive comment on each essay and one constructive criticism. Collect the essays.

Time: 10-15 minutes

2. Read in *Take a Stand!* lesson 8, The Renaissance. Remind students that their readings are their research to use to complete the activities for lesson 8 in *Take a Stand!*

Time: 10-15 minutes

3. Read Medieval History lessons 1,2, and 3 on The Renaissance, found in this book. Remind students that while they are reading, they should be filling out the research activities in the *Take a Stand!* book.

Time: 15-25 minutes

4. Homework:

- i. Complete the readings and questions from The Renaissance (found in this book).
- ii. Primary Source Readings. Start these in class and finish as homework. Use the readings to help you complete the *Take a Stand!* activities.
  - a. *Global History and Geography, Readings and Documents*, “Creating the French Academy.”
  - b. *Global History and Geography, Readings and Documents*, “A Portrait for a New Age.”

**Ideas for family discussion:** Have the child show the family some favorite works of art from the Renaissance, or, if the child loves science, have the child show some type of discovery or invention from this time period.

### **LESSON TWENTY-FOUR**

\*A Special Note on the Year-End Final

**Year Final:**

I strongly recommend that in the spring, the students, in addition to completing regular class assignments, choose one topic from semester 2 to be an “expert” in. The student should read a biography from this time period and should also be compelled to research from at least three primary sources not found in the textbook. The student should also know

they are responsible for about a 5-10 minute final presentation. Much like the semester final, this final looks the same, however, the student will only present one topic in depth.

1. Review the homework.

20-25 minutes

2. Primary Source Readings: When reading these, think about how they might help you understand the Renaissance, and see if they help you fill in the *Take a Stand!* activities. The teacher is encouraged to read these out loud and discuss them with their students.

a. *Global History and Geography, Readings and Documents*, “Leonardo da Vinci, Renaissance Man.

b. *Global History and Geography, Readings and Documents*, “Copernicus Writes ‘On the revolutions of the Heavenly Bodies.’”

c. *Global History and Geography, Readings and Documents*, “The Inquisition Convicts Galileo of Heresy.”

d. *Global History and Geography, Readings and Documents*, “Madame du Chatelet: ‘Inferior to No One.’”

Time: 30 minutes

3. Homework (to be started in class)

a. Write the outline

b. Write the rough draft

c. Write the final essay

Time: Remainder of the class