

# **The Classical Historian**

## **Modern American History**

**One Year Teacher  
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. **This program shows the teacher how to teach the tools of the historian including all the analytical tools, how to lead the Socratic discussion, and how to teach analytical writing as it pertains to history.**

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. Perhaps most importantly, the student builds skills that enable them to analyze, interpret, and present the most correct perspective on the past.

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



## 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.

### III. The Year in 32 Lessons

#### TEACHER: COMPLETE A. and B. BEFORE YOU MEET WITH STUDENTS FOR THE FIRST TIME

A. Read Chapters I, II, and Chapter III from *The Socratic Discussion in History DVD Curriculum*. (Teacher Only)

B. DVD 1 and Extended Introduction (Teacher Only)

1. Watch DVD 1. This is a brief introduction to a classical education in history. (Required)

2. Watch the Extended Introduction DVD. The extended version DVD includes the author's personal teaching stories that led him to create *The Classical Historian*. Teachers instructing in international schools have shown this to their students because of John De Gree's international experiences. (Optional)

C. Important: Read the next week's lesson one week BEFORE meeting with the students, so you have time to prepare.

#### LESSON ONE WITH STUDENTS

No matter how well or how poorly the students know each other, I strongly recommend an ice breaker activity. Learning is fun and social, and the ice breaker loosens everyone up. It is FANTASTIC for the students to see a sincere smile from each other and from the teacher before learning happens.

##### Two Truths and a Lie

This is an ice breaker I like to use with pre-teens and teenagers. Each person (including the teacher) writes down two truths and a lie about himself, in any order. Then, each person reads out loud the three statements, and everyone guesses which statement is the lie. Time to complete: About 10 minutes

##### DVD 2 (Teacher and Students)

The teacher and students learn the tools of the historian with DVD 2 and by following the lessons in *The Socratic Discussion in History*. Begin on page 13, and start DVD 2 with your students. (Remember-each student will need his own page to work on.)

##### DVD 2

Introduction: DVD Time: 2:55

1. Fact or Opinion, pages 13 and 14.
  - a. DVD time: 2:55 – 15:43
  - b. Time to Complete Lesson: 20-25 minutes
2. Judgment, page 15.
  - a. DVD time: 15:43-22:19

b. Time to Complete Lesson: 20 minutes

3. History:

a. Read pages 294-321 in *A Patriot's History of the United States*. Assign students to write the main points for each page, attempting to write just 1-2 sentences per page.

b. *Problems with the Study of Prehistory*. Read and to answer the questions. They may begin in class and ask your help if necessary.

Try to begin the homework in class.

\*Important: Read the next week's lesson one week BEFORE meeting with the students, so you have time to prepare.

## LESSON TWO

1. Begin Lesson Two by reviewing the homework. Let each students each review the main points of each page. If they wish to discuss anything, encourage them to.

Time to complete: 10-15 minutes

### DVD 2

2. Supporting Evidence, page 16

Using DVD 2, go to Lesson 3, Supporting Evidence. In *The Socratic Discussion in History*, go to page 16.

a. DVD time: 22:19-30:49

b. Time to Complete Lesson: 20 minutes

3. Primary or Secondary Source Analysis, page 17

Continuing with DVD 2, go to Lesson 4., Primary or Secondary Source Analysis, and open the *The Socratic Discussion in History* to page 17.

a. DVD time: 30:49 - 36:56

b. Time to Complete Lesson: 15 minutes

4. History: Assign students to read pages 321-344 in *A Patriot's History of the United States*. Assign students to write the main points for each page, attempting to write just 1-2 sentences per page.

\*Important: Read the next week's lesson one week BEFORE meeting with the students, so you have time to prepare.

## 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: 10-15 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

Assign students to read pages 344-352 of *A Patriot's History of the United States*.

Assign students to write the main points for each page, attempting to write just 1-2 sentences per page.

\*Important: Read the next week's lesson one week BEFORE meeting with the students, so you have time to prepare.

## LESSON SEVENTEEN

1. Review homework of the outline and rough draft by having students read out loud their rough draft. Offer one positive comment and one constructive criticism about each student's essay. Ask other students to comment positively about each person's essay. Homework: Assign students to revise their essay with the revising lesson found in *Take a Stand!* and for next week to turn in the final essay, stapled on top of the rough draft and the outline.

10-15 minutes

2. Read lesson 5 of *Take a Stand!*

10-15 minutes

3. Begin reading for lesson 5:

- a. In *A Patriot's History of the United States*, read pages 533-558.
- b. *U.S. History and Government, Readings and Document*, "Two Poems from the Harlem Renaissance."
- c. *U.S. History and Government, Readings and Document*, "Songs of the Early 1930s."
- d. *U.S. History and Government, Readings and Document*, "Lynch Law in America."
- e. *U.S. History and Government, Readings and Document*, "Plessy v. Ferguson."
- f. Research in an encyclopedia or online to help you complete the *Take a Stand!* activities.

4. Using the readings, complete all research activities of *Take a Stand!*

\*Important: Read the next week's lesson one week BEFORE meeting with the students, so you have time to prepare.

## LESSON EIGHTEEN

1. Students turn in the revised version of *Take a Stand!* lesson 4.

2. Review all the homework for lesson 5 of *Take a Stand!* After reviewing the research, conduct the Socratic discussion.

3. Homework:

- a. Write the outline for a five-paragraph essay.
- b. Write the rough draft for the five-paragraph essay.

### **Ideas for Family Discussion:**

Have the student present his findings to the family. Discuss segregation and lynchings in America in the early 1900s. Discuss the laws against miscegenation in the U.S. that lasted until early 1970s. As the United States was experiencing economic gain of the "Roaring 20s," did Blacks in America experience improved civil rights?

\*Important: Read the next week's lesson one week BEFORE meeting with the students, so you have time to prepare.

## LESSON NINETEEN

1. Have each student read out loud their five-paragraph essays. Each student should make one positive comment and one constructive criticism from each essay. Homework: Assign students to write their final essay due next week.

2. Begin the readings for Take a Stand! Lesson Six. When reading, try to complete the research activities for lesson six:

a. In *A Patriot's Guide to the United States*, read pages 533-558.

b. *U.S. History and Government, Readings and Document*, "Songs of the 1930s."

c. *U.S. History and Government, Readings and Document*, "President Franklin D. Roosevelt's First Inaugural Address."

d. *U.S. History and Government, Readings and Document*, "New Deal Programs."

e. *U.S. History and Government, Readings and Document*, "Letters to Eleanor Roosevelt From Ordinary Citizens."

f. Research in an encyclopedia or online to help you complete the Take a Stand! activities.

\*Important: Read the next week's lesson one week BEFORE meeting with the students, so you have time to prepare.

## LESSON TWENTY-FOUR

**\*Note:** Introduce the idea of the student becoming an expert in one topic for the end of the year presentation. Students should choose one topic from the *Take a Stand!* book. From this topic, each student will choose one biography, and research three primary sources. Later, for their final presentation, the student will present this topic he will be the expert on. The teacher will be responsible to remind and monitor the students as they find the biography and the three primary sources, so the student will be ready at the end of the year to make an interesting presentation. Every lesson, please ask the student how he is doing with his extra research. I strongly recommend that the length of the essay be longer than a five-paragraph essay. An appropriate length for a high school student is a 3-5 page paper, double spaced. This amounts to approximately 15 paragraphs.

1. Review the homework for lesson eight.

Time: 15 minutes

2. Lead the Socratic discussion for Lesson Eight.

Time: 15 minutes.

3. Assign the following:

- a. Write an outline for a Five-Paragraph essay for Lesson Eight.
- b. Write the rough draft essay for a Five-Paragraph essay for Lesson Eight.

Time: The rest of the class.

**Ideas for Family Discussion:**

Have the student present his findings to the family. Discuss the alternatives to dropping the atomic bombs on Japan. How many American and Japanese deaths were estimated to win the war if the U.S. invaded? How many civilian Japanese would have died if the U.S. invaded? What were the repercussions of the U.S. dropping the bombs on Japan?

\*Important: Read the next week's lesson one week BEFORE meeting with the students, so you have time to prepare.

**LESSON TWENTY-FIVE**

\*Remind students they should be reading their biography and their three primary sources for the end of the year presentation. You can have students briefly talk about their biography, and what they have learned so far

1. Have students read out loud their essays they wrote for homework. Each student can give one positive comment and one constructive criticism. Assign students to revise their essays and turn in their finals the next week.

Time: 10 minutes

2. Read out loud Lesson 9 of *Take a Stand!*

3. Homework you can begin in class: Reading:

- a. In *A Patriot's History of the United States*, read pages 631-667
- b. *U.S. History and Government, Readings and Document*, "A Call for Containment of the Soviet Union."
3. *U.S. History and Government, Readings and Document*, "The Korean War."

When reading, try to fill out as much of the prewriting activities as you can, but do not worry if you are unable to find all the answers. For this assignment, you will have two weeks time to complete the research.

\*Important: Read the next week's lesson one week BEFORE meeting with the students, so you have time to prepare.