

YEAR 1 HISTORY READ-ALOUD SUGGESTIONS

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

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

Year 1 History Book Pack

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

Unit 1: *Boy of the Pyramids*
Unit 2: *The Saracen Steed*

Unit 3: *The Three Gold Doubloons*
Unit 4: *Through the Wall*

Unit 1 Suggested Read-Aloud Books

All Ages (Grades 1–12)

1. ***Boy of the Pyramids*** by Ruth Fosdick Jones
(Published by The Good and the Beautiful Library)

Kaffe, the 10-year-old son of a prominent Egyptian nobleman, has 14 copper rings to spend at the market in Memphis this year. He dreams of buying his own dagger but instead makes a purchase that will change his life forever. Ancient Egypt comes alive through Kaffe's adventures during the harvest feast, bullfight, and annual flood. His ultimate challenge will be to solve the mystery of the pyramid.

Intermediate Ages and Older (Grades 5–12)

1. ***The Pharaohs of Ancient Egypt*** by Elizabeth Payne

This is a very readable nonfiction book that is written well and has a rich vocabulary. The stories and information about ancient Egypt are fascinating.

2. ***The Cat of Bubastes*** by G.A. Henty

Many homeschool families use G.A. Henty's historical fiction books as part of their history instruction. Henty's books are historically accurate and are written from a Christian worldview. The books are very well written and contain a rich, varied vocabulary as well as examples of high moral principles such as honesty, selflessness, and loyalty. Although *The Cat of Bubastes* is a challenging read, it is a fantastic, exciting story brimming with historical facts about ancient Egypt. I heartily agree with the reviewer Principled American: "If you're looking to provide historically rich literature for your home, the Henty series is an excellent option. Besides the obvious value of reading an enjoyable book based on historical fact, these stories are an easy way to increase the reader's patience and attention span. Additionally, immersing oneself in skillful writing is a simple method of promoting good grammar."

3. ***The Riddle of the Rosetta Stone*** by James Cross Giblin

This 75-page book tells of the discovery and translation of the Rosetta Stone. This fantastic book is well written and easy enough for children eight and older to understand (as a read-aloud) while still being informative and engaging even for adults. The book features large print and great illustrations and images.

4. ***God King: A Story in the Days of King Hezekah*** by Joanne Williamson

Author Joanne Williamson skillfully brings history alive in this book, which takes place in ancient Egypt and Biblical Jerusalem when teenage Prince Taharka unexpectedly becomes ruler of Egypt and Ethiopia. My son read this book when he was 13 and really enjoyed it. This book is published by the Christian publisher Bethlehem Books.

Older Children Only (Grades 7+)

1. ***Mara, Daughter of the Nile*** by Eloise Jarvis McGraw

First published in 1953, *Mara* brings ancient Egypt alive in a story of secrecy and danger. I love the descriptive writing, the elevated vocabulary, the historical details, and the engaging characters. There is a bit of appropriate romance that may make the book more suitable for a somewhat older audience.

2. ***The Golden Goblet*** by Eloise Jarvis McGraw

Ranofer, an orphaned boy and goldsmith's porter in the ancient Egyptian city of Thebes, has discovered a thief. But it isn't just any thief—it's someone he knows well. His discovery leads him on a suspenseful journey to thwart the evil plans of the thief. Readers are not only left with greater knowledge about ancient Egypt but also with messages about working through trials, friendship, hard work, and courage. I especially love the wonderful ending. *Note: The main character suffers physical and verbal abuse by his brother, which may be difficult for some children.*

Unit 2 Suggested Read-Aloud Books

All Ages (Grades 1–12)

1. ***The Saracen Steed*** by Arthur Anthony Gladd
(Published by [The Good and the Beautiful Library](#))

When a simple farm boy befriends a strange and beautiful horse that has wandered onto the lands of Abbey St. Simon, the boy cannot begin to imagine the adventures he will have upon its back. As all of Christendom hangs in the balance, young Hugh embarks on a mission with unfaltering bravery and a sense of duty that will leave even the most powerful leaders and hardened warriors awestruck. Against all odds, Hugh is determined to save his people from the Saracens with help from one of their very own majestic steeds. Set in the tumultuous times of the Crusades, this beautifully written story is an example of how a book can portray a violent time period without graphic details and can powerfully contrast right and wrong while remaining completely uplifting and appropriate. This adventurous tale has everything that makes a book good and beautiful: high moral and educational value, exemplary writing, and an intriguing plot.

2. ***The Door in the Wall*** by Marguerite de Angeli

I highly recommend this Newbery Medal classic book, which is set in medieval times. Robin, the son of a nobleman, loses the use of his legs after becoming ill. Circumstances separate him from his parents, and a plague causes all his servants to flee or die. A monk takes in the abandoned but somewhat spoiled boy, and the reader is taken on a journey of adventure, change, courage, and kindness. With beautiful writing and an interesting plot, this book is a look into history with powerful messages that make it a highly worthwhile read. However, reluctant readers or those not used to classics may struggle with this book.

3. ***Huguenot Garden*** by Douglas M. Jones III
This book sat on my shelf for two years before I

read it because the cover did not appeal to me. However, I'm so glad that I finally decided to read this fantastic book; it is a treasure. Packed with educational and literary merit, this book tells the story of twin sisters who are Huguenots living in La Rochelle, France, in 1685. I was educated, entertained, and inspired by the sacrifice and faith of the characters. So many good values and messages are promoted in this book. *Note: Catholics should be aware that this novel takes a Protestant worldview.*

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

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

Younger Children Only (Grades 1–4)

1. ***Summer Birds: The Butterflies of Maria Merian*** by Margarita Engle

This short book is a wonderful read! Learn about the true and inspiring story of Maria Merian, a young scientist in the Middle Ages, through lovely illustrations and engaging storytelling.

Older Children Only (Grades 7+)

1. ***Wings Like a Dove: The Courage of Queen Jeanne d'Albret*** by Christine Farenhorst

This book tells the true story of a largely forgotten but important and heroic woman of the Reformation, Jeanne d'Albret, who becomes queen of Navarre. This powerful story is inspiring as it skillfully tells of Jeanne's incredible courage

and kindness in a time fraught with dangers and persecution. The plot is intriguing, and the story is packed with meaning and educational value. Even reluctant readers should love this book. *Note: Catholics should be aware that this novel takes a Protestant worldview.*

2. ***Jacqueline of the Carrier Pigeons*** by Augusta Huiell Seaman

(Published by The Good and the Beautiful Library)

This historical fiction novel is set in the Netherlands during the Spanish siege of 1574. “The hush of a gold May afternoon lay on the peaceful, watery streets of Leyden.” Thus begins the story of Jacqueline and her brother, Gysbert, but things do not remain peaceful for long. Leyden is soon completely encircled by the Spanish army. With wonderfully trained carrier pigeons, determination to find a way out of the city, and a lot of courage, the two siblings believe they can help free Leyden. Augusta Huiell Seaman weaves rich historical detail into an engaging plot, complete with a father who has been missing for years, a nurse acting mysteriously, and a dangerous visitor to the city.

3. ***Otto of the Silver Hand*** by Howard Pyle

(Published by The Good and the Beautiful Library)

This historical fiction novel set in the Middle Ages tells the story of the fictional character Otto, son of the robber Baron Conrad. While the story reveals the cruelty and vengeance that pervaded medieval society, young Otto, who grows up surrounded by holiness and gentleness in a monastery, displays love, courage, and strength of character when he is thrust into the bitter feudal world. Written more than 125 years ago by Howard Pyle (author of *The Story of King Arthur and His Knights* and *The Merry Adventures of Robin Hood*), this book is an

example of writing at its finest. The rich, vibrant, skillfully crafted language paints a picture so real that you can hear the clash of iron; you can see the rays of misty yellow sunlight and the treetops that roll in endless billows of green; you can smell the pungent aroma of burned vinegar; and you can feel the folds of a coarse gray cloak and the cold stone walls. The mind-expanding elements of classic literature abound in this book: varied and complex sentence structures, elevated vocabulary, powerful and extensive description, figurative language, sensory description, and profound insights into places, cultures, history, and human nature. This is a challenging yet worthy read.

4. ***The Dragon and the Raven*** by G.A. Henty

This historical fiction novel by classic writer G.A. Henty is set in ninth-century England during the rule of Alfred the Great. The book follows the story of a fictional Saxon lord as he helps fight against Danish invaders. Packed with educational value, Henty’s story teaches much about the historical time period. King Alfred (who is an amazing historical figure) is in the book, but the story does not center on him. I recommend this book only to serious readers who are used to challenging literature. The writing is complex, and the vocabulary is challenging. While the story is engaging and fulfilling, it is not an instantly gratifying thriller.

5. ***Joan of Arc: Warrior Saint*** by Jay Williams

I listened to the Audible version of this book, and it was fantastic. This version is well written and not dry like some other accounts of Joan of Arc. It reads more like a narrative than other biographies. I felt Joan’s inspiring story was faithfully portrayed in this compelling account. *Note: There are multiple books with very similar titles. This review is for the text published by Sterling Point Books.*

Unit 3 Suggested Read-Aloud Books

All Ages (Grades 1–12)

1. ***The Three Gold Doubloons*** by Edith Thacher Hurd

(Published by The Good and the Beautiful Library)

This wonderful tale follows the adventures of a printer's apprentice, Tom Cartwright, in colonial Williamsburg. Not only is Tom caught up in an exciting historical time period, but also in an engaging plot. With skillful writing, the author weaves in inspiring messages, such as how kind actions to those who treat us unkindly can come back to bless you in the most unexpected ways. When I read this book, I knew it was one that needed to be brought back to the world. It has everything that makes a worthy book: high literary, moral, educational, and entertainment value.

2. ***Drumbeats in Williamsburg*** by Isabelle Lawrence

This book is not as instantly entertaining as others and may present a challenge for reluctant readers; however, it truly exemplifies a good and beautiful work, and I loved it! This wholesome and exciting story is full of authentic historical details as it beautifully paints the story of the young fictional character Andy Small. In the early Revolutionary War, Andy is sent to live in Williamsburg with relatives for his safety, but Williamsburg turns out to be anything but safe. Andy meets General Lafayette, carries an important message, cares for and hides a wounded British boy, and ends up taking a daring and unique role in the Siege of Yorktown. This is one of those books that really should not be out of print. The first half of the book is not as exciting as the second half, which really picks up. I adore the drawings at the beginning of each chapter.

3. ***Silver for General Washington: a Story of Valley Forge*** by Enid LaMonte Meadowcroft

Originally published in 1944, this book tells the story of Valley Forge during the American Revolutionary War through the eyes of children living in Valley Forge with extended relatives. This book is currently out of print, but if you can find it, it is a worthy read that features wonderful writing, very high educational value, and an engaging and wholesome story with great messages. My 9-year-old daughter and I read the book together, and we both really enjoyed the story. However, it is slower paced than many modern books.

4. ***Patriots in Petticoats: Heroines of the American Revolution*** by Shirley Raye Redmond

In a fun and interesting way, this book tells the story of hard-working, heroic women and girls who helped in the fight for freedom in many different ways during the American Revolution. The stories are interesting and inspiring with messages of courage, hard work, loyalty, and sacrifice. The book also has a great deal of information about the time period. I learned a lot and really liked this book.

5. ***The Winter at Valley Forge*** by F. Van Wyck Mason

This old, out-of-print book is a treasure if you can find it! The writing style is so fun and interesting; it makes history come alive. Children of all ages should enjoy this book about George Washington and his army at Valley Forge.

Younger Children Only (Grades 1–4)

1. ***Martha Washington: America's First First Lady*** by Jean Brown Wagoner

Most of this fictionalized biography focuses on Martha's childhood. It is a fun book that teaches a lot about the time period, and it supports high moral character. Although this is an easy read, it

contains great writing, just the right elevated vocabulary for the age level, and lovely descriptions, such as: “The fireflies began to twinkle in the tall grass along the river.” This is the perfect example of an easy reader that is really entertaining and interesting and yet is so much more than empty, fast-paced adventure. It is inspiring and gives the reader a deeper understanding of history, cultures, character, and human nature. I highly recommend this book!

2. ***The Sign Painter’s Secret: The Story of a Revolutionary Girl*** by Dorothy Hoobler and Thomas Hoobler

The official description reads: “When the Redcoats occupy her house in Philadelphia, young Annie MacDougal finds a way to help General Washington’s troops at Valley Forge.” This 52-page book, published in 1991, is an interesting and wholesome story with great educational value.

3. ***Toliver’s Secret*** by Esther Wood Brady

The inside flap reads: “When her grandfather is injured, 10-year-old Ellen Toliver replaces him on a top-secret patriotic mission. Disguised as a boy, she manages to smuggle a message to General George Washington.” This is a captivating story with nice writing and some good messages.

Intermediate Ages and Older (Grades 5–12)

1. ***The Swamp Fox of the Revolution*** by Stewart H. Holbrook

This interesting and well-written biography of Francis Marion not only gives insight into the life of an inspiring and unique man, but it also gives insight into the Revolutionary War. I loved the book and highly recommend it to those interested in American history.

2. ***Tree of Freedom*** by Rebecca Caudill

This is a fantastic Newbery Honor book. Hard work, persistence, bravery, and respecting and helping family members are themes my daughter found in the book. The book takes place during the Revolutionary War. Some of the reading is more difficult

because some dialogue is written in a “time period” style. *Note: The word “Lordy” is used once, as well as the phrase “Lord ‘a’, mercy, let us be quick.”*

Older Children Only (Grades 7+)

1. ***Seven Miracles That Saved America: Why They Matter and Why We Should Have Hope*** by Chris Stewart and Ted Stewart

I can’t recommend this book highly enough! Effectively weaving story vignettes with historical accounts, this book teaches about seven instances when God’s protective care saved America. The messages and information are so important to understand. This is the kind of book that not only makes history come alive, but it also gives deep meaning to history and connects learning to God and character. The writing is skillful and elevated, but it is written in a way so that even teenagers would enjoy this insightful book and find it entertaining. The content is appropriate, and the text uses clean language.

2. ***The Jefferson Lies: Exposing the Myths You’ve Always Believed about Thomas Jefferson*** by David Barton

In this *New York Times* best-selling book, David Barton sets out to “correct what he saw as the distorted image of a once-beloved Founding Father, Thomas Jefferson.” In a time when people have forgotten their country’s noble roots and have distorted and twisted the truth about this amazing historical figure, I cannot recommend this book enough. Even though it is long (416 pages) and is nonfiction, I found it fascinating and engaging. I highly recommend listening to the book with Audible; it’s a great way to get through a long read. I am impressed with the use of original documents and sources with which David Barton makes his case.

3. ***Apostle of Liberty: The World-Changing Leadership of George Washington*** by Stephen McDowell

This book is an absolute treasure. McDowell, with skilled, rich writing, goes well beyond just telling the story of George Washington’s life—he also

illustrates, with inspiring, specific detail, the unique personal qualities that made Washington a successful leader and a man of such noble character. This book also beautifully explains the deeply rooted faith of Washington and how it affected his decisions and actions and thus the destiny of the entire nation. I knew Washington was a man of faith, but I was surprised to learn just how much his faith played a role in his life. I like how McDowell used factual accounts and information rather than just giving his opinion. This book inspired me in so many ways: to seek and value knowledge, to be humble, to have deeper faith, to give more service, and much more!

Unit 4 Suggested Read-Aloud Books

All Ages (Grades 1–12)

1. ***Through the Wall*** by Alida Sims Malkus

(Published by The Good and the Beautiful Library)

“Suddenly the sound of heavy footsteps drew nearer, coming up the stairs, tramp, tramp, tramp, nearer, strange and threatening. . . . The Russian police of East Berlin. Five of them!” When twelve-year-old Hansi’s father is arrested, his world is turned upside down. Why was his father taken away? Hansi discovers a past he didn’t know his family had, and soon after, he embarks on an adventure he never could have imagined—a daring trek to cross the great wall that divides East from West Berlin. With the help of a small dog and some other friends he makes along the way, Hansi comes to realize that the things he’s been taught in post-World War II East Berlin may not provide the best way to live after all.

2. ***Nory Ryan’s Song*** by Patricia Reilly Giff

Set in Ireland during the Great Hunger in the 1840s, this book tells the story of the fictional character Nory Ryan—a brave, positive, and persevering girl. Readers of all ages, even young children, should find the story very engaging. It would make a great family read-aloud. I loved the wonderful messages in the book and the way that the author painted a picture of the dire difficulties of the time while giving the book an overall feeling of hope. It is an uplifting and wholesome book.

3. ***Gladys Aylward: No Mountain Too High*** by Myrna Grant

I highly recommend this fabulous book that tells the true story of Gladys Aylward, a British maid who purchases a one-way ticket to China with her life savings in 1932. Determined to be a missionary even though the mission did not accept her application, Gladys shows incredible courage, perseverance, sacrifice, love, faith, and devotion

to God as she experiences an adventurous and miraculous life in war-torn China. Readers will not be able to put this book down—it is fascinating, deeply moving, and highly worthwhile.

4. ***Candy Bomber: The Story of the Berlin Airlift’s “Chocolate Pilot”*** by Michael O. Tunnell

This stunning book is 103 pages long and includes many photographs. It tells the true story of US Air Force Lieutenant Gail Halvorsen, who wanted to bring some happiness to the children of Berlin after WWII was over and Berlin was in ruins.

5. ***Children of the Storm: The Autobiography of Natasha Vins*** by Natasha Vins

Natasha Vin’s story is a must-read—a reminder that we are so blessed to have religious freedoms. Growing up in Soviet Russia as a Christian, Natasha and her family face severe persecution and trials. Natasha’s uncompromising faith and noble character are inspiring, and her story gives deep insight into the injustices of communism. The book is wholesome, appropriate for all ages, and uses clean language. This is the kind of book that needs to fill our children’s minds.

Younger Children Only (Grades 1-4)

1. ***Ivan and the Hidden Bible*** by Myrna Grant

This series follows two siblings, Ivan and Katya, in Soviet Russia. I’ve only read this one, but there are eight books in the Ivan Series. These wholesome books have wonderful educational value, but I think that some children will love them and find them more engaging than others. At the time of this review, some books in the series were out of print, but others have been republished.

Intermediate Ages and Older (Grades 5-12)

1. ***Nate Saint: On a Wing and a Prayer*** by Janet Bengé and Geoff Bengé

I listened to *Nate Saint* on Audible and really enjoyed the book. Nate Saint was an evangelical Christian missionary pilot to Ecuador. This book tells the story from his interesting childhood to his death while he was bravely attempting to reach out to the Huaorani people about the gospel of Jesus Christ. The book is nicely written and would be enjoyed best by children ages 10 and older.

2. ***Eric Liddell: Something Greater than Gold*** by Janet Bengé and Geoff Bengé

I listened to *Eric Liddell* on Audible and thought it was a fantastic book. Eric Liddell was a Scottish athlete who broke world records and later became a missionary in China. I was inspired by his story about not competing in a race he was favored to win during the Olympics because it was on a Sunday. The book is nicely written and would be enjoyed best by children ages 10 and older.

3. ***David Livingstone: Africa's Trailblazer*** by Janet Bengé and Geoff Bengé

I listened to *David Livingstone* on Audible and really enjoyed the book. David Livingstone was a famous Scottish medical missionary and explorer in Africa. I found his story interesting and inspiring, although I did feel a little sad that he spent so many years away from his family and his duties as a father. That may be a message you want to discuss with your children if you read this book together. The book is well written and would be enjoyed best by children ages 10 and older.

4. ***The Ocean of Truth: The Story of Sir Isaac Newton*** by Joyce McPherson

This book is well written and reveals an extraordinary character in Isaac Newton, both as a renowned scientist and as a virtuous Christian man. Readers will learn from this great man how to face adversity and adversaries with peace and goodwill. There are excellent excerpts from Isaac Newton's own writings, both on scientific ideas and his religious convictions. I highly recommend this book!

Older Children Only (Grades 7+)

1. ***I Am David*** by Anne Holm

David, the main character in this engaging historical fiction book set in the mid-1900s, is a 12-year-old boy who has lived in an Eastern European concentration camp since he was a baby. He knows nothing about his background or the outside world. When David is given the chance to escape, he takes it. As he begins a suspenseful journey to try to make it to Denmark (freedom) without getting caught, we get to see the world through the eyes of a boy who has never before seen a baby or a flower or most foods. This well-written book teaches about understanding the effects of communism and the plight of refugees, and about being grateful and trusting in God. Deep topics and sad events are explored in an appropriate, uplifting way, not in a graphic or dark way. Even if younger children could handle the reading level, the deep topics make it more fitting for ages 13+.