



Exploring America Part 1

Exploring America Part 1
Ray Notgrass

ISBN 978-1-60999-192-0
5th edition. 2026 printing.

Copyright © 2026 Notgrass History. All rights reserved.
No part of this material may be reproduced without permission from the publisher.

Previous Page: *The Younger Generation* by Sturtevant J. Hamblin (American, c. 1850). Image courtesy the National Gallery of Art.

Front Cover Images: *An Evening Halt - Emigrants Moving to the West in 1840* by Benjamin Franklin Reinhart (American, 1867) and *A Pastoral Visit* by Richard Norris Brooke (American, 1881)

Author Photo: Charlene Notgrass

All product names, brands, and other trademarks mentioned or pictured
in this book are used for educational purposes only.

No association with or endorsement by the owners of the trademarks is intended.

Each trademark remains the property of its respective owner.

Unless otherwise noted, Scripture quotations taken from the (NASB®) New American Standard Bible®, Copyright © 1960, 1971, 1977, 1995 by The Lockman Foundation.

Used by permission. All rights reserved. www.Lockman.org

Cover design by Mary Evelyn McCurdy

Interior design by John Notgrass

Printed in the United States of America

Notgrass History
1-800-211-8793
notgrass.com



Hunting Scene with a Harbor (*American, 18th century*)

Table of Contents

How to Use This Curriculum	vii
Advice on Writing.....	xii
Writing a Research Paper.....	xvi
Unit 1 - The Europeans Arrive.....	1
1 - This Is America	
2 - 1491	
3 - Columbus, the Spanish, and the French	
4 - The Reformation	
5 - Bible Study: Religion in the New World	
Unit 2 - English Settlement of America	33
6 - England on the Rise	
7 - English Colonies in America	
8 - Life in the Colonies	
9 - The Enlightenment	
10 - Bible Study: The Shape of Religion in the Colonies	
Unit 3 - English Colonies in the 1700s	71
11 - The Experiment of Self-Government	
12 - The French and Indian War	
13 - The Growing Conflict	
14 - The Shot	
15 - Bible Study: The Great Awakening	

Unit 4 - Revolution 101

- 16 - The Declaration of Independence
- 17 - The Revolutionary War (Part 1)
- 18 - The Revolutionary War (Part 2)
- 19 - Society and Government After the Revolution
- 20 - Bible Study: A Nation Finding Itself

Unit 5 - The Constitution..... 131

- 21 - From Confederation to the Constitution
- 22 - Basic Principles and the U.S. Congress
- 23 - The Presidency, the Federal Judiciary, and Other Matters
- 24 - Amendments to the Constitution
- 25 - Bible Study: The Bible as Spiritual Constitution

Unit 6 - The New Nation..... 167

- 26 - First in War, First in Peace
- 27 - Conflicts Foreign and Domestic
- 28 - The Man from Massachusetts
- 29 - The End of a Revolutionary Century
- 30 - Bible Study: Religion in the New Nation

Unit 7 - An Expanding Nation 199

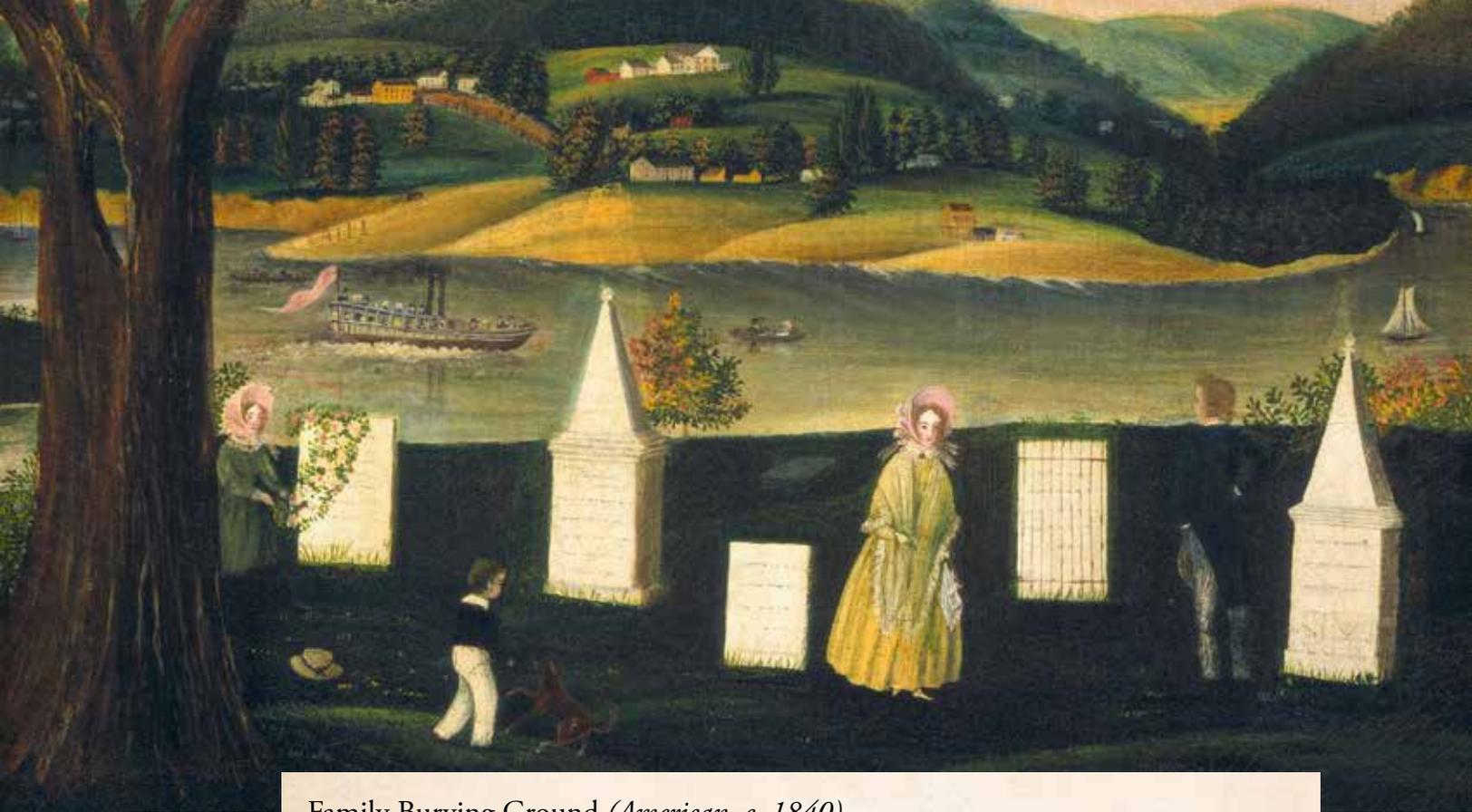
- 31 - Expanding Democracy
- 32 - The Expanding Power of the Supreme Court
- 33 - The Second War for Independence
- 34 - Expanding America's Territory
- 35 - Bible Study: The Second Great Awakening

Unit 8 - Growing Pains 237

- 36 - A Firebell in the Night
- 37 - Asserting Our Presence in the World
- 38 - Hindered from the Start
- 39 - Old Hickory Emerges on the American Scene
- 40 - Bible Study: 19th Century Religious Movements



*Assiniboine children,
George Catlin (c. 1860s)*



Family Burying Ground (*American, c. 1840*)

Unit 9 - Democrats and Whigs271

- 41 - Jackson's Issues
- 42 - Kinderhook, Tippecanoe, and Tyler, Too
- 43 - The Relentless Move Westward
- 44 - Texas, Mexico, and War
- 45 - Bible Study: The American Tradition of Protest

Unit 10 - Challenges and Changes..... 315

- 46 - Slavery in the United States
- 47 - The Abolitionist Impulse
- 48 - The Growth of Cities and Industry
- 49 - Immigration, Social Reform, and Sectionalism
- 50 - Bible Study: Slavery and the Bible

Unit 11 - The Nation Confronts the Crisis.....355

- 51 - Trouble in the Territories
- 52 - Twilight of the Giants
- 53 - Stumbling Toward War
- 54 - Election and Secession (1860)
- 55 - Bible Study: War

Unit 12 - The House Divided.....389

- 56 - Early Battles (1861-1862)
- 57 - The Fight for Glory (1862)
- 58 - The Interminable Battle (1863-1864)
- 59 - The Costs of the Conflict (1865)
- 60 - Bible Study: Faith on the Front Lines

Unit 13 - Putting the Nation Back Together.....429

- 61 - A Rocky Start
- 62 - Congressional Reconstruction
- 63 - He Saved the Nation!
- 64 - Go West, Young Man
- 65 - Bible Study: How Does America Measure Success?

Unit 14 - Moving Forward..... 475

- 66 - Corruption and Reform
- 67 - Money Matters
- 68 - Leapfrog: Cleveland and Harrison
- 69 - Rural and Urban
- 70 - Bible Study: Are We Men or Are We Monkeys?

Unit 15 - All That Glitters.....513

- 71 - The Growth of Big Business
- 72 - The Rise of Organized Labor
- 73 - New South, New West
- 74 - Diversions
- 75 - Bible Study: Social Darwinism and the Social Gospel

Image Credits..... C-1



*1870s portrait of a woman
born in 1791*



Exploring America Part 2



NOTGRASS
HISTORY

Exploring America Part 2

Ray Notgrass

ISBN 978-1-60999-193-7

5th edition. 2026 printing.

Copyright © 2026 Notgrass History. All rights reserved.

No part of this material may be reproduced without permission from the publisher.

Previous Page: “A Day to Remember” World Trade Center Tribute in Light,
September 11, 2010 (Bob Jagendorf / Flickr / CC-BY-2.0)

Front Cover Images: Airplane - National Archives,
Pittsburgh Skyline - Sean Pavone / Shutterstock.com

Author Photo: Charlene Notgrass

All product names, brands, and other trademarks mentioned or pictured
in this book are used for educational purposes only.

No association with or endorsement by the owners of the trademarks is intended.

Each trademark remains the property of its respective owner.

Unless otherwise noted, Scripture quotations taken from the (NASB®) New American
Standard Bible®, Copyright © 1960, 1971, 1977, 1995 by The Lockman Foundation.

Used by permission. All rights reserved. www.Lockman.org

Cover design by Mary Evelyn McCurdy

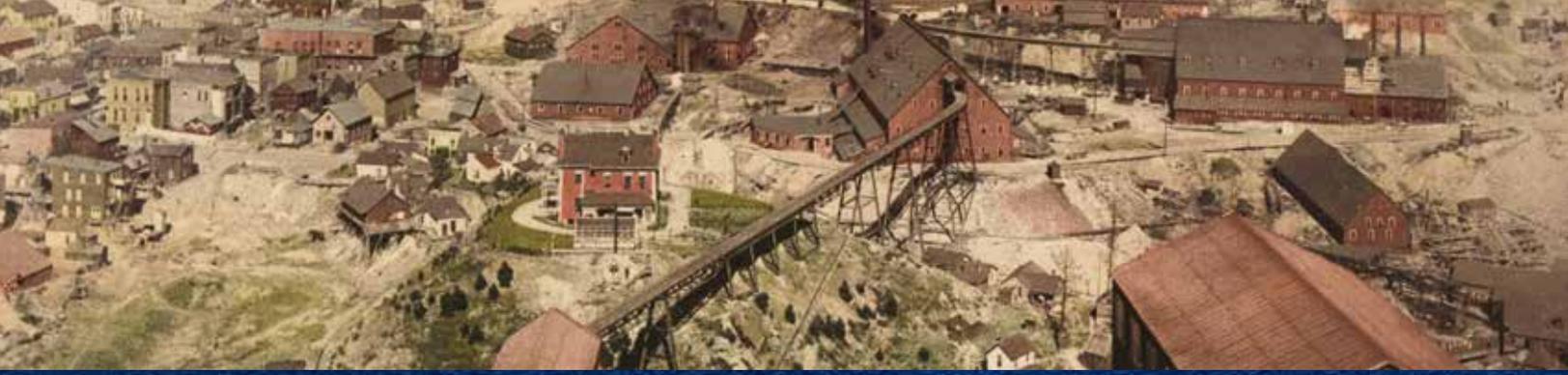
Interior design by John Notgrass

Printed in the United States of America

Notgrass History

1-800-211-8793

notgrass.com



Homestake gold mine in Lead, South Dakota (1900)

Table of Contents

Unit 16 - Beginnings of the Modern Age 551

- 76 - Politics at the End of the 19th Century
- 77 - Separate and Unequal
- 78 - The Progressive Movement
- 79 - American Empire
- 80 - Bible Study: God and Freud

Unit 17 - The Triumph of the Progressives 587

- 81 - America in 1900
- 82 - The Emergence of Theodore Roosevelt
- 83 - Roosevelt's Foreign Policy and the Taft Administration
- 84 - A Time of Invention
- 85 - Bible Study: Liberal and Conservative

Unit 18 - Wilson and the Great War.....625

- 86 - Wilson's Domestic Agenda
- 87 - Trouble in Europe
- 88 - America Goes "Over There"
- 89 - An Imperfect Peace
- 90 - Bible Study: From Every Nation, Tribe, and Tongue

Unit 19 - The 1920s.....665

- 91 - Return to Normalcy?
- 92 - The Roaring Twenties
- 93 - Two Issues: Prohibition and Discrimination
- 94 - The Great Depression Begins
- 95 - Bible Study: The Scopes Trial

Unit 20 - Happy Days Are Here Again.... 703

- 96 - The Only Thing We Have to Fear
- 97 - The New Deal Runs Aground
- 98 - Life in the 1930s
- 99 - War Clouds Build Again
- 100 - Bible Study: How Do We Cope with Suffering?

Unit 21 - The War to Save Democracy 743

- 101 - America Enters World War II
- 102 - America at War
- 103 - Victory!
- 104 - One Soldier's Story
- 105 - Bible Study: Don't You Know There's a War On?

Unit 22 - The Rapidly Changing World.... 779

- 106 - The Cold War Begins
- 107 - Communism—in America!
- 108 - Changes and Challenges After World War II
- 109 - The Korean War
- 110 - Bible Study: Religious Issues of the 1940s

Unit 23 - The 1950s..... 815

- 111 - We Like Ike!
- 112 - The Civil Rights Movement
- 113 - Eisenhower's Foreign Policy
- 114 - The Space Race Begins
- 115 - Bible Study: Were They Really the Golden Days?

Unit 24 - The Turbulent 1960s..... 847

- 116 - JFK and LBJ
- 117 - "I Have a Dream"
- 118 - Vietnam
- 119 - 1968
- 120 - Bible Study: The Counterculture of Jesus



NAACP poster advertising a "wartime conference for total peace" (1944)

Unit 25 - The 1970s.....885

- 121 - Nixon Now!
- 122 - And the Fall of That House Was Great: Watergate
- 123 - Ford and Carter
- 124 - Abortion
- 125 - Bible Study: Other Spiritual Issues of the 1970s

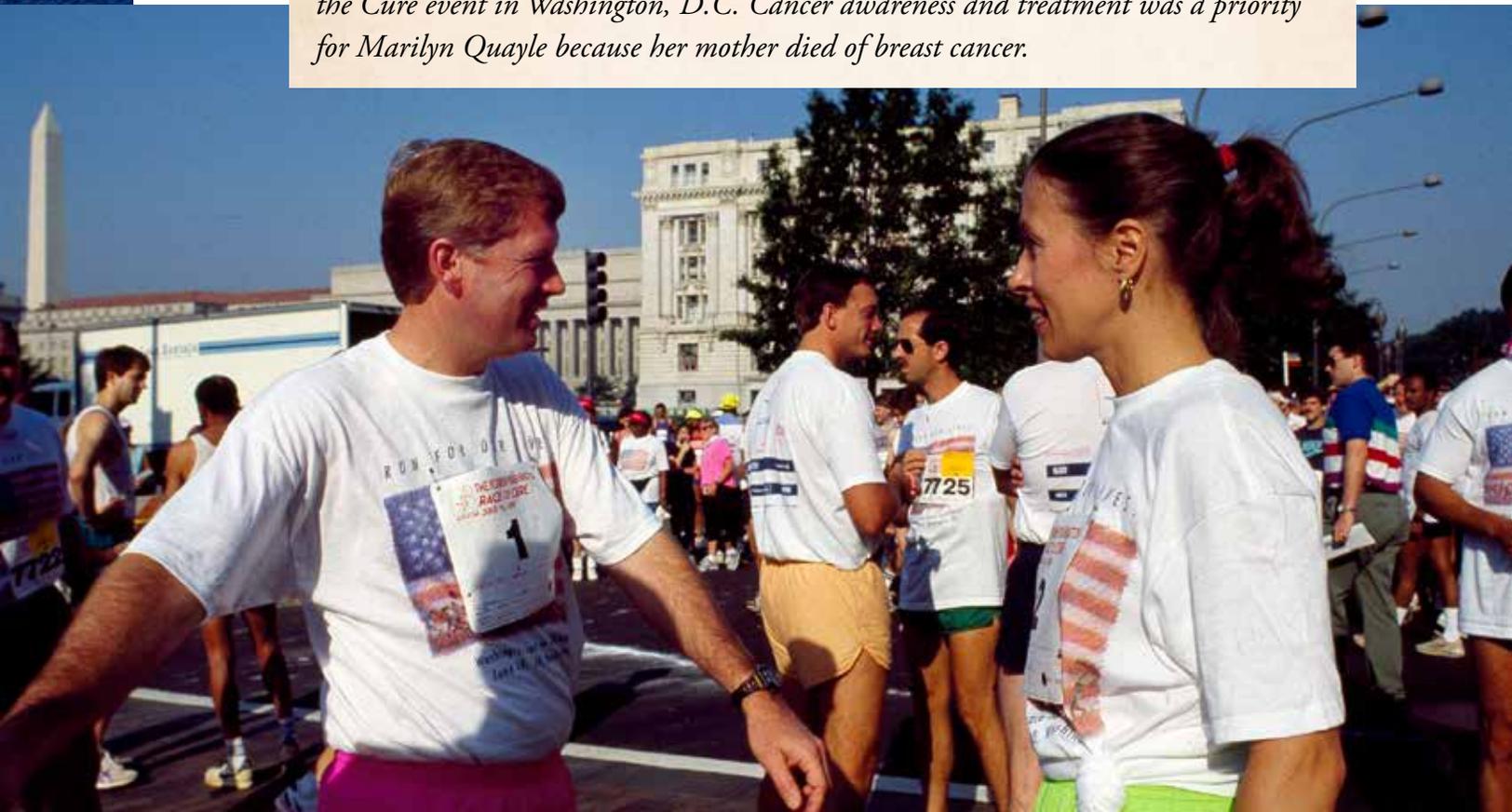
Unit 26 - And the Wall Came Tumbling Down923

- 126 - The Reagan Revolution
- 127 - Reagan's Foreign Policy
- 128 - George H. W. Bush and the Fall of Communism
- 129 - The Persian Gulf War
- 130 - Bible Study: Bringing Good Out of Something Bad

Unit 27 - The End of Another Century959

- 131 - Clinton's Success and the Republican Comeback
- 132 - Complicated Foreign Entanglements
- 133 - An Impeachment at Decade's End
- 134 - America in 2000
- 135 - Bible Study: Public Leaders, Private Lives

Vice President Dan Quayle and his wife, Marilyn, participated in the 1990 Race for the Cure event in Washington, D.C. Cancer awareness and treatment was a priority for Marilyn Quayle because her mother died of breast cancer.



Unit 28 - The New Millennium995

- 136 - The Son of a President Becomes President
- 137 - September 11, 2001
- 138 - The Great Recession
- 139 - Yes We Can!
- 140 - Bible Study: Discerning the Truth

Unit 29 - Crises and Opportunities 1029

- 141 - The First Trump Administration
- 142 - COVID and the Census
- 143 - The 2020 Election and Biden’s Tenure
- 144 - The American Story Continues
- 145 - Bible Study: Recent American Religious History

Unit 30 - Your America..... 1057

- 146 - The War on Terror
- 147 - Civil Rights After the 1960s
- 148 - Technology
- 149 - Red States, Blue States: Can’t We All Just Get Along?
- 150 - Bible Study: Putting American History into Perspective

Image CreditsC-1

Independence Day parade in Boston, Massachusetts (2019)





Wesley Biddle Notgrass, Governor's Island, New York (1942)

How to Use This Curriculum

My dad served in the U.S. Army during World War II. He endured the German bombing of Bristol, England, where he was stationed before the D-Day invasion. His unit landed on Utah Beach on the northern coast of France the day after D-Day. As the Allied forces were advancing through France, the Germans bombed the train station where Dad was sleeping one night. On another occasion, as he stood on a small balcony, a German pilot fired at him and just missed him. Dad suffered through the bitter cold weather that occurred during the Battle of the Bulge.

My father participated in history. If you had suggested to him that the experience of millions of soldiers in World War II, as well as the experience of all those on the home front, was boring and irrelevant because it was history, I think he would have been confused and hurt. For him, history was literally a life-and-death story.

This curriculum will guide you through the story of our country from the first European explorers to the present. We place great emphasis on original documents and speeches because these allow the participants in history to tell the story from their own perspective. This curriculum also introduces some of the great literature that Americans have produced: novels, short stories, autobiographies, memoirs, essays, poems, hymns, and other kinds of writing. The written and spoken word has a profound ability to move hearts and minds.

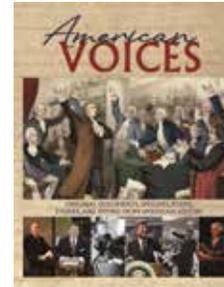
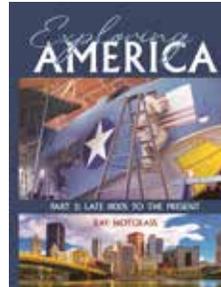
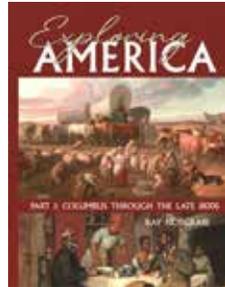
This course also explores the significance of faith with regard to history. Faith is connected with history in two ways. First, people have often been motivated to act because of their faith in God. For instance, faith motivated the Pilgrims on the *Mayflower* to seek a new land in which to live. Faith caused people to oppose slavery. Faith has been expressed often in the speeches and documents that Americans have produced. We recognize and highlight the importance of faith throughout the American story.

A second way that faith should be connected to history is by looking at the overall story of American history through the eyes of faith. We encourage students to think

about the faith lessons that they can learn from people and events in history. For instance, many God-fearing Americans enslaved others and had a strong prejudice against black people. We need to understand what caused those Christian people to be blinded by their culture and how they missed the example of Jesus and the teaching of Scripture about this issue (see John 4:7-9, Galatians 3:28, and Ephesians 2:19). This might help us realize cultural blindnesses we suffer today. A study of history can inform, challenge, and strengthen our own faith.

How It Works

This curriculum provides credit in three high school subjects: American history, English, and Bible. Part 1 covers American history from early European



exploration to the late 1800s. Part 2 covers from the late 1800s to the present.

American Voices is a collection of documents, speeches, essays, hymns, poems, and short stories that supplement the lessons.

The 150 lessons are divided into 30 units of five lessons each. Since a typical school year has 36 weeks, you have some flexibility in completing the course. You can take two weeks to complete a unit when you find a topic particularly interesting or when your schedule is especially busy.

On the first day of a unit, you and a parent should read the unit introduction. There you will find a brief overview of the unit; a list of lessons for that unit; a Bible passage to memorize; a list of books used with that unit; choices for a project for that unit; and, when a literature title is begun, an introduction to that book. Parents: If you choose to use the literature, please see pages iv-v of the *Exploring America Guide for Parents and Answer Key*. If you do not have a copy, it is available as a free download at notgrass.com/ealinks.

After reading the introduction, choose a project to complete by the end of the unit and make a schedule for how to complete it. Find the memory work for the week in the Bible translation of your choice.

Complete the following each day:

- Read one lesson.
- Complete each assignment in the box at the end of the lesson. These include readings in *American Voices*, literature, Bible study, and working on your chosen project.
- If you are using the *Student Review*, complete the assignment(s) for that lesson.

On the last day of each unit, you will recite or write your memory work and complete your project for the unit. An assignment checklist is available as a free download on our website (notgrass.com/ealinks). We recommend that students keep their completed assignments in a three-ring binder used exclusively for *Exploring America*.

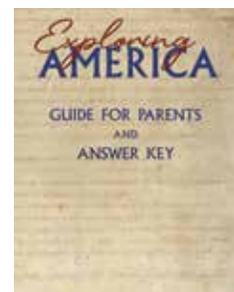
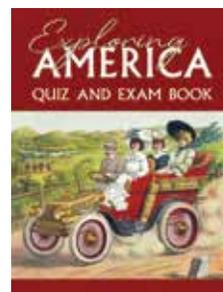
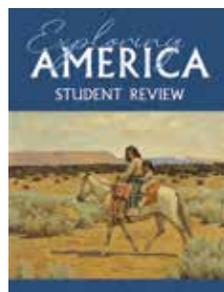
Assigned Literature

The English component of the curriculum includes reading 12 literature titles. Each of the books is assigned at a particular point in the course and focuses on a different period of U.S. history. All titles are in print and available for purchase individually or as a package.

- Units 2-3: *The Scarlet Letter* (Nathaniel Hawthorne)
- Units 6-7: *Narrative of the Life of David Crockett* (David Crockett)
- Unit 8: *Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass* (Frederick Douglass)
- Units 9-11: *Uncle Tom's Cabin* (Harriet Beecher Stowe)
- Units 12-13: *Co. Aytch* (Sam Watkins)
- Units 14-15: *In His Steps* (Charles Sheldon)
- Unit 16: *Up From Slavery* (Booker T. Washington)
- Unit 17: *Mama's Bank Account* (Kathryn Forbes)
- Units 18-19: *Miracle in the Hills* (Mary T. Martin Sloop and LeGette Blythe)
- Units 20-21: *To Kill a Mockingbird* (Harper Lee)
- Unit 25: *The Giver* (Lois Lowry)
- Units 28-29: *Thunder Dog* (Michael Hingson with Susy Flory)

Student Review Pack

The Student Review Pack (sold separately) includes three books. The *Student Review* features daily review questions and literary analysis for the



12 works of literature. The *Quiz and Exam Book* has a history quiz for each unit and comprehensive exams in history, English, and Bible every five units. The assignments in Part 1 and Part 2 tell you when to do all of these and how to prepare for them. The *Guide for Parents and Answer Key* has notes on the literature and all the answers for the review questions, quizzes, and exams.

Tips on Memorization

Each unit of *Exploring America* gives a Bible passage to memorize. Here are some tips on memorization. Pay attention and internalize what the verses mean. You can more easily memorize thoughts that you understand than a string of words that have no meaning to you. Write the verses on an index card or divide them between several index cards. Keep these handy to use when you have a spare moment. Copying out the verses is a good exercise, especially if you learn visually.

Draw pictures illustrating the verses. Ask another person to read the verses to you. Ask another person to listen to you and correct your recitation. Working on memorization consistently in small chunks of time over several days works much better than last-minute cramming.

Unit Projects

Each unit has three choices for a project. Your choices always include a writing assignment. Discuss with a parent how many writing assignments you need to complete to fulfill the English requirement as you study *Exploring America*. We recommend that you choose the writing assignment as your project a minimum of six times throughout the course. The other project choices include a wide variety of activities: building models, cooking, field trips, volunteer opportunities, and more, all of which will enhance and expand what you are learning in the course.

The projects relate to the material in the unit. Where applicable, the lesson from which the project is drawn is noted. You should choose your project at the beginning of the unit and work on it throughout the unit. Don't wait until the end of the unit or until you reach the lesson noted. You might need to look ahead at the relevant section of the lesson to get started on your project.

As you choose your project unit by unit, take the opportunity to try new things and expand your skills. If you have never made a model out of STYROFOAM™, or seldom do any cooking, or don't know how to make a video, this is your chance!

You are expected to complete each project at a high school level. Some of these assignments could be given to an elementary school student and the results would be on an elementary school level. Your work should be performed with care and research and with attention to accuracy, creativity, and excellence. Throwing something together in a haphazard fashion is not appropriate. Whether you spend your time writing an essay or building a model, use your mind and hands to create something you can be proud of.

Optional Supplements

Homeschool History is our curated database of videos, websites, field trip ideas, and other resources that go along with specific lessons in this curriculum. At the end

of each lesson, you will find a link that will take you to a page of suggested resources. These supplemental resources are not required to complete the course. However, if your student wants to dig deeper into a particular topic, these links provide a way to get started.

How We Present Scripture

The most important material in this course are the studies from God's Word. Understanding history and literature is important, but how we live before God is the most important issue before each one of us. We want to help you as you do that by digging into spiritual trends and issues in American history.

We believe in the inspiration and authority of the Bible, and our desire is to present the Bible in all of its truth, wisdom, and power. We strive in all we do simply to be Christians. We are on a quest to understand the truth that God has provided in His Word. We believe that eternal truth does exist, but we do not claim to know it all.

In this curriculum we have sought to present a fair analysis of American history, highlighting various people, viewpoints, and denominations. If you read something in this curriculum that differs from what your family believes, take the opportunity to discuss the issue and search the Scriptures together. We welcome your feedback. If you believe that we have written something in error, please email us so that we can learn together the truth that will set us free.

Thanks

Like all Notgrass history curriculum, this new edition of *Exploring America* has been a team project. I thank my wife, Charlene, and my children John and Mary Evelyn for their valuable help. Dena Russell, Abby Purtee, and Ella Settles also provided research and proofreading assistance.

We have been richly blessed by the positive feedback we have received from homeschooling families all across the country regarding the previous editions of this curriculum. I thank the Father, who put me in this great country, gave me a wonderful family, and blesses me in countless other ways. Any criticism should be directed toward me; give Him all the praise.

God has blessed us with a beautiful and fascinating country. He has given us the freedom to know Him and the opportunity to serve Him in our country. Knowing where we have been will help us know where we should be going by the grace of God as individuals, as families, and as a nation. Thank you for joining with us in the exciting adventure of *Exploring America*.

*Ray Notgrass
Gainesboro, Tennessee
ray@notgrass.com
February 2026*



Underwood typewriter from the early 1900s

Advice on Writing

Composition is part of most high school English courses. It usually involves learning how to express ideas, write themes, and do research papers. Practicing writing helps you to develop your style and skill, just as practicing any activity will help you to be better at it. I make my living by writing, so I appreciate the importance of this skill.

One goal of high school composition is to prepare you for college composition. I have taught college students who never learned to construct a good sentence, let alone a good paragraph. However, learning to write just for high school and college composition assignments is a limited goal. Life does exist beyond school.

You will probably have many occasions to engage in research and to prepare your thoughts on a vital subject such as abortion or capital punishment. You will have numerous opportunities to write: letters to friends and family, journals, social media posts, advertisements for a business, and reviews and articles for periodicals, to mention just a few.

Writing helps you express what you understand about a subject. If you can't explain something to another person, you probably don't understand it well yourself. The writing assignments in this course will help you learn to pull your thoughts together.

Good writing style is important in getting your ideas across to other people. Writing skills will be helpful in your job or in conducting your own business. You will bless your spouse and children if you write thoughtful letters to them often. You can help others by expressing yourself well in writing.

Three ways to improve your writing are to read good writing, to write often yourself, and to receive criticism of your writing with humility and a desire to do better. Reading and applying the guidance in good books on writing will also help you refine your technique. I recommend *The Elements of Style* by William Strunk Jr. and E. B. White.

Writing Assignments in This Course

Each week you do a writing assignment (instead of one of the other suggested projects), you will have two possible topics from which to choose. Some of the assignments ask you to imagine you were living during a certain time in history and write a journal entry, speech, or article to express your perspective on something related to that period. The other assignments ask you to write an essay about a particular person, idea, or other topic.

A basic way to compose an essay is to write five paragraphs: an opening paragraph that states your purpose, three paragraphs that develop three different points or arguments, and a closing paragraph that summarizes your position or topic. If you are floundering on a particular assignment, using this outline can get you started.

The usual target length of your writing projects for this course is 300 to 500 words, which is about two or three typed, double-spaced pages.

Writing Tips to Implement

Here are some tips I have learned that have helped my writing.

Write with passion. Believe in what you are saying. People have plenty to read, so give them something that will grip them. If you don't believe deeply in what you are saying, you give others no reason to do so either. This raises an issue that is related to many writing assignments. Assigned writing is like assigned reading: we often approach it as a chore. Deep emotion and a passion for convincing others are difficult to express in a theme on "The American Interstate System" or "How I Spent My Summer Vacation."

If a writing assignment in this curriculum does not excite you, change it or select one about which you can write passionately. If you ever do write about the Interstate system, approach it in a way that makes it personal and compelling.

Writing with passion means that you should not soft-pedal what you say. Phrases such as "It seems to me," "I think that it would be good if," or "My personal opinion, for what it is worth," take the fire out of your message. It is your piece, so we know it is your opinion. Just state it. Related to this is the common use of quotation marks to highlight a word. Save quotation marks for when you are actually quoting something.

Develop your paper in an orderly and logical way. Using an outline helps me to structure what I am writing. Identify the major points you want to make, the order in which you need to make them, and what secondary points you want to include to support your major points. Be sure that each paragraph has one main point, expressed in a topic sentence, with the other sentences supporting that point. In a narrative, tell what happened first before you tell what happened later. In an essay, make your points in the order of their importance to your overall theme.

Don't try to put everything you believe into one piece. Trust that you will have the opportunity to write again, and stay focused on your topic. Your challenge is to narrow your topic sufficiently to be able to cover it completely.

Use short, simple sentences. Longer sentences do not necessarily show greater intelligence or convey ideas more effectively. You are trying to teach or convince a reader who perhaps has not been thinking about the topic the way you have. He or she will need to see your ideas expressed simply and clearly. Shorter sentences generally stay with people longer: "These are the times that try men's souls." "The only thing we have to fear is fear itself."

Writing Habits to Avoid

Avoid these habits that weaken your writing.

Do not begin sentences with "There is" or "There are." Find a more forceful way to cast the sentence. Compare "Four score and seven years ago our fathers brought forth upon this continent a new nation" to "There was a country begun by our ancestors 87 years ago."

Do not habitually begin sentences with "and" or "but." This practice has become a trendy habit in informal writing, but most grammar books tell you never to do this.

Avoid the word "would." Such usage is an attempt to soft-pedal, to indicate customary behavior, or to describe something that is not a reality. "That would be a good idea" is less powerful than "That is a good idea." "Americans would often violate the terms of treaties made with Native Americans" is not as sharp as "Americans often violated the terms of the treaties."

Don't imitate someone else's style. That person didn't become a good writer by copying someone else's style; he or she developed his or her own style. You might become enamored with the writing of a favorite author and want to write the way he or she does. Learn from that author, but be yourself.

Additional Suggestions

C. S. Lewis had good suggestions about writing (*Letters of C. S. Lewis*, edited by W. H. Lewis, first published in 1966; this edition New York: Harcourt Brace, revised edition 1988; pp. 468-9, 485):

- Write with the ear. Each sentence should read well aloud.
- Don't say something is exciting or important. Prove that it is by how you describe it.
- Turn off the radio (in our day, he might say the smartphone and television).
- Read good books and avoid nearly all magazines.

A key to good writing is rewriting. Writing is hard work, and you shouldn't let anyone tell you otherwise. You will not get every word and phrase just right the first time you put them down on paper or type them on the computer. Great, famous, well-paid writers have to rewrite their work and often have editors who revise and critique what they write. Don't be impatient, and don't wait until the last minute. Write something; then go back and rewrite it; then go back a day or two later to consider it again. This is where another pair of loving and honest eyes is helpful. People who have read my writing and who were willing to point out the faults in it have often helped me (although I admit that I have winced inside when I heard their criticism).

Find someone who is willing to take a red pen to your work; a favorite uncle or grandparent might not be that person. You might know exactly what you mean by a particular statement, but someone else might not understand what you said at all. I have often found that when someone doesn't understand a statement I have written, it is because I have tried to say something without really saying it. In other words, I have muddled what should have been a clear statement, and that fuzzy lack of commitment showed through.

Your writing will improve with practice, experience, and exposure to good writing. I hope that in 10 years you will not write the same way you do now. The only way you can get to that point is to keep writing, keep learning, and keep reading. I hope that this course helps you on your journey.



The Writing Lesson
Morris Shulman (American, c. 1938)



Detail from *The Writer*, Mary Bradish Titcomb (American, c. 1912)

Writing a Research Paper

We recommend that you write a research paper of 8 to 10 typed, double-spaced pages (about 2,000-2,500 words) over a four-week period of your choice while you are studying *Exploring America*. Waiting until the second semester will give you time to prepare and to practice writing shorter papers for your weekly special projects.

This section guides you step-by-step through the process. You and your parents should discuss whether you think a research paper assignment is appropriate for you. Also discuss with your parents whether you should reduce or eliminate the special projects for each unit during the time you are working on your research paper.

When you are ready to begin, refer to this section. If you feel a need for more detailed guidance, we recommend checking out the resources available on the Purdue University Online Writing Lab (OWL). (Visit notgrass.com/ealinks for more details.)

Research Paper Basics

A research paper combines the work of investigation with the task of writing. Choosing your topic is the first step. When you write a research paper, you must define your topic as clearly as possible. You might have to do some general research before you can define your topic. Topics such as “The Colonial Period” or “The Impact of the Civil War” are too broad for a research paper. “Commerce in the Colonial Period” or “Women in the Civil War” are more defined and manageable.

Next comes research. Research involves finding legitimate, authoritative sources on the subject and gathering information from those sources. The modern researcher has a wealth of material available to him, some good and some worthless. Sources include books, encyclopedias, scholarly articles, and original sources. Original or primary sources are materials written or developed at the time of history you are investigating. A diary written by a sailor on a trading vessel during the Victorian era is an example of an original source. You probably will not be able to hold the actual document in your hands, but many transcriptions of original source materials can

be found in print and online. Secondary sources are materials written later about the subject in question.

Use caution with online sources, as many are not authoritative. A comment by a reader on a blog about the Roman Empire is not necessarily based on fact, and you cannot use information gathered from such a source in a research paper. It might give you an idea about something to research yourself, but just because someone posted it online doesn't make it accurate or relevant. Wikipedia is the classic example of a source that is not authoritative. A great deal of the material found on Wikipedia is accurate, but because of the way in which the articles are created and edited, Wikipedia cannot be relied upon as an authoritative source. Artificial intelligence (AI) tools are not authoritative either. Websites maintained by universities, government entities, and reputable publishers of reference materials are good sources for online research. Google Books and Project Gutenberg have many historic books available in their entirety online.

Do not neglect print resources for information. A good old-fashioned one-hour visit to the library might provide much more valuable material than hours of sifting through material online. However, you need to be sure that your print sources are reliable also. Encyclopedias and books published by large publishers are your best sources.

The researcher must give proper credit to her sources. Plagiarism is using someone else's words or ideas without giving proper credit to that source. The internet contains information that you could simply copy and paste into your paper. Though this might be tempting, it is absolutely wrong. Plagiarism is at once lying, stealing, and cheating. You do not have to cite a source for basic information, such as the fact that Columbus sailed across the Atlantic in 1492. However, you do need to cite sources for detailed information and for unique perspectives about a topic. As you take notes while doing research, indicate clearly what is a direct quote and what is your paraphrase of another person's writing. Do not copy another person's exact words into your paper without showing that you are quoting and giving credit to the source.

A research paper is a big project that can seem overwhelming. Divide the project into manageable steps. We have provided a schedule that will help you do this. You might need extra time on some steps while you breeze quickly through others. You must stay on track to meet your deadline. Look ahead to the finished product and take it step-by-step.

Your paper should be based on historical fact and should not primarily be an opinion piece. Sometimes differentiating between the two is difficult. A simple list of facts that can be found elsewhere is not interesting. Your paper should have a point, and you should bring your own thoughts to bear on the facts you gather in your research. Your paper will be dull if you do not draw interesting conclusions. Noting how 19th century American painting expressed American ideals is excellent; on the

other hand, listing reasons why you like American painting is irrelevant to this paper. Your task for your research paper is to provide information, make observations, and draw conclusions on the topic in an interesting, readable format that is worth someone's time to read.

Four-Week Schedule (see further explanation for each day below)				
Day 1	Day 2	Day 3	Day 4	Day 5
Investigate possible topics.	Choose a topic and write a purpose sentence.	Research sources, make preliminary outline.	Learn how to give credit.	Make a research plan.
Day 6	Day 7	Day 8	Day 9	Day 10
Begin research.	Continue research.	Continue research.	Finish research.	Finalize outline.
Day 11	Day 12	Day 13	Day 14	Day 15
Begin writing.	Work on first draft.	Work on first draft.	Work on first draft.	Finish first draft.
Day 16	Day 17	Day 18	Day 19	Day 20
Work on final draft.	Work on final draft.	Work on final draft.	Finish final draft.	Polish and turn it in!

Day 1: Read “Research Paper Basics” (on the previous two pages) and all daily assignments below. Make a list of at least seven ideas for topics. Discuss ideas for topics with a parent. Select topics that you would like to spend the next few weeks studying and writing about. The index of this curriculum is a source for possible topics.

Day 2: Investigate possible sources for your top three topic ideas to make sure you will be able to find enough material. Choose your topic and write a one-sentence summary of your purpose for the paper. Don't say, “This paper is about how the United States transformed international relations.” Instead, state the substance of your paper: “The United States transformed international relations in trade, politics, economics, and science.”

Day 3: Gather possible sources for research. Make a list of places to look. You can bookmark websites, visit the library, and look through relevant periodicals. Develop a preliminary outline for your paper.

Day 4: Learn how to cite your sources properly. Your research paper should follow MLA (Modern Language Association) guidelines for source citations. Your paper needs to have footnotes or in-text citations for your sources of information and a separate Works Cited page at the end of your paper. Look online for the most up-to-date MLA guidelines. We recommend Purdue University's Online Writing Lab (OWL).

Practice some example citations. Whether you use note cards, copy and paste to a computer document, or a combination of these approaches, be consistent and accurate in your in-text and bibliography citations. Look over the guidelines and your examples with a parent to make sure you are on the right track.

Day 5: Make a general outline for your paper to help guide your research. Make some notes about what you want to say in your paper, questions you hope to answer in your research, and ideas for the main point of your paper. This plan will enable you to make the most of your research time. You want to immerse yourself in the topic you will be writing about. Your final paper will not include every bit of information you read, but you want to write from a position of overflow instead of scraping together just enough facts to fill up your paper.

Day 6: Begin your research. Develop a system to stay organized, keeping track of the source for every quote or fact. For example, if you are using the book *John Adams* note which facts and quotations come from that specific work and the relevant page numbers. You need to know clearly where every item of information came from: book, website, article, etc. Use a minimum of six different sources for your paper.

Day 7: Continue your research.

Day 8: Continue your research.

Day 9: Finish your research. Where do you want this paper to go? What do you want to say? Decide what information you gathered in your research is relevant and what isn't. Highlight key findings in your research. Set aside (but don't throw away) information that does not seem relevant to what you want to say. Talk about your general ideas for your paper with a parent.

Day 10: Work on the final outline for your paper. Jot down the points you want to make in the introduction, the main sections of your paper, what you want to include in each section, and what you want to emphasize in the conclusion. Organize these into an outline. Your research might have shown you that you need to

emphasize a point that you had not previously realized was important, or you might not be able to find much information about what you thought was a main idea.

Look through the information you gathered in your research to make sure you didn't leave anything important out of your outline. Finalize your outline and talk about it with a parent. A good, detailed outline will ease your writing process significantly.

Day 11: Reread "Advice on Writing" on pages xii-xv of this book. Begin writing your paper, starting with your introduction and conclusion. Your introduction should give a general idea of what your paper is about and the main points you will make. Your conclusion will reemphasize your main points. Include proper citations as you go, both in-text and on your Works Cited page.

Day 12: Continue work on your first draft.

Day 13: Continue work on your first draft.

Day 14: Continue work on your first draft.

Day 15: Finish the first draft of your paper. Check your in-text source citations and Works Cited page against your research notes and make sure your formatting is correct. Proofread your paper and make corrections. Give your paper a title. Ask a parent to read and correct your paper and make suggestions for improvement.

Day 16: Discuss the paper with your parent. Think about improvements that you can make. Begin working on the final draft of your paper. Fix mistakes and polish your style.

Day 17: Continue working on your final draft.

Day 18: Continue working on your final draft.

Day 19: Finish writing your final draft. Read your paper carefully for spelling and grammatical errors.

Day 20: Read your paper aloud. Make any final corrections. Save it, print it, and turn it in. Good work!