

TruthQuest

HISTORY

How we plan and schedule

Peggy from Virginia says:

"One of the biggest reasons I like TruthQuest History is that it isn't full of busy work, and I can just pick it up and use it with hardly any planning...I do look ahead and make sure we have books for a particular subject before we begin. The only extras I add are field trips and timeline work."

April from South Carolina says:

"While I love a certain amount of structure, I prefer flexible structure. [My last curriculum] was the former, and TruthQuest History is the latter! I did not like a good many of the books chosen by [my former curriculum]. I was constantly having to 'replace' the books they chose. TruthQuest History allows me to choose the books that pass our family standards for reading!"

Rhea from Tennessee says:

"I much prefer to control what, when, and how we study an event or person in the scheme of things. TruthQuest History allows you to do how ever much or little you choose for your family...I like the fact that TQH guides do not tell you what you have to do and when to do it. If we want to read ten books on the Pilgrims (it may be even more!) or just one, or a brief section in our spine book, then it is so nice to not feel pressured to do it some other way or else to feel that we have failed."

Kimberly from North Carolina says:

"I'm going to jump in here and say the biggest lesson God has taught me in regard to TruthQuest History and everything else we 'do' for home education is that I need to get out of the way. By nature, I am a planner. I like to make a plan, work a plan, revise the plan, review the plan...you get the point. However, what I have begun doing this year is every morning, I take the day to the Lord and ask that we do/learn what He wants us to do and learn, not what I have planned or

what I think I have planned. The experience has been wonderful! Allowing God to be our Superintendent of Instruction has been the best 'choice' I've ever made. If we as parents can remember that our God knows what He is preparing our children to do/be, then who better can know what they need? Certainly not some pre-fabricated course of study or learning objectives list. So you don't think I'm in the twilight zone, I do have a very rough idea of what we'll do in a certain period of time."

"Our first year with TQH was a learning year for me in many ways. Obviously, we learned about history, but, more importantly, we learned how TQH works for our family."

"MISTAKES:

- a. getting bogged down in a subject. I will not admit publicly to how many Columbus books we have; suffice it to say, too many! Not wanting to miss anything, we went overboard, and thus you can get stuck;
- b. choosing books or topics based on your 'feminine preferences.' I have always loved to read, so I have been familiar with many titles, but when I began to search out those boy books, things really began to take off. (Try to get a copy of Michelle Miller's talk at the 2003 Living Books Retreat, "Hot Rods and Hope Chests: Boys and Girls and History.") Michelle gave me a genuine appreciation for the heart of my boys. If Michelle says boys love it, they do! History has come alive for them (play acting all the time) as we have read the books that interested them. In my case, God has blessed us with a little girl, so when we cover things later, I will read those 'girl' preferences aloud with her. If you have boys and girls the same age, I would say find some of both. All 'girl' books are not bad for boys, but let them experience the adventure of men!"

"Anyway, I have to concur with Michelle: relax and enjoy! Don't be afraid to pursue a child's interest, even if it is not yours. Let different children use different books. Remember that TruthQuest History discusses artists, composers, writers, and scientists, so you can cover other 'subjects' as well. And if you are like our family and like to read year round, why not just use some TQH suggestions?!"

Lynn from Florida says:

"History. I don't have much recollection from my school days, and after using TruthQuest History for one year I know why. I am enjoying reading the books along with my son...So I am not the teacher, but more of a student too!"

"Other than selecting and locating the books YOU select to read (or allow your children to select) there is nothing easier in my opinion than the TruthQuest History guides. It's easy for me: very little planning, we are just working our way through the guide with no have-to-finish-by-this-time in mind. As for academic excellence, nothing I have seen tops this either!"

"I keep a Post-it note sticking out of the page we are on in the TruthQuest History guide, and after reading the commentary for a section, we read from books we've decided on. I note in the guide the day a book is started and the day completed. I also highlight any books we personally own, which makes it very easy and quick to see what I may need to reserve at the library. There

is no 'do this' or 'do that' in these guides. If you want to add activities, you are free and encouraged to do that, but 'what to dos' are not included in the guides."

Michelle from Iowa says:

"I am a planner. I once had my curriculum all figured out, exactly what we'd all be doing until graduation, and then I began to feel led to use TruthQuest History instead. I felt like someone had pulled the rug out from under me. What was I supposed to do? What exactly would we be doing each and every year for the next 12+ years? What if it didn't turn out "right" for one of my children? What if they all turned out historically illiterate because I messed up and didn't plan rightly? I wanted to see the end from the beginning, in extreme detail, now already! I furiously used I-don't-know-how-many sheets of paper trying to get all my kids to cycle through all of history-chronologically and in depth-starting and finishing in all the right places."

"Somehow, the Lord got hold of me in the midst of my frantic "spinning" If I remember it all right, He basically put the following thoughts into my mind:

'Just what makes you think that the success of My precious children depends upon your schedules and plans? What is it with you and this need to see the end from the beginning all the time? You aren't big enough to do that. That's My job, daughter. I called you to love and disciple and teach and train. I told you I would be in charge of handling "the big picture." You are trying to drive, again, dear daughter. Move over and let Me. It doesn't matter exactly what guide you are using in 2012. Just begin at the beginning and keep pressing forward. If you go too slowly, I'll prod you. If you go too fast, I'll slow you down. Just remember to listen, okay?"

"No one will die if they pick up history in the middle and have to wait for the early stuff later. No one will die if some part gets skipped or hurried over. The process is more important than the aggregate of the details. Seeing God in human life is more important than who did what when. They can look that part up later if, gasp, you leave a hole, or forget, or run out of time."

"I know that it only works for me when I do a reasonable amount of planning. When I try to super-plan, I lose it somehow. I'm not saying don't ever plan. I am saying, don't stress over long-term plans. Set a few goals prayerfully, pick up where you decided to start, and just move forward. It'll get you there."

"I went from frantically filling in check marks...to taking control of myself (with leading from the Lord, of course) and plotting our course. Instead of checking off my little sheets, I feel like I have been given a talented tour guide (TQH) to help me plan my tour through history effectively, instead of getting on a tour bus and rushing through, getting on and off when everyone else does. Although my children don't decide what we do, they often choose individual books, and we stay in areas that they are interested in, and move on somewhat more quickly in areas they are not. They choose many of the ways they record what they have learned."

"Now, I pray about whether I need to worry about how long we take, or whether I can just 'meander.' I've gotten different answers at different times. If I feel I need to 'keep moving,' I divide up the guide and set some targets. Otherwise, I just make a list of things I'll do (I type up a copy of the TQH guide's Table of Contents with more space between the items, and then jot down the various places we can use some of our own wide-ranging resources-such as articles to read, Hands-and-Hearts kits, History Pocket books, and ATTA timeline figures-and paperclip this outline inside the cover of my guide) and we keep 'doing the next thing.'"

Yolanda of Massachusetts says:

"I sat down during the summer and decided which topics we were going to cover, how much time to allot for each, and which resources we were planning to use. I simply copied the guide's Table of Contents (TOC) and hand wrote the spines and/or resources right next to the topic which looked right for my teen boys. In particular, I make sure there is a resource which I'm reading aloud as this keeps us together and allows us to talk about what we're studying. This is by no means set in concrete, but at least it gives me a framework within which to work. Believe me, I am constantly adjusting as I find something better at the library or find my original book(s) don't fit our needs."

"In this same TOC, I also pencilled in any activities and/or supplements to look at when we're studying a particular topic. For example, I might pencil in "look at Kathryn Stout's History Guide p. xx for writing ideas". When I get to the topic, then I get to the specifics, but I don't plan to this depth in advance."

"I don't keep close track of where we are vs. where my plan is (maybe I should), but I at least know whether or not we've been on the same topic for way too long. We've been guilty of that in the past with no planning."

"I sit at the computer with my TQH guide and check my library consortium to see what they do have and make a note of it. If they don't have a particular book, then I find something they do have. I only buy spines or absolute 'must haves.' I do this pre-planning maybe 2-3 weeks in advance of getting to that topic. Our InterLibrary Loan is pretty quick, so I can wait till the previous week to actually order."

Brenda from Illinois says:

"TruthQuest History is the most wonderful part of our school day hands down! The best way for me to describe it is incredibly freeing! I'm not going to force myself into a set schedule, other than reading every day. We are just going to 'drink' in the information and move along as we want to. Keep in mind that I'm learning so much with my kids!"

Kimberly from Michigan says:

"Even if you have to stop a topic before you are 'ready,' it has been my experience over these past few years of using TQH, that my children are constantly being reminded of things that we covered in months past...Done, but not over. Sometimes I think that because of the depth of the TQH commentary and the books that are recommended, it really sinks into the hearts of the kids. They are able to make connections and form the relationships (that Charlotte Mason talks of) in their learning that continue to build into ideas, and the hunger for truth and greater depth further on."

"I have found many times that while we are in the middle of a certain topic of study, it is not always the right time to measure what the kids are getting out of it. Instead, I often find that the guts of it come alive while driving in the car weeks or months later. All of a sudden, a 'big idea' explodes in a simple sentence or two. It is then that I know they got it! And it was worth the wait!"

Tami from Minnesota says:

"I don't schedule certain books (freedom!), other than my read-aloud spine. We simply check out as many books as we find on two weeks worth of topics and put them in our History Basket.

During daily history reading time, my daughter picks out her own books to read. It's so easy and low-stress! Some weeks, I simply read aloud from a 'spine' on a new topic, and my daughter is free to keep reading more books on the last topic, if she likes. This way, she can delve into topics of her choice, and we can still keep moving along. At the end of the week, I record the titles that she read. We love the freedom and passion for His-story that TQH ignites!"

"I plan my year into three 12-week terms, so for each term, I left a couple weeks 'blank' and studied world history on those break weeks: Japan, China, Russia, India, etc. It was fun and a nice change of pace."

"If you need a yearly outline, here is a low stress suggestion. You can go through the guide and highlight the top 25 or so topics that you definitely want to cover for the year. This will enable you to see a BIG picture for the year, have materials ready, and still have lots of flexibility."

Dawn from Indiana says:

"I found I was trying to apply nonBiblical methodologies to a Biblical way of doing school. Let me try again...I was trying to make TruthQuest History fit 'school.' I was still trying to do school with TQH, rather than using it the way that it was intended, and that is as a guide, as a docent, if you will, to history...to allow me to teach history to my children, to allow me to lead my children in discussions, to allow me to be the director of the history education my children were getting."

Michelle Miller, author of TruthQuest History, says:

"If you really think about it, you will hopefully see that it would be very presumptuous of me to tell you what you should do with each of your children each day in history. I don't know what God wants to impress on your children tomorrow morning at 9:00 am. History is not like learning phonics or subtraction. It's just one thing...the chance for your children to discover that God is standing as the awesomely huge center of everything, and that all of life is deciding what to do with Him. Believe, love, and obey Him? Or reject Him and go a way of our own making? If for one minute I led anyone to believe that the goal of history was simply to learn about the famous people and events of the past, I'd faint! That's just knowledge which 'puffs up!'"

"Because these are very profound, very deep, and very personal issues, it would be outrageous for me to suggest what be studied each day! Why, these are matters of the heart! These are the matters parents long to explore with their children and teach them as they are ready to learn! Only you can prayerfully sense the appropriate pace. Only you can know when you're striking an important chord."

"Thus, TruthQuest History attempts only to sequentially lay out comments in history that will give your reading true depth and insight, and which will incrementally help your children unveil the most important truths. Remember, the goal is for students to better know God personally by truly understanding that God's ways are best and produce the highest level of freedom and

blessing...and for the students to impact our societies with their grasp of these profound truths as they apply to government, economics, law, the arts, the church, etc."

"To-do lists are great in so many areas of our lives, and with other educational topics; I'm so glad you're organized, conscientious, and serious about homeschooling. But I believe that history is not to be merely inserting facts into our children as they passively move by on a pre-programmed conveyor belt. I think God wants to shake that whole model of education right out of this generation, but it's not easy since we were all taught that way!"

"With this, I'll close. If history is to be of real depth and real impact, it has to be a living thing. It has to be a spiritual thing. It has to be a personal thing. And that's why we can trust God to guide us, using programs like TruthQuest History only as humble aids to save us time and offer help in our mission."

Melinda says:

"I [bought a curriculum that] was all scheduled out for me; just grab it and be done. Then when I got into it, that is the reason I hated it...It wasn't something that was teaching my children independence...I want to be able to spend some time on history with all my children, and then have the older ones be able to dig deeper on their own...and then tell me about it."

"Some TQH families do schedule out the entire year for themselves, and that helps them. Right now, I basically take some time and plan each week. I have found it easier for me to work weekly, than yearly or even monthly."

Kimberly from Ohio says:

"I went through the guide and assigned weeks for all the topics that I wanted to cover....then I started choosing books [from the booklists]. The first thing I did was check off which books sounded 'good' and were age appropriate to my girls. The book that didn't change was my spine, Story of the World, which I used for as many topics as I could. Then, after I checked off all the books, I did an online search of what my library actually had. That narrowed down a lot. Picture-type informational books we did together along with our spine. Fiction books I gave to my girls to read on their own...We also worked on our timeline, colored pages from a Dover coloring book, and made chicken mummies!"

"I know how hard it is to just relax when you've used programs that have everything laid out! Especially for a Type A like me!! But this program will give you freedom if you just sit back, relax, and choose only the things that will fit best for the needs of your family. You don't have to read every book; read through the best ones and pick sections out of the others. Many times I reserved all the books, brought them all home, and then weeded! Some books took a day; others took a week. You can figure that out once you hold them in your hands. Pray, pray, pray before you start your weeks and the Lord will show you what He wants His kids to get!"

Rebecca from Michigan says:

"You know how you don't know what you're going to have for lunch two weeks from now? But you know you are going to eat lunch. That's how we do TruthQuest History. I don't know what

will be at the library. I don't know what will turn up at the next yard sale or on paperback swap. I don't know what we'll be in the mood for, or if an unexpected field trip opportunity will present itself. I don't know what kind of activities I'll stumble across online. Whatever is in my TQH cupboard when we're ready to 'eat,' that's what we'll choose from. Don't take this to mean we're unprepared. I'm always looking forward to the next section, taking inventory of what I have and hunting for a few things I don't want to miss...so when we're hungry for the next topic, the cupboard is full!"

"Here's how we do TruthQuest History. We take the topic, i.e. Pilgrims. I gather all the resources I have around the house. I go to the library and check out books on Pilgrims. I put it all on a shelf in my house. We have TQH time at 1:00 every day. That's the plan anyway. Some days life happens and TQH doesn't! I decide which ones we have to read aloud. If you don't like reading aloud, keep it simple, or assign an older child to read aloud to the group, or find some audio books. The rest of the books remain on the shelf. The kids have a list of school to-do's. Reading a TruthQuest History book independently is on their list about every other day. So, we'll read through the books until we run out, or until we get sick of them. Then we move on to the next topic. If I have some activities to go along, then I'll sprinkle those in among the readings."

"Here's a tip I heard and it's working great. Instead of writing down a schedule of the future, keep a record of what you accomplish each day. Sometimes I feel like we haven't done very much history, but when I look back at the list of books we've read and the projects we've done, why, we've been truly busy and we've accomplished an amazing amount. It encourages me to see how much we've done instead of feeling always behind schedule or continually spending my time revamping the schedule."

Wanda from Alaska says:

"I sat down at the beginning of this school year and planned out the entire year of 'American History for Young Students II.' I use my plan loosely, but appreciate having it. We've also added in corresponding 'Hands-n-Hearts' history kits and use the 'Story of the World' coloring and map pages where appropriate."

"I've deviated from our schedule a little bit, but I really like having it all laid out. I didn't put in actual page numbers, just the approximate number of pages I wanted us to read. I always have a read-aloud going and then assign the girls additional titles to read silently. They craft or color while I read, and when we finish a read-aloud, we make a notebook page with a narration, coloring, etc. Sometimes I'll reduce the 'Story of the World' coloring and map pages so we can fit them on a page. We often google for images as well."

Adrianne from Illinois says:

"I know for a little while, I felt a little confused and overwhelmed at how to implement TruthQuest History and I asked [on the online discussion loop] how people scheduled. Many of the replies suggested making a loose schedule and not getting too locked into something. Some of the replies suggested I take a look at the Table of Contents, and decide what are the most important topics I feel we must cover."

"We are doing American History for Young Students I, and I must say that I just love it. I feel more relaxed now. We are progressing and I feel I am now in a groove. I always read the commentary in the guide first as we move to a new topic. Then, if we are moving over a particular topic quickly, I may simply read a chapter from the one 'spine' [several are cited right in the guide for your convenience] we are using, or we may just read the TQH commentary aloud and let it go at that. Often, I will read a simple picture book related to the topic for my two younger children...For my older child, I assign a harder book, and she must read a certain number of chapters per day. And then I may have a longer chapter book I am also reading aloud to everyone."

"I must tell you I love this approach to history. I can see my daughter making connections. We are getting ready to begin to add to a wall timeline. At first, I wanted to squeeze in every little detail, but God laid it on my heart to just stick to the highlights. This is where the guide can come in handy."

"Using the library is something I love to do and this program is so economical. My dear husband discouraged the purchase of a more expensive program that is all scheduled out because of the cost, but also because he said to me, 'You know how you are going to feel if you cannot keep up with the schedule,' and he was right on."

Traci from North Carolina says:

"I had been trying to use TQH with Veritas cards/manual, and some other things to supplement. I found this to be most frustrating, and this year we have just read books, books and more books. I have never used my library as much as I have this year, nor have we ever read and enjoyed so many books. Usually we 'share' our readings with my 5 and 6-year-old boys, or sometimes we/she reads them alone."

(Editor's note: Other families do enjoy supplementing with Veritas materials. On the Files page of our online discussion group (HIStoryQuesters@YahooGroups.com), you will find planning sheets made by families who use the materials together.)

Elizabeth from Ohio says:

"I use the Veritas Press history cards to schedule and for memory work."

Kim from Arkansas says:

"In the past I have not had a rigid plan, I would just expect to take a whole year to cover one guide (this was a personal preference, certainly it can be done more quickly). I would make up a schedule for one or two weeks at a time, usually on Saturday morning so that I could go to the library and get whatever we needed for that next week or two. Basically, I sat down with the book and determined what I thought we could cover each day. Some days there might be a very short TQH commentary, a few pages cited by TQH from a specific book, and then a long list of optional books to read. Some days there might be a long TQH commentary followed by a couple chapters from a specific book, then the long list of optional books."

"So, let's say for example, it is Day 1 and I see there is a short commentary on some minor character in the Middle Ages book. I might determine that we could read that commentary in about 2 minutes, the couple pages from the specific book in about 5 minutes, and that I didn't really want to read any of the optional books. (It would be wonderful to have time to read a book

on every person/event, but that simply is not realistic). It would be obvious that a high school student should do more than that in one day. So, I would go on and look at the next commentary and add that onto Day 1. If it was the same situation (i.e., short commentary, a couple pages, don't want to read the optional books), then we might do 3 of these on Day 1. On Day 2, we move on to the next commentary."

"But, let's say it is Day 1 and I see a long commentary on a major character like King Henry VIII. Listed below the commentary are two chapters from a key book, plus a long list of optional books. Well, I know we need to really understand this guy and what made him tick. So on Day 1, we would read the long commentary and one of the chapters of the specific book. At lunch I might (not must but might) start a read-aloud. On Day 2, we would read the second chapter from the specific book and then each of the kids would pick out a book from the list of optional books to read by themselves, usually a biography or historical fiction. (These books I would have picked up at the library the weekend before; sometimes I give the kids the choice before I go to the library, but usually I go get a ton of books and they just choose from the ones I bring home). At lunch I might read a chapter from the read-aloud. On Day 3 the kids would continue to read their biography/historical fiction, maybe for an hour. Day 4 they continue reading and that evening we watch a video from the library on Henry VIII. Day 5 they pick a portrait of Henry that they like and then make a drawing of it on their own art paper (they can choose if they want to paint it or use chalk or pencil); this will go in their notebook. I read aloud while they work (or if I had other kids, I would be doing something else!)."

"So for someone important, it took us a week, maybe two. If the kids still are not done with their personal book, they would continue reading but we will go ahead and move on to the next commentary, even while they are still reading about Henry VIII."

"I don't plan more than two weeks in advance because everything changes during that time. By the end of week one, you may find that they are falling behind, are way ahead, or are really enjoying this particular person/event and you would like to spend even more time on it. Obviously, you will need to adjust your schedule. It isn't too hard if you only have a couple weeks planned out."

"By the way, we read a lot of children's books, particularly biographies, because the kids can get through them quickly. We just don't have the time to read a monster bio very often and the kids' bios cover the important details. And I still check out picture books! You may think that is weird, but where else do you get the fabulous art work, the great stories of somebody's quirky personality, or a detailed account of George Washington's wooden teeth?! I mean, don't we all love, as adults, to sit down with our little kids and read picture book after picture book?! I absolutely adore them ...and my kids do too. I often see my teenagers sitting down in the evening in their little 'spot' in the living room, surrounded by piles of books, some of them picture books. They flip through them, smile, laugh, and are done with it in five minutes...but they enjoyed it!"

Mary from Tennessee says:

"A few years ago, I started out using TQH, but got bogged down trying to cover too many books. Last year, we used another curriculum, which did provide a schedule for us to follow; however, I missed the TQH commentary and wide selection of books.

This year, we are back with TQH, and it is working out very well for us. I believe that the following things have helped make TQH work for us:

A schedule which keeps us moving along through the material

More hands-on activities (3-D Maps, History Pockets)

Group activities in a local co-op

Our children are older now and can read more books independently

Compiling a history notebook which summarizes the information we are learning

A wall timeline to help us see the big picture

We're excited to be using TQH once again. Seeing our children curled up with a good book, or begging for just one more chapter of a read-aloud, makes me so happy!!!!"

Janet from Kansas says:

"I've now come up with a general plan for selecting materials. For each topic in TQH, I look for books in the following order:

Books by favorite authors

Books by favorite publishers (such as Bethlehem, Greenleaf, etc.)

Books by an author/publisher I've used before

Other books on the TQH list

Books found by doing a 'subject search' of our library's card catalog

Once I've found a read-aloud and an age-appropriate book for each child to read independently, I quit looking. If I cannot find an age-appropriate book for a particular child, I simply select literature books for them to read until we move on to the next topic!"

Cynthia from Alaska says:

"I make a spreadsheet, so I have my plan in grid format, which is easier for me to read. I just list the TQH section number we will cover, along with the corresponding chapters/pages in the books I've chosen to read.

If it takes more than one day to complete a section, that is fine. I look at the various segments more as what stepping stone I am on, instead of what day I am on. You can include checkpoints so that you complete the material in your school year."