

Non-Fiction Books

If you are interested in a particular topic, see the list below for additional resources to extend your learning. We will continue to update this resource throughout the year.

Note: Most of these books are written by professional historians and consequently are at a high school reading level or beyond. They are available through local libraries and bookstores.

Within the topic, books are alphabetical by author. Biographies are alphabetical by person.

American Revolution:

Almost a Miracle, John Ferling

A Leap in the Dark, John Ferling

Flight from Monticello: Thomas Jefferson at War, Michael Kranish

1776, David McCullough

Washington's Crossing, David Hackett Fischer

Constitution and Government:

The Federalist Papers

The Anti-Federalist Papers

America's Constitution: A Biography, Akhil Reed Amar

Plain, Honest Men: The Making of the American Constitution, Richard Beeman

Ratification: The People Debate the Constitution, Pauline Maier

The Summer of 1787: The Men who Invented the Constitution, David O Stewart

Early Republic:

Undaunted Courage: Meriwether Lewis, Thomas Jefferson, and the Opening of the American West, Stephen E. Ambrose

Jefferson's Great Gamble, Charles A. Cerami (the story of the Louisiana Purchase)

Founding Brothers, Joseph Ellis

The Hemings of Monticello: An American Family, Annette Gordon-Reed (a look at Thomas Jefferson's other family)

Andrew Jackson and the Miracle of New Orleans: The Battle that Shaped America's Destiny, Brian Kilmeade and Don Yaeger

The Great Decision: Jefferson, Adams, Marshall, and the Battle for the Supreme Court, Cliff Sloan and David McKean

The Civil War of 1812, Alan Taylor

Empire of Liberty, Gordon Wood (part of the Oxford History of the United States series)
Thomas Jefferson and the Tripoli Pirates: The Forgotten War That Changed American History, Brian Kilmeade and Don Yaeger
The End of Barbary Terror: America's 1815 War Against the Pirates of North Africa, Frederick C. Leiner

Manifest Destiny:

Nothing Like It In the World: The Men Who Built the Transcontinental Railroad 1863 - 1869, Stephen E. Ambrose
Bury My Heart at Wounded Knee: An Indian History of the American West, Dee Brown and Hampton Sides
Ordeal By Hunger: The Story of the Donner Party, George R. Stewart, originally published in 1936, copyright renewed in 1960, 1963 and 1988. This is the classic book on the Donner Party written by a great Cal History professor - Go Bears!
Desperate Passage: The Donner Party's Perilous Journey West, Ethan Rarick
The Best Land Under Heaven: The Donner Party in the Age of Manifest Destiny, Michael Wallis, published in 2017, newest study)
The Year of Decision: 1846, Bernard DeVoto (the first real history book Mr. Hayman read)
Prairie Fires: The American Dreams of Laura Ingalls Wilder, Caroline Fraser (a realistic look at life on the frontier and the true story of the author of the beloved *Little House* series, and Ms. Haggin's childhood idol)
The Last Stand: Custer, Sitting Bull, and the Battle of the Little Bighorn, Nathaniel Philbrick
The Last Indian War: The Nez Perce Story, Elliott West

Civil War:

Receding Tide: Vicksburg and Gettysburg: The Campaigns that Changed the Civil War, Edwin C. Bearss ("and the Confederate tide rolled back..." that guy)
The Fiery Trial: Abraham Lincoln and Slavery, Eric Foner
Personal Memoirs, Ulysses S. Grant
The Battle Cry of Freedom: The Civil War Era, James McPherson (part of the Oxford History of the United States series)
Gettysburg, Stephen W. Sears
A Stillness at Appomattox, Bruce Catton (any of Catton's books on the Civil War are worth your time, especially *The Coming Fury*, *Terrible Swift Sword*, and *Never Call Retreat*)
Crossroads of Freedom: Antietam: The Battle that Changed the Course of the American Civil War, James M. McPherson

Reconstruction:

Forever Free: The Story of Emancipation and Reconstruction, Eric Foner

Reconstruction: America's Unfinished Revolution, 1863-1877, Eric Foner

The Republic for Which it Stands: The United States during the Reconstruction and the Gilded Age, 1865-1896, Richard White (part of the Oxford History of the United States series)

20th Century:

Great Depression:

Freedom from Fear: The American People in Depression and War, 1929-1945, David Kennedy (Stanford professor--Go Cardinal!)

The Forgotten Man, Amity Shlaes

WWII:

D-Day, Stephen E. Ambrose

Flags of Our Fathers, James Bradley

Ghost Soldiers, The Forgotten Story of World War II's Most Dramatic Mission, Hampton Sides

The Longest Day, Cornelius Ryan (D-Day from the perspectives of the British, French, German and American soldiers who fought on June 6, 1944)

The Second World Wars: How the First Global Conflict Was Fought and Won, Victor Davis Hanson

Civil Rights:

Parting the Waters: America in the King Years, Taylor Branch (part of a trilogy on the Civil Rights Movement)

A Call to Conscience: The Landmark Speeches of Martin Luther King, Jr., edited by Claborne Carson

Stubborn Twig: Three Generations in the Life of a Japanese American Family, Lauren Kessler

Eyes on the Prize: America's Civil Rights Years, 1954-1965, Juan Williams

Biographies:

John Adams, David McCullough

Grant, Ron Chernow (Civil War General)

Alexander Hamilton, Ron Chernow (The book that inspired the musical)

American Lion: Andrew Jackson in the White House, Jon Meacham

Jefferson: Architect of American Liberty, John B Boles

Most Blessed of the Patriarchs: Thomas Jefferson and the Empire of Imagination,

Annette Gordon-Reed

A. Lincoln, Ronald C. White, Jr.

The Autobiography of Malcolm X, Malcolm X

Washington: A Life, Ron Chernow

Benjamin Franklin: An American Life, Walter Isaacson