



The First Americans: Prehistory-1600

Joy Hakim

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Recommended by the Common Core State Standards for English Language Arts and Literacy as an exemplary informational text.

Thousands of years--way before Christopher Columbus set sail--wandering tribes of hunters made their way from Asia across the Bering land bridge to North America. They didn't know it, but they had discovered a New World. The First Americans is a fascinating re-creation of pre-Columbian Native American life, and it's an adventure of a lifetime! Hunt seals with the Inuit; harvest corn on a cliff-top mesa; hunt the mighty buffalo; and set sail with Leif Erickson, Columbus, and all the early great explorers--Cabot, Balboa, Ponce de Leon, Cortes, Henry the Navigator, and more--in this brilliantly told story of America before it was America.

About the Series:

Master storyteller Joy Hakim has excited millions of young minds with the great drama of American history in her award-winning series A History of US. Recommended by the Common Core State Standards for English Language Arts and Literacy as an exemplary informational text, A History of US weaves together exciting stories that bring American history to life. Hailed by reviewers, historians, educators, and parents for its exciting, thought-provoking narrative, the books have been recognized as a break-through tool in teaching history and critical reading skills to young people. In ten books that span from Prehistory to the 21st century, young people will never think of American history as boring again.

The First Americans: Prehistory-1600 Details

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From Reader Review The First Americans: Prehistory-1600 for online ebook

Amy says

This series of books about US History are OUTSTANDING! I used the series when I taught US History in 5th grade and I still refer to them constantly. They are written on a 5th grade reading level but their interest level is huge...old to young. US History is told through stories, accounts, pictures, anecdotes, etc. and it is fun! This is a must have reference library for any household!

Hank Pharis says

Since I'm currently teaching a course on the History of Christianity in America I thought it would be good to get an overview of U.S. history for review. This series is actually written for juveniles but it is well done. Of the four volumes I've listened to thus far I enjoyed this first one the least. But they have all been enjoyable and helpful.

Esther Filbrun says

Good history, for the most part. I didn't find it truly spectacular, but it's a good overview. (Full review coming soon.)

Charles says

I was introduced to this series by my son, whose elementary school uses this series as a history text in sixth grade. Sure, because of the intended audience, the writing is simple and conclusions somewhat pat, but I am impressed how effective Hakim is at presenting a primer of U.S. history. She is balanced and fair, and her presentation is interesting, thorough, and surprisingly nuanced. She often includes examples from primary sources and lesser-known facts to flesh out the story. As a lover of history, I bought the entire series as a refresher - most of the content I already know, but there is plenty that I have forgotten over the years. As I come upon topics that interest me, I then do further research and reading to get the whole story. After reading Book One (admittedly, it took me a while to read because it was my bathroom book, sitting by the toilet to be perused a chapter or two at a time while otherwise occupied), I can now recall the individual conquistadors again, and know trivia like what is the first permanent European settlement in North America. I have since begun Book Two for the same purpose and in the same manner. Eventually, I will read the entire series, one poop at a time.

Maddie says

Yeah it took me FOREVER to finish this but in my defense school has been CRAZY!!!! Anyway I found these books in my school's library and thought they would be good for me to learn some history before I travel this summer! Once I really settled down and started reading this, I really enjoyed this and can't wait to get to the next one!!

Jeanette says

We used this for our American History spine. I love her little bits of humor throughout.

Jim says

This is fantastic as a history for kids. I guess it's geared toward 10 year olds since the pilot of the time ship is, but it has a lot of good information & questions. (The time ship thing wasn't overdone, just used occasionally.) For instance, Hakim didn't pull any punches when describing the colonization of the Americas, but she didn't vilify anyone. She managed to show their mindset & circumstances pointing out where they were brutal, but also how tough they were.

She covers the time from about 40K years ago when Beringia was above water. At this time, the first humans & some animals possibly came across. She points out how we just don't know for sure, but are more certain of later migrations. She works her way up to about 1600 & a bit beyond concentrating on the Americas, but also mentioning a few things around the world which are important like the spice trade, the printing press, & the Catholic-Protestant wars.

The material wasn't terribly watered down, so it makes a good overview for an adult. She does explain some words & concepts that an adult wouldn't need, but never talks down to her audience. Her questions are good ones both for a single reader & a group. They put the reader into the history & make it more personal.

She did skip around in time a little too much at times. A kid would definitely want the book at hand to be able to refer to the timeline at the end & to maps. My geography isn't too bad, but she kept me busy visualizing it at times.

Highly recommended for kids 8 & up to adults. I plan to listen to the next book soon. There are 10 in the series & I hope they're all as good as this one.

The other John says

This year my elder daughter's history textbook is an eleven volume series called *A History of US*. Like *The Story of the World* series, it adds some life and character to the dull old facts and figures of your old fashioned history texts. What's even better is that I get to read it along with the Sonlight curriculum, which offers its own rebuttals to various statements in the text. Not that one really needs the extra commentary. Ms. Hakim does a rather nice job of pointing out that there are two sides to every history. Take this volume, for

example. As you might infer from the title, the book talks about the native American population that preceded and encountered Columbus and his followers. Now when I was growing up, Native Americans were pretty much just supporting characters in my history texts. Some twenty years later, the pendulum had swung the other way, and they were the sublime innocents who were invaded by the rapacious white fortune hunters. In *The First Americans*, Ms. Hakim briefly covers the American civilizations that the Europeans found, pointing out their glories and their warts. Likewise, Columbus and the boys are presented as brave, idealistic, cruel and greedy. In *A History of US*, nobody's perfect... but we are rather interesting.

Penny says

I have to admit, I wasn't sure what to expect when I first picked up these books. I'd heard some mixed reviews from other sources, however I was pretty happy with the content of the book.

True to the title, it starts with what is known about prehistory in America, giving some information in what is known about the First Americans/Native Americans. Up until Chapter 13 (and they're short chapters) there is a focus on what life and civilization must have been like in various parts of the territory prior to European exploration. It introduced a lot of new ideas that weren't discussed back when I was in school, which was honestly refreshing.

Unlike so many other sources I've been introduced to, this first book doesn't just paint a flat description of the events that happened, frequently portraying European explorers in a positive light. This is not a Eurocentric view of history, openly discussing the effects of violence and slavery on the native people who lived in America before the Europeans came to claim territory. On several occasions she highlights the territory being taken from the native people without their permission and the effects of European exploration. More often than not the European explorers are painted in a pretty negative light, which can certainly come across as a biased opinion. A lot of philosophical questions are raised as well, like if you do something bad, but you don't know better, is it justified?

Overall, I think the history in this book is a little light, but it's a good place to start when introducing history. It covers a good deal more of history than even I remember learning in school, and it seems to be a lot more in depth than my high school age daughter is going into in her classes. It's a great age-appropriate resource for kids, which seems to be for kids around 10-11 years old. The story-like format is engaging and keeps it from getting that dry, textbook feel. As an introduction to these topics, it's more than satisfactory, and is a great leaping-off point for subjects that a kid might want to explore more deeply.

While we are going to be using this as a part of our homeschool curriculum this year, I do think it would be a good resource for any kid, whether they're in public school, homeschooled, or unschooled if they have an interest in American history.

Michelle says

I read this daily to my 7 year old. It's a really good intro to US history for young kids. Apparently it was written for the 5th grade but my son loved it. We're starting the next in the series tomorrow.

Mickey Mevissen says

This is a home school book for my grandson. It is very easy to read and understand and is very engaging as well.

Matriarchy says

My eldest daughter used these in 5th grade through an online school, and she liked them. We are using them again, this time while homeschooling our younger daughter, now in 5th grade. Elder sister hearing them for the second time (now 9th grade) is absorbing a higher level of detail. Larger public libraries frequently have one of the editions (I think 1999 was first, then around 2002, then the Third Edition is 2006-2007).

I think these are great for homeschooling families, especially if you have multiple kids to get a lot of use out of them. There are study guides available if you can't come up with your own discussion questions. Easy to supplement with additional reading, museum trips, art projects, dioramas, lapbooks, or pop-up projects. Some reviewers bicker about whether the author is completely correct or unbiased - but who EVER is? This series provides an entertaining overview of American history for middle-school to early high school, and you can lead a discussion about anything you find questionable.

We have the kids read the chapters, and then we go back through them together, making sure we caught the important points and looking up more stuff online for discussion. They can also be read outloud and discussed on car trips and while hands are busy with something else.

Dividing it into nice-sized books make it more portable, less intimidating, and allows you to buy materials one bite at a time. Used books and sets frequently appear for sale and auction.

Suzanne says

Extremely condescending and politically correct bias. On the positive side, my kids are showing what great critical readers they are by picking apart the personal opinion she presents as historical fact.

Seayla says

I liked it as a read along with my daughter but never finished.

Wendy says

Sarah has been using this as her history curriculum this year. I am probably enjoying it so much more than her, too! She loves to read, so she is always happy to read her chapters in history. I love that she is doing

American History in 5th Grade. This reads easily and is concise. We are now on to the next period of American History, the 1800's.
