

Custom History Unit Planning

As a former classroom teacher (in both public and private schools), I'm often found that pre-made, one-size-fits-all curriculum or unit plans, are best used as a jumping-off point to finding a better way. Too often they simply provide too much to look at and/or do. Many activities look good on paper, but flop with the learner.

It seems that many people buy a curriculum and find that it doesn't fit their needs. Some offer too little; others too much. Costly material ends up sitting in a drawer or on a desktop file. One of the key advantages of homeschooling is the individualization that can be provided to each learner. I like to provide families with a plan that is tailored for them, and offer myself as a mentor to guide the learner through the plan.

The best way I've found to help learners absorb history is to base the curriculum on the their interests and let them immerse themselves in it. Elements of this approach are often called unit plans, but in reality, it's a custom learning exploration. These units can be based on:

- Components within a current curriculum or based on standards (i.e. Islam, Civil War, Mayans, etc.)
- Concentrated subjects (i.e. women in the 60's, history of film, African American history, etc.)
- Learner interests (i.e. history of baseball, history of toys, etc.)
- Integration into a subject (i.e. Marie Curie, Pythagoras, Shakespeare's England, etc.)
- A specific place or time period

How does it work?

1. First is an initial 30-minute mentor session in which I meet with the family to figure out what angle of history interests the learner, their learning strengths, and how best to inspire their learning process.
2. A week later, I return with a plan, any necessary supplies (with the exception of consumables), and in a 15-minute mentor session with the learner, we quickly go over the plan. If there are any problems or areas that don't inspire, we work on a solution, and I email any updates to the plan within two business days.
3. The family implements the plan, and contacts me when they've finished.
4. Within a week of finishing, I have a mentor meeting with the learner to see how everything went, giving them the opportunity to review, share and discuss their experience. And, if desired, we can then start preparing for the next unit.

Included within the plan:

- a timeline based on family schedule
- supplies such as media or manipulatives
- a plan that is the classroom equivalent of about 10-15 days of 45 minute learning sessions, written for the learner to follow
- activities that address all learning styles
- one hour and 15 minutes of mentor meetings
- mentor availability by email or text throughout to help support and encourage

Plans are based on preferences and what inspires a learner, but common elements include: novels, non-fiction, documentaries, movies, creative essay prompts, games, historical realia, recipes, projects, text readings, LEGO, pictures, integration of other subjects, etc.

Unit Plan Flat Rate	\$200
Add-on: Field Trip Plan or local field trip options	\$85
Add-on: Event Plan to further explore the topic with friends	\$85

I serve areas within a 15-mile radius of Pasadena, Ca (possibly online as well).