

# The Unit Outline

## Elementary School 1<sup>th</sup>-5<sup>th</sup>

### A Survey

*Diocese of Marquette Schools*

The outlines are intended to provide a universal structure while encouraging teachers to consider the various categories in their instruction. Some of these categories are filled out, these are to be used as starting points to prime the teacher for planning lessons. The teacher need not use all of the advice and themes present. Rather, the teacher should treat the following as features to consider in shaping a lesson.

Allow time and amount of content to shape the scope and duration of a unit to your own situation and what students can actually accomplish well.

Below are the various categories with brief comments explaining each category.

#### **Unit Description**

A very short overview of the topic.

#### **Teacher Resources**

These are the main resources that will be used in the unit.

#### **Backdrop – Setting the Stage**

In teaching any history lesson, students should first have a grasp of the time, place, lifestyle, and various conditions in which the events occur—much like knowing the setting for a story or play. Having such a starting point also allows a clearer contrast of the *before* and *after* of the event that enhances students' understanding of the changes wrought.

##### **Maps, Places, & Geographical Features**

A good map that presents the physical setting and illustrates the features that have bearing on the subsequent events is a prerequisite for almost any lesson. Moreover, students particularly enjoy maps.

##### **Insights into Everyday Life**

Students should wonder at and appreciate the challenges and distinctions of ordinary life in a time period. In short, such a vision ignites the student's imagination of himself or herself living in that time period; this is an excellent method of engaging students, not to mention making them thankful for the many conveniences of modern life.

##### **Existing Circumstances & Situations**

Students need a sense of the political, cultural, and economic situations in a given time and place. With such knowledge, students will have a better

understanding of the causes of the subsequent events and a clearer vision of how the consequences are distinct from the prior situations.

### **Timeline**

The timeline situates the chronology of events. Timelines should be done for every unit.

### **Particulars**

This section pertains to the basic and specific material students will need to encounter and know. Everything need not be presented as an encyclopedia, simply running down the list of definitions. Instead, many of these facets should be introduced in the course of the narrative.

#### **Persons**

The key actors. Note the understanding of these people as actors, those given to certain actions, their actions comprising history itself: the story of actions undertaken by individual or groups of human beings. History does not exist apart from human action.

#### **Vocabulary**

Key terms or topics.

#### **Biographies to be Read**

Biography is one of the greatest mediums for retaining students' attention. Good, brief biographies should be used to introduce the key actors.

#### **Primary Sources**

Much of history is made in the form of writings, speeches, documents, and first-hand accounts of events. Reading and discussing primary sources is the most direct contact students will have with a historical event within the classroom.

#### **Poetry, Music, Paintings, Architecture, Inventions**

History is oftentimes manifested by those both who lived through and partook of the historical events as well as by those who were effected by them soon afterwards. This is done through a variety of mediums. These expressions are one way for our students to partake in the beauty of that time period or event in history. Sometimes this beauty portrays the goodness, heroism and creative in man, sometimes it portrays the tragic and evil that has happened. It is hoped the teacher will choose to present and enjoy these expressions of beauty with their students.

#### **Enduring Legacy Today (symbols, holidays, etc.)**

What definite legacy commemorates or expresses this aspect of history.

#### **To be Memorized (and so carried in the Heart)**

The benefits and enjoyment of memorization should dispel the bad reputation it has garnered over the last several decades. For one, memorization strengthens the mind's abilities. That pertains to the head. As for the heart and the love of learning, memorization helps the students truly take the history into themselves, carry it within them, and share a

relationship to the history and people that is closer than mere facts, a joy to recall, and that gives students a greater likelihood of retaining the knowledge. Should one memorize something from that history, it would be difficult to remain ignorant of the history itself.

**Speeches**

**Poems**

**Songs**

**Short Excerpts from Primary Sources (documents, writings)**

**Quotes**

**Writing Assignments**

Besides reading, writing ought to be a backbone to the curriculum as regards literacy and quality thinking. The best methods are frequent sentences or paragraphs on given topics each year

**Subsection of a unit**

**Unit 1 – Part A**

**Major Questions or ideas in this section**

Two or three sentences which summarize the main ideas and questions to address.

**Major Actions & Events**

Here we come to taking the particulars above (vocabulary, persons, biographies, primary sources, poetry, music etc.) and stringing them together, interwoven to form the story of people's actions as they respond to circumstances, moved by ideas, passions, reason, belief, and these mingled with a degree of ignorance, weaknesses, virtues, and the universal human quest for happiness.

**Key Tales & Stories**

Everybody loves a well-told story. Even material that at first appears dull can be turned into a riveting story with the knowledge, passion, and charisma of the storyteller (the teacher). In the many instances that a lesson will at first seem dull to the teacher, he or she should challenge himself or herself not to discount the lesson by asking, "What about this reality is full of wonder, of awe, of mystery?"

**What about the stories, actions and events inspire wonder (think heroism, sacrifice, acting on principles, leadership, humility etc.)**

This wonder is the fire that has been lost in education. It is this fire that will propel a student to love learning for a long time after his early years of schooling. Our curriculum foundations document states the point about wonder in this way. "In each subject matter, the ideal [true, good, beautiful] corresponding to that subject matter must be assimilated no less than the corresponding skills, methods and basic knowledge."

### **Catholic Saints & Church Contributions**

It is a great advantage to Catholic students to see how our faith is lived out in a historical context by these great witnesses of Christ, for such an understanding further illuminates the heroism and charity of the Church and the saints and even more so, the providence of God.

### **Morals, Virtues, & Catholic Principles**

The teacher should guide students towards the moral lesson, virtues, and Catholic principles that the story might include. The students should be taught to make connections and draw conclusions by themselves. Of course, if at the end of the lesson students have not arrived at these, the teacher should gently but clearly point them out.

### **Patriotism and Citizenship**

Patriotism and citizenship are important goals in our history curriculum. Be sure to preview these virtues at the beginning of the year and recognize that students may need a little direction in making consistent application of these virtues to the history they are studying throughout the year.

### **End of Unit**

#### **Creative Activities**

#### **Further reading**

Provide further reading suggestions for those students that are hungry for it.

#### **At Home Questions with Parents**

To give students and parents a series of questions or conversation-starters for discussions at home is a superb way to help students incorporate their learning in their lives, share it with their parents, help parents enter into their child's learning, cultivate a sincerity in students towards their studies, and foster the love of learning, that it might become a lifelong habit.

#### **Unit Assessments**

Assessments, both formative and cumulative, are important for solidifying the student's knowledge. It is at these points that students have the opportunity to review and master their content to the extent that they can reproduce it. It might be wise to structure the test in the same chronological order in which it was taught during class, and laid out on the study guide. Some suggestions for assessments:

#### **Map**

Students should always be required to complete some geography portion that involves drawing, labeling, and answering questions

on maps. Don't underestimate students' ability to do so without a word bank. Sometimes maps can be assessed separately from exams and need not always be lengthy.

**Timeline**

Put the dates in the correct order, scramble the events, and have students write the event next to the correct date. This is asking them to order events with dates as a secondary aid.

**Memorization of Quotes, Poems, etc.**

Have students write these out or recite aloud.

**Summary writing suggestions**

FINAL WORKING DRAFT