

How To Make a History Notebook

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A history notebook is a place for you to organize the things you are learning in history and watch it grow as you add to it each year. Everyone should have their own history notebook, including Mom. Each child creates their own history notebook and it becomes theirs. When I read through my children's notebooks I can tell they have learned about history better than by having them fill in workbooks, answer questions, or taken a test. A history notebook can be as big or little as you want to make it. The following are some ideas for making a history notebook, and you will have some of your own ideas to add as well. Surprisingly, once you start learning about the people and events in history, ideas will come to you of how you want your notebook, and of resources you have in your own home of things to add to your notebook.. The main thing to remember about a notebook is for each person to make it theirs.

Three-Ring Binder:

Start with a 2 inch 3-ring binder (you can add binders as your notebook grows). We start with 3 notebooks - 1 for the *World Before Christ*, 1 for the *World after Christ*, and 1 for *United States History*. By using a *View Binder* with a clear plastic slip cover you can make a front cover, back cover, and put the title of your history book on the spine of the binder.

Dividers for the Binder:

Decide how you are going to divide your history into time periods. Use a divider for each time period. If you are using the *Living History* books, use one divider for each *Epoch*.

Box and File Folders:

If you find yourself collecting pictures and magazine articles about history events or people, start organizing them into file folders that are divided into the same time periods you are going to study. This way you can easily find stories and resources for the time period you are studying. If you don't have an empty file drawer to put them in, use a box the size that paper reams come in.

Cover Page:

Make a cover page and give your history notebook a title. This is your history book, so give some thought to your title. Add your name to the cover - you are the author. If you are having a hard time thinking of a title for your notebook, put the cover page aside for now. It may take working on the contents of the notebook to help you come up with a title that has some meaning to you.

Add some art work to your page or paste on pictures (see picture ideas). If you would like, add a scripture or thought to the cover. If you have a *View Binder* you can slip the page in the outside front cover to be seen on the outside, otherwise this is your first page inside the binder.

IDEAS OF THINGS TO PUT INTO EACH DIVIDED SECTION:

Time Line:

Make an individual time line for each time period showing dates of important events and people you study. You can add to it the new events and people you study each year. You can also

make a separate chronological time line on just one person or event you have been studying.

Some people like to make a bigger time line to put on the wall. Colorful butcher paper can be cut into long strips. Add pictures from books that you have copied or have children draw pictures of the people or events.

Person and Event Pages:

This will be the biggest part of the notebook for the child to work on. I feel using a test means I have to teach to the test and am not free to teach what I feel my children and I want to learn about in history. Instead of a test, each child writes about a person and an event that we have been studying. When we finish studying a time period, we list all the people we studied about and all the events. Then each person picks a person to write about and an event to write about. For younger children who are not writing yet, you can have them narrate to you what they want written, and you write it down for them. For children who can write you may want to still have them narrate to you while you write (or type), but then have the child write it on the paper that will go in their notebook. (This is good practice for handwriting.) Have them tell or write as much as they can about the person they have chosen. They will understand and remember history better this way than by answering questions.

When a child is old enough have them do some additional study on their own about the person or event they want to write about. The encyclopedia is a good place to get added information, or we like reading biographies, autobiographies, or other books on historical events geared to the age of the child. The books are not real long, yet good ones will be full of stories and information on the person. They can also write about more than one person or event if they want to.

First have them write their rough drafts on regular lined paper. Then when they have finished I would read their paper and make any changes in red ink. They liked me writing in red because it was easier for them to find the places they needed to correct, and wasn't looked on as criticizing their work. Add positive remarks as well that you like how well they worded something or improved their writing. Their final copy is written on paper I have made with lines for writing but also has space to add a picture (see pictures below).

Each person that wants to can give an oral report on the paper they wrote.

Pictures:

Pictures really help make your notebook fun to look at over and over again. You can find pictures in old encyclopedias that you don't mind cutting up (try the thrift store for an inexpensive set), old history text books, and the LDS Church gives permission to make copies for personal use of the *Gospel Art Prints* (**except for the following picture #'s which are restricted and you are not allowed to make copies: # 116, 124, 125, 226, 321, 400, 417, 504, 600-on). If you have visited historical places and have taken photographs, display them in your history notebook, or your child may want to draw their own picture.

If you need more than one of the same picture many copy stores can make the same picture in duplicate copies on one page. You can also get colored pictures in duplicate. If the picture is too large or too small to fit in the area on the person or event page, the pictures can be sized down or enlarged and copied in duplicate for more than one child to have.

If you have a scanner with your computer you can scan in the pictures, crop and resize the

pictures, then print off copies to fit on their people and events pages.

Maps:

We like to use black and white map outlines - where it is just an outline of the land and larger water areas of what we are studying. Then with colored pencils we can fill in the cities, countries, oceans, mountains and rivers (drawing in those things that apply to what we are studying). Trying to figure out where places are gives us good geography skills. Color in the water first and then it will be easier to see where the places are on the land.

Articles:

There are good articles in the Ensign, Friend, National Geographic and other magazines on people and events in history. Put the article inside sheet protectors (or make a copy) and add it behind the divider in the time period it goes with. If you have visited historical museums or visitor centers they sometimes have a pamphlet or information that you can place in your notebook.

Notes:

Any notes children take while you study or teach about history can go in their notebooks. They can be useful when writing up their person or event pages.

Music:

Music has played a big part in history as well as the present. Keep a list of music that goes along with your time periods.

Literature:

Read a book written during the time period you study, or a historical fiction novel about that time period, autobiographies, or biographies about the people of the time period. Read the book for fun or do a book report and add it to your notebook. Either way, write the bibliography information about the book in your notebook so you will have it for future reference.

Family History:

Look into your own ancestors. What countries do your ancestors come from and what time period were they there. Were they in France during the French Revolution? How about during the Reformation? Were they persecuted for religious beliefs? Do you have Mormon Pioneers in your family tree? Get out your pedigree charts and start finding out. Are there any family stories you can bring into your history class? Add pedigree charts, family group sheets, pictures, and even write up some person pages on your own ancestors. This is a good time to get your children interested in genealogy and especially get to know the neat heritage they come from.