

# Exploring America

## Unit 1 Project Ideas

1) Write 300 to 500 words on one of the following topics:

- Write a summary of your worldview, giving specific citations from Scripture to support your beliefs. Include the following ideas: your view of God and how He works in the world, the value and purpose of human beings, the basis on which you determine right and wrong, how your worldview affects what you believe and do, the influences that have affected your worldview, and an example of your perspective on a current or historical event. See Lesson 5.
- Write about a time when you experienced discrimination because someone treated you with prejudice, or a time you felt prejudice toward someone else. See Lesson 2.

2) Design a poster that communicates—through any combination of words, pictures, or symbols—the themes in American history as given in Lesson 2.

3) Choose one of the explorers discussed in Lesson 4 and dramatize a scene of the discovery of America into the form of a play. You may need to do additional research.

## Unit 2 Project Ideas

1) Write 300 to 500 words on one of the following topics:

- Write a summary of the ways in which religion was involved in the founding of the English colonies.
- In Lesson 3 we read about an imaginary English family, the Coopers, from the village of Notgrove. Imagine that one of Thomas Cooper's descendants, named Samuel, settled in Boston in the mid-1600s. Write a letter from Samuel to his family in Bristol, England. What was life like for him? What work did he do? How was he affected by the religious life of the colonies?

2) Draw a map of the original thirteen American colonies. Don't copy a modern map showing the current borders of these states, rather consult a historically accurate map showing the borders of the original colonies.

3) Create a three-dimensional model of a Colonial-era farm or village. Research first so you can make your model historically accurate. Use the material of your choice (e.g., wood, cardboard, clay, STYROFOAM™, LEGO® bricks).

## Unit 3 Project Ideas

1) Write 300 to 500 words on one of the following topics:

- How do you reconcile (1) belief in an all-powerful God who rules the universe, (2) that universe operating on the basis of natural law, and (3) the Biblical teaching that God is a personal God who responds to our prayers? Give your response to Enlightenment thinking as it compares to traditional Christian teaching. See Lesson 11.
- Write an essay responding to Jonathan Edwards' sermon, "Sinners in the Hands of An Angry God" (read in Lessons 11-12). Discuss what you agree with and what you disagree with. How is it good to hear lessons such as this one, and how is it counterproductive? What would be the effect of this sermon in your church?

2) Make a video "public service announcement" as if made in the 1760s that tries to convince your fellow colonial Americans to boycott British goods. Give at least three arguments to justify this action. Your video should be at least three minutes long. See Lesson 14.

3) Prepare a Cajun meal for your family. See Lesson 13.

## Unit 4 Project Ideas

1) Write 300 to 500 words on one of the following topics:

- Write a summary of the reasons Americans desired independence.
- Write about what the Christian's relationship to the government should be in the United States today and what it should be for a Christian living in Communist China today.

2) Make a portfolio of at least ten weapons that were used by the British and Americans during the War for American Independence. Include a detailed description and a drawing or photograph of each one.

3) Make an audio recording or video of yourself singing or playing at least five songs that were popular during the War for American Independence.

## Unit 5 Project Ideas

1) Write 300 to 500 words on one of the following topics:

- Write an essay on what you believe to be the main strengths of the U.S. Constitution and what you see as the main threats today to the original meaning of the Constitution.
- Write an essay on the importance of the Bill of Rights and how protecting the rights listed there is essential to maintaining freedom in the United States. See Lesson 24.

2) Create a painting that illustrates one of the amendments to the Constitution in practice today. See Lesson 24.

- 3) Create a collection of photos that represent each amendment in the Bill of Rights. Compose your photos intentionally and artistically. Your finished project should be in the form of a slideshow on an electronic device, prints of the photographs displayed on a poster, or photos in book form. Include at least one photo for each amendment (ten or more). See Lesson 24.

## Unit 6 Project Ideas

- 1) Write 300 to 500 words on one of the following topics:
  - Write about the strengths of George Washington that contributed to the successful founding of the new government.
  - Write about the diversity in the early days of the United States and how that diversity has been a blessing in helping the U.S. become what it is today.
- 2) Take a field trip to the oldest church in your town. Ask for a tour and learn the history of the church. See Lesson 30.
- 3) Write and illustrate a children's book about the life of George Washington or John and Abigail Adams. Your book should be a minimum of fifteen pages. You might need to do research outside the information found in this unit. See Lessons 26 and 28.

## Unit 7 Project Ideas

- 1) Write 300 to 500 words on one of the following topics:
  - Compare the religious experience in the Massachusetts Bay colony and that on the frontier during the Second Great Awakening.
  - Write a letter to a friend in which you discuss your views on a significant national issue.
- 2) Interview the pastor or minister of your family's church regarding his history with the church he works with and any previous churches he worked with. Ask him about any education or training he received directly related to his work. Compose at least ten questions ahead of time. You can conduct your interview by phone or in person. Be respectful of your interviewee's time and keep the interview within an hour. If possible, make an audio recording of the interview. See Lesson 35.
- 3) Make a board game of the Lewis and Clark expedition to play with your family. Make the board a map of the United States. Make the game educational, including facts about the Louisiana Purchase, Thomas Jefferson, and the actual expedition. You might need to do research outside the information found in this unit. See Lesson 31.

## Unit 8 Project Ideas

- 1) Write 300 to 500 words on one of the following topics:
  - Write a report on the contributions of the Adams family to America, especially John and Abigail Adams, John Quincy Adams, Charles Francis Adams Sr., Charles Francis Adams Jr., and Henry Adams. See Lesson 38.
  - Respond to the tenets of transcendentalism. Include at least three different quotations from Scripture in your response. See Lesson 40.
- 2) Memorize Proverbs 14:24-35. If you choose this project, you should recite or write the verses from memory at the end of the week.
- 3) Make a large jigsaw puzzle of the United States with entire states as the pieces. Make the states to scale. Make slave state puzzle pieces of one color, non-slave states another color, and states that entered the union after the Civil War a third color. You will need to do research outside the information found in this unit. See Lesson 36.

## Unit 9 Project Ideas

- 1) Write 300 to 500 words on one of the following topics:
  - Alexis de Tocqueville wrote in the 1830s, “There is no country in the world where the Christian religion retains a greater influence over the souls of men than in America.” How is this still true and how is it not? If things have changed, what has changed and why do you think as you do?
  - Write a speech to be given in Tennessee explaining and justifying the United States’ acquisition of Texas, or write a five-minute speech to be given in Massachusetts opposing the annexation of Texas. See Lessons 43 and 44.
- 2) Read a biography of one of the Presidents discussed in this unit: Andrew Jackson, Martin Van Buren, William Henry Harrison, John Tyler, or James K. Polk.
- 3) Design a book cover for one of the famous works written by one of the American authors discussed in Lesson 42 in the medium of your choice (e.g., paint, colored pencil, pencil, ink, or pastels).

## Unit 10 Project Ideas

- 1) Write 300 to 500 words on one of the following topics:
  - Summarize the historical arguments in support of slavery and the arguments opposing slavery. Give your opinion on the issue and on how the issue should have been settled.
  - Write about how being an immigrant in this time period might have affected your fears, beliefs, connections with family, and dreams.
- 2) Research Gullah cooking traditions and prepare a Gullah-style meal for your family. See Lesson 46.

- 3) Create a collection of photos of yourself or another person performing tasks that were once done by hand or with simple tools and are now mostly done by machine (i.e., sewing, washing laundry, washing dishes, mowing the lawn, etc.). Take two photos for each task—one of “the old-fashioned way” and one of the modern method. Compose your photos intentionally and artistically. Your finished project should be in the form of a slideshow on an electronic device, prints of the photographs displayed on a poster, or photos in book form. Include at least ten examples (twenty photos). See Lesson 48.

## Unit 11 Project Ideas

- 1) Write 300 to 500 words on one of the following topics:
- Would you have been an abolitionist, a defender of slavery, a compromiser, or would you have held some other position during the 1850s? Would you have been part of a church that endorsed slavery, opposed slavery, or said nothing about slavery? Write an essay on what you think would have been your position. Be honest with yourself.
  - Write a letter to someone explaining the way people do things where you live (either in your family or in your community, or both) and how those ways are different from the way others do those things. This can become a humorous piece, but do not be cruel or mean in what you say.
- 2) Make an audio recording or video of yourself singing or playing at least five spirituals sung by African American slaves during the 1800s.
- 3) Make an illustrated poster contrasting different, but equally acceptable, ways of living and doing things (such as types of houses, church practices, food, clothing, etc.). Your poster should include at least ten examples. Use the medium of your choice (e.g., collage, photography, drawing, painting, or pastels).

## Unit 12 Project Ideas

- 1) Write 300 to 500 words on one of the following topics:
- Do you believe that the Civil War was inevitable? Explain your answer.
  - Write about your beliefs regarding war and a Christian’s participation in war. Does Jesus’ admonition to turn the other cheek apply to nations or just to individuals? Is it true that if those who do wrong are not opposed or punished, they will likely do wrong again? Explain your answer.
- 2) Interview a Christian who has served in the armed forces. If possible, also interview a Christian who has been a conscientious objector, or read an interview or article about one. How were their experiences similar, and how were they different? How are their worldviews different? Do either of them have any regrets about their decisions? Compose at least ten questions ahead of time. You can conduct your interview(s) by phone or in person. Be respectful of your interviewee’s time and keep the interview within an hour. If possible, make an audio recording of the interview(s).
- 3) Create a model of a structure that was significant in the Civil War. Locate one or more photos of the structure. Make your model as close to scale as you can and from the material of your choice (e.g., wood, cardboard, clay, STYROFOAM™, LEGO® bricks).

## Unit 13 Project Ideas

1) Write 300 to 500 words on one of the following topics:

- Write about the importance of leadership. Choose a particular leader you admire and use him or her as an example of the qualities you want to emphasize.
- Write a letter home as though you were a soldier in the Civil War. Tell about your thoughts, feelings, and experiences.

2) Write and illustrate a book about the Civil War geared for the early elementary level. Think about how to deal with such difficult issues as slavery, war, and violence with a young audience. Conclude your book on a hopeful note. Your book should be a minimum of fifteen pages.

3) Take a field trip to a site related to the Civil War or to the era. Perhaps you can find a house or church built during the 1860s, a museum of artifacts, or a site related to a famous person who was involved in the Civil War. If you are not able to visit a site in person, choose a Civil War battlefield site that interests you and research it. Whether you visit in person or conduct research, make a tri-fold brochure about the site with a description, illustrations or photographs, and details for visiting.

## Unit 14 Project Ideas

1) Write 300 to 500 words on one of the following topics:

- Research and write about one of the reforms passed by Congress during the Civil War: the Homestead Act, the beginning of land grant colleges, or the National Bank Act. Tell how the reform makes a difference in everyday life for people today. See Lesson 69.
- Describe what you admire in Nehemiah's example of leadership and what lessons you learn from his story that are needed today. See Lesson 70.

2) Make a video "public service announcement" as if made during Reconstruction that encourages forgiveness and cooperation between northerners and southerners or slaves and slave owners, opponents in Congress, other opposing groups that saw conflict, or for the divided country in general. Your video should be at least three minutes long.

3) Make a strategy board game that concerns former slaves building a new life after the Civil War. Think about and incorporate into the game what former slaves needed to make a new start, what challenges they faced, what help was available to them, and their likely interactions with fellow former slaves and others. Choose a goal or goals toward which the game's players are working to "win." Make the events of your game as realistic as possible. Play the game with your family. See Lesson 66.

## Unit 15 Project Ideas

1) Write 300 to 500 words on one of the following topics:

- Look through the lessons in this unit and select a leading figure that is discussed. Write a biography of him or her.
- Write an essay on contrasts present in the United States after the Civil War. Consider, for instance, the end of slavery and the bondage of discrimination; the power of corporate leaders and the dependency of people who worked for them; material wealth and spiritual poverty. You might concentrate on one contrast or list as many contrasts as you can think of. Discuss what we in America today have learned and failed to learn from these experiences.

2) Create a sculpture related to the Transcontinental Railroad. Be creative in determining your subject: it could relate to the railroad itself, a train, the regions of the country impacted, the workers involved, or something else. You can use any combination of media your choice (e.g., paper, wire, wood, cardboard, clay, STYROFOAM™, LEGO® bricks). See Lesson 73.

3) Make a video about “progress” as discussed in Lesson 75. You can choose the style of your video: a story, documentary style, or artistic/poetic. Your video should be at least five minutes long.

## Unit 16 Project Ideas

1) Write 300 to 500 words on one of the following topics:

- What can you do to bring about more honesty in government and politics? Identify what you think needs to be done and outline steps to bring it about.
- Imagine that you are the son or daughter of a struggling Midwestern farmer. Write a letter to your grandfather in Chicago describing the hardships your family is facing.

2) Write a hymn with at least three verses and a chorus extolling God’s power in Creation. Counter the theory of evolution in a positive way in your hymn. See Lesson 80.

3) Write a play about political corruption. It can be fictional or based on fact and set in any place and time period you wish. Your play should be at least five pages long. Performing the play is optional but would be fun!

**Optional Research Paper:** If you plan to write a longer research paper as part of this course, plan with a parent when you will work on it. See pages xii-xv of *Part 1*.

## Unit 17 Project Ideas

1) Write 300 to 500 words on one of the following topics:

- Write an essay on the significance of the city in American life. Include your thoughts on at least three issues related to cities, which could include: how the city has changed the American economy, how the city has played a role in including immigrants in American life, how the city has been a laboratory for testing new technology and inventions, and how urban life challenges family life and traditional morality. See Lesson 84.
- What is your opinion on entertainment? How is it helpful and how is it a distraction? What forms of entertainment are inappropriate for Christians? Why is immorality passed off as art? What will you want your children to watch and participate in?

2) Memorize Matthew 25:31-46. If you choose this project, you should recite or write the verses from memory at the end of the week.

3) Make a portfolio profiling large and small businesses that operate in your area. Profile at least three large, nationwide businesses (restaurant chains, mobile phone companies, discount stores, etc.) and three small, local businesses (with less than twenty-five employees). If possible, talk to someone who works with each business. Include photos, print advertising, and a summary of the history and product or service offered by each business in your portfolio. Your portfolio should contain at least two pages for each business.

## Unit 18 Project Ideas

1) Write 300 to 500 words on one of the following topics:

- Write a newspaper editorial either supporting or condemning the Spanish-American War as if you were writing in that day.
- How has Freud and psychoanalysis helped people, and how has it hurt? In what ways does it challenge Biblical teaching? What is a good balance between using what Freud and other students of human behavior have said and relying on the Bible to be the source of our solutions?

2) Interview someone who administers a charitable organization in your area about how he or she became involved in the work, their goals for the organization, disappointments he or she has experienced, and some memorable successes. Compose at least ten questions ahead of time. You can conduct your interview by phone or in person. Be respectful of your interviewee's time and keep the interview within an hour. If possible, make an audio recording of the interview. See Lesson 88.

3) Write a poem of at least twenty lines about race relations in the United States, either past, present, or both. See Lesson 87.

## Unit 19 Project Ideas

1) Write 300 to 500 words on one of the following topics:

- What is the Christian's responsibility toward the environment? What is the proper Biblical balance between taking God's Creation for granted and worshiping it as a deity? See Lesson 92.
- Express your own beliefs about one of the religious liberal/conservative debates discussed in Lesson 95.

2) Create a sculpture that celebrates the age of invention as discussed in Lesson 93.

3) Create a magazine as if it were published in 1900. Choose the audience for your magazine—women, men, youth, young children, ministers, farmers, homemakers, etc. Create a variety of illustrations, features, fiction, poetry, articles, and advertisements that reflect life in 1900. Your magazine should be a minimum of ten pages, including a cover. See the discussion of magazines in Lesson 91.

## Unit 20 Project Ideas

1) Write 300 to 500 words on one of the following topics:

- Write a letter from an American soldier in France to his family back home, describing what it was like to fight in the Great War. See Lesson 97 and 98.
- Write an editorial about America's entry into the League of Nations as if you were writing during the heat of the debate in 1919. Take a definite stand on one side or the other of the issue. See Lesson 99.

2) Memorize Micah 4:1-5. If you choose this project, you should recite or write the verses from memory at the end of the week.

3) Create a propaganda poster for the World War I era. Choose an appropriate message (e.g., staying out of the war, encouragement to enlist, women's services in the war) and design your poster in the style of the times. See the examples in this unit or look for other examples. Make your poster about the size of a piece of posterboard.

## Unit 21 Project Ideas

1) Write 300 to 500 words on one of the following topics:

- Write an essay on the role that religion should play in the life of an elected official. Do you want an elected official to vote on the basis of his or her faith? Might a person's religious beliefs cause you not to vote for him or her?
- Select one of the innovations of the 1920s (e.g., automobiles, movies, radio, consumerism) and describe how it has affected our lives for good or ill. Give specific reasons for your answer.

2) Write and illustrate a children's book that explains the Great Depression and its impact. Your book should be a minimum of fifteen pages. You might need to do research outside the information found in this unit. See Lesson 104.

- 3) Write a play that relates to the Scopes Trial. You could dramatize the trial itself; explore a different angle, such as the experience of the people of Dayton, Tennessee, during the trial; or focus on an individual involved. You could also concentrate on how the Scopes Trial influenced American thought. You might need to do additional research. Your play should be at least five pages long. Performing the play is optional but would be fun! See Lesson 105.

## Unit 22 Project Ideas

- 1) Write 300 to 500 words on one of the following topics:
- What do you think was the overall effect of the New Deal? Did it provide the critical difference in helping the nation survive the Depression, or did it begin an unhealthy dependence on the Federal government? What elements of the New Deal were constitutional or unconstitutional? Give reasons from the Constitution for your answer. See Lessons 106-108.
  - Write a summary of your understanding of the dilemma of suffering and the best way to approach it in faith. See Lesson 110.
- 2) Memorize Romans 8:26-39. If you choose this project, you should recite or write the verses from memory at the end of the week.
- 3) Create an audio recording of a fictional call-in radio talk show as if it were taking place in the 1930s. Write an outline of what the host and callers will say. Have callers who support and others who oppose the New Deal, sharing their own experiences with the Depression and the New Deal. Recruit friends or family to portray the callers if possible, while you portray the host (or use different voices yourself). Your radio program recording should be at least fifteen minutes long. See Lessons 106-108.

## Unit 23 Project Ideas

- 1) Write 300 to 500 words on one of the following topics:
- Write a letter home as someone in military service in Europe or Asia during World War II. Remember that your letter will be censored by American officials so that you do not give away any information that might be helpful to the enemy.
  - Write your view on whether or not the United States should have used atomic weapons against Japan. See Lesson 113.
- 2) Research recipes that were created during World War II to help families conserve rationed foods such as meat, sugar, and fats. Prepare some of these recipes and serve a “Victory Dinner” to your family.
- 3) Create a model of a weapon or vehicle (tank, jeep, plane, ship, etc.) that helped the Allies win World War II. You will need to do research and locate photos to guide your planning. Make your model as close to scale as you can and from the material of your choice (e.g., wood, cardboard, clay, STYROFOAM™, LEGO® bricks).

## Unit 24 Project Ideas

1) Write 300 to 500 words on one of the following topics:

- Write an assessment of Joseph McCarthy, including the good and the bad effects of what he did. See Lesson 117.
- What should the policy of the United States be toward Israel? Should the U.S. seek good relations with Arab states in the Middle East? Should America's policy be based on a particular interpretation of Scripture or only on the political realities of today? Write a paper presenting your ideas. See Lesson 120.

2) Use one of the photographs in this unit as a springboard for a painting or drawing in the style and medium of your choosing. You can create a photograph-like copy or create an abstract interpretation.

3) Create a sculpture honoring one of the American heroes discussed in this unit. Your sculpture can represent the person or objects or places connected with that person. Use the medium of your choice (e.g., wire, wood, cardboard, soap, found objects, clay, or STYROFOAM™).

## Unit 25 Project Ideas

1) Write 300 to 500 words on one of the following topics:

- Is it better to influence another nation by engagement or by boycott? The United States has tried boycotting Cuba but is engaged in trade and dialog with Communist China. Does trading with China endorse its violations of human rights, use of low-paid labor, and poor environmental standards? Or is engagement the best way to have influence with the Chinese government? See Lesson 123.
- Summarize the spiritual blessings and problems of the 1950s. In what ways were they the good old days, and in what ways were they not? What would you have liked about living during that time, and what would you have found difficult to accept?

2) Write a poem of at least twenty lines in rhyme or free verse about one or more ways that American life changed during the 1950s.

3) Make a space race board game, card game, or strategy game to play with your family. Incorporate information about the early days of space exploration into your game. Be creative! See Lesson 124.

## Unit 26 Project Ideas

1) Write 300 to 500 words on one of the following topics:

- Discuss the impact of the Supreme Court's decisions on prayer and Bible reading in public schools. Discuss the role of religion in the public arena and what constitutes a "law respecting an establishment of religion." See Lesson 127.

- How do you think Jesus was a countercultural leader? Explain how Jesus challenged the religious and societal structures of His day and how He challenges those same structures today. See Lesson 130.
- 2) Create a book, using quotations from Martin Luther King’s “I Have a Dream” speech as the text and your own drawings, paintings, photographs, or a combination thereof as the illustrations. Create your book intentionally and artistically, and make it inspirational for the continuation of the ideals that King expressed. Your book should be at least fifteen pages in length.
  - 3) Create a portfolio of at least ten protest signs addressing issues that Americans dealt with in the 1960s. Your signs can be the size of a regular piece of paper. The photos on pages 744 and 772 show real protest signs from this era. Research some other examples from the era. Make your signs in the same style. Be thoughtful and original in the messages you place on your signs.

## Unit 27 Project Ideas

- 1) Write 300 to 500 words on one of the following topics:
  - Describe your life today. Use the essay “Confessions of a Baby Boomer” (*American Voices*, pages 407-409) as an example of what you might include. Talk about the things that are truly important to you and the seemingly little things that characterize your days. You will enjoy looking back at this essay in years to come.
  - Write out your position on abortion. Give Biblical reasons for what you believe. This will be helpful to you as you discuss it with others. See Lesson 135.
- 2) Arrange a tour of a crisis pregnancy center in your community. Find out how the center was started, how it is supported financially, and how it is staffed. Ask what services are offered to women. Find out how Christians in your community can get involved. See Lesson 135.
- 3) Make a video newscast about the moon landing as if it were broadcast on July 20, 1969, with yourself as news anchor. Make your video at least three minutes long. See Lesson 131.

## Unit 28 Project Ideas

- 1) Write 300 to 500 words on one of the following topics:
  - Write a review of your favorite work of fiction of those assigned during this course. Tell what you liked about it and why you thought it was effective. Think of your review as a way to encourage someone else to read the book.
  - After you read lessons 136 and 137 and the two speeches by Reagan in *American Voices*, summarize Reagan’s approach as a leader and tell why you think he was effective.
- 2) Make a scrapbook of at least ten pages about your homeschooling experience. See Lesson 138.
- 3) Write and illustrate a children’s book about American fads of the twentieth century. Some have been mentioned in this book, but you might need to do additional research. Include at least ten examples of fads. Your book should be at least twenty pages in length.

## Unit 29 Project Ideas

1) Write 300 to 500 words on one of the following topics:

- Should local, state, and Federal governments in the United States provide education, public health, and other services to illegal immigrants who are here in violation of the law? Should the children of illegal immigrants be denied public services just because their parents brought them here? Does providing these public services encourage more illegal immigration? See Lesson 142.
- Should the United States enact tougher gun control laws? What is the relationship between access to guns and public safety? Does the Second Amendment have limits? See Lesson 142.

2) Create a collection of photos that represent ways that computers and the Internet have changed everyday American life. Compose your photos intentionally and artistically. Your finished project should be in the form of a slideshow on an electronic device, prints of the photographs displayed on a poster, or photos in book form. Include at least fifteen photos. See Lesson 142.

3) Create a model of a U.S. military weapon or vehicle that was used during the 1990s or since. Make your model as close to scale as you can and from the material of your choosing (e.g., wood, cardboard, clay, STYROFOAM™, or LEGO® bricks).

## Unit 30 Project Ideas

1) Write 300 to 500 words on one of the following topics:

- Should the electoral college be changed, abolished, or kept as it is?
- Write an essay in which you share three things you love about the United States and three things you would like to be different.

2) Make a poster timeline of key events in American history. Include at least twenty-five events. Be creative in the way you present and illustrate the information.

3) Plan a family field trip to an historically significant site in your area that you have never visited before. Prepare yourself to be the family tour guide. Be able to explain how and why this place had an impact on American history.

*Copyright © 2014 Notgrass Company. All product names, brands, and other trademarks mentioned are used for educational purposes only. No association with or endorsement by the owners of the trademarks is intended. Each trademark remains the property of its respective owner.*