



# American History Pathfinder



## Overview

The purpose of this pathfinder is to serve as a starting point for research on various topics concerning American History, prior to World War II. General topics are listed first, and then specific topics are listed in chronological order. This pathfinder is meant to be used by students ranging from third grade through middle school. Teachers will also find this pathfinder a great resource tool. Many of these websites come with superb lesson plans, activities, and quizzes to be used with one's students. This pathfinder is by no means a comprehensive collection of material available on the subject. The resources listed here are only recommended beginning points regarding Internet sources for American History research.

America has a rich and diverse history. Too many students today are unaware of major historical events and the people involved. There is a saying, "Those who don't know their history, are doomed to repeat it." Students of the 21<sup>st</sup> century must know America's past, so as to learn from it and not repeat the same mistakes. Also, through studying history, students will be challenged by the courageous men and women who formed and shaped this great country. This pathfinder will introduce the student to such topics as: immigration; civil rights; the early women's movement; the early American colonists; the American Revolution; the Civil War; the Spanish-American War; Westward expansion; and the reasons for the horrific Dust Bowl. Within each pathfinder, the researcher will be directed to several links, which will provide even more pertinent information on each topic.

## [American History Internet Resources:](#)

### General Resources

#### **America's Story**

<http://www.americaslibrary.gov/about/welcome.html>

This is America's story brought to you by the Library of Congress. You can discover what Abraham Lincoln had in his pockets on the night he was assassinated. Or you can read about

other amazing Americans such as Buffalo Bill Cody and his "Wild West" show; the heroism of Harriet Tubman, who helped many slaves escape bondage; the music of jazz great Duke Ellington; or the inventions of Thomas Edison. (You will even be able to see his first motion picture!) Jump back in time and find the settlers who landed on Plymouth Rock. Want to travel across the country? Then click on "Explore the States" where one can find fascinating facts and stories about all the states and Washington, D.C.

## **General American History**

[http://www.educationworld.com/history/us\\_history/index.shtml](http://www.educationworld.com/history/us_history/index.shtml)

An excellent website for students and teachers. Very well developed timelines of U.S. history are included. North American Exploration can be studied from the rare book collection of the National Library of Canada. There are history links to many primary source archives and eyewitness written accounts from events in history sorted by era and event. Teachers will enjoy the lesson plans concerning Native American heritage, immigration to America, the mighty Mississippi, the Civil War, Westward expansion, the American Revolution, the Colonial Period, the Great Depression, presidents, women in history, African-American history, and slavery. Links to other websites direct students and teachers to D-Day, the Underground Railroad, and other related topics. The United States History Standards are also available for grades K-12.

## **Today in American History...**

<http://lcweb2.loc.gov/ammem/today/>

This is a great site to look up! "What happened today, back in history?" Simply key in today's date and one can read an array of articles about what took place on this date, back in history. This site has an Archives section as well, so one can look up past dates. What is so informative about this site is that there are numerous links to other historical people and events. For example, if one were to click on today's date (3/16/01) one would find that James Madison was born today, in 1751. While reading about Madison, one could click on "American Revolution" and read about that as well.

## **Immigration to America**

<http://library.thinkquest.org/26786/en/introduction/help.php3>

This website gives an overall view of immigration. It guides you through the main articles, which, to a certain extent, exemplifies the immigration during the 19th-century. Includes bibliographic references. Causes of immigration are listed, and the journey to America and a new life in America are highlighted. An excellent time-line is available. A quiz is also included. Explore a small piece of 19th-century reality. Watch the emigrants closely as you imagine yourself being in their situation. Imagine how they felt, what went on in their minds, while you see the expressions on their faces becoming real.

## **Civil Rights in America**

<http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/amex/kids/civilrights/>

Learn about how Alice Paul and the National Women's party used public protests and a prison hunger strike to help win women the right to vote. Learn how courageous African American kids broke the race barrier at Little Rock's Central High School. Did you know that in Colonial America, you could be banished – or even executed – for your personal religious beliefs?

Students also have a chance to test their Civil Rights knowledge, by clicking on "Game Space." In the "Archives" section, students can find valuable information on "Flight," "The Gold Rush," and "Technology in the 1900's."

## **Women in American History 1600 – Present**

<http://women.eb.com/>

This website gives extensive information on the impact women have made in American society. One can learn about women in Early America (1600-1820), the Nineteenth Century (1820-1880) , at the Crossroads (1880-1920) and modern America (1920-Present). Learn not only about the women's suffrage movement, but also about women of achievement in the arts, politics, sports, and business.

## **Famous American Women**

<http://teacher.scholastic.com/activities/women/index.htm>

This website describes famous American women who changed history. Learn about Mae Jemison, Amelia Earhart, Rosa Parks, Sally Ride, and Melba Pattillo. Included in this website is a "Women's History Cyberhunt," and "History Mystery Challenges." This site recognizes the month of March as "Women's History Month."

## **First Ladies of the U.S**

<http://unitedstates-on-line.com/ladies/>

This website lists biographies of the wives of all the American presidents. A picture of the first lady accompanies each biography. Each biography is written in an easy to understand manner. Major facts from childhood, formal education, and adulthood are included.

## **Famous American leaders**

<http://us.history.wisc.edu/hist102/bios/bios.html>

This website describes famous American leaders from the following eras: Post-Civil War, Gilded Age, Turn of the Century, World War One, The 1920's, The Great Depression, World War Two, and Post World War II. This list of leaders includes thirty-two men and women, including Native Americans, presidents, and authors. Includes an excellent photo gallery of many significant events in American History from the Civil War to the Present.

## **American Presidents**

<http://gi.grolier.com/presidents/nbk/prescont.html>

This site has detailed biographies of each American president, including information on their formative years, education and adulthood. Included with each biography is a picture of the featured president.

## **Famous Explorers**

[http://www.mce.k12tn.net/explore rs/explorers\\_start.htm](http://www.mce.k12tn.net/explore rs/explorers_start.htm)

This website includes activities, quizzes and lessons for teachers and students alike, related to French, Spanish, British and English Explorers. It includes a Jeopardy like game, which will challenge anyone's knowledge of explorer history. It includes an incredible time-line of all the explorers, the countries they came from and the major discovery these explorers made. There are three additional websites listed. One related site includes curriculum guides. Many of these explorers impacted America in a great way.

## Specific resources

### Colonial Times

<http://www.hfmgv.org/smartfun/colonial/intro/>

Be a history detective. Go back in time and investigate the daily lives of the Daggetts, a colonial family from northeastern Connecticut. Collect clues to uncover answers to seven questions about colonial life in the 1700s.

### American Revolution

<http://www.alexandriacentral.org/revolution.html>

Take students (fourth and fifth grade) from 1760 to 1785. The unit begins with the French and Indian War and ends with the framing of the Constitution. Links to events and vocabulary terms. Bibliographies included. Students will enjoy the "real-life" pictures of other students working on this unit.

### Lincolns and the Civil War Era

<http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/amex/lincolns/>

Explore a nation deeply divided on the eve of war. Follow Confederate and Union soldiers into war. Visit a slave cabin and examine the conditions of slavery. Study maps and go on virtual tours. Learn about the politics involved during the Civil War. Study about the involvement of African-Americans in the civil war. Learn about women leaders during this era, such as Susan B. Anthony, Elizabeth Cady Stanton, and Sojourner Truth who took bold stands on reform. What kind of medical care was available at that time? Teacher's guide and lesson plans included.

### The Civil War – Teacher Lesson Plans and Activities

[http://www.mce.k12tn.net/revolutionary\\_war/american\\_revolution.htm](http://www.mce.k12tn.net/revolutionary_war/american_revolution.htm)

This website is exclusively for teachers, teaching the American Revolution to upper elementary or middle school students. Students are taken through fifteen lessons, activities, and quizzes. Lesson one begins with "The Colonists Begin to Hate" and Lesson 15 ends with, "Valley Forge and the End of the War." There is a great bibliography of related websites at the bottom of the homepage.

### Pioneer Unit

<http://tjunior.thinkquest.org/6400/>

Many years ago people in the United States traveled to the new frontiers. Although in the 1700s the frontier was the Appalachian Mountains, later with westward expansion the frontier moved to the territories beyond the Mississippi River. This web page will provide information about the pioneers who traveled not only to Oregon on the Oregon Trail and the Natchez Trace to Texas, but all early American Pioneers. All pioneers had many of the same experiences. This site will tell the story of the pioneers and their adventures on the trail to their new lives on the frontiers of North America. Also included are recipes, music, activities, a glossary, and related links to other websites covering pioneers. A list of children's books on pioneers is also available.

## **Laura Ingalls Wilder and Westward Expansion**

[http://www.hoover.nara.gov/kids/liw\\_kids/pioneering\\_intro.html](http://www.hoover.nara.gov/kids/liw_kids/pioneering_intro.html)

Born February 7, 1867, Laura Elizabeth Ingalls began her life in the Big Woods of Pepin County, Wisconsin. Her pioneering journeys began just a few years later when Pa started his long search for a productive farm and a permanent home in the west. Teachers will lead students through activities to help them understand "Westward Expansion" through the eyes of Laura Ingalls. Activities include: Using the dates given and the map of the region, trace the journeys of the Ingallses, and include the final journey Laura and Almanzo made to Rocky Ridge Farm in Missouri. With the help of an atlas, estimate the distances traveled between each home. A covered wagon could travel about fifteen miles a day. At that rate, how long would each trip have taken? Calculate and record. What kind of route might pioneer travelers choose? Why? Read about traveling by covered wagon. What hardships did pioneers face? How were obstacles, such as rivers, faced? Students will learn a great deal about westward expansion after completing this Laura Ingalls Wilder unit.

## **Spanish-American War**

<http://www.spanam.simplenet.com/>

Everything you've always wanted to know about the Spanish-American War. Includes an extensive chronology of the Spanish-American War with links to major events and people involved. Includes both Spanish and American viewpoints of the war. Includes actual letters from servicemen, written at the time of the Spanish-American War. You can even tour the USFS Olympia! The extensive book and publication bibliography is very informative.

## **Dustbowl**

<http://www.discovery.com/area/history/dustbowl/dustbowlpener.html>



The Day of the Black Blizzard. The Dustbowl was born on Palm Sunday, 1935. This website takes you through that horrific day, starting at 8:00 a.m. and ending at 6:00 p.m. Why did the dust begin? What were the causes? How did people manage through their daily lives, living with incessant dust day to day? Here, you will find all the answers.

