

History Odyssey: Early Modern Level One Alternative Booklist

Note: Comprehension questions found in the study guide are provided only for the original books listed in the guide.

Below are alternative books that can be read in place of the following four titles:

1. *The Man in the Iron Mask* by Alexandre Dumas, adapted by Paul Mantell

Alternatives: Give your young student a grounding in Shakespeare's plays at an early age is a good idea, especially for those who might encounter the "real" versions in high school and beyond. Choose one of the children's versions of Shakespeare stories listed below and read as many of the stories as your child would like. Here are several options, but quite a few others exist as well:

- ★ ***Usborne Illustrated Stories from Shakespeare* adapted from William Shakespeare (Usborne, 2010) ISBN: 978-1409522232.** This collection includes delightfully illustrated versions of *Twelfth Night*, *Romeo and Juliet*, *The Tempest*, *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, *Macbeth*, and *Hamlet*. In addition, there's a chapter at the end of the book with more information about Shakespeare's life.
- ★ ***A Stage Full of Shakespeare Stories* adapted by Angela McCallister (Frances Lincoln Children's Books, 2018) ISBN: 978-1786031150.** This collection includes a dozen tales from the bard: *Macbeth*, *Romeo and Juliet*, *Hamlet*, *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, *The Tempest*, *Twelfth Night*, *Othello*, *As You Like It*, *Julius Caesar*, *Much Ado About Nothing*, *King Lear*, and *The Merchant of Venice*. The collage-style art is quite beautiful and the list of characters at the beginning of each story is a helpful reference.
- ★ ***Brick Shakespeare: Four Tragedies & Four Comedies* by John McCann (Skyhorse Publishing, 2014) ISBN: 978-1629145273.** This particular retelling of Shakespeare's stories will appeal to the master builders in your family – all the scenes are "acted out" with Lego bricks! In this volume, you'll find *Hamlet*, *Macbeth*, *Romeo and Juliet*, *Julius Caesar*, *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, *The Tempest*, *Much Ado About Nothing*, and *The Taming of the Shrew*.

2. *George the Drummer Boy* and, 3. *Sam the Minuteman* by Nathaniel Benchley

Alternatives: Here are three other options for a Revolutionary War-era book:

- ★ ***Phoebe the Spy* by Judith Griffin (Puffin, reissued 2002) ISBN: 978-0698119567.** This book tells the story of Phoebe Fraunces, a young girl who (legend has it) foiled a plot to assassinate General George Washington. How true is the story? We might never know. After reading this book, you and your child might enjoy going down the rabbit hole of learning more about the Fraunces family and the legend surrounding Phoebe.
- ★ ***The Arrow Over the Door* by James Bruchac (Puffin, 2002) ISBN: 978-0141305714.** Abenaki storyteller Bruchac tells the true story of an Abenaki boy and a Quaker boy during the time of the American Revolution, switching perspective after each chapter. Despite the two boys' different backgrounds, they have one thing in common: They both struggle with how to do the right thing in a difficult situation. Please note that Bruchac uses the term "Indian" in this book.

★ ***Chains* by Laurie Halse Anderson. (Atheneum Books for Young Readers, 2010) ISBN: 978-1416905868.**

This novel tells the story of a teenager named Isabel who lives with the horrors of slavery during the early days of the American Revolution. Each chapter begins with a historical document such as a letter or newspaper clipping that ties the fictional story to historical events. You and your child can also choose to explore the book's two sequels, *Forge* and *Ashes*. Note: This novel deals with slavery and as such, has several upsetting moments. Parents with highly sensitive children may want to pre-read. *Chains* is on a bit higher reading level than the other two Revolutionary War options, and might work best for older or more advanced students.

4. *The Courage of Sarah Noble* by Alice Dalgliesh

★ ***The Birchbark House* by Louise Erdrich (Disney/Hyperion, 1999) ISBN: 978-078681454-1.** The *Birchbark House* is the first in a five-book series and serves as an excellent introduction to Ojibwe culture. Erdrich tells the story of Omakayas, a young nineteenth-century girl who lives on an island in Lake Superior. Students reading around a fifth- or sixth-grade level should be able to handle this book as an independent read, and it also makes an excellent read-aloud for younger students. Highly recommended.