**Textbook Evaluation Chart**

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| Book Title/Edition | *The Story of the World: History for the Classical Child: Volume 1: Ancient Times: From the Earliest Nomads to the Last Roman Emperor* (1st Edition) |
| Publisher | Peace Hill Press |
| Grade level | Middle School – Grades 5-8 |
| Content Area | Social Studies |
| Reviewer | Deborah R. Davis |

**3 Excellent, the text shows this quality throughout**

**2 Average, the quality is somewhat evidenced**

**0 – 1 Poor, the quality is not demonstrated**

**NA Not Applicable**

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| **3** | **2** | **1** | **NA** | **Area of Focus** | **Comment** |
| Language Concerns | | | | | |
|  | X |  |  | Phonics well addressed for reading level | Ramsay and Sperling (2015) advise that “comprehension of content area texts requires both general skills and the specific comprehension skills and strategies unique to each content area or domain” (p. 83). This text stretches the reading level of the middle school child toward the next level of understanding in preparation for high school autonomy. |
|  | X |  |  | Readability appropriate for grade level  intended |
|  | X |  |  | Language patterns appropriate for grade level |
|  | X |  |  | Vocabulary used appropriate for grade level |
| X |  |  |  | New vocabulary words marked in text |
| X |  |  |  | New vocabulary defined in context |
| X |  |  |  | New vocabulary defined in other areas |
| Ideas and Concepts | | | | | |
| X |  |  |  | Curriculum Perspective matches school mission | Identified perspective of  text: Classical Education/Perennial |
| X |  |  |  | Comprehension questions include literal,  inference, and critical thinking | Questions are reflective, open ended, as well as factual in review, and broaden application to current issues |
| X |  |  |  | Concepts covered are grade level appropriate | Early Civilizations are specifically required as part of the Ohio Learning Standards for fifth grade (Ohio Department of Education, 2013). |
| X |  |  |  | Ideas presented deductively | The diversity of presentation is one of the strengths of this textbook. Bauer takes pains to ensure that the main ideas are clearly evidenced, and that students are guided to think both inductively and deductively. |
| X |  |  |  | Ideas presented inductively |
| X |  |  |  | Main ideas marked in some way |
| X |  |  |  | Appropriate expectation of prior knowledge | Grade four standards reflect a sense of historical time. While their focus is on the history of the United States and Ohio, the constructs are presented in a timeline that indicates a past before the United States became a country, and the influence of prior cultures on the influx of people to Ohio (Ohio Department of Education, 2013). |
| X |  |  |  | Enough development of new ideas provided |
| X |  |  |  | No sexual, racial, economic, cultural or political  bias | Chapters 6, 14, 37, 38, and 39 deal specifically with Biblical issues and Christianity. No other faiths are addressed in this text. |
| Format | | | | | |
| X |  |  |  | Logical development of subject matter | This text lends itself to a pre-reading outline. It fully aids the teacher to “prepare students by discussing how the text is organized, what to look for (e.g., look at the headings, discuss the textbox on the side bar) and how to identify transition words” (Hughes & Parker-Katz, 2013, p. 97). |
| X |  |  |  | Chapter headings and divisions contribute to comprehension |
| X |  |  |  | Introduction, explanatory, and summary  paragraphs included |
| X |  |  |  | Topic sentences identifiable |
| X |  |  |  | Every chapter/unit includes summary |

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| **3** | **2** | **1** | **NA** | | **Area of Focus** | **Comment** |
| Style | | | | | | |
| X |  |  |  | Clear and direct expression of material | | “Teachers of secondary students have two related instructional goals: to improve students’ content knowledge and to improve their reading comprehension” (Vaughan, et al., 2013, p. 77). This text fully implements a program to do just that. With its storybook flow and explicit mechanics, it encourages readers and aids comprehension. |
| X |  |  |  | Wording flows easily and well | |
| X |  |  |  | Expression of ideas is readable and pleasing | |
| X |  |  |  | Mechanics are correct | |
| Student Assistance | | | | | | |
|  | X |  |  | | Questions/assignments appropriate for grade level and age | “Questions” is one area where this text is lacking. While the included questions and analysis presented within the closing of each section are appropriate, they are not expansive. Guided questions and assignments are limited and do not “enable students to make the connection between writing well and providing well-written evidence of their understanding” (Merten, 2015, p. 18). |
|  | X |  |  | | Questions cover all thinking skills from  knowledge level to evaluation (lower to high) |
|  | X |  |  | | Questions/assignments can be used as  reading guide |
|  | X |  |  | | Appropriate suggestions for additional reading |
|  | X |  |  | | Each modality addressed (visual, auditory, and  kinesthetic) |
| Teacher Assistance | | | | | | |
|  | X |  |  | | Helps for conceptual development | There is a Teacher’s Guide to this text. That guide was not specifically reviewed at this time, but prior review showed that these elements are fully addressed within the Guide. Further, there is a section in the Teacher’s Guide with specific questions and analysis for a variety of grade levels – fourth through ninth. |
|  | X |  |  | | Suggestions and helps for less able and diverse student assistance |
|  | X |  |  | | Enrichment ideas included for gifted |
|  | X |  |  | | Objectives stated |
|  | X |  |  | | Management assistance provided, tests,  scope/sequence charts, etc. |
|  | X |  |  | | Supplementary materials provided or available,  web assistance, videos, etc. |
|  | X |  |  | | Clear and user friendly teacher’s manual |
| The Hard Copy | | | | | | |
| X |  |  |  | | Book is appropriate size for desk use | The 5x8 text size makes it convenient for desk use as well as a comfortable size to carry. The cover, binding, and paper are of good quality. Font is approximately Times New Roman 12 pitch and would be more readable at 14.  The format is wonderful. This text reads like a storybook creating a fabulous transition from chapter books to more sophisticated texts. All graphics are an enhancement to the text; appropriately place and unbiased. |
| X |  |  |  | | Cover, binding and paper are good |
|  | X |  |  | | Font size and readability is grade level  appropriate |
| X |  |  |  | | Format (layout) is appropriate |
| X |  |  |  | | Pictures, and all graphics are appropriate |
| X |  |  |  | | Pictures and illustrations aid text  comprehension |
| X |  |  |  | | Illustrations are free of any bias |
| 27 | 17 |  |  | | **TOTALS** |  |
| Strengths | | | | | Probably the greatest strength of this text is its readability. The storybook method of presenting the history of the ages allows for the reader to be caught up in the reading! The appropriate inclusion of graphics enhance the clarity and stretch the comprehension of the learner. The accuracy is carefully documented and allows opportunities for further research. | |
| Weaknesses | | | | | The chapter summaries are mere footnotes, and the questions are included within the text rather than being clearly enunciated at the end of each section. Students would be required to ferret out questions which may present challenges for some middle schoolers. | |
| As to each perspective, the following questions are applied:  How would each perspective differ in presentation of the material?  How would the instruction and focus be different?  Identify any areas that would conflict with a biblical perspective. | | | | | | |
| Perspectives – Perrenialism  This work is guided for the classical student. Focused on the very foundation of humanity, it is culled from foundational texts that have indeed stood the test of time. Some examples of the focus on foundational texts is the presentative of the Greek alphabet (Bauer, 2001, p. 158-159) and of Chinese calligraphy (p. 247-251). It is, in many ways the very essence of perrenialism and there are with its charts, graphs, and maps, there are no differences in presentation of the material. The instruction and focus of the material is unerringly perennial. There are no conflicts with the biblical perspective which is exemplified telling of the birth of Jesus using the Gospel of Luke (p. 289-291). | | | | | | |
| Perspectives – Essentialism  These foundational facts and elements of the history of humanity, cultures, and relationship are essential to student understanding of today’s cultural relationships. Using the essentialist perspective, it would, perhaps, be more in-depth than some would construe as required. The instruction and focus of the material is ideally attuned to essentialism, presenting this historical era as a necessary knowledge for the current scholar. The first people, however, are presented as the nomads of the fertile crescent. While these people are likely descendants of Adam and Eve, there is no mention of the Garden of Eden or the creation of the Earth. There are those who would find the biblical references inessential. This text presents the history of Abraham, Moses, and Jesus, as elemental facts. The presentation of Abram in Chapter 12 of the Book of Genesis in the Holy Bible is clearly portrayed in this text even to the words, “I will make you into a great nation” (Bauer, 2001, p. 51-52). | | | | | | |
| Perspectives – Progressive  This text is not geared in a problem-solving theme. While problems that are presented are solved, questions of alternative methods of problem solving are not inclusive to this text. The instruction and focus of this text are not presented in the manner of progressivism. These historical issues are presented in a neatly chronological method beginning with about 600 B.C., and continuing through the death of Augustus in 476 A.D (Bauer, 2006). The material is presented more biblically than progressively. | | | | | | |
| Perspectives – Reconstructive  While this text tells the story of social change over millennia, it does not present an argument for social change in the current time. The instruction and focus are strictly historical. While all history is an allegory for currency (those who ignore it are doomed to repeat it), the history presented in this text is focused to place the mindset of the student in the past. Many would argue that the Bible is a text in argument for social change, *The Story of the World: Volume 1*, however is more a presentation of the changes throughout those eras than an argument for social change in today’s world. | | | | | | |
| Perspectives – Biblical  The text presents biblical history as fact. To that end, it is biblical in nature. There is a general theme and focus on the importance of God as opposed to gods. While all are presented with equal candor, there is a decidedly biblical slant within the instruction and focus of the text. | | | | | | |

References

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