

Reading Guide for *The Curious Historian Level 1A*

This recommended reading list has been compiled by the series authors; Leslie Rayner, curator of [The Classical Reader](#); and Patty Kobzowicz, former grammar school teacher.

A Note from Dr. Christopher Perrin

One way to regard history is as a record of the past. There are various kinds of “records” that we can turn to: inscriptions, monuments, buildings, statues, written documents, and other preserved artifacts. Literature is certainly a kind of document that we can add to this list and is itself a large category that can include historical accounts, biography, myths, legends, poetry, novels, political philosophy, and so on.

Literature from many historical periods can be a very rich source of information for the historian. To understand both Greece and Rome well, for example, one should know at least some of the great literature of these civilizations. Homer’s *The Iliad* and *The Odyssey* are critical to understanding the Greek mind, just as Virgil’s *The Aeneid* is to understanding the Roman mind. We could say the same about other civilizations for which we have extant literature.

The historian will not only be a reader of the great, enduring literature of any given civilization that he or she studies but will also want to be a reader of the history and context of a given literary work. History and literature are thus interrelated disciplines that shed light upon each other while also preserving their differences. This is why, in our *The Curious Historian Level 1A (TCH1A)* text, we have, where appropriate, referenced great literary works such as *The Epic of Gilgamesh* and the Code of Hammurabi and noted their contributions to our historical understanding. We want students to see the valuable and complementary role that literature plays in the study of history.

We also want to encourage students’ inquisitive natures. Therefore, we have compiled this collection of reading recommendations, sorted by genre and subject, for students (and teachers) who would like to dive deeper into the topics covered in the *TCH1A* text. We encourage you to look for additional opportunities to integrate literature into your course and to help students learn to appreciate the interdisciplinary benefit of both their historical and literary studies.

Ancient History and Archaeology

Nonfiction Books for Students

[Archaeology](#) (Kingfisher Knowledge) by Trevor Barnes. This visual guide covers what archaeology is; key archaeological sites around the world, such as Pompeii, the Acropolis, Angkor Wat, and the great Aztec temples; major discoveries such as the *Mary Rose* warship; and even features several pages on battlefield archaeology.

[Questions & Answers: Ancient History](#), edited by Ella Fern, Fiona Tulloch, and Alex Woolf. This guide explores important elements of human life—culture, religion, architecture, and art—and key people across ancient civilizations, from early times to the medieval period. Chapters cover Mesopotamia, Egypt, India, China, Japan, Greece, Rome, the Incas, the Aztecs, Native Americans, and medieval Europe.

[The Penguin Historical Atlas of Ancient Civilizations](#) by John Haywood, edited by Simon Hall. This collection of full-color maps, photographs, and recreations of ancient art covers the history of the earliest civilizations around the world, from Mesopotamia and Egypt to the Far East, as well as America and Europe, following the various empires, societies, and technological innovations.