Chapter 1
Columbus, the Great Sailor

Narration Ideas
1. Tell or write the story of Christopher Columbus in your own words.
2. Write an interview with Christopher Columbus.
3. Draw a map of the places you just read about. Illustrate your map with pictures from the story, then explain your map.

People: Christopher Columbus, Leif Ericson, Queen Isabella
Places: America; Europe; Iceland; Vineland (area of coastal North America); Mediterranean Sea; Genoa, Italy; Africa; Madeira, Portugal; Atlantic Ocean; Lisbon, Portugal; China; India; La Rabida, Spain
Dates: 1492; 1506
Vocabulary: Indians, sailors, Northmen, Italian, adventure, Portuguese, continent, geography, caravans, convent, monks, jewels, league, compass, desperate, comrades, natives, ornaments

Chapter 2
Captain John Smith and Jamestown

Narration Ideas
1. Tell or write the story of Captain John Smith in your own words.
2. Write a short skit based on what you read about John Smith and Jamestown.
3. Write 1–3 journal entries from Captain John Smith's point of view.

People: Captain John Smith, Chief Powhatan, Pocahontas, John Rolfe
Places: North Carolina; Russia; Jamestown, Virginia; Chesapeake Bay; London, England
Dates: 1607
Vocabulary: English, New World, Spaniards, French, shipwrecked, Turks, prisoner, volunteered, adventure, colonists, Indians, compass, Virginians, "fools' gold," governor, grumbling, gunpowder, profane, tobacco, settlement

Narration Notecards
Pre-Printed 3" x 5" cards
You receive 3" x 5" cards printed on both sides. One side features the narration prompts and the other side gives the key people, places, dates, and vocabulary words.

Printable Electronic Download
You receive a PDF with two cards, both fronts and backs, on each 8.5" x 11" page. Print the PDF on regular copy paper or card stock and cut the sheets in half length-wise. (One chapter on the top half, the other chapter on the bottom half.) Fold each chapter's card to place the narration prompts on one side and the key people, places, dates, and vocabulary words on the other side.
How to Use Narration Notecards

1. Read aloud a chapter from the book or assign it as independent reading.
2. Grab the narration notecard for that chapter and select a narration idea from the list on the front or let your student choose one.
3. Give your student the notecard to look at while narrating orally or in writing. The word bank of people, places, dates, and vocabulary on the back will help with spelling and details.

More Narration Notecards Ideas

- Choose a few key words from the back of the notecard to highlight before you read. Write those words in a visible location and instruct your student to listen/read attentively for them. Define the chosen words if necessary.
- Use a map to look up any of the places listed.
- Use the dates to prompt Book of Centuries entries.
- Add any other words from the reading that your student would like to see spelled.

Choosing a Narration Prompt

The narration ideas are listed from easiest to hardest on each card. Select one of the prompts for your student: 1. Beginner, 2. Intermediate, 3. Advanced.

1. Beginner prompts are designed for beginner narrators of all ages. Beginners in grades 1–3 should tell their narrations, not write them. Older beginners should start by telling and can gradually move to writing as they become comfortable.

2. Intermediate prompts are designed for students in grades 4–12 who have had some experience narrating. Narrations should be a variety of written as well as oral. Students at this level can be assigned either the

3. Advanced prompts are designed for fluent narrators in approximately grades 7–12 who are ready for more. Use Advanced prompts to raise the bar on their narrations as they move into high school, but feel free to assign any prompt on the card as desired. Many narrations will be written; continue to ask for some oral.
Narration Notecards Tips

Important! The narration cards are to be used as a springboard for telling or writing narrations. Please do not burden your young student with insisting that he must use every word on the card.

For students experienced in oral narration, we recommend about
- 1 written narration per week for 4th grade; the rest oral.
- 2 written narrations per week for 5th and 6th grade; the rest oral.
- 3 written narrations per week for 7th and 8th grade; the rest oral.
- 4 written narrations per week for 9th and 10th grade; the rest oral.
- 5 written narrations per week for 11th and 12th grade; the rest oral.

For more narration ideas, refer to

Your Questions Answered: Narration
by Sonya Shafer
Chapter 1
The Modern World

Narration Ideas

1. Draw a picture of some of the inventions mentioned in the chapter. Tell about them.
2. Describe some of the historic events that have led up to what we now call “the modern world.”
3. “We live in the modern world.” Write a short essay describing what that means.

People: Noah Webster

Places: Paris, France; New York, New York

Dates: 1700s; 1800s; 1900s

Vocabulary: pertaining, historians, steam engines, railroad, factories, inventions, scientist, inventor, telephones, telegraphs, radio, presidents, prime ministers, dictators, exploration, power

Chapter 2
How Bismarck Made an Empire

Narration Ideas

1. Tell all you know of Count Otto von Bismarck.
2. Explain “The king danced when Bismarck played the fiddle.” Give an account of the war between France and the Kingdom of Prussia.
3. Trace the rise of Germany under the influence of Count Otto von Bismarck.

People: Napoleon, King Wilhelm I, Count Otto von Bismarck, Cardinal Richelieu, King Louis XIII, Louis Napoleon, Prince Leopold, General Helmuth von Moltke

Places: Germany; Europe; Paris, France; Denmark; Mexico; United States; Spain; Berlin, Germany; Metz, France; Versailles, France

Dates: 1800; 1862; August 2, 6, 16, 1870; September 2, 1870; October 30, 1870; January 18, 1871

Vocabulary: German, Empire of Austria, Kingdom of Prussia, Saxony, Bavaria, Holy Roman Empire of the German Nation, tyrant, dispute, Prussians, Austrians, muskets, balls, cabinet, battle of Worth, battle of Gravelotte, resolute, fortress, Sedan, frontier, emperor, republic, besieged
Chapter 3  How China Opened Its Doors

Narration Ideas

1. Tell or write all you remember about how China opened its doors to foreign countries.
2. What do you know of the war fought between China and Japan in 1894?
3. Describe the events that led to China's entering the modern world.

People: King Kangxi, Sun Yat-sen, Emperor Puyi

Places: China; Europe; America; England; Canton, China; Hong Kong, China; Peking, China; Japan; Sea of Japan; Korea; Yangtze River

Dates: 1860; 1876; 1894; 1900; 1908; December 1911

Vocabulary: trade, Chinese, established, civilization, opium, poppies, emperor, profitable, Opium War, commerce, palace, railroad, telegraph, peninsula, colossus, Celestial Kingdom, ambassadors, ignorance, foreign, Boxer Rebellion, embassies, foreigners, Qing dynasty

Chapter 4  Sailing through the Sand

Narration Ideas

1. Tell or write what you learned about the Suez Canal.
2. Tell the history of Ferdinand de Lessop's dream and how it was fulfilled.
3. Explain the challenges Ferdinand faced in digging a canal through the desert. How did he overcome these problems?

People: Darius, Napoleon, Ferdinand de Lessops, Mohammed Said, Ottoman Sultan

Places: Sinai Peninsula; Mediterranean Sea; Red Sea; Nile River; Cairo, Egypt; Africa; Europe; Asia; France; Isthmus of Suez; Sinai desert; Lake Manzala; Port Said; Suez Canal

Dates: 1799; 1832; 1854; 1859; 1864; November 1869

Vocabulary: camel, desert, dunes, canal, pharaohs, surveyors, engineer, calculations, Ottoman Turks, viceroy, shares, profits, isthmus, pickaxe, machinery, harbor