Historical Fiction

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Definition:
Historical fiction is made up stories based on real historical events. Stories are usually written about events that happened twenty five to fifty years prior.

Categories:
There are three types of categories within historical fiction.
Fictionalized memoir
Fiction based on research
Fiction based on family research

Plot Summary: The story of Seven Brave Women by Betsy Hearne is about a family full of strong and courageous women. The story is being told by a little girl sharing all of her family’s journeys. Her mother told her all different stories about wonderful women and their struggles and strides. This book is broken down into eight different chapters about each of her grandmothers. Each chapter has many different references to things that were occurring in the world at the time each woman lived. The chapters start off by referring to the war that was occurring during the time in which they lived. Even though none of these women were fighting in the war they still made a difference in helping people.

Reader Response: I will ask students to look up four famous people throughout history and write a story about each person’s journey through life. This will give students a chance to do research on the time period and person as well as being creative in using their own story to tell someone else’s life.

Seven Brave Women
Author: Betsy Hearne
Illustrator: Bethanne Andersen
Genre: Historical Fiction
Grade Range: Intermediate
**Plot Summary:** *Boom Town* is a story about a young named Amanda who just moved west with her family so her father could go search for gold. Her father would leave every Monday morning and come home every Saturday night. Amanda did not like the west; there was nothing out there. Her mom and her siblings lived in a cabin and they all worked to keep everything okay. Amanda’s dad would always come home empty handed. One day Amanda really wanted to make a pie like she did back at her old home. Her mom simply told her that would be wonderful but they do not have a pan and all they had was a wood oven. Amanda was determined to make a pie. The first one she made was hard a rock and her brothers made fun of her, the second one she did not leave in the oven for ever long but then it was too soft and the middle run out, and finally the third pie was perfect! When Amanda’s father came home that night he had a slice of pie and he thought it was great and he decide to bring a pie with him when he left. The next week he came back with money and told Amanda that he had sold her pie to the minors and they loved it. That gave Amanda idea to start baking pies for people in town. Eventually they town starts growing and they open their first store and then after time the empty west town was filled with stores, banks, hotel, school and church and it was all because of Amanda’s idea to make a pie.

**Reader Response Activity:** A lesson that I would do with my students is having them think about moving to a place where there wasn’t anything but just land. How would you start a town and get the town to bloom? What kind of stores would you have?
Plot Summary: *The Long March* is about a man name Tom and he looks back as when he was a child and growing up. The one thing he remembers is when he a teenagers he remember that no one ever talked about the March that moved them out of Mississippi into the new land. It always upset Tom that no one talked about it, his great grandmother was the oldest women in the tribe. He talks about how one day they were called for a meeting and everyone from their tribe showed up and they got from Washington D.C about the Irish Famine and that needed help. No one in the tribe said anything for awhile then finally someone said why would we help them, they didn’t help us during our march they focus us out. Finally great grandmother gets up and starts speaking, she talks about the march and how they never received any of the supplies the government said they would send. She goes and talks about how it was too cold and when they would go to sleep if people didn’t wake up in the morning they would quickly say their goodbye and leave them behind. Tom was really bothered by that and when his family decides to donate money he said no I want to think about it more. Tom goes outside and his great grandmother goes outside and they talk and Tom finally realizes that the Irish Famine has helped his tribe get pass their past and open up and he agrees to help out.

Reader Response Activity: A reader responds I would do is have the students find information out about their family and then I would have the students draw pictures in a timeline of events.
Plot Summary: *Navajo Long Walk* is a story about the history of the Navajo tribe and what it means. It also talks about in 1864 when the enemy’s come into their land and start burning everything and that the child have become weak because of the cold and now they will become even more weak because the lack of food. It talks about how in 1846 their lives changed forever because the U.S army came in and said they now have control over all the land in New Mexico. The book describes the fear the Native Americans had when the U.S Army came in pretty much took everything from them. By 1865 the army had rounded up the Navajos and placed them at Fort Sumner. In 1886 the government began to give them their livestock promised. From the point the Native American nation grow and slow recovered from what had happened.

Reader Response Activity: A reader responds I would do is have the students think about what would it feel like to forced to leave their home and were treated badly. What would they do and how would they react?
Plot Summary: The Discovery of the Americas is a historical fiction picture book based on how the Americas were made. The plot of this story is based over thousands of years and is very educational. This story gives a wide overview of the Americas’ history and how they came to be. The authors start off by talking about the land bridge that formed from Asia to the “New World” during the Ice Age. Nomads then started following mammoths into what we now know as the Americas. As people started to migrate the climate was changing and all of the ice melted and there was no link between Asia and North America. Along with climate the way people were eating had to change also; soon people were harvesting crops which led them to become settlers. Soon there were huge civilizations that were being formed; The Mayans built pyramids, were skillful in math and astronomy. This story also talks about the not proven and proven voyages throughout history. Pottery and other ancient artifacts connect The Old world and The New World. Many different civilizations were talked about and their little understanding of North America. This book talks about the journeys of Christopher Columbus, Amerigo Vespucci, Balboa, and Magellan. This story is a great way to see how the all of civilizations were formed and the struggles each faced. With the opening of Americas doors came drastic change forever.

Reader Response: I would use this story before I start the lesson on early civilizations. I would ask students to use the additional information in the back and chose which time period and people they would like to learn most about and why. Another activity could be having students write a time line of the events to show cause and effect.
The Amazing Impossible Erie Canal

Author: Cheryl Harness
Illustrator: Not named
Genre: Historical Fiction
Grade Range: Primary and Intermediate

Plot Summary: Cheryl Harness tells the amazing journey of how the Erie Canal changed the way of life after the War of 1812 and America forever. Using maps and illustrations she tells the stories using text and images. The images go into deeper explanation of the process and fun facts. It also shows the steps and designing aspect of the canal. De Witt Clinton knew the importance of this canal and fought to make this dream a reality; on the Fourth of July, 1817 the project began! The process of building the canal was sometimes rocky, but after eight years, it was finished! It took only seven days from Buffalo to Albany and ironically cost seven “million o’ dollars to build”. People were in awe of this incredible and difficult project and celebrated its success. Not only does it show the story of the Erie Canal it gives an inside perspective of life after the War of 1812. This canal encouraged new towns and gave hope to America, a very young nation. When the ship Seneca Chief brought the seawater from the Atlantic Ocean to the Erie Lake our nation changed the way of life, forever.

Reader Response: In the book it says that every ten miles or so horses were replaced with new horses and gave an example of using the canal to make money based on what people were shipping and how much. They also found how much the canal had earned over a certain time period. I will use the numbers given in the story to tie this into a math lesson. Example: If the Erie Canal was 363 miles long and they switched the horses every 10 miles, how many times did they switch. I can only use word problems using money to represent the money being made from the canal.