

Grades 10-12: Overview of the region

A Brief History of Central America - Hector Perez-Brignoli (common, divergent histories of five nations)

Grades 10-12: Specific events

Ancient Civilizations of Mexico and Central America - Herbert Spinden (Mayans, Olmecs, Toltecs, more) D
Ancient Maya - Robert J. Sharer (comprehensive and thorough, lavishly illustrated)
Forest of Kings: The Untold Story of the Ancient Maya - Linda Schele (new discoveries)
Lords of Tikal: Rulers of an Ancient Maya City - Peter D. Harrison (what is now known; well-illustrated)
The True History of Chocolate - Sophie D. Coe, Michael D. Coe (Mayas, Olmecs first developed use of cacao)
1491: New Revelations of the Americas Before Columbus - Charles C. Mann (absolutely fascinating thesis)
The Sack of Panama: Captain Morgan and the Battle for the Caribbean - Peter Earle (1671; history of piracy)
Banana Wars: United States Intervention in the Caribbean 1898-1934 - Lester Langley (also Central America)
Last Flight of the Scarlet Macaw - Bruce Barcott (effort to save macaw habitat in Belize illuminates country)
Silence on the Mountain - Daniel Wilkinson (Guatemala 36 years of civil war through interviews; brutal truth)
Contra Cross: Insurgency and Tyranny in Central America 1979-1989 - William R. Meara (US soldier's view)
Companions of Jesus: The Jesuit Martyrs of El Salvador - Jon Sobrino, Ignacio Ellacuria (during 79-89 war)
The Massacre at El Mozote - Mark Danner (El Salvador: 1981 massacre by US-backed troops; why it happened)
Six Minutes to Freedom - Kurt Muse (1980s Panama, Manuel Noriega, and capture, rescue of brave American)
Unfinished Conquest: The Guatemalan Tragedy - Victor Perera (govt. ethnic cleansing of native Mayans)
Dark Alliance: The CIA, the Contras, and the Crack Cocaine Explosion - Gary Webb (1994 discovery)
Art of Political Murder - Francisco Goldman (Guatemala: 1998 murder of govt. critic Bishop Juan Gerardi)
Enrique's Journey - Sonia Nazario (Honduran teen's search for mother who left him for USA; graphic) P
Nicaragua - Thomas W. Walker (concise history; especially of last 100 years and US involvement)

Grades 10-12: Biography

Sandinista: Carlos Fonseca and the Nicaraguan Revolution - Matilde Zimmerman (killed in 1976, accurate bio)
Disappeared: A Journalist Silenced - June Erlick (life, 1980 death of Guatemalan journalist Irma Flaquer)

Grades 10-12: Literature

Conquistador - Archibald MacLeish (narrative poem, about Cortes and the Central American conquest) P

Grades 10-12: Culture

My Car in Managua - Forrest D. Colburn (daily life in 1980s Nicaragua; humorous, witty, lyrical)

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China

Resources for all ages

China: People Place Culture History - DK Publishing (large coffee table book; gorgeous photos; informative)
Eyewitness Books: Ancient China - Arthur Cotterell (history, inventions, culture, Silk Road, more) S
Eyewitness Books: China - Hugh Sebag-Montefiore (modern country, geography, culture; museum in a book)
Living in Peking - Wenlan Peng (Living in Famous Cities Series; city, culture, people) B
Living in Hong Kong - Nora Clarke (Living in Famous Cities Series; city, culture, people) B
The Seventy Wonders of China - Jonathan Fenby (natural, cultural, historical; amazing and insightful)
The Great Wall - Michael Yamashita, William Lindesay (photographic journey and history; beautiful)
Marco Polo: A Photographer's Journey - Michael Yamashita (NG photographer follows in Polo's footsteps)
Children of China: An Artist's Journey - Song Nan Zhang (beautiful paintings tell story of China's peoples) G
Operation China - Paul Hattaway (minority, unreached peoples of China; brilliant photos, prayer calendar)

Grades 1-3: Overview of the region

Asia - Allan Fowler (excellent Rookie Read About Geography series for beginning readers)

China A to Z - Justine, Ron Fontes (excellent introduction to land, people, culture, animals of China)

Grades 1-3: Specific events

Giant Pandas: Gifts from China - Allan Fowler (Rookie Read About Science series for beginning readers)
We're Riding on a Caravan: An Adventure on the Silk Road - Laurie Krebs (Silk Road in rhyming verse)
Marco Polo: A Journey Through China - Fiona Macdonald (Expeditions series, 3rd grade reading level) G
Forbidden City - Barbara Knox (emperor's residence in Beijing; begun in Ming dynasty, 1406)
Ms. Frizzle's Adventures: Imperial China - Joanna Cole (teacher of *Magic School Bus* fame on China)

Grades 1-3: Biography

Marco Polo - Charles P. Graves (1274-94 World Explorer series, 3rd-4th grade) S
Marco Polo - Keren Gefen (Great Explorers series; Italian European visited China, 1300-24) VP
My Book About Hudson - Sheila Miller (Hudson Taylor, missionary to China during Victorian era) S
Between Two Worlds - Barbara Mitchell (Pearl S. Buck 1892-1973 winner of Pulitzer and Nobel prizes)

Grades 1-3: Historical fiction

Pi-Shu: The Little Panda - John Butler (panda facts woven in to tale of mother and baby panda)
Adventures in Ancient China - Linda Bailey, Bill Slavin (time travel story, ancient Chinese culture, 3rd-4th)
Story About Ping - Marjorie Flack (duck herding on the Yangtze River) H
Mei Mei Loves the Morning - Margaret Holloway Tsubakiyama (Chinese girl and her grandfather; beautiful)
Granny Han's Breakfast - Sheila Groves (wonderful story of God's provision in China) S
Mei Li - Thomas Handforth (girls attends New Year's Day fair in 1939 China, Caldecott Medal winner)
Year of the Panda - Miriam Schlein (boy finds orphaned baby panda; adventures, growth, friendship; 3rd-4th)

Grades 1-3: Literature

Tikki Tikki Tembo - Arlene Mosel (Chinese legend; why Chinese children have short names)
Yeh-Shen: A Cinderella Story from China - Ai-Ling Louie (evocative watercolors illustrate tale)
The Dragon Prince: A Chinese Beauty and the Beast Tale - Laurence Yep (lovely illustrations, 3rd-4th)
Liang and the Magic Paintbrush - Demi (lovely illustrations, classic folk tale from ancient China)
The Empty Pot - Demi (lovely illustrations; classic folk tale from China teaches importance of truthfulness)
The Greatest Power - Demi (sequel to above; lovely illustrations; classic tale teaches the importance of life)
The Emperor and the Kite - Jane Yolen, Ed Young (classic folktale, emperor's daughter and kite saves him)
The Seven Chinese Brothers - Margaret Mahy, Mou-Sien Tseng (beautiful retelling of classic folk tale)
The Seven Chinese Sisters - Kathy Tucker, Grace Lin (beautiful retelling of classic folk tale) G
Legend of Mu Lan: A Heroine of Ancient China - Wei, Cheng an Jiang (5th-6th century legend, lovely)
Magic Horse of Han Gan - Chen Jiang Hong (beautiful Tang dynasty legend of 8th century, famous painter) G

Grades 1-3: Culture

China ABCs: A Book About the People and Places of China - Holly Schroeder (alphabet book introduction)
Growing Up in Ancient China - Ken Teague (daily life of children in ancient China) G
A Coloring Book of Ancient China - Bellerophon Books (from ancient Chinese art, also emperors, empresses)
This is Hong Kong - Miroslav Sasek (delightful picture book introduces the sights, culture of 1965 Hong Kong)
Chinese New Year - David F. Marx (excellent Rookie Read About Holidays series for beginning readers)
Happy New Year! - Demi (Chinese New Year traditions, festivities; caution: Chinese zodiac, gods included)
Look What Came from China! - Miles Harvey (inventions, food, toys, tools; fascinating)
Dim Sum for Everyone! - Grace Lin (Chinese cuisine, ingredients, "little dishes", dining traditions)

Grades 4-6: Overview of the region

China: A History to 1949 - Valjean McLenighan (beautifully illustrated pre-Communist history)

Grades 4-6: Specific events

Pandas - Heather Angel (beautifully photographed; home, habitat, food, behavior; World Life Library)
Ancient China - Judith Simpson (Nature Company Discoveries series; introduction to times) G
Great Wall of China - Leonard Everett Fisher (Emperor Huang Ti and Mongol raiders, begun in 2nd cen. BC) G
Great Wall - Elizabeth Mann (began in 2nd cen. BC, China and Mongol Empire, Wonders of the World series)
You Wouldn't Want to Work on the Great Wall of China - Jacqueline Morley, David Salariva, David Antram G
Silk Route: 7000 Miles of History - John S. Major (typical journey in 700 AD from China to Constantinople) G
Genghis Kahn and the Mongol Horde - Harold Lamb (Asia and Mongolia: 1166-1227, conquered China) L

Grades 4-6: Specific events

Marco Polo for Kids - Janis Herbert (illustrated story of Marco's journey, time in China, Chinese culture) G
Adventures and Discoveries of Marco Polo - Richard J. Walsh (1254-1324, Venice to China, Kublai Khan) L
You Wouldn't Want to Be in the Forbidden City - Jacqueline Morley, David Antram (Ming dynasty, 1400s)G
First Book of the China Clippers - Louise Dickinson Rich (American clipper ships and Chinese trade, 1850s)
God's Adventurer: Hudson Taylor - Phyllis Thompson (influential missionary to China during Victorian era) S
Man Who Changed China: The Story of Sun Yat-Sen - Pearl S. Buck (overthrew Manchu dynasty 1911) L
First Book of Communist China - William Kinmond (one-party system established in 1949)

Grades 4-6: Biography

Su Dongpo - Demi (revered as China's greatest scholar and statesman, lived in 11th century)
Genghis Khan: Mongol Emperor - Judy Humphrey (Asia and Mongolia, 1166-1227) S
Marco Polo - Gian Paolo Ceserani (1274-94, Venice to China, in service to Kublai Khan) B
Hudson Taylor, Founder, China Inland Mission - Vance Christie (1832-1905, Heroes of the Faith series)
Eric Liddell - Catherine M. Swift (1924 olympic champion, missionary to China) S
Eric Liddell: Something Greater Than Gold - Janet, Geoff Bengé (1924 Olympic champion, missionary) S
Eric Liddell - Ellen W. Caughey (Olympic champion, missionary to China killed in WWII, Heroes of the Faith)
Homesick - Jean Fritz (autobio, Americans living in 1920s China from child's point of view) S
Watchman Nee, Man of Suffering - Bob Laurent (1903-72, Chinese Christian, author; imprisoned for his faith)
Gladys Aylward, Missionary in China - Sam Wellman (1904-70, English parlormaid, pre-Communist China)
Gladys Aylward: Christian Heroes Then and Now - Janet, Geoff Bengé (1937-1945 British missionary) S

Grades 4-6: Historical fiction

Lady of Ch'iao Kuo: Warrior of the South, Southern China, A.D. 531 - Laurence Yep (Royal Diaries series)
Mission to Cathay - Madeleine A. Polland (Matteo Ricci, amazing Catholic ambassador to China, 1582-1610) S
Shanghaied to China - Dave and Neta Jackson (Trailblazers, Hudson Taylor, China Inland Mission 1832-1905)
With the Allies to Peking: A Story of the Relief of the Legations - G. A. Henty (1899-1900 Boxer Rebellion) VF
Little Pear - Eleanor Frances Lattimore (boy's adventures in pre-Communist China; 3rd-4th grades) S
Young Fu of the Upper Yangtze - Elizabeth Lewis (China 1920s coppersmith's apprentice) N
Flight of the Fugitives - Dave and Neta Jackson (Trailblazers, Gladys Aylward, missionary 1937-1945) S
House of Sixty Fathers - Meindert de Jong (young boy becomes separated from family during WWII) NH
Li Lun, Lad of Courage - Carolyn Treffinger (love, courage, adventure, hardship in China) NH

Grades 4-6: Literature

Shen of the Sea: Chinese Stories for Children - Arthur Chrisman (anthology of fairy tales and folk tales) N
The Ch'i-lin Purse: A Collection of Ancient Chinese Stories - Linda Fang (10 classics from 770-221 BC)
Tales of a Chinese Grandmother: 30 Traditional Tales from China - Frances Carpenter (lyrical tales)
The Weaving of a Dream - Marilee Heyer (sumptuously illustrated traditional tale of widow, three sons)

Grades 4-6: Culture

Made in China: Ideas and Inventions from Ancient China - Suzanne Williams (Chinese contributions)
The Ancient Chinese - Virginia Schomp (People of the Ancient World series; culture, timelines)
See Inside an Ancient Chinese Town - Penelope Hughes-Stanton (town life in ancient China) B
Ancient Chinese Art: Art in History - Jane Shuter (art museum in a book, suggested projects, excellent)
Moonbeams, Dumplings, and Dragon Boats - Nina Simonds, Leslie Swartz (holidays, tales, activities, recipes)

Grades 7-9: Overview of the region

A Traveller's History of China - Stephen G. Haw (concise overview of Chinese history from earliest periods)
The Ancient Chinese World - Terry Kleeman (to 589 AD, complete political and cultural history; text)
The Asian World, 600-1500 - Roger V. Des Forges, John S. Major (China, Japan, India, Korea; text)
Twentieth Century China: A History in Documents - R. Keith Schoppa (fast-paced narrative, excellent)

Grades 7-9: Specific events

A Traveller's History of Beijing - Stephen G. Haw (concise overview of "the forbidden city" to modern day)
China's Long March: 6,000 Miles of Danger - Jean Fritz (Mao Tse-Tung, Communists; Nationalists, 1934-35) S

Grades 7-9: Biography

Messer Marco Polo - Donn Byrne (1274-94 Venice to China; in service to Kublai Khan) A
Story of Marco Polo - Noah Brooks (1274-94 Venice to China; in service to Kulai Khan) A
Secrets from the Rocks: Dinosaur Hunting with Roy Chapman Andrews - Albert Marrin (1920s-30s Mongolia)
My Several Worlds - Pearl S. Buck (raised in pre-Communist China by missionary parents) A
Flying Scotsman - Sally Magnusson (Eric Lidell, olympic champion, missionary to China) A
Nothing Daunted - Gloria Repp (Isobel Kuhn, missionary to Lisu tribe of southwestern China) S
Gladys Alyward, the Little Woman - Gladys Alyward, Christine Hunter (story of extraordinary woman)
Small Woman - Alan Burgess (fascinating story of Gladys Alyward, missionary to China, 30s-40s) B
Mao Tse-Tung and His China - Albert Marrin (history of Mao, China from 1911 to end of Cultural Revolution) G
Chinese Cinderella: True Story of an Unwanted Daughter - Adeline Yen Mah (growing up in post-war China)
Red Scarf Girl - Ji-li Jiang (powerful autobiography of young girl during Cultural Revolution, 1966-76) S
China's Son - Da Chen (growing up during Cultural Revolution, 1966-76, *Colors of the Mountain* for teens)
Heavenly Man: The Remarkable True Story of Chinese Christian Brother Yun - Brother Yun, Paul Hattaway

Grades 7-9: Historical fiction

Rebels of the Heavenly Kingdom - Katherine Paterson (Christianity, oppression of Manchus in 1851 China) A
Ties That Bind, Ties That Break - Lensey Namioka (girl, social stigmas with refusal to have her feet bound)
Boy's War - David J. Michell (American boy in China during World War II against the Japanese) S
Dragon Seed - Pearl S. Buck (Chinese peasants during WWII, poignant and heartwrenching) A
Promise - Pearl S. Buck (sequel; Chinese division rescues British soldiers trapped by Japanese in Burma)
Little Tiger in the Chinese Night - Song Nan Zhang (story of the Cultural Revolution, 1966-76) G
Safely Home - Randy Alcorn (American businessman and Chinese Christian; persecution in China)

Grades 7-9: Literature

The Normal Christian Life - Watchman Nee (Chinese Christian, 1903-72, influential house churches founder)

Grades 7-9: Culture

Science in Ancient China - George Beshore (discoveries in science, medicine, astronomy, more)
Travelers' Tales China: True Stories - Larry Habegger (anthology of short stories, covering 6000 yrs history)
Travelers' Tales Hong Kong: True Stories - Larry Habegger (anthology of 52 short stories of Hong Kong)
Travelers' Tales Tibet: True Stories - James O'Reilly (anthology of short stories by wonderful writers)
China Homecoming - Jean Fritz (1976 description and travel of Jean Fritz's homeland)
Iron and Silk - Mark Salzman (1982 China by American teaching English; poignant and funny vignettes)
Simple Chinese Cooking - Kylie Kwong (easy to follow Chinese recipes demystified for American kitchens)
The Chinese Kitchen - Eileen Yin-Fei Lo (recipes, plus history, geography of Chinese cuisine)

Grades 10-12: Overview of the region

Cambridge Illustrated History of China - Patricia Buckley Ebrey (comprehensive, readable, balanced)
Dynasties of China - Bamber Gascoigne (China's 8 greatest dynasties from 1600 BC; excellent intro; long ages)
The Search for Modern China - Jonathan D. Spence (history from 1600 to 1989 Tiananmen Square; readable)

Grades 10-12: Specific events

Records of the Grand Historian - Sima Qian, Burton Watson (historian for emperor Wu Qin, 108 BC)
Travels of Marco Polo - Marco Polo (dictated upon his return from China; some fabrications) A
When China Ruled the Seas: The Treasure Fleet of the Dragon Throne 1405-1433 - Louise Levathes
A Vision Betrayed: The Jesuits in Japan and China 1542-1742 - Andrew C. Ross (history of Catholic missions)
Memoirs of Father Ripa - Matteo Ripa (13 years in Peking in service to Emperor; early 18th cen.; fascinating)
Hungry Ghosts: Mao's Secret Famine - Jasper Becker (Great Leap Forward, 1958-62) A
Life and Death in Shanghai - Nien Cheng (ordeal surviving Cultural Revolution 1966-72)
Across China - Peter Jenkins (late 70s trip across China by *Walk Across America* author)
God's Smuggler to China - Brother David (smuggling Bibles into communist China)
Escape from China - Zhang Boli (by the only surviving student leader of 1989 Tiananmen Square; gripping)
Model Rebels - Bruce Gilley (1980s economic reform, its effect on one village in northern China)
Lost Daughters of China - Karin Evans (China's 1-child policy, abandoned infant girls, American adoption)

Grades 10-12: Biography

Marco Polo: From Venice to Xanadu - Laurence Bergreen (recreates journey; substantiates many claims)
Emperor of China: Self-Portrait of K'ang-Hsi - Jonathan Spence (emperor 1661-1772, from source docs)
Hudson Taylor's Spiritual Secret - Howard Taylor (founder, China Inland Mission; life of trust in God)
Hudson Taylor and the China Inland Mission: The Growth of a Work of God - Howard Taylor (1860-1905) E
Wild Swans: Three Daughters of China - Jung Chang (20th century China seen via lives of 3 generations)
Colors of the Mountain - Da Chen (memoirs, growing up during Cultural Revolution in ostracized family)
Sounds of the River - Da Chen (sequel to above, memoirs of university days in Communist China)

Grades 10-12: Historical fiction

Lieh Kuo Chih - Feng Meng-lung (set during the times of China's feudal lords, 770-220 BC) A
Three Kingdoms - Moss Roberts (Chinese epic; Han dynasty fall ca. 200 AD, three kingdoms which replaced it)
All Men Are Brothers - Pearl S. Buck (Buck translated this epic Chinese novel set in 12th cen. into English) A
The Scholars - Wu Ching-tzu (Chinese classic, Ming dynasty critique of Confucian civil service system)
Dream of the Red Chamber - Tsao Heueh-Chin (set in Peking from 1729 to 1737, a family history) A
Peony - Pearl S. Buck (late 19th cen. in Kaifang, China; Jewish family assimilating into Chinese culture)
Imperial Woman - Pearl S. Buck (Tzu Hsi, the last Empress of the Manchu dynasty, overthrown in 1911)
East Wind: West Wind - Pearl S. Buck (traditional wife marries Western-educated man; culture clash)
Good Earth - Pearl S. Buck (peasant family rises to riches in 1920s China; poignant and moving) P
Sons - Pearl S. Buck (Good Earth trilogy, vol. 2; the next generation, how riches change the family)
A House Divided - Pearl S. Buck (Good Earth trilogy vol. 3; the next generation; revolution, change in China)
The Mother - Pearl S. Buck (1950s China; peasant woman with ancient traditions must face communist era)
Three Daughters of Madame Liang - Pearl S. Buck (Cultural Revolution, 1966-72, how three daughters fare)
Let One Hundred Flowers Bloom - Feng Jicai (Chinese Cultural Revolution) S
Brothers: A Novel - Da Chen (two brothers take different paths, climax in Tiananmen Square; grand saga)
In the Pond - Ha Jin (set in modern Communist China; witty and insightful; captures poetic futility)
The Last Chinese Chef: A Novel - Nicole Mones (American writer in China; cultural importance of cuisine)

Grades 10-12: Culture

China: A Cultural History - Stephen G. Haw (literature, poetry, philosophy, art through China's history)
God's Promise to the Chinese - E. Nelson, R. Broadberry, G. Tongchock (Genesis in Chinese language) AG
Jesus in Beijing - David Aikman (history of Christianity in China, especially of underground house churches)
Under the Red Flag - Ha Jin (short stories of life under strict Communist rule, by Chinese emigrant)
River Town: Two Years on the Yangtze - Peter Hessler (1996-97, American teaching English in China; lovely)
Oracle Bones: A Journey Through Time in China - Peter Hessler (varied life in modern China through stories)

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Eastern Europe

Resources for all ages

Historical Atlas of Central Europe - Paul Robert Magocsi (chronological maps beginning 400 AD to present)
My Secret Camera - Frank Dabba Smith, Mendel Grossman (silent suffering in Lodz Ghetto, Poland, WWII) VP

Grades 1-3: Specific events

Wenceslas - Geraldine McCaughrean (Christmas carol based on historical Wenceslas Duke of Bohemia d. 929)
Good King Wenceslas - John M. Neale, Tim Ladwig (Christmas carol legend, Christian Duke of Bohemia)
Castle Dracula - Barbara Knox (built to defend against Ottoman Turks; Dracula: Vlad Dracul, ruled 1441-76)
Passage to Freedom - Ken Mochizuki (Sugihara, 1940 Japanese consul in Lithuania, saved 10,000 Jews)

Grades 1-3: Literature

Way Meat Loves Salt: A Cinderella Tale from the Jewish Tradition - Nina Jaffe (exquisite, set in Poland)
It Could Always Be Worse - Margot Zemach (Eastern European folktale on finding contentment)