

The history teacher displays a mastery of many talents, not least of which is the ability to perform a continuous balancing act of books. This feat is no small challenge, as we consider a variety of authors, contour for specific audiences, grapple with bombardments of promotional materials, and accommodate inundations of institutional and governmental requirements—only for the process to begin anew with the next incoming class. The results, however, seem miraculous when we see the spark of discovery flash in the eyes of our students.

Books, which frequently form the core of our teaching, are at the heart of this issue: John H. Bickford III and Theresa Byas evaluate the different representations of Martin Luther King Jr. in tradebooks aimed at younger readers, while Mark Pearcy analyzes the remarkably similar depictions of the outbreak of the U.S. Civil War in textbooks for more advanced readers. Peter Conolly-Smith zeroes in on one popular U.S. history textbook to canvass how it has changed—for better or worse—with each new edition. Jordan M. Reed frames the textbook as a form of pedagogical technology in its own right, whether through traditional print versions or the ever-growing digital field of open educational resources. Dave Neumann then takes us behind the scenes of the intricate textbook adoption process for grades K-8 under California’s State Board of Education. Finally, Kevin Vanzant and Summer Cherland each tackle the concept of narrative itself, with innovative methods on how the narrative structure can be mined for even more historical learning opportunities.

We hope you and your students enjoy the possibilities presented in this edition of The History Teacher, a special-focus issue on Tradebooks, Textbooks, and Narrative.
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