

Why America: The Last Best Hope

American History courses have traditionally depended upon a printed, encyclopedia-type textbook to help convey information to students. In reality, these massive books are rarely even read by students. They also suffer from what is commonly known as the “mentioning syndrome” where every fact, biography, date, trend and fad are inserted in check-list fashion but with little context or development. Little wonder that surveys and assessments demonstrate there is a longstanding and pervasive problem of historical ignorance and indifference among American students. In fact, in no other subject do a majority of students register so little knowledge of a subject taught in school.

We are called [Team HOPE](#), History Opens Eyes, and propose *America: The Last Best Hope* and its online companion curriculum, called the Roadmap, as a solution. Team HOPE consists of the author, Former Secretary of Education Dr. William J. Bennett, a group of recipients of the [Milken Educator Award](#), and Thomas Nelson Publishing. We have joined together because we believe that this unique curriculum package has the potential to shape the future of history education.

Our vision is curriculum adoptions, *Last Best Hope* in school libraries, homeschool parents using *Last Best Hope*, history teachers reading *Last Best Hope* to inform their instruction, and college professors teaching survey courses with *Last Best Hope*.

This very ambitious plan is based on two principles.

- First; Students can learn and enjoy history by reading it. *Last Best Hope* does not look or read like a textbook. In *Last Best Hope*, history is drama, romance, comedy, mystery, action, yes the tragedies, and yes the triumphs. A panel of [national experts](#) and [reviews](#) report that this is a history textbook that students will actually read. Significantly, *Last Best Hope* has been described as a balanced, comprehensive narrative about our country’s people and events.
- Second; Talented teachers can write curriculum for other teachers. The [Roadmap](#) was developed by award- winning history teachers and designed to support and extend *Last Best Hope*. It also capitalizes on the digital revolution which has transformed society into an information rich environment where the world’s libraries, archives, and museums are literally a mouse-click away. Sometimes, though, in an information-rich society, there is too much information. Thus, the Roadmap aims to help both teachers and students maximize their time and effort. Team HOPE makes sense of the vast amount of information, by prescreening and organizing reliable and relevant web links and sharing lessons that emulate an exciting history classroom. Because the curriculum is completely online, they are also a living set of materials and will be continually improved and updated.

From the perspective of a recent college graduate, we heard, "I want to wish you continued success in this noble endeavor. Hopefully, it will begin to revitalize interest in history and replace those boring textbooks I used to read. No one can resist a good story. And America has a great story to tell. Our students deserve it."

To use an historical analogy, we are calling it a revolution. Just as our Founding Fathers helped shape our country, we invite you join Team HOPE and our "revolution" for all the students who deserve an exciting history education. We invite you to explore this sampler web site for much more information and also the resources for Volume I, Chapter 3. [Dr. Rex Bolinger](#), Team HOPE Project Director, is also available for questions and guidance how to adopt *Last Best Hope* for your curriculum.

There is no time like the present to get students excitable and knowledgeable about the past. We look forward to your participation and ideas.