

28<sup>th</sup> December

Memory verse:

**To every thing there is a season,  
and a time to every purpose under the heaven.**

Ecclesiastes 3:1

This verse is the beginning of a beautiful piece of Bible poetry which is worth learning complete and very good for children to say out loud together. Younger children can learn the words in bold.

Something to write

There is a simplified version of the story below in the Optional Resources files for today. I have highlighted some of the harder words below for you to look up in your dictionary.



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Thomas Babington Macaulay, historian, poet, essayist and former governor of India died on 28<sup>th</sup> December 1859 aged 59.

Thomas Babington Macaulay grew up in Clapham, where his parents had moved, partly to be close to friends such as William Wilberforce. A group of Christians lived in Clapham who became known as the “Clapham Sect.” The term “sect” was used as a slightly sarcastic witticism because although the “Clapham Sect” had no unorthodox or sectarian beliefs they were such a force for good in the nation that they seemed to turn things upside down.

Thomas was an unusual child.

From the time that he was three years old he read incessantly, for the most part lying on the rug before the fire, with his book on the ground, and a piece of bread and butter in his hand . . . His memory retained without out effort the phraseology of the book which he had been last engaged on, and he talked . . . “quite printed words,” which produced an effect that appeared formal, and often, no doubt, exceedingly droll [amusing, funny]. [For instance when] ...his father took him on a visit to Lady Waldegrave at Strawberry Hill. . . a servant who was waiting upon the company in the great gallery spilt some hot coffee over his legs. The hostess was all kindness and compassion, and when, after a while, she asked how he was feeling, the little fellow looked up in her face and replied: “Thank you, madam, the agony is abated.”

While still the merest child he was sent... to Mr. Greaves . . . school for boys . . . Mrs. Macaulay explained to Tom that he must learn to study without the solace of bread and butter, to which he replied: “Yes, mama, industry shall be my bread and attention my butter.” But, as a matter of fact, no one ever crept more unwillingly to school. Each several afternoon he made piteous entreaties to be excused returning after dinner, and was met by the unvarying formula: “No, Tom, if it rains cats and dogs, you shall go.” His reluctance to leave home had more than one side to it. Not only did his heart stay behind, but the regular lessons of the class took him away from occupations which in his eyes were infinitely more delightful and important . . . [For instance] he took it into his head to write a compendium of Universal History . . . and he really contrived to give a tolerably connected view of the leading events from the Creation to the present time, filling about a quire<sup>1</sup> of paper . . .<sup>2</sup>

1 24 sheets of paper.

2 George Otto Trevelyan, *Life and Letters of Lord Macaulay* (London,1876)

At the age of seven, Thomas was already engaged in one of the activities that would make him famous – history writing. He had taught himself how to do it merely by reading everything he could lay hands on in a house well stocked with good books. As a child he also wrote stories, poems and legends. In later life he wrote one of the most famous poems in the English language. You will find his poem, *Horatius*, in today's Optional Resources files. Thomas also went on to do an immense amount of good in India, establishing English language education and carrying out many other reforms.



Suppose *you* wanted to write a “compendium of Universal History from the Creation to the present time” how would you set about it? It may surprise you to know that you can do it – even if you are only quite young! It is easier than you might think and when you have finished you will have a good idea of the proportions of history. Here's how to do it:

First of all draw yourself a rough time line. The earth is about 6000 years old so divide your line into six segments one for each thousand years. Mark in the divide between BC and AD and number the segments back to 4000BC and forward to 2000AD Now decide on the most important event in each of those thousand years. For example, you would probably consider the creation of the world followed by the fall of mankind to be the most important event in the first 1000 years. You can use your Bible to find the most important events for each of the successive 1000 year periods in the BC section especially if you can find a copy which has Archbishop Ussher's dates in the marginal information. You may want to include an additional event in some of the segments such as the Flood of Noah's day. Try not to get bogged down, however, and restrict yourself to one or two events at most. With the first AD segment comes the birth, death and resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ. When you have put that on to you line you could choose one other event or simply note the spread of the church. Look at some history books and decide on the most important event between AD1000 and AD2000. This will be the hardest part as we are so close to it all that it seems as if more has happened in the last 1000 years than ever before. Be strict though and do not choose more events from the last thousand years than you have selected from any of the others.

Now you can write your Compendium of Universal History. Write as clearly as you can about each of the events you have chosen. Try to explain why the event you have chosen is important. If you can write a few sentences linking each event so much the better. Make what you write as interesting to read as you can.<sup>3</sup>

Historians have to consult sources; you did that when you read the Bible to get your facts. Historians have to select their material; you did that when you chose which topics you would include. Historians have to evaluate their material; you did that when you explained why the events were important. Historians have to communicate what they have to say clearly to their readers and interest them in the subject; you did that too. So, if you did this exercise you are a historian!

#### Something to listen to:

We have dipped into the diary of Samuel Pepys (1633-1703) before.<sup>4</sup> His diaries give us a picture of what it was like to live in seventeenth century London. On **28<sup>th</sup> December** 1660 Samuel Pepys had a quiet day. He wrote in his diary:

Office day. There all the morning. Dined at home alone with my wife, and so staid within all the afternoon and evening; at my **lute**, with great pleasure, and so to bed with great content.

<sup>3</sup> Any child who can write six simple sentences could do this activity with help. Older children can expand on it, always keeping the same number of events and about the same number of words for each millennium for balance.

<sup>4</sup> See lesson for 4<sup>th</sup> May.

Samuel Pepys obviously enjoyed playing his lute. The lute is an ancient string instrument that was very popular in Pepys time although it went out of fashion later. Nowadays people have rediscovered this beautiful instrument and there are many excellent lutenists or lute-players. Try to listen to some lute music played by Paul O'dette or Nigel North for instance, their recordings can be found easily on the internet.

### Something to make:

You can make your own lute out of cardboard. It will not sound quite as good but it will show you how the instrument works.

You will need:

A large cereal box

a cardboard tube

scissors

6 elastic bands

duct tape

paper doily (you can fold and cut some paper of your own if you do not have a doily)



Cut a hole on the front of the box for the sound hole.

Centre the cardboard tube on one end of the box and draw round it. Cut out a hole.

Make small cuts around one end of the tube.

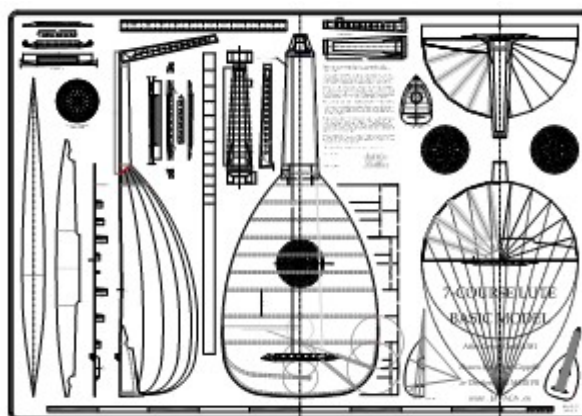
Insert the bottom of the tube into the hole at the top of box.

Fold back the cut ends inside the box and secure with tape. Reach through the centre hole to do this. To make the decorative “rose” that all lutes have, stick the doily or part of it (cut to shape) over the hole in the box.

Make some small cuts or nicks in the top of the tube.

Wrap rubber bands from the top of the tube to the bottom of the box, securing them in the nicks you made. Tape in place.

Your lute works like a lute but does not look very lute shaped. A lute shaped lute would be a very good addition to your dressing up box for any costume from the middle ages and Tudor times and on up to the times of Samuel Pepys himself. Look at the shape of the lute in the picture above. Although the rounded back would be hard to make, the pear shaped front may be achievable by adding a cardboard pear shaped surface to your box lute. Experiment and see what you can do. The picture on the right<sup>5</sup> is a luthier's (lutemaker's) plan for making a real lute. You can see the shape clearly in the centre of the plan.



<sup>5</sup> By kind permission of Jan van Cappelle

<https://thedutchluthier.wordpress.com/books-and-publications/instrument-plans/> 10/11/20