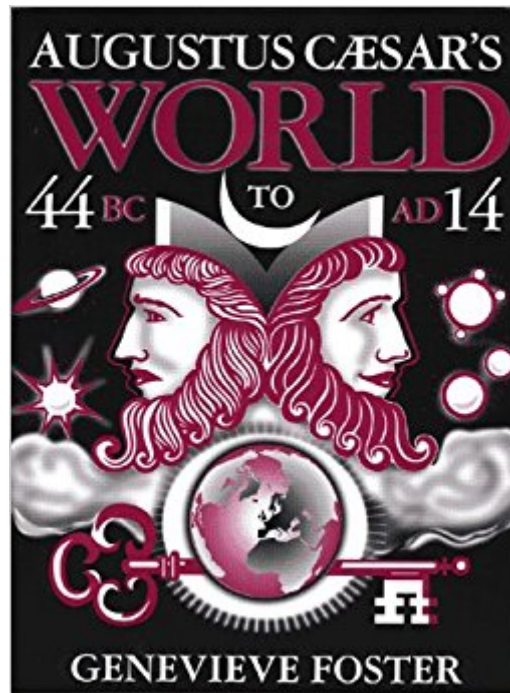




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# Augustus Caesar's World



## Synopsis

Considered the innovator of "horizontal history," Genevieve Foster became frustrated when her two school-aged children complained about the boring presentation of history in their school texts. This frustration led to Foster's first book, *George Washington's World* (1941). In her unique approach, Foster weaves a story of the world around her central character; rather than focusing exclusively on geo-political events, as most textbooks do; she includes stories of scientific discovery and invention, music, literature, art, and religion. She has a keen intuition for stories that will especially delight and amuse her youthful audience. In *Augustus Caesar's World*, Foster traces the seven major civilizations Rome, Greece, Israel, Egypt, China, India, and Persia from 4500 B.C. to the time of Augustus Caesar in 44 B.C. and culminating in 14 A.D. Within this timeframe readers will learn not only the stories of Julius Caesar, Cleopatra, and Marc Antony, but also the historian Livy and how Virgil came to write the *Aeneid*. Foster will then take her readers all over the world to learn what was happening at this same time in China, Persia, India and so on. Foster's detailed pen and ink drawings are fresh and appealing, and her illustrated timelines give a clear sense of chronology, enriching the engaging text. An all-time customer favorite!

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

"Nothing is more critical, I believe, than that children growing up in these critical explosive days should be given an understanding of American history as a part of the history of the world. Every year this grows more urgent, as increasingly rapid communication integrates world events more closely and the impact of foreign affairs on our own lives becomes more serious and immediate."

Genevieve Foster wrote this nearly fifty years ago. It resonates with perhaps more truth today. As a

result of this clarion call we have sold many of her enduring "World" titles because of the timeless nature of her books. Her writing style is clear, concise and fluid with her greatest strength as a storyteller being her ability to bring her readers right into the minds and times of her characters.

The portions on Caesar and Roman history were quite good. We used those as read-alouds in our study of Ancient Rome. Ordinarily, I would have been thrilled at having so many historical tie-ins to what else was happening at the same time. But the history happening in other places felt too jarringly inserted -- like **\*\*long\*\*** interruptions -- and while some did tie in, the overall effect was of unnecessary tangents. Since I was reading aloud, I could read ahead and mark the portions for reading/skipping. The illustrations in this book were superb -- really, really good. We'll keep this book. This is a fine history-of-the-world for children to read. It is far more interesting, in-depth, and readable than most history texts.

One of the great bonuses of parenting is that you get to introduce books to your own kids that wowed you when you were a kid yourself. Sometimes your children love the books as much as you did; sometimes they don't. But in either case, you get to revisit with old friends and see how much you and they have changed and retained over the years. Some of my best book friends when I was a kid were the wonderful illustrated histories of Genevieve Foster, and the one I loved most was *\*Augustus Caesar's World\**. I recently introduced it (and a few others: *\*Washington's World\**, *\*Lincoln's World\**, *\*John Smith's World\**, *\*Columbus's World\**) to my 8 year old, and he's discovering the magic in them I did so many years ago. There are three qualities to *\*Augustus Caesar's World\** that make it so entertaining and educating. The first is that it's incredibly well written. Foster has the gift of breathing life into historical accounts. In reading about Cicero's execution or the life of Siddhartha, for example, one experiences all the dreadful waste of the one and the liberating wonder of the other. Second, the book is wonderfully illustrated by Foster herself. The illustrations are themselves instructive: along with individual scenarios, she provides time-lines, illustrated most fetchingly, that conveniently encapsulate events and persons. Finally, Foster's histories are really world histories. In *\*Augustus Caesar's World\**, she focuses on the events leading up to the end of the Roman Republic and the establishment of the Empire (roughly, 44BCE to 14 CE). But she doesn't limit herself to Roman history; she also examines events taking place across the world during the time frame in which she's working: the druids in Gaul, Hindus in India, Confucius in China, Mayans in the Americas, and so on. She even includes intellectual history: the origins of Christianity and Buddhism, the Upanishadic culture of the Hindus, etc. Her aim is to give

the reader a wide angle of vision, and she succeeds wonderfully. I'm grateful that Foster's histories are being republished. They don't patronize kids by resorting to silly gimmicks that supposedly make learning more palatable (or at least more marketable). Instead, they make history fascinating the old fashioned way: by showing that it's a great story in its own right. They're a great discovery for my son, and a great rediscovery for me.

I checked this out from the library to research it as a possible source for our homeschooling library and have had trouble putting it down. It reads like a story and I love the way Foster inserts chapters that let you know what else is going on in the world at the time. My 5 year old son asked me to start reading it aloud to him after learning it was about Ancient Rome, and I was hesitant, concerned that it would be too far above him. But with some summarizing on my part at the end of every few paragraphs and asking him questions to see how well he was tracking, I discovered he really was understanding more than I thought and he was soon hooked. He didn't even want me to stop reading when he got up to use the restroom -- he hollered from down the hall, "Just keep reading loud, Mom, and I can still hear you. I want you to read all the way to the end!" Of course, we didn't finish the whole book in that sitting, but he's asked for it every day since. I look forward to checking out Foster's other histories.

I read this to an 8 year-old for home school history lessons. We really enjoyed the book. The story of Antony and Cleopatra especially interested her. There are pictures of major people for each section. I photo-copied some of them for my daughter to colour while I read. It gave her a quiet activity related to the story while she listened to the reading. Mrs. Foster wanted to give an overview of other events around the world in this era. It includes a survey of major world religions and events in chapters between the main action of the story. This made the story a little choppy and took away from the main narrative, but overall, the book was still very good.

I was thrilled to be able to order this book through . I became acquainted with Genevieve Foster years ago when I got one of her books through a school sale. She puts things together differently than does anyone else of whom I know, and helps to make history come alive.

This book covers information about the world's religions including, Rome, Greece, Israel, Egypt, China, India and Persia, from 4,500 BC. It also describes Augustus Caesar's life and how the religions of the world impacted and had an impact on Roman expansion of the world. I enjoyed the

author's way of relating history through storytelling; which makes the information come alive and it is easier to remember. I also enjoyed learning about Herod the Great and his relationship with Antony of Rome. I had the feeling that the authors opinion about eternity is based on the golden rule of: do unto others as you would have them do unto you and that by doing that, you will obtain eternal life. She observed that this was the basic premise of all world religions. This view of eternal life is not biblically based. Based on what I read in this book, I think that the author had a difficult time leaving her opinion about religion out of the narrative.

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