

# Introduction

The idea for *Facts Plus* came on one of the most frustrating days of my career, as I attempted to teach reference skills using a standard almanac. It was a frustrating day for my students, too, as they struggled to extract information from multi-columned tables with small type, abbreviations and numbers carried to several decimal places.

I couldn't blame them. The almanac was truly too difficult for them. As I analyzed the problem, an idea came. Why not a simplified almanac, "user-friendly" enough for students, yet authoritative enough for people of any age? It seemed a practical idea!

That was the beginning of years of research and writing that led to the publication of *Facts Plus*. The more I read and did research for the book, the more I realized that truth can be stranger than fiction. Not only are facts fascinating and useful, they are difficult to remember accurately and may change over time! A good reference book, kept handy, can be an extension of the mind, freeing it for problem solving and creativity.

*Facts Plus* is more than a collection of information. It presents in a concise and understandable format the basic core of information taught in schools and necessary for comprehending books and newspapers intended for the general public. It's arranged to provide a foundation and framework to help learners organize their growing knowledge.

My students use *Facts Plus* as an authentic desk reference. With instant access to maps, charts, statistics and details, they begin to discover that *they* are capable of finding the answer to almost any question they have in a book or at the library. They gain confidence to use reference books of all types. That's power! That's learning *how* to learn.

## **Students! Improve your grades and impress your teachers!**

- Keep *Facts Plus* in your desk or study area at home as a quick source of information for reports, writing, math or other homework.
- Look up answers to questions as they occur to you. Take advantage of an easy opportunity to extend your knowledge.
- Impress others by learning fascinating facts that few people know.
- Use the maps to locate places you hear or read about.
- Review *Facts Plus* to check how well you remember what you've already learned.

## **Parents & grandparents! Model good habits and invest in the education of those you love!**

- Keep *Facts Plus* and other reference sources handy to locate information and answer questions as they arise in the family.
- Play quiz games and challenge each other.
- Teach children to rely on *Facts Plus* and other reference resources rather than on you for answers and help with homework. Assist them initially in using the index, finding the right page, and scanning for information.
- Demonstrate the value you place on learning by giving *Facts Plus* to someone special.

## **Teachers! Conserve planning time and tailor lessons to your students' needs!**

- Keep a copy of *Facts Plus* near your desk. Consult it for ideas and fascinating tidbits of information as you plan units and activities. Use it for mini-lessons to review or briefly introduce a topic. It can help you teach students how to do an interview, take a standardized test, or write a report. Have students use addresses to write letters, statistics to create math problems, or web addresses to investigate a subject further.

- Use it for instant reference during classroom discussions. Take advantage of “teachable moments” or current events when student interest is high.
- Build background for the enjoyment and understanding of literature. If students are reading a story set in New York City, for example, look up the height of the Empire State Building and the Statue of Liberty. Find the population. Translate the statistics into a mental picture of the traffic, the skyscrapers, the excitement!
- Keep eager learners busy and happy by challenging them to memorize for extra credit or a reward. The preamble to the Constitution, the countries of South America, and the manual alphabet are some possible challenges.
- Use *Facts Plus* as a springboard to the library or Internet. Native tribes, notable people, and national parks have individual articles in the encyclopedia, for example.
- Order the *Facts Plus Activity Book* for ready-to-use reference activities, including graphs, time lines, puzzles, and games. Students learn to predict, generalize, hypothesize and look for patterns.
- Consider ordering a class set of *Facts Plus* so all or several students can use it at once. Quantity discounts are available to educators ordering 25 or more copies. See [www.SusanCAnthony.com](http://www.SusanCAnthony.com).

**Businesspeople! Time is money! When you need facts, you need them immediately!**

- Carry *Facts Plus* in your briefcase and use it for quick information as you plan or write during spare moments that might otherwise be wasted.
- Keep it handy at your desk to easily verify statistics or details that you might otherwise guess or work around.
- Use it to update your information or to brush up on the basics of something you haven’t thought about for awhile.

Countless sources were consulted during the preparation of *Facts Plus*. Primary sources of information were used whenever possible. Facts were carefully checked and cross-checked for accuracy, and specialists were asked to comment on sections relating to their areas of expertise. Although I cannot guarantee the accuracy of every fact in this book, I have made a great effort to locate and use the best and most reliable sources of information available at the time of publication. Statistics may vary from source to source and even from year to year in the same source. Contact us if you have specific questions concerning facts or sources.

A selected bibliography on page 230 lists the resources from which substantive information was taken. There is also a list of web sites that can be consulted for updated information. See pages 227–229 for explanatory notes by page number and sources of specific facts. Information in the notes can be accessed through the index.

To ensure student success in using *Facts Plus*, an exhaustive index containing more than 3,800 entries appears on pages 231–248. Maps, charts, text and even notes are indexed for easy access. Although it would be impossible to include every fact of importance in any single book, all facts which are included in *Facts Plus* can be easily found using the index.

More thanks than I can express go to Lyle Wheeler, Beverly Wheeler, Dennis Weston, and numerous friends and family members for their assistance and encouragement through the years. Thanks to my students and colleagues in the Anchorage School District and to countless home school leaders and parents. Special thanks to artists Pam and Curtiss Clifton, Phyllis Hamann, and Joe Nedland. My sincere gratitude extends to others too numerous to mention who offered ideas, encouragement and support during the long years it took to make *Facts Plus* a reality.