

Major Events in World History

This Quick Prep section provides a handy reference to key facts on a variety of topics in world history.

Time and Place	Event	Significance
40,000 b.c. Europe	Cro-Magnons appear.	Ancestors of modern humans
8000 b.c. Africa, Asia	Agriculture begins.	One of the great breakthroughs in human history, setting the stage for the development of civilizations
3100 b.c. Egypt	Upper and Lower Egypt unite.	The Kingdom of Egypt, ruled by pharaohs, began a 3,000-year period of unity and cultural continuity.
3000 b.c. Mesopotamia	Civilization emerges in Sumer.	One of the world's first civilizations
2500 b.c. Indus Valley	Planned cities arise.	Beginning of the Indus Valley civilization; many features of modern Indian culture can be traced to this early civilization.
2350 b.c. Mesopotamia	Sargon of Akkad builds an empire.	World's first empire, which extended from the Mediterranean coast in the west to present-day Iran in the east
2000 b.c. China	Xia Dynasty emerges.	This was the first Chinese dynasty. Along the Huang He, farming settlements grew into cities.
1700 b.c. Asian steppes	Indo-Europeans begin migrations.	The Indo-Europeans moved into Europe, the Middle East, and India, spreading their languages and changing cultures.
1532 b.c. China	Shang Dynasty begins.	The first Chinese civilization, which arose along the Huang He
1200 b.c. Mexico	Olmec culture arises.	Oldest known civilization in the Americas
850 b.c. Assyria	Assyria builds an empire.	Using military force to conquer and rule, the Assyrians established an empire that included most of the old centers of power in Southwest Asia and Egypt.
800 b.c. Greece	Greek city-states arise.	Led to the development of several political systems, including democracy
550 b.c. Persia	Cyrus builds the Persian Empire.	Characterized by tolerance and wise government
500 b.c. Rome	Romans establish a republic.	Source of some of the most fundamental values and institutions of Western civilization
461 b.c. Greece	Age of Pericles begins.	Democratic principles and classical Greek culture flourished, leaving a legacy that endures to the present day.
334 b.c. Greece	Alexander begins to build an empire.	Conquered Persia and Egypt; extended his empire to the Indus River in India; resulted in a blending of Greek, Egyptian, and Eastern customs
321 b.c. India	Mauryan Empire is established.	United north India politically for the first time
202 b.c. China	Han Dynasty replaces Qin dynasty.	Expanded China's borders; developed a system of government that lasted for centuries
27 b.c. Rome	Octavian rules Roman Empire.	Took the title of Augustus and ruled the mightiest empire of the ancient world; began the Pax Romana, a 200-year period of peace and prosperity; Roman way of life spread throughout the empire.
A.D. 29 Jerusalem	Jesus is crucified.	Christianity spread throughout the Roman Empire.
A.D. 100 South America	Moche civilization emerges.	Built an advanced society in Peru
A.D. 100s Africa	Bantu migrations begin.	Bantu speakers spread their language and culture throughout southern Africa.
A.D. 320 India	Gupta Empire begins.	A great flowering of Indian civilization, especially Hindu culture

Time and Place	Event	Significance
527 Constantinople	Justinian I becomes Byzantine emperor.	Recovered and ruled almost all the former territory of the Roman Empire; created a body of civil laws called Justinian's Code; built beautiful churches
600 Central America	Maya civilization thrives.	Built spectacular cities and developed the most advanced writing system in the ancient Americas
618 China	Tang dynasty begins.	Created a powerful empire, improved trade and agriculture, and restored the civil service bureaucracy
622 Arabia	Muhammad leaves Mecca.	The hegira (emigration) of Muhammad marked the founding of Islam, now the world's second-largest faith.
800 North America	Anasazi civilization develops.	Ancestors of the Pueblo peoples
800s–900s West Africa	Empire of Ghana thrives.	Built its wealth on the trans-Saharan gold-salt trade
814 Western Europe	Charlemagne unites much of Europe.	Established the Carolingian Empire
960 China	Sung Dynasty begins.	China became the most populous and advanced country in the world.
1095 France	Pope Urban II issues call for First Crusade.	Stimulated trade, weakened the power of the pope and feudal nobles, and left a legacy of distrust between Christians and Muslims
1192 Japan	Kamakura Shogunate begins.	First shogunate, which set the pattern for military dictators, called shoguns, to rule Japan until 1868
1200s Mexico	Aztec civilization begins.	Built the greatest empire in Mesoamerica
1200s Peru	Inca Empire begins.	The largest empire in the Americas
1209 Mongolia	Genghis Khan begins Mongol conquests.	Built the largest unified land empire in world history
1215 England	King John agrees to Magna Carta.	The Magna Carta contributed to modern concepts of jury trials and legal rights.
1235 Africa	Sundiata founds Mali Empire.	Became a powerful center of commerce and trade in West Africa
1279 China	Kublai Khan conquers Sung Dynasty.	Completed the conquest of China and encouraged trade; Chinese ideas then began to influence Western civilization.
1300 Italy	Renaissance begins.	Revival of classical studies, revolutionized art, literature, and society
1337 France	Hundred Years' War begins.	Ended the Middle Ages
1347 Italy	Bubonic plague spreads to Europe.	Killed nearly one-third of Europe's population and disrupted medieval society
1368 China	Ming Dynasty begins.	Ended Mongol rule of China and made China the dominant power in the region
1453 Turkey	Constantinople falls to Turks.	One of the most influential cities of the 15th century, Constantinople became part of the Ottoman Empire, and its name was changed to Istanbul.
1492 Americas	Columbus sails to Hispaniola.	Opened the way for European settlement of the Americas
1517 Germany	Martin Luther begins Reformation.	Led to the founding of Protestant churches
1526 India	Babur founds Mughal Empire.	Brought Turks, Persians, and Indians together in a vast empire
1529 Anatolia	Suleiman the Magnificent rules Ottoman Empire.	The Ottoman Empire reached its greatest size and grandeur.
1603 Japan	Tokugawa Shogunate begins.	Unified Japan and began a 200-year period of isolation and prosperity
1607 North America	English settle at Jamestown.	England's first permanent settlement in North America

Time and Place	Event	Significance
1644 China	Manchus found Qing dynasty.	The Manchus ruled China for 260 years and brought Taiwan, Chinese Central Asia, Mongolia, and Tibet into China.
1700s Europe	Enlightenment thought develops.	Philosophers promoted ideas about representative government and individual rights that helped to spur democratic revolutions.
1775 North America	American Revolution breaks out.	American revolutionaries threw off British rule and established a successful republic—the United States.
1789 France	French Revolution begins.	The French Revolution ended the Old Regime and brought on the Reign of Terror.
1805–1812 France	Napoleon conquers most of Europe.	Built the largest European empire since the Roman Empire
1821 Mexico	Mexico declares independence.	Mexico and many other Latin American countries fought colonial rule and gained their independence about this time.
1848 Europe	Revolutions sweep Europe.	A system of nation-states became established in Europe.
1854 Japan	Treaty of Kanagawa gives U.S. access to two ports.	Japan ended its isolation from the rest of the world.
1865 United States	Civil War ends.	The United States remained one nation and slavery ended.
1871 Germany	Franco-Prussian War ends.	The final stage in the unification of Germany
1884–1885 Germany	Berlin Conference takes place.	European powers divided among them almost the entire continent of Africa, which remained largely colonized until the 1960s.
1911 China	Qing dynasty is overthrown.	Ended thousands of years of imperial rule and made China a republic under Sun Yat-sen.
1914 Europe	World War I begins.	Became the largest war the world had ever seen
1917 Russia	Russian Revolution occurs.	Ended the rule of the czars and ushered in the first communist government
1939 Europe	Germany invades Poland.	The beginning of World War II, which caused more death and destruction than any other conflict in history
1945 Japan	United States drops atomic bombs.	Japan surrendered, and World War II ended.
1945 United States	United Nations charter is signed.	With 191 member nations, the UN is now the world's leading peacekeeping organization.
1949 China	Chinese Communists take over China.	China split into two nations, one on the island of Taiwan and one on the mainland. On the mainland, Communist China expanded its territory and reshaped its economy based on Marxist socialism.
1957 Vietnam	Vietnam War begins.	The war continued until 1975, deeply divided Americans, and ended with North Vietnamese Communists taking over South Vietnam.
1990 Germany	Berlin Wall falls.	Germany became unified again.
1991 Soviet Union	Soviet Union breaks up.	The Cold War ended.
2001 United States	September 11 Terrorist Attacks	Terrorists attacked the United States, crashing planes into strategic targets, killing thousands of civilians.

Major Eras in World History

The term *era*, or *age*, refers to a broad period of time characterized by a shared pattern of life. Eras and ages typically do not have exact starting and ending points. Because the historical development of different regions of the world is varied, no single listing of eras applies to all of world history. This chart applies primarily to Western civilization.

Era and Dates	Description
Stone Age (2.5 million–3000 B.C.)	This long prehistoric period is often divided into two parts: the Old Stone Age, or Paleolithic Age, and the New Stone Age, or Neolithic Age. The Paleolithic Age lasted from about 2.5 million to 8000 B.C. During this time, hominids made and used stone tools and learned to control fire. The Neolithic Age began about 8000 B.C. and ended about 3000 B.C. in some areas. In this period, people learned to polish stone tools, make pottery, grow crops, and raise animals. The introduction of agriculture, a major turning point in human history, is called the Neolithic Revolution.
Bronze Age (3000–1200 B.C.)	People began using bronze, rather than stone and copper, to make tools and weapons. The Bronze Age began in Sumer about 3000 B.C. when Sumerian metalworkers found that they could melt together certain amounts of copper and tin to make bronze. The first civilizations emerged during the Bronze Age.
Iron Age (1500–1000 B.C. to the present day)	The use of iron to make tools and weapons became widespread. The Iron Age is the last technological stage in the Stone-Bronze-Iron ages sequence.
Classical Greece (2000 B.C.–300 B.C.)	Greek culture developed, rose to new heights, and spread to other lands. The Greek city-states established the first democratic governments. Greek scientists made advances in mathematics, medicine, and other fields. The Greeks produced great works of drama, poetry, sculpture, architecture, and philosophy that still influence people today.
Roman Empire (500 B.C.–A.D. 500)	At its height, the Roman Empire united much of Europe, the north coast of Africa, and a large part of the Middle East. The Romans admired Greek art, literature, architecture, and science, and so they adopted and preserved much of Greek culture. The Romans also created their own legacy with outstanding achievements in engineering, architecture, the arts, and law. The Romans spread Christianity throughout Europe, and their official language—Latin—gave rise to French, Italian, Spanish, and other Romance languages. Western civilization has its roots in Greco-Roman culture.
Middle Ages (500–1200)	The West Roman Empire fell to Germanic conquerors who formed kingdoms out of former Roman provinces. A new political and military system called feudalism became established. Nobles were granted the use of lands that belonged to their king in exchange for their loyalty, military service, and protection of the peasants who worked the land. Western Europe became divided into feudal states. The Middle Ages was the time of castles and knights.
Renaissance and Reformation (1300–1600)	The Renaissance was a period of rebirth of learning and the arts based on a revival of classical study. The study of Greek classics gave rise to an intellectual movement called humanism, which emphasized human potential and achievements rather than religious concerns. The works of the Italian artists Leonardo da Vinci and Michelangelo and the English dramatist William Shakespeare represent the cultural height of the Renaissance. The Reformation was a movement for religious reform that led to the founding of Protestant churches. These churches rejected the authority of the pope, and the power of the Roman Catholic Church declined.
Exploration and Colonization 1400–1800	The monarchs of Europe financed voyages around the world, motivated by the desire for riches and the hope of spreading Christianity. Seeking spices and converts, European explorers made long sea journeys to the East. Searching for a shorter sea route to Asia, Christopher Columbus landed in the Caribbean islands and opened up the New World to European colonization. The establishment of colonies and trading networks led to a great worldwide cultural exchange, the devastation of Native American cultures in the New World, and the enslavement of millions of Africans.
Revolution and Independence 1700–1900	Movements toward democracy and nationalism affected most countries in the Western world. These movements sparked the Revolutionary War in America, which resulted in the independence of the British colonies and the birth of the United States. They also sparked the ten-year French Revolution. Many Latin American nations fought colonial rule and gained their independence. In Europe, great empires fell and a system of nation-states became established.

Era and Dates	Description
Industrial Revolution 1700–1900	<p>The spread of power-driven machines sparked the rapid growth of industry in Great Britain, the United States, and continental Europe. People began working in large factories, rather than homes and small workshops, to produce goods. Industrialization made possible a great increase in the production of manufactured goods. A worldwide system of markets developed as industrial nations imported raw materials and exported manufactured goods. Industrialization dramatically transformed people’s lives. People moved from rural areas to cities, and the middle class increased in size. European nations divided up most of Africa, acquiring colonies to feed their factories with raw materials.</p>
Warring World 1900–1945	<p>The first half of the 1900s was marked by warfare on a larger scale than ever before. Rivalries among European powers led to a system of military alliances that drew Europe and other regions into World War I (1914–1918). The Allies, which included France, Britain, Russia, Italy, and the United States, defeated the Central Powers, which included Germany, Austria-Hungary, and the Ottoman Empire. The victorious Allies dictated harsh peace terms that left hard feelings and set the stage for World War II. World War I also helped ignite the Russian Revolutions of 1917, which replaced czarist rule with the world’s first communist government. The expansionism of Germany and Japan led to World War II (1939–1945). Germany, Japan, Italy, and other Axis powers were defeated by Britain, the Soviet Union, the United States, and the other Allies. The war cost millions of lives and left Europe and Japan economically and socially devastated.</p>
Cold War 1946–1991	<p>After World War II, countries with two conflicting economic systems—capitalism and communism—competed for worldwide influence and power. The major players in this struggle, the United States and the Soviet Union, each tried to win other nations to its side. They used military, economic, and humanitarian aid to extend their control over other countries. Each sought to prevent the other superpower from gaining influence. The rivalry was mainly diplomatic and strategic and hence was called the Cold War. However, it led both the United States and the Soviet Union to become involved in military actions around the world. The rivalry dominated world politics for four decades, until the Soviet Union broke up in 1991.</p>

Major Empires

Major Empire	Approximate Dates	Key Achievements
Akkadian (c. 2350–2150 B.C.)	• Mesopotamia	• Became the world's first empire.
Alexandrian (336–322 B.C.)	• Greece, Persia, Egypt, northwest India	• Spread Greek culture.
Assyrian (c. 850–612 B.C.)	• Southwest Asia, Egypt	• Built one of the ancient world's largest libraries at Nineveh, the largest city of its day.
Athenian	• Greece	• Developed democratic principles and classical culture.
Austro-Hungarian (late 1600s–1918)	• Central Europe	• Became known for its cultural life, especially its great composers.
Aztec (1325–1521)	• Mesoamerica	• Built pyramids and developed a pictorial written language.
British (1600s–1900s)	• United Kingdom, Americas, Africa, Asia	• Held one-fourth of the world's land and spread British culture to one-fourth of the world's people.
Byzantine (395–1453)	• Parts of southern and eastern Europe, northern Africa, and the Middle East	• Preserved Greek culture, Roman customs, and Christianity and built the Hagia Sophia.
Egyptian (2780–1075 B.C.)	• Egypt, Nubia, parts of Syria and Palestine	• Built magnificent palaces, temples, and pyramids.
Ghana (800–1076)	• West Africa	• Became a center of the gold-salt trade.
Han (201 B.C.–A.D. 220)	• China	• Established a centralized, bureaucratic government and unified Chinese culture.
Holy Roman (962–1806)	• Western and central Europe	• Was the strongest state in Europe until about 1100.
Inca (1400–1532)	• South America	• Built a vast empire linked by an extensive road system.
Mali (1200–1400)	• West Africa	• Became wealthy on the gold-salt trade and created an efficient government.
Maya (250–900)	• Mesoamerica	• Built pyramids and developed the most advanced writing system in the ancient Americas.
Mongol (about 1200–1294)	• Europe, Asia	• Created the largest unified land empire in history.
Mughal (1526–1700s)	• India	• Built the Taj Mahal.
Muslim (661–1171)	• Southwest Asia, North Africa	• Spread Muslim culture.
Old Babylonian (about 2000–1550 B.C.)	• Mesopotamia	• Compiled the Code of Hammurabi.
Ottoman (about 1300–1922)	• Turkey, North Africa, Southwest Asia, Southeast Europe	• Became the world's most powerful empire in the 1500s and 1600s and built architectural masterpieces.
Persian (about 550–330 B.C.)	• Fertile Crescent, Anatolia, Egypt, India	• Established a wise and tolerant government.
Roman (27 B.C.–A.D. 476)	• Europe, Mesopotamia, North Africa	• Spread Greek and Roman culture, which became the basis of Western civilization.
Songhai (1460s–1591)	• West Africa	• Gained control of trans-Saharan trade routes and built a thriving empire.

Major Religions



	Buddhism	Christianity	Hinduism	Islam	Judaism	Confucianism
Followers Worldwide*	360 million	2 billion	900 million	1.3 billion	14 million	6.3 million
Name of Deity	The Buddha did not teach a personal deity.	God	Three main gods: Brahma, Vishnu, Shiva	God (Allah)	God (Yahweh)	Confucius (viewed by many as a god)
Founder	The Buddha	Jesus Christ	No one founder	Muhammad	Abraham	Confucius
Holy Book	No one book—sacred texts, including the <i>Perfection of Wisdom Sutra</i>	Bible	No one book—sacred texts, including the Vedas, the Puranas	Qur'an	Hebrew Bible, including the Torah	the <i>Analects</i> , the Five Classics
Leadership	Buddhist monks and nuns	Clergy (priests/ministers)	Guru, Holy Man, Brahmin priest	No clergy	Rabbis	No clergy
Basic Beliefs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Persons achieve complete peace and happiness, known as nirvana, by eliminating their attachment to worldly things. •Nirvana is reached by following the Noble Eightfold Path: Right views; Right aspirations; Right speech; Right conduct; Right livelihood; Right endeavor; Right mindfulness; Right meditation. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •There is only one God, who watches over and cares for his people. •Jesus Christ was the son of God. He died to save humanity from sin. His death and resurrection made eternal life possible for others. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •The soul never dies, but is continually reborn. •Persons achieve happiness and enlightenment after they free themselves from their earthly desires. •Freedom from earthly desires comes from a lifetime of worship, knowledge, and virtuous acts. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Persons achieve salvation by following the Five Pillars of Islam and living a just life. These pillars are: faith; almsgiving, or charity to the poor; fasting, which Muslims perform during Ramadan; pilgrimage (to Mecca); and prayer. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •There is only one God, who watches over and cares for his people. •God loves and protects his people, but also holds people accountable for their sins and shortcomings. •Persons serve God by studying the Torah and living by its teachings. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Social order, harmony, and good government should be based on strong family relationships. •Respect for parents and elders is important to a well-ordered society. •Education is important both to the welfare of the individual and to society.

* estimated 2002 figures

Major Inventions of the Modern Age

Some dates are historically debated.

Invention	Date	Significance
Magnifying Glass	1250	Used for study of small matter and used in crafts
Gun / Cannon	1260	Enabled weapons to be used at long range for better defense
Mechanical Clock	1360	Allowed better planning, especially in cities and in traveling
Printing Press	1454	Spread written information and scholarship and new ideas, especially in religion
Cast Iron Pipe	1455	A conduit for water and sewage; improved sanitation
Graphite Pencil	1560	Helped in art, science, mathematics and education for drafting ideas
Microscope	1590	Allowed study of cells and microorganisms; new knowledge of life processes
Telescope	1608	Study of the stars, planets, objects, and motion in space; better navigation
Submarine	1620	Used for ocean exploration and later for warfare
Analytic Geometry	1637	System for describing points, planes, and curves in abstract space
Steam Engine	1639	Helped pave the way for the industrial revolution
Barometer	1643	Measured atmospheric pressure; allowed more accurate weather prediction
Tourniquet	1674	Used in medicine to apply pressure and stop blood flow to a part of the body
Piano	1709	Produced a greater range of sounds than previous musical instruments
Mercury Thermometer	1714	Measured heat by degrees; improved chemistry, meteorology, and medicine
Ship Chronometer	1728	Allowed timekeeping at sea; led to longitude measurements; improved mapping
Threshing Machine	1732	Sped up crop production; improved farming
Classification of Species	1735	Allowed shared data about global discoveries within a scientific naming system
Wool Carding Machine	1743	Sped production of fibers for wool cloth
Leyden Jar	1746	First electrical condenser, led to understanding of current and circuits
Dynamometer	1750	Measured mechanical forces, used in developing new machines
Watt's Steam Engine	1769	More efficient engine powered the industrial revolution
Cotton Gin	1793	Cotton could be cleaned by machine rather than by hand; sped production
Smallpox Vaccine	1796	helped stop the spread of epidemic disease
Locomotive	1825	First locomotive and first passenger railroad, sped shipping and transport
Photograph	1826	Faithful production of images from life by machine
Telegraph	1837	First long-distance communication without human travel
Bessemer Steelmaking	1850s	Furnace hot enough to melt iron and carbon; facilitated steel and skyscrapers
Pasteurization	1860s	Sterilization of liquids; increased shelf-life of milk and other perishables
Telephone	1876	Person-to-person long-distance communication by speech
Edison's Light Bulb	1879	Made long-lasting indoor electric lighting possible
Automobile	1885–96	First gas engine, diesel engine, motorcycle, automobile, and tires
Radioactivity (X-Ray)	1895–8	Accidental X-ray led to discovery of radioactivity; used in medicine and energy
Airplane	1903	Sped transportation and shipping, also maximized military weapons
Television	1923	Long-distance transmission and receipt of sound and moving image
Rocket	1926	First liquid-propelled rocket, led to later space flight
Penicillin	1928	mold spores that killed bacteria, later used to cure bacterial infections, led to other antibiotics
Satellite	1957	Mechanical explorer able to orbit Earth through space; used for communications, surveillance, weapons, and space exploration
Computer	1964	Used for engineering; data storage, sharing, and processing; robotics and other artificial intelligence applications
Global Computer Network	1969	U.S. Defense Department creates ARPANET; precursor to 1991 Internet
Genetic Engineering	1973	First successful recombination of DNA; led to improved food production

Major World Documents

Time and Place	Event	Significance
Analects (about 400 B.C.)	Followers of Confucius	Teachings of Confucius
Bill of Rights (adopted 1791)	Members of Congress	First 10 amendments to the U.S. Constitution, outlining the rights and liberties of American citizens
Code of Hammurabi (1700s B.C.)	Hammurabi	Collection of laws for Babylonian Empire
Dead Sea Scrolls (about 200 B.C.–A.D. 70)	Probably the Essenes, a Jewish sect	Ancient manuscripts from Palestine that include the oldest manuscript of the Hebrew Bible
Declaration of Independence (1776)	Thomas Jefferson	Statement of the American colonists' reasons for declaring independence from Great Britain
Declaration of the Rights of Man (1789)	French National Assembly	Statement of the rights of French men
English Bill of Rights (1689)	English Parliament	List of the rights of Englishmen
Hebrew Bible (after 1000 B.C.)	Unknown	Sacred book of Judaism
Justinian Code (A.D. 528–533)	Panel of legal experts appointed by Byzantine emperor Justinian	Collection of early Roman laws and legal opinions
Magna Carta (1215)	English nobles	Guaranteed rights of English nobles
Mayflower Compact (1620)	Pilgrim leaders	First written agreement for self-government in America
New Testament (after about A.D. 70)	Unknown	Sacred book of Christianity
Ninty-Five Theses (1517)	Martin Luther	Statements addressing problems within the Catholic Church
Popol Vuh (1500s)	Unknown	Creation story of the Maya
Qur'an (A.D. 610–632)	Considered to be revelations from the angel Gabriel to Muhammad	Sacred book of Muslims
The Republic (375 B.C.?)	Plato	Description of ideal state of society
Two Treatises of Government (1690)	John Locke	Ideas on government and natural rights
U.S. Constitution (adopted 1788)	Members of Constitutional Convention	Statement of the form of the United States government
Vedas (about 1400 B.C.)	Unknown	Sacred books of Hinduism

Major Explorations

Area Explored	Dates	Explorer(s)	Nationality
Newfoundland	about 1000	Leif Ericson	Norse
China, Southeast Asia, India	1270s–1290s	Marco Polo	Venetian
West Indies, South and Central America	1492–1502	Christopher Columbus	Italian
Newfoundland	1497	John and Sebastian Cabot	Italian
Cape of Good Hope, Africa; India	1497–1498	Vasco da Gama	Portuguese
East and north coast of South America	1497–1499	Vespucci	Italian
Brazil	1500	Pedro Alvarez Cabral	Portuguese
Panama, Pacific Ocean	1513	Vasco Nunez de Balboa	Spanish
Florida, Yucatán Peninsula	1513	Juan Ponce de Leon	Spanish
Mexico	1519	Hernando Cortés	Spanish
Straits of Magellan, Tierra del Fuego	1519–1520	Ferdinand Magellan	Portuguese
New York harbor	1524	Giovanni da Verrazano	Italian
Texas	1528	Cabeza de Vaca	Spanish
Peru	1532	Francisco Pizarro	Spanish
Canada, Gulf of St. Lawrence	1534	Jacques Cartier	French
Buenos Aires	1536	Pedro de Mendoza	Spanish
Mississippi River, near Memphis	1539–1541	Hernando de Soto	Spanish
Southwestern United States	1540	Francisco de Coronado	Spanish
Colorado River	1540	Hernando Alarcon	Spanish
Colorado, Grand Canyon	1540	Garcia de Lopez Cardenas	Spanish
Amazon River	1541	Francisco de Orellana	Spanish
Western Mexico, San Diego harbor	1542	Juan Rodriguez Cabrillo	Portuguese
California coast	1577–1580	Sir Francis Drake	English
Orinoco river	1595	Sir Walter Raleigh	English
Canadian interior, Lake Champlain	1603–1609	Samuel de Champlain	French
Hudson River, Hudson Bay	1609–1610	Henry Hudson	English
Tasmania	1642	Abel Janszoon	Dutch
Mississippi River, south to Arkansas	1673	Jacques Marquette, Louis Joliet	French
Mississippi River, south to Gulf of Mexico	1682	Robert Cavelier, sieur de La Salle	French
Bering Strait and Alaska	1727–1729	Vitus Bering	Danish
South Pacific	1768–1775	James Cook	English
Northwestern Canada	1789	Sir Alexander Mackenzie	Canadian
Missouri River, Rocky Mountains, Columbia River	1804–1805	Meriwether Lewis, William Clark	American
Arabia, East Africa, Lake Tanganyika	1853–1858	Sir Richard Burton	English
Upper course of Zambezi River, Victoria Falls, Lake Ngami	1849–1873	David Livingstone	Scottish
Congo River	1874–1889	Sir Henry Stanley	Welsh
North Pole	1909	Robert E. Peary, Matthew Henson	American
South Pole	1911	Roald Amundsen	Norwegian
Moon	1969	Neil Armstrong, Edwin Aldrin	American
Mars	1975–2005	Space probes Viking 1 and 2; Mars Rover robots Spirit and Opportunity	American

Major Figures in World History

Name	Who the Person Was	What the Person Did
Abraham (2000 B.C.?)	Hebrew leader	Founded Judaism.
Alexander the Great (356–323 B.C.)	Macedonian king	Built an empire that included Greece, Persia, Egypt, and part of Central Asia.
Aristotle (384–322 B.C.)	Greek philosopher	Summarized most knowledge up to his time and invented rules of logic that contributed to the modern scientific method.
Bonaparte, Napoleon (1769–1821)	French general and emperor	Built a vast French empire and is considered one of the world's great military geniuses along with Alexander the Great, Hannibal, and Julius Caesar.
Caesar, Julius (100–44 B.C.)	Roman general and dictator	Expanded the Roman Empire.
Gandhi, Mohandas K. (1869–1948)	Indian political and religious leader	Helped India gain its independence from Great Britain by a method of nonviolent resistance.
Hitler, Adolf (1889–1945)	German dictator	Initiated World War II and the Holocaust.
Jefferson, Thomas (1743–1826)	American president, architect, and inventor	Wrote the Declaration of Independence.
Jesus (4 B.C.?–A.D. 28?)	Jewish religious leader	Founded Christianity.
King, Martin Luther, Jr. (1929–1968)	American civil rights leader	Led the civil rights movement in the United States during the 1950s and 1960s.
Lenin, Vladimir (1870–1924)	Russian dictator	Founded the Communist Party in Russia and established the world's first Communist Party dictatorship.
Lincoln, Abraham (1809–1865)	American president	Led the United States through the American Civil War.
Locke, John (1632–1704)	English philosopher	Was a leader of the Enlightenment and promoted democratic thinking.
Luther, Martin (1483–1546)	German theologian	Started the Reformation.
Mandela, Nelson (1918–)	South African anti-apartheid leader	Became the first black president of South Africa.
Mao Tse-tung (1893–1976)	Chinese dictator	Led the Communist revolution in China.
Marx, Karl (1818–1883)	German philosopher	Founded the mass movements of democratic socialism and revolutionary communism.
Moses (1300s B.C.?)	Israelite leader	Led the Jews out of Egypt and received the Ten Commandments.
Muhammad (A.D. 570?–632)	Muslim prophet	Founded Islam.
Pericles (494?–429 B.C.)	Greek statesman	Led Athens during its golden age, often called the Age of Pericles.
Plato (427–347 B.C.)	Greek philosopher	Wrote <i>The Republic</i> , in which he described his ideal society.
Socrates (469–399 B.C.)	Greek philosopher	Taught students to examine their beliefs and developed a question-and-answer method of teaching called the Socratic method.
Stalin, Joseph (1879–1953)	Soviet dictator	Used terror to transform the Soviet Union into a totalitarian state and to modernize its economy.
Sun Yat-sen (1866–1925)	Chinese leader	Became known as the “father of modern China” for leading a revolution that overthrew the last Chinese emperor.
Washington, George (1732–1799)	American general and president	Commanded the Continental Army during the American Revolution and served as the first president of the United States.

Major Geographic Features

United States and Canada					
Climate		Vegetation		Land Forms and Bodies of Water	
Arctic	Semi-arid	Tundra	Mediterranean	Great Lakes	Rocky Mountains
Sub-arctic	Sub-tropical	Coniferous forest	scrub	Gulf of Mexico	Mississippi River
Temperate	Tropical	Broadleaf forest	Semi-desert	Appalachian	
Arid		Grassland	Desert	Mountains	

Latin America					
Climate		Vegetation		Land Forms and Bodies of Water	
Tropical	Temperate	Savannah	Tropical rainforest	Orinoco River	Sierra Madre
Sub-tropical	Arid	Semi-desert	Monsoon forest	Andes Mountains	Amazon River
Desert	Semi-arid	Desert	Broadleaf forest		
		Dry tropical scrub			

Europe, Russia, and the Independent Republics					
Climate		Vegetation		Land Forms and Bodies of Water	
Sub-arctic	Temperate	Tundra	Grassland	Baltic Sea	Volga River
Steppe	Mediterranean	Coniferous forest	Mediterranean	Mediterranean Sea	Alps Mountains
Tundra	Alpine	Broadleaf forest	scrub	North Sea	Pyrenees
Humid continental				Lake Baikal	Mountains
				Danube River	Ural Mountains
				Rhine River	

North Africa and Southwest Asia					
Climate		Vegetation		Land Forms and Bodies of Water	
Desert	Temperate	Semi-desert	Monsoon forest	Red Sea	Sahara Desert
Sub-tropical	Arid	Desert	Dry tropical scrub	Persian Gulf	Nile River
Tropical	Semi-arid			Black Sea	Tigris River
Tropical monsoon				Dead Sea	Euphrates River

Africa South of the Sahara					
Climate		Vegetation		Land Forms and Bodies of Water	
Tropical	Semi-arid	Savannah	Dry tropical scrub	Mount Kilimanjaro	Congo River
Sub-tropical	Desert	Semi-desert	Tropical rainforest	Kalahari Desert	Niger River
Arid		Desert	Monsoon forest	Victoria Falls	Zambezi River
				Nile River	

Southern Asia					
Climate		Vegetation		Land Forms and Bodies of Water	
Tropical	Sub-tropical	Monsoon forest	Sub-tropical forest	Himalayan	Mekong River
Monsoon	Moderate	Tropical rainforest		Mountains	Arabian Sea
				Mount Everest	South China Sea
				Indus River	Bay of Bengal
				Ganges River	Malay Archipelago

East Asia, Australia, and the Pacific Islands					
Climate		Vegetation		Land Forms and Bodies of Water	
Temperate	Sub-tropical	Savannah	Dry tropical scrub	Mount Fuji	Huang He
Arid	Tropical	Semi-desert	Tropical rainforest	Southern Alps	(Yellow River)
Semi-arid		Desert	Monsoon forest	Gobi Desert	Chang Jiang
				Great Barrier Reef	(Yangtze River)

Government and Economic Systems

System	Definition	Example
Government Systems		
aristocracy	Power is in the hands of a hereditary ruling class or nobility. Aristocracy is a form of oligarchy.	Medieval Europe
autocracy	A single person rules with unlimited power. Autocracy is also called dictatorship and despotism.	Pharaohs of ancient Egypt
democracy	Citizens hold political power either directly or through representatives. In a direct democracy, citizens directly make political decisions. In a representative democracy, the citizens rule through elected representatives.	direct democracy: ancient Athens representative democracy: United States since the 1700s
federal	Powers are divided among the federal, or national, government and a number of state governments.	United States since the 1700s
feudalism	A king allows nobles to use his land in exchange for their loyalty, military service, and protection of the people who live on the land.	Medieval Europe
military state	Military leaders rule, supported by the power of the armed forces.	Assyrian Empire
monarchy	A ruling family headed by a king or queen holds political power and may or may not share the power with citizen bodies. In an absolute monarchy, the ruling family has all the power. In a limited or constitutional monarchy, the ruler's power is limited by the constitution or laws of the nation.	absolute monarchy: reign of King Louis XIV of France constitutional monarchy: United Kingdom
oligarchy	A few persons or a small group rule.	most ancient Greek city-states
parliamentary	Legislative and executive functions are combined in a legislature called a parliament.	United Kingdom since the 1200s
presidential	The chief officer is a president who is elected independently of the legislature.	United States since the 1700s
republic	Citizens elect representatives to rule on their behalf.	Roman Republic
theocracy	Religious leaders control the government, relying on religious law and consultation with religious scholars. In early theocracies, the ruler was considered divine.	Aztec Empire
totalitarianism	The government controls every aspect of public and private life and all opposition is suppressed.	Soviet Union under Joseph Stalin

System	Definition	Example
Economic Systems		
command	The production of goods and services is determined by a central government, which usually owns the means of production. Also called a planned economy.	former Soviet Union
communism	All means of production—land, mines, factories, railroads, and businesses—are owned by the people, private property does not exist, and all goods and services are shared equally.	former Soviet Union
free enterprise	Businesses are privately owned and operate competitively for profit, with minimal government interference. Also called capitalism.	United States
manorialism	A lord gives serfs land, shelter, and protection in exchange for work, and almost everything needed for daily life is produced on the manor, or lord's estate.	Medieval Europe
market	The production of goods and services is determined by the demand from consumers. Also called a demand economy.	United States
mixed	A combination of command and market economies is designed to provide goods and services so that all people will benefit.	present-day Israel
socialism	The means of production are owned by the public and operate for the welfare of all.	In many present-day countries, including Denmark and Sweden, the government owns some industries and operates them for the public good.
traditional	Goods and services are exchanged without the use of money. Also called barter.	many ancient civilizations and tribal societies

Key Terms and Names

TERMS

absolute chronology the arrangement of events by specific dates.

anthropologist a scientist who studies the origin and the physical and cultural development of human beings.

archaeologist a scientist who studies the remains of past cultures.

artifact a human-made object, such as a tool, weapon, or piece of jewelry.

capitalism an economic system based on private ownership and on the investment of money in business ventures in order to make a profit.

communism an economic system in which all means of production—land, mines, factories, railroads, and businesses—are owned by the people, private property does not exist, and all goods and services are shared equally.

constitutional republic a republic established by a constitution, or set of basic laws.

constitutional system of government a system of government that operates according to a set of basic laws.

constitutionalism a constitutional system of government.

democracy a government controlled by its citizens, either directly or through representatives.

democratic-republican government a government that gets its power from citizens who elect representatives.

Eastern civilization civilization that has its origins in ancient East Asian civilizations.

Enlightenment an 18th-century European movement in which thinkers attempted to apply the principles of reason and the scientific method to all aspects of society.

era broad time period characterized by a shared pattern of life.

Fascism a political movement that promotes an extreme form of nationalism, a denial of individual rights, and a dictatorial one-party rule.

feudalism a political system in which nobles are granted the use of lands that legally belong to their king, in exchange for their loyalty, military service, and protection of the people who live on the land.

frames of reference a set of ideas that are necessary for interpreting or understanding events or other ideas.

genocide the systematic killing of an entire people.

geographic distribution the geographic occurrence or range of a feature, such as the location of cities.

geographic pattern the geographic configuration of a feature, such as the grouping of cities along a coast.

Greco-Roman relating to ancient Greece and Rome.

historical context the past circumstances in which an event occurred.

historical inquiry close examination of sources in a search for accurate information about past events.

Holocaust a mass slaughter of Jews and other civilians, carried out by the Nazi government of Germany before and during World War II.

imperialism a policy in which a strong nation seeks to dominate other countries politically, economically, or socially.

individualism belief in the importance and value of the individual, or the doctrine that the interests of the individual have priority over those of the state.

Indus river valley area along the Indus River in what is now Pakistan, where one of the world's first civilizations arose about 2500 B.C.

industrialization the development of industries for the machine production of goods.

Judeo-Christian having historical roots in Judaism and Christianity.

Judeo-Christian ethics a set of moral principles or values that has its roots in both Judaism and Christianity.

Key Terms and Names continued

manorialism economic system in medieval Europe in which a lord gives serfs land, shelter, and protection in exchange for work, and almost everything needed for daily life is produced on the manor, or lord's estate.

Mesoamerica an area extending from central Mexico to Honduras, where several of the ancient civilizations of the Americas developed.

Nazism the fascist policies of the National Socialist German Workers' party, based on totalitarianism, a belief in racial superiority, and state control of industry.

Neolithic agricultural revolution the major change in human life caused by the beginnings of farming—that is, by people's shift from food gathering to food producing.

Nile river valley area in Egypt along the Nile River where one of the world's first civilizations arose between about 3000 and 2000 B.C.

oppression unjust or cruel exercise of power.

parliamentary system of government system in which legislative and executive functions are combined in a legislature called a parliament.

primary source material produced during the period being studied.

relative chronology the arrangement of events in relation to other events.

republicanism belief in a system of government in which political power rests with citizens who vote for representatives responsible to them.

scientific revolution a major change in European thought, starting in the mid-1500s, in which the study of the natural world began to be characterized by careful observation and the questioning of accepted beliefs.

secondary source material prepared after the period being studied by a person who used primary sources.

secularism the view that religious considerations should be kept separate from political affairs or public education.

social mobility the ability to move from one social class to another.

socialism an economic system in which the factors of production are owned by the public and operate for the welfare of all.

Strait of Hormuz a strait, or narrow channel of water, connecting the Persian Gulf and the Gulf of Oman.

thematic maps maps that focus on a specific idea, such as vegetation, natural resources, or historical trends.

Tigris and Euphrates river valley area in Southwest Asia along the Tigris and Euphrates rivers where the earliest Asian civilization arose about 3000 B.C. The area is also referred to as Mesopotamia and the Fertile Crescent.

totalitarianism government control over every aspect of public and private life.

validity truth or soundness.

Western civilization civilization that has its origins in ancient Greek and Roman civilizations.

Yellow (Huang He) river valley area in China along the Huang He where an early civilization emerged about 2000 B.C.

Key Terms and Names continued

NAMES

- Archimedes** (287?–212 B.C.) Hellenistic scientist who estimated the value of pi and invented the compound pulley and Archimedean screw.
- Boyle, Robert** (1627–1691) Irish scientist who is considered the father of modern chemistry and is best known for his experiments on gases and for introducing new methods of identifying the chemical composition of substances.
- Churchill, Winston** (1874–1965) British prime minister who inspired the British to fight against Hitler in World War II and helped lead the Allies to victory.
- Copernicus, Nicolaus** (1473–1543) Polish astronomer who proposed the theory that the earth and other planets revolve around the sun.
- Curie, Marie** (1867–1906) French chemist who conducted research on radioactivity.
- Edison, Thomas** (1847–1931) American inventor who developed practical electric lighting and the modern research laboratory.
- Einstein, Albert** (1879–1955) American scientist who proposed the theory of relativity.
- Erastosthenes** (276?–195? B.C.) Greek mathematician who found a way of estimating the circumference of the earth.
- Fulton, Robert** (1765–1815) American inventor who developed the first practical steamboat.
- Galileo** (1564–1642) Italian astronomer who first used a telescope to study the stars and who was persecuted for supporting Copernicus's theory that the sun was the center of the universe.
- Gandhi, Mohandas** (1869–1948) Indian political and religious leader who helped India gain its independence from Great Britain by a method of nonviolent resistance.
- Hitler, Adolf** (1889–1945) German dictator who initiated World War II and the Holocaust.
- Lenin, Vladimir** (1870–1924) Russian dictator who founded the Communist Party in Russia and established the world's first Communist Party dictatorship.
- Mao Zedong** (1893–1976) Chinese dictator who led the Communist revolution in China.
- Mother Theresa** (1910–1997) Roman Catholic nun from Macedonia who worked among the poor of Calcutta, India, and established an order of nuns to serve the poor.
- Newton, Sir Isaac** (1642–1727) English mathematician and scientist who formed the theory of universal gravitation.
- Pasteur, Louis** (1822–1895) French chemist who invented the process of pasteurization.
- Pope John Paul II** (1920–) Leader of the Roman Catholic Church since 1978 and first Polish-born pope.
- Pythagorus** (580?–? B.C.) Greek philosopher and mathematician famous for the Pythagorean theorem.
- Tutu, Desmond** (1931–) South African leader in the antiapartheid struggle.
- Watt, James** (1736–1819) British inventor who improved the steam engine.
- Wilson, Woodrow** (1856–1924) American President during World War I.