

Crash Course World History – Video Transcript  
**The Agricultural Revolution: Crash Course World History #1**

Present John: Hello, learned and astonishingly attractive pupils. My name is John Green and I want to welcome you to Crash Course World History. Over the next forty weeks together, we will learn how in a mere fifteen thousand years, humans went from hunting and gathering...

Mr. Green, Mr. Green! Is this gonna be on the test?

Present John: Yeah, about the test: The test will measure whether you are an informed, engaged, and productive citizen of the world, and it will take place in schools and bars and hospitals and dorm rooms and in places of worship. You will be tested on first dates, in job interviews, while watching football, and while scrolling through your Twitter feed.

The test will judge your ability to think about things other than celebrity marriages, whether you'll be easily persuaded by empty political rhetoric, and whether you'll be able to place your life and your community in a broader context.

The test will last your entire life, and it will be comprised of the millions of decisions that, when taken together, make your life yours. And everything — everything — will be on it. I know, right? So pay attention.

In a mere fifteen thousand years, humans went from hunting and gathering to creating such improbabilities as the airplane, the Internet, and the ninety-nine cent double cheeseburger. It's an extraordinary journey, one that I will now symbolize by embarking upon a journey of my own ... over to camera two.

Hi there, camera two, it's me, John Green. Let's start with that double cheeseburger. Ooh, food photography! So this hot hunk of meat contains four-hundred and ninety calories.

To get this cheeseburger, you have to feed, raise, and slaughter cows, then grind their meat, then freeze it and ship it to its destination; you also gotta grow some wheat and then process the living crap out of it until it's whiter than Queen Elizabeth the First; then you gotta milk some cows and turn their milk into cheese. And that's not even to mention the growing and pickling of cucumbers or the sweetening of tomatoes or the grinding of mustard seeds, etc.

How in the sweet name of everything holy did we ever come to live in a world in which such a thing can even be created? And HOW is it possible that those four-hundred and ninety calories can be served to me for an amount of money that, if I make the minimum wage here in the U.S., I can earn in ELEVEN MINUTES? And most importantly: should I be delighted or alarmed to live in this strange world of relative abundance?

Well, to answer that question we're not going to be able to look strictly at history, because there isn't a written record about a lot of these things. But thanks to archaeology and paleobiology, we CAN look deep into the past.

Let's go to the Thought Bubble.

So fifteen thousand years ago, humans were foragers and hunters. Foraging meant gathering fruits, nuts, also wild grains and grasses; hunting allowed for a more protein-rich diet ... so long as you could find something with meat to kill. By far the best hunting gig in the pre-historic world, incidentally, was fishing, which is one of the reasons that if you look at history of people populating the planet, we tended to run for the shore and then stay there. Marine life was A) abundant, and B) relatively unlikely to eat you.

While we tend to think that the life of foragers were nasty, brutish and short, fossil evidence suggests that they actually had it pretty good: their bones and teeth are healthier than those of agriculturalists. And anthropologists who've studied the remaining forager peoples have noted that they actually spend a lot fewer hours working than the rest of us, and they spend more time on art, music, and storytelling. Also if you believe the classic of anthropology, Nisa, they also have a lot more time for skoodilypooping. What? I call it skoodilypooping. I'm not gonna apologize.

It's worth noting that cultivation of crops seems to have risen independently over the course of millennia in a number of places--from Africa to China to the Americas--using crops that naturally grew nearby: rice in Southeast Asia, maize in Mexico, potatoes in the Andes, wheat in the Fertile Crescent, yams in West Africa. People around the world began to abandon their foraging for agriculture. And since so many communities made this choice independently, it must have been a good choice ... right? Even though it meant less music and skoodilypooping.

Thanks, Thought Bubble.

All right, to answer that question, let's take a look at the advantages and disadvantages of agriculture.

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**Advantage:** Controllable food supply. You might have droughts or floods, but if you're growing the crops and breeding them to be hardier, you have a better chance of not starving.

**Disadvantage:** In order to keep feeding people as the population grows you have to radically change the environment of the planet.

**Advantage:** Especially if you grow grain, you can create a food surplus, which makes cities possible and also the specialization of labor. Like, in the days before agriculture, EVERYBODY'S job was foraging, and it took about a thousand calories of work to create a thousand calories of food ... and it was impossible to create large population centers.

But, if you have a surplus, agriculture can support people not directly involved in the production of food. Like, for instance, tradespeople, who can devote their lives to better farming equipment, which in turn makes it easier to produce more food more efficiently, which in time makes it possible for a corporation to turn a profit on this ninety-nine cent double cheeseburger.

Which is delicious, by the way. It's actually terrible. And it's very cold. And I wish I had not eaten it. I mean, can we just compare what I was promised to what I was delivered? Yeah, thank you. Yeah, this is not... that.

Some would say that large and complex agricultural communities that can support cities and eventually inexpensive meat sandwiches are not necessarily beneficial to the planet or even to its human inhabitants. Although that's a bit of a tough argument to make, coming to you as I am in a series of ones and zeros.

**ADVANTAGE:** Agriculture can be practiced all over the world, although in some cases it takes extensive manipulation of the environment, like y'know irrigation, controlled flooding, terracing, that kind of thing.

**DISADVANTAGE:** Farming is hard. So hard, in fact, that one is tempted to claim ownership over other humans and then have them till the land on your behalf, which is the kind of non-ideal social order that tends to be associated with agricultural communities. So why did agriculture happen?

Wait, I haven't talked about herders. Herders, man! Always getting the short end of the stick. Herding is a really good and interesting alternative to foraging and agriculture. You domesticate some animals and then you take them on the road with you. The advantages of herding are obvious. First, you get to be a cowboy. Also, animals provide meat and milk, but they also help out with shelter because they can provide wool and leather.

The downside is that you have to move around a lot because your herd always needs new grass, which makes it hard to build cities, unless you are the Mongols. [Mongoltage] By the way, over the next forty weeks you will frequently hear generalizations, followed by "unless you are the Mongols" [Mongoltage].

But anyway one of the main reasons herding only caught on in certain parts of the world is that there aren't that many animals that lend themselves to domestication. Like, you have sheep, goats, cattle, pigs, horses, camels, donkeys, reindeer, water buffalo, yaks, all of which have something in common. They aren't native to the Americas. The only halfway useful herding animal native to the Americas is the llama. No, not that Lama, two l's. Yes, that llama.

Most animals just don't work for domestication. Like hippos are large, which means they provide lots of meat, but unfortunately, they like to eat people. Zebras are too ornery. Grizzlies have wild hearts that can't be broken. Elephants are awesome, but they take way too long to breed. Which reminds me! It's time for the Open Letter.

Elegant. But first, let's see what the Secret Compartment has for me today. Oh! It's another double cheeseburger. Thanks, Secret Compartment. Just kidding, I don't thank you for this. An Open Letter to elephants.

Hey elephants,

You're so cute and smart and awesome. Why you gotta be pregnant for 22 months? That's crazy! And then you only have one kid. If you were more like cows, you might have taken us over by now. Little did you know, but the greatest evolutionary advantage: being useful to humans.

Like, here is a graph of cow population, and here is a graph of elephant population. Elephants, if you had just inserted yourself into human life the way cows did, you could have used your power and intelligence to form secret elephant societies, conspiring against the humans! And then you could have risen up, and destroyed us, and made an awesome elephant world with elephant cars, and elephant planes!

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It would have been so great! But noooo! You gotta be pregnant for 22 months and then have just one kid. It's so annoying!

Best wishes, John Green.

Right, but back to the agricultural revolution and why it occurred. Historians don't know for sure, of course, because there are no written records. But, they love to make guesses. Maybe population pressure necessitated agriculture even though it was more work, or abundance gave people leisure to experiment with domestication, or planting originated as a fertility rite--or as some historians have argued--people needed to domesticate grains in order to produce more alcohol.

Charles Darwin, like most 19th century scientists, believed agriculture was an accident, saying, "a wild and unusually good variety of native plant might attract the attention of some wise old savage." Off topic, but you will note in the coming weeks that the definition of "savage" tends to be "not me."

Maybe the best theory is that there wasn't really an agricultural revolution at all, but that agriculture came out of an evolutionary desire to eat more. Like early hunter gatherers knew that seeds germinate when planted. And, when you find something that makes food, you want to do more of it. Unless it's this food. Then you want to do less of it. I kinda want to spit it out. Ewww. Ah, that's much better.

So early farmers would find the most accessible forms of wheat and plant them and experiment with them not because they were trying to start an agricultural revolution, because they were like, you know what would be awesome: *more* food!

Like on this topic, we have evidence that more than 13,000 years ago humans in southern Greece were domesticating snails. In the Franchthi Cave, there's a huge pile of snail shells, most of them are larger than current snails, suggesting that the people who ate them were selectively breeding them to be bigger and more nutritious.

Snails make excellent domesticated food sources, by the way because

- A) surprisingly caloric
- B) they're easy to carry since they come with their own suitcases, and
- C) to imprison them you just have to scratch a ditch around their living quarters.

That's not really a revolution, that's just people trying to increase available calories. But one non-revolution leads to another, and pretty soon you have this, as far as the eye can see.

Many historians also argue that without agriculture we wouldn't have all the bad things that come with complex civilizations like patriarchy, inequality, war, and unfortunately, famine. And, as far as the planet is concerned, agriculture has been a big loser. Without it, humans never would have changed the environment so much, building dams, and clearing forests, and more recently, drilling for oil that we can turn into fertilizer.

Many people made the choice for agriculture independently, but does that mean it was the right choice? Maybe so, and maybe not, but, regardless, we can't unmake that choice. And that's one of the reasons I think it's so important to study history.

History reminds us that revolutions are not events, so much as they are processes; that for tens of thousands of years people have been making decisions that irrevocably shaped the world that we live in today. Just as today we are making subtle, irrevocable decisions that people of the future will remember as revolutions.

Next week we're going to journey to the Indus River Valley - whoa - very fragile, our globe, like the real globe. We're going to travel to the Indus River Valley.

### **Indus Valley Civilization: Crash Course World History #2**

Hi, I'm John Green and this is Crash Course World History. Let's begin today with a question. Why am I alive? Also, why don't I have any eyes, ah that's better.

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The way we answer that question ends up organizing all kinds of other thoughts, like what we should value, and how we should behave, and if we should eat meat, and whether we should dump that boy who is nice, but insanely clingy in a way that he can not possibly think is attractive. All of which...

Mr. Green, Mr. Green. Uh, uh a-are you talking about me?

Yes, I am talking about you, Me from the Past; I am telling you that one of the reasons we study history is so that you can be a less terrible boyfriend, but more on that momentarily.

Today we're going to talk about civilizations, but in order to do that we have to talk about talking about civilizations, because it's a problematic word. So problematic, in fact, that I have to turn to camera two to discuss it. Certain conglomerations of humans are seen as civilizations, where as, nomadic cultures generally aren't. Unless you are, say it with me, the Mongols.

By calling some groups civilizations, you imply that all other social orders are uncivilized, which is basically just another way of saying they're savages or barbarians. Side note - originally, in Greek, the word barbarian denoted anyone who didn't speak ancient Greek, because to the Greeks, all other languages sounded like, "bar bar bar bar bar bar bar". So that is to say, we're all basically barbarians except for the classics majors, which is worth remembering when we're discussing civilization.

Civilizations are like most of things we like to study. They're intellectual constructs. No one woke up in the city of Thebes in Egypt one morning and said "What a beautiful morning; I sure am living at the height of Egyptian civilization!" Still, they're useful constructs, particularly when you're comparing one civilization to another. They're less useful when you're comparing a civilization to a non-civilization type social order, which is why we'll try to avoid that. And yes, I'm getting to the good boyfriend stuff; patience, grasshopper.

So what is a civilization? Well, diagnosing a civilization is a little like diagnosing an illness. If you have you have four or more of the following symptoms, you might be a civilization: Surplus production - once one person can make enough food to feed several people, it becomes possible to build a city. Another symptom of civilization: It also leads to the specialization of labor, which in turn leads to trade. If everybody picks berries for a living, then there's no need to trade, because I have berries and you have berries. But, if I pick berries for a living, and you make hammers, suddenly we have cause to trade.

Civilizations are also usually associated with social stratification, centralized government, shared values (generally in the form of religion), and writing. And, at least in the early days, they were almost all associated with rivers.

These days, you can just bisect a segment of land horizontally and vertically and, boom, build a city. But 5,000 years ago, civilizations were almost all associated with rivers. That's the Tigris and the Euphrates, the Yellow River, the Nile, the Amazon Basin, the Coatzacoalcos - Gaaah! I was doing so good until I got to Coatzacoalcos!

Coatzacoalcos, maybe. Why river valleys? They're flat, they're well watered, and when they flood, they deposit nutrient-rich silt. We'll have more to say about most of these civilizations later, but let's talk about this guy, the Indus Valley Civilization, 'cause it's my all-time favourite.

The Indus Valley Civilization was located in the floodplain of the Indus and Sarasvati rivers, and it was about the best place in the world to have an ancient civilization, because the rivers flooded very reliably twice a year, which meant that it had the most available calories per acre of pretty much anywhere on the planet.

We know the Indus Valley civilization flourished a long time ago, probably around 3000 BC. Why is that question literally hanging over my head? But people of the Indus Valley were trading with Mesopotamians as early as 3500 BC. We also know that it was the largest of the ancient civilizations; archaeologists have discovered more than 1500 sites. So what do we know about this civilization?

Let's go to the Thought Bubble.

Everything we know about the Indus Valley Civilization comes from archaeology, because while they did use written language, we don't know how to read it, and no Rosetta Stone has thus appeared to help us learn it. I meant the other Rosetta Stone, Thought Bubble, yeah. Although, come to think of it, either would be acceptable. So here's what we know:

They had amazing cities. Harappa and Mohenjo-Daro are the best known, with dense, multi-story homes constructed out of uniformly sized bricks along perpendicular streets. I mean, this wasn't some ancient world version of

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Houston, more like Chicago. This means they must have had some form of government and zoning, but we don't know what gave this government its authority.

Cities were oriented to catch the wind and provide a natural form of air conditioning. And they were clean - most homes were connected to a centralized drainage system that used gravity to carry waste and water out of the city in big sewer ditches that ran under main avenues, a plumbing system that would have been the envy of many 18th-century European cities.

Also, in Mohenjo-Daro, the largest public building was not a temple or a palace, but a public bath, which historians call the Great Bath. We don't know what the Great Bath was used for, but since later Indian culture placed a huge emphasis on ritual purity, which is the basis for the caste system, some historians have speculated the bath might have been like a giant baptismal pool.

Also, they traded. One of the coolest things that the Indus Valley Civilization produced were seals used as identification markers on goods and clay tablets. These seals contained the writing that we still can't decipher, and a number of fantastic designs, many featuring animals and monsters.

One of the most famous and frightening is of a man with what looks like water buffalo horns on his head, sitting cross-legged between a tiger and a bull. We don't know what's really going on here, but it's safe to say that this was a powerful dude, because he seems to be able to control the tiger.

How do these seals let us know that they traded? Well, because we found them in Mesopotamia, not the Indus Valley. Plus, archaeologists have found stuff like bronze in the Indus Valley that is not native to the region. So what did they trade? Cotton cloth. Still such a fascinating export, incidentally, that it will be the subject of the 40th and final video in this very series.

But here's the most amazing thing about the Indus Valley people: They were peaceful. Despite archaeologists finding 1500 sites, they have found very little evidence of warfare and almost no weapons.

Thanks, Thought Bubble.

Okay, before we talk about the fascinating demise of the Indus Valley civilization, it's time for the Open Letter.

Magic! I wonder what the secret compartment has for me today? Oh! Fancy clothes. I guess the secret compartment didn't think I was dressed up enough for the occasion. An Open Letter to Historians.

Dear Historians,

The Great Bath? Really? The Great Bath? I'm trying to make history fascinating and you give me a term that evokes scented candles, bath salts and Frédéric Fekkai hair products?

I know sometimes the crushingly boring names of history aren't your fault. You didn't name the Federalist Papers or the Austro-Hungarian Empire or Adam Smith, but when you DO get a chance to name something, you go with The Great Bath? Not the Epic Bath of Mohenjo-Daro, or the Bath To End All Baths, or The Pool That Ruled, or The Moist Mystery of Mohenjo-Daro, or The Wet Wonder?

The Great Bath? Really?! You can do better!

Best wishes, John Green

So what happened to these people? Well, here's what didn't happen to them: They didn't morph into the current residents of that area of the world, Hindu Indians or Muslim Pakistanis. Those people probably came from the Caucasus.

Instead, sometime around 1750 BCE, the Indus Valley Civilization declined until it faded into obscurity. Why? Historians have three theories.

1. Conquest! It turns out to be a terrible military strategy not to have any weapons, and it's possible people from the Indus Valley were completely overrun by people from the Caucasus.
2. Environmental Disaster! It's possible they brought about their own end by destroying their environment.

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3. Earthquake! The most interesting theory is that a massive earthquake changed the course of the rivers so much that a lot of the tributaries dried up. Without adequate water supplies for irrigation, the cities couldn't sustain themselves, so people literally picked up and headed for greener pastures.

Well, probably not pastures; it's unlikely they became nomads. They probably just moved to a different plain and continued their agricultural ways. I am already boring you, and I haven't even told you yet how to be a better boy-and/or girlfriend. I'm going to do that now.

So we don't know why the Indus Valley Civilization ended, but we also don't really know why it started. Why did these people build cities, and dig swimming pools, and make unnecessarily ornate seals? Were they motivated by hunger, fear, a desire for companionship, the need to be near their sacred spaces, or a general feeling that city life was just more awesome than foraging?

Thinking about what motivated them to structure their life as they did helps us to think about how we structure our own lives. In short, you're clingy because you're motivated by fear and a need for companionship, and she finds it annoying because it's enough work having to be responsible for herself without having to also be responsible for you.

Also, you're not really helping her by clinging, and from the Indus Valley in the Bronze Age, to school life today, human life is all about collaboration. Trading cloth for bronze, building cities together, and collaborating to make sure that human lives are tilted to catch the wind.

Next week, we will travel here to discuss the Hot Mess-o-Potamia.

### **Mesopotamia: Crash Course World History #3**

Hi there, I'm John Green. You're watching Crash Course World History, and today we're going to talk about...

[globe] Iraq.

No! you purportedly smart globe. We're going to talk about Mesopotamia! I love Mesopotamia, because it helped create two of my favorite things: writing and taxes. Why do I like taxes? Because before taxes, the only certainty was death.

Mr. Green, Mr. Green, did you know you're referencing Mark Twain?

I'm not referencing Mark Twain, Me from the Past. I'm referencing Benjamin Franklin, who was probably himself referencing the unfortunately named playwright Christopher Bullock. Listen, you may be smart, kid, but I've been smart longer.

By the way, today's illustration points out that "an eye for an eye" leaves the whole world monocular.

So about 5000 years ago, in the land "meso," or between, the Tigris and Euphrates "potomoi," or rivers, cities started popping up, much like they had in our old friend the Indus River valley. These early Mesopotamian cities engaged in a form of socialism where farmers contributed their crops to public storehouses, out of which workers, like metalworkers, or builders, or male models, or whatever, would be paid uniform wages in grain. So basically...

Mr. Green, Mr. Green, were there really male models? Can you do Blue Steel?

Oh, younger version of myself, how I hate you. Oh, the humiliation I suffer for you people. That was my best Blue Steel. That was as close as I can get.

So anyway, if you lived in a city, you could be something other than a shepherd, and thanks to this proto-socialism, you could be reasonably sure you that you'd eat.

Stan! Is there anyway we can get another globe in here? I feel like this shot is inadequately globed. Yes! Much better. You know, you can tell the quality of a historian by the number of his or her globes.

But even though you could give up your flock, a lot of people didn't want to. And one of the legacies of Mesopotamia is the enduring conflict between country and city. You see this explored a lot in some of our greatest art, like The Beverly Hillbillies, and Deliverance, and the showdown between Enkidu and Gilgamesh in the Epic of Gilgamesh.

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Gilgamesh is one of the oldest known works of literature, and I'm not going to spoil it for you, there's a link to the poem in the video info. But suffice it to say that in the showdown between country and city, the city wins.

So what were these city-states like? Well let's take a look at one such city-state, Gilgamesh's hometown of Uruk, in the Thought Bubble.

Uruk was a walled city with an extensive canal system and several monumental temples, called ziggurats. The priests of these temples originally had all the power because they were able to communicate directly with the gods, and that was a useful talent, because Mesopotamian gods were moody and frankly pretty mean. Like according to Gilgamesh, they once got mad at us because we were making too much noise while they were trying to sleep, so they decided to destroy all of humanity with a flood.

The Tigris and Euphrates are decent as rivers go, but Mesopotamia is no Indus Valley, with its on-schedule flooding and easy irrigation. A lot of slave labor was needed to make the Tigris and Euphrates useful for irrigation. They are also difficult to navigate and flood unpredictably and violently. Violent, unpredictable, and difficult to navigate; oh, Tigris and Euphrates, how you remind me of my college girlfriend.

So I mean, given that the region tends to yo-yo between devastating flood and horrible drought it follows that one would believe that the gods are kind of random and capricious, and that any priests who might be able to lead rituals that placate those gods would be very useful individuals. But about 1000 years after the first temples, we find in cities like Uruk, a rival structure begins to show up: the palace. The responsibility for the well-being and success of the social order was shifting, from gods to people. A power shift that will see-saw throughout human history until... probably forever, actually.

But in another development we'll see again, these kings, who probably started out as military leaders or really rich landowners, took on a quasi-religious role. How? Often by engaging in "sacred marriage", specifically, skoodilypooping with the high priestess of the city's temple. So the priests were overtaken by kings, who soon declared themselves priests.

Thanks, Thought Bubble.

So how do we know that these kings were skoodilypooping with the lady priests? Because they made a skoodilypooping tape and put it on the internet? No! Because there's a written record. Mesopotamia gave us writing, specifically a form of writing called cuneiform, which was initially created not to like, woo lovers or whatever, but to record transactions, like how many bushels of wheat were exchanged for how many goats. I'm not kidding by the way: a lot of cuneiform is about wheat and goats.

I don't think you can overestimate the importance of writing, but let's just make three points here:

First, writing and reading are things that not everyone can do, so they create a class distinction, one that in fact survives to this day. Foraging social orders were relatively egalitarian but the Mesopotamians had slaves and they played this metaphorically resonant sport that was like polo, except instead of riding on horses, you rode on other people. And written language played an important role in widening the gap between classes.

Two, once writing enters the picture, you have actual history instead of just a lot of guesswork and archaeology.

And three, without writing I would not have a job. So I'd like to personally thank Mesopotamia for making it possible for me to work while reclining in my La-Z-Boy.

So why did this writing happen in Mesopotamia? Well, the Fertile Crescent, while it is fertile, is lacking pretty much everything else. In order to get metal for tools or stone for sculpture, or wood for burning, Mesopotamia had to trade. This trading eventually led Mesopotamia to develop the world's first territorial kingdom, which will become very important and will eventually culminate in some extraordinarily inbred Habsburgs.

The city-state period in Mesopotamia ended around 2000 BCE, probably because drought and a shift in the course of rivers led to pastoral nomads coming in and conquering the environmentally weakened cities, and then the nomads settled into cities of their own as nomads almost always will, unless... wait for it... you are the Mongols.

These new Mesopotamia city-states were similar to their predecessors in that they had temples and writing and their own self glorifying stories, but they were different in some important ways:

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First, that early proto-socialism was replaced by something that looked a lot like private enterprise, where people could produce as much as they would like as long as they gave a cut, also known as taxes, to the government. We talk a lot of smack about taxes but it turns out they're pretty important to create stable social orders.

Things were also different politically because the dudes that had been the tribal chiefs became like full blown kings who tried to extend their power outside of cities and also tried to pass on their power to their sons. The most famous of these early monarchs is Hammurabi, or as I remember him from my high school history class, The Hammer of Abi. Hammurabi ruled the new kingdom of Babylon from 1792 BCE to 1750 BCE.

Hammurabi's main claim to fame is his famous law code, which established everything from like the wages of ox drivers to the fact that the punishment for taking an eye should be having an eye taken. Hammurabi's law code can be pretty insanely harsh, like if a builder builds a shoddy building, and then the owner's son dies in a collapse, the punishment for that is the execution of the builder's son! The kid's like, "That's not fair! I'm just a kid. What did I do? You should kill my dad."

All of which is to say that Hammurabi's law code gives a new meaning to the phrase "tough on crime". But it did introduce the presumptions of innocence. And in the law code, Hammurabi tried to portray himself in two roles that should sound familiar: shepherd and father. "I am the shepherd who brings peace. My benevolent shade was spread over the city. I held the peoples of Sumer and Akkad safely on my lap."

So again we see the authority for the protection of the social order shifting to men, not gods, which is important, but don't worry. It'll shift back.

Even though territorial kingdoms like Babylon were more powerful than any cities that had come before it, and even though Babylon was probably the world's most populous city during Hammurabi's rule, it wasn't actually that powerful. And keeping with the pattern, it was soon taken over by the formerly nomadic Kassites.

The thing about territorial kingdoms is they relied on the poorest people to pay taxes and provide labor and serve in the army, all of which made you not like your king very much, so if you saw any nomadic invaders coming by, you might just be like, 'hey, nomadic invaders, come on in, you seem better than the last guy!'

Well, that was the case until the Assyrians came along anyway. The Assyrians have a deserved reputation for being the brutal bullies of Mesopotamia. But the Assyrians did give us an early example of probably the most important and durable form of political organization in world history, and also Star Wars history, the Empire.

The biggest problem with empires is that, by definition, they're diverse and multi-ethnic, which makes them hard to unify. So beginning around 911 BCE, the neo-Assyrian Empire grew from its hometowns of Ashur and Nineveh to include the whole of Mesopotamia, the Eastern coast of the Mediterranean, and even, by 680 BCE, Egypt.

They did this thanks to the most brutal, terrifying, and efficient army the world had ever seen. More adjectives describing my college girlfriend. For one thing, the army was a meritocracy - generals weren't chosen based on who their dads were, they were chosen based on if they were good at general-ing. Stan, is general-ing a word?

It is! Also, they were super mean, like they would deport hundreds of thousands of people to separate them from their history and their families and also moved skilled workers around where they were most needed. Also, the Neo-Assyrians loved to find would-be rebels and lop off their appendages, particularly their noses for some reason. And there was your standard raping and pillaging and torture, all of which was done in the name of Ashur, the great God of the Neo-Assyrians, whose divine regent was the King.

Ashur, through the King, kept the world going, and as long as conquest continued, the world would not end. But if conquest ever stopped, the world would end and there would be rivers of blood and weeping and gnashing of teeth, you know how apocalypses go. The Assyrians spread this worldview with propaganda, like monumental architecture and readings about how awesome the King was at public festivals, all of which was designed to inspire awe in the Empire's subjects. Oh, that reminds me, it's time for the open letter!

An open letter to the word 'awesome'. But first, let's see what's in the secret compartment today. Oh, Stan, is this yellowcake uranium? You never find that in Mesopotamia.

Dear 'Awesome',

I love you. Like most contemporary English speakers, in fact, I probably love you a little too much. The thing about you, 'Awesome', is that "awesome" is just so awesomely awesome – at being awesome, so we lose track of what you



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really mean, 'Awesome', you're not just cool, you're terrifying and wonderful. You're knees-buckling, chest-tightening, fearful encounters with something radically other, something that we know could both crush and bless us.

That is awe, and I apologize for having to water you down, but seriously, you're awesome.

Best wishes, John Green

So what happened to the Assyrians? Well first, they extended their empire beyond their roads, making administration impossible, but more importantly, when your whole worldview is based on the idea that the apocalypse will come if you ever lose a battle, and then you lose one battle, the whole worldview just blows up. That eventually happened, and in 612 BCE, the city of Nineveh was finally conquered and the Neo-Assyrian empire had come to its end.

But the idea of 'empire' was just getting started. Next week, we'll talk about mummies! Oh, I have to talk about other things, too? Crap, I only want to talk about mummies. Anyway, we'll be talking about... [Smart Globe] Sudan

No, dang it! We'll actually be talking about... [Smart Globe] Egypt. Thank you, Smart Globe.

### Ancient Egypt: Crash Course World History #4

Hi there my name's John Green and this is Crash Course World History, and today we're going to talk about Egypt. No, not that Egypt. Older. Older. Older. Less fictional. Yes, that one.

Ancient Egypt is probably the most influential of the river valley civilizations. Like, you might not recognize any Assyrian Kings or Assyrian language, but you probably do know King Tut. And you may recognize that the Eye of Horus is right now staring at me and judging me. I can feel... I can feel your judgment.

When we think of Ancient Civilizations, we think of Egypt. There are a few reasons for this, like the fact that the pyramids are the last man standing among the Seven Ancient Wonders of the World. But more importantly, Ancient Egyptian civilization lasted from 3000 BCE to 332 BCE. That's a period that historians call a long-ass time. And I will remind you, it is not cursing if you're talking about donkeys.

So, there are many approaches to the study of history. You could view history as a millennia-long conversation about philosophy or as clashes between great men or you can see history through the lens of traditionally neglected populations, like women or indigenous peoples or slaves. And we're going to try to take many approaches to our study of history during Crash Course.

Mr. Green, Mr. Green, Mr. Green, which approach is right? I mean, for the test.

Oh, Me from the Past. Remember how you spent all of third year French writing notes back and forth to that girl, and she eventually agreed to go out with you, and you did make it to second base, but now you can hardly parle un mot de Francois? Historical lenses are like that, my friend - with every choice, something is gained and something is lost.

Right, so in discussing agriculture and early civilizations, we've been approaching history through the lens of resource distribution and geography. And just as the violent and capricious Tigris and Euphrates rivers shaped the worldview of early Mesopotamians, the Nile shaped the worldview of the Egyptians.

Let's go to the Thought Bubble.

The Nile was regular, navigable, and benign, making for one of the safest and richest agricultural areas in the world. Each summer, the river flooded the fields at precisely the right time, leaving behind nutrient-rich silt for planting season. Planting was so easy that Egyptians just tossed seeds around the silty earth and then let their cattle or pigs walk on it to press the seeds into the ground, and then boom: grain, and figs, and wheat, and pomegranates, and melons, and joy.

Unlike most river valley civilizations, Egyptian communities existed ONLY along the Nile, which was navigable enough to get valuable resources downstream from timber to gold, which the Egyptians considered the divine metal, thereby introducing an idea that would eventually culminate in Mr. T.

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The Nile is also easily tamed. While other river valley civilizations needed complicated and labor-intensive hydraulic engineering projects to irrigate crops, the Nile was so chill that Egyptians could use a simple form of water management called basin irrigation, in which farmers used flood waters to fill earthen basins and canals for irrigation.

In short, the awesomeness of the Nile meant Egyptians could create big food surpluses with relatively little work, allowing time and energy for some pretty impressive projects. Also, the Nile may help explain the ancient Egypt's general optimism - while ancient Sumerian religion, for instance, saw the afterlife as this gloomy, dark place, Egyptians were often buried with things that were useful and pleasurable to them in life, because the Afterlife was seen as a continuation of this life, which, at least if you lived along the Nile, wasn't half-bad.

Thanks, Thought Bubble.

And now, my dear pupils, I shall terrorize you with the oppression of dates. No. Dates. Yes. Thank you. Historians have divided Egyptian history into three broad categories. Each with their own numbered dynasties. But only hardcore Egyptologists know the dynasties, and we're not trying to become hardcore Egyptologists.

The Old Kingdom lasted from 2649 to 2152, the Middle Kingdom from 2040 to 1640, and the New Kingdom, so called because it is only 3,000 years old, lasted from 1550 to 1070 BCE. In between you have a couple so-called Intermediate periods. Okay, OLD KINGDOM. This was really the glory age of ancient Egypt, when we got all the stuff that will later make Indiana Jones possible, like the pyramids at Giza, and the sun king Ra, and the idea of divine kingship.

The king, or pharaoh, was either a god or very close to a god, which seems like a good gig, except that it meant that he wasn't expected to act like a person, he was expected to act like a god, which in ancient Egypt means acting like the Nile: calm, cool, benevolent... there's no fun in that. And then, of course, there are the Pyramids, which, aside from remaining impressive to behold, represent a remarkable degree of political and social control over the population, because it is not easy to convince people to devote their lives to building a sarcophagus for someone else.

The most famous pyramids were built between 2575 and 2465 BCE. The one with the Sphinx was for Khephren; the largest, the Great Pyramid, was built for the Pharaoh Khufu. These pyramids were built partly by peasants who were required by Egyptian law to work for the government a certain number of months per year, and partly by slaves, but not by Moses and the Jews, who showed up on the scene long before the Pyramids were even a twinkle in Khufu's eye.

This leads to an overwhelming question: Why? Why in the sweet name of Ra would anyone ever build such a thing? Well, let's start with Ra. So, Ra started out as a regional god, reigning over Heliopolis, but he eventually became really central to the entire pantheon of gods of ancient Egypt. He was the god of the sun, but also the god of creation. And the thinking was that if humans did their jobs, then the pantheon of gods would maintain cosmic order, and since the pharaohs became gods upon their death, it made sense to please them, even unto Pyramids.

Egyptian popular religion also embraced the belief in amulets and magic and divination and the belief that certain animals, especially cats, had divine power. And yes, I did bring that up just so I could lolcat. Old Kingdom Egypt was also remarkably literate. They had two forms of writing: hieroglyphics for sacred writing and then demotic script for recording contracts and agreements and other boring stuff. The last thing I want to say about Old Kingdom Egypt - it was ridiculously rich.

But then around 2250 BCE there were a series of droughts and Pharaohs started fighting over who should have power and we had an intermediate period. Which was followed by the Middle Earth... No, what? The Middle Kingdom? Ohh. Really? That's a bummer, Stan. I want it to be the Middle Earth. How awesome would that be? Like, right in the middle of Egyptian history, there were Hobbits....

So the Middle Kingdom, which apparently had no Hobbits, restored Pharaonic rule in 2040 BCE but with some distinct changes: First, the rulers were outsiders, from downriver in Nubia. Second, they fostered a new pantheon of gods, the star of which was Amun, which means hidden. So here's a little lesson from history: Hidden gods tend to do well because they're omnipresent.

So Amun eventually merged with Ra to form the god Amun-Ra, who was like the best god ever, and all the Middle Kingdom pharaohs made temples for him and devoted all of their surplus to his glory. The Middle Kingdom also

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developed an interest in conquering, specifically the new pharaoh's homeland of Nubia, and they developed a side interest in getting conquered, specifically by Semitic peoples from the Levant.

They were able to conquer much of Egypt using superior military technology like bronze weapons and compound bows, and chariots of fire. What? They were just regular chariots? STAN, WHY ARE YOU ALWAYS KILLING MY DREAMS?! One group, the Hyksos, were able to conquer all of Egypt, but rather than like destroying the Egyptian culture, they just relaxed like the Nile and assimilated into the Egyptians.

And the Egyptians adopted their military technology. And then the Egyptians destroyed the Hyksos and expelled them from Egypt. And then, by 1550 BCE, there was again an Egyptian pharaoh, Ahmose... whose name only sounds like an STD.

Anyway, after all this conquering and being conquered, Egypt eventually emerged from its geographically imposed isolationism and, can you cue the New Kingdom Graphic please? There it is! New Kingdom Egypt continued this military expansion but it looked more like an Empire, particularly when they headed south and took over land in an attempt to find gold and slaves.

Probably the most expansive of the New Kingdom pharaohs was Hatshepsut, a woman who ruled Egypt for about 22 years, and who expanded Egypt not through military might, but through trade. But most New Kingdom pharaohs, being dudes, focused on military expansion, which brought Egypt into conflicts with the Assyrians, who you'll remember from last week, and then the Persians, and then Alexander the Great, and finally, the Romans.

On the whole, Egypt probably would've been better off enjoying its geographical isolation and not trying to conquer new territory, but all of Egypt's friends had jumped off a bridge, so... One last thing about the New Kingdom. There was this crazy New Kingdom Pharaoh named Akhenaten, who tried to invent a new god for Egypt, Aten.

Akhenaten was kind of the Kim Jong-Il of Ancient Egypt, like he had this feared police force and this big cult of personality. And also he was a nut job. Anyway, after his death he was replaced by his wife, and then a daughter and then a son, Tutankhamen, who turned his back on the weird god Aten and changed his name to Tutankhamen.

And that is about all King Tut did before he died, probably around the age of 17. Honestly, the only reason King Tut is famous is that most Pharaohs had their graves robbed by ancient people; and King Tut had his grave robbed by 20th-century British people. Which brings us to the Open Letter.

An Open Letter to King Tut. Oh, but first we gotta find out what Stan left for me in the Secret Compartment. It's a pen. [clicks pen] AAHHHH!! It's a shock pen! Stan?! That's a terrible, terrible gift for the secret compartment.

Dear King Tut,

I know that as Pharaohs' lives go, yours was pretty poor. First, you had to marry your sister, which... hopefully you weren't that psyched about, plus you had a cleft palate and probably scoliosis. Plus, you died before really reaching adulthood.

But dude, you have had the best afterlife ever. Since your body was discovered in 1922, you've become probably the most famous ancient person. There have been lots of books about you; scholars have devoted their lives to you - dude, we're so obsessed with you that we used this fancy new technology to scan your body and establish that you probably died of an infected broken leg and/or malaria.

So you've inspired such seminal works of art as the Discovery Kids series Tutenstein, which my son forces me to watch. Your relics have been to six continents! So it all works out in the end, man. Well, I mean, you're still dead. So that kinda sucks. Best wishes, John Green.

King Tut leads us nicely to the really crucial thing about Egyptian culture. Because King Tut lived right around the same time as the Pyramids, right? Wrong. Remember, the Pyramids were built around 2500 BCE during the Old Kingdom. King Tut died in 1322 BCE, 1200 years later! That's five and a half Americas.

But because Egypt was so similar for so long, it all tends to blend together when we imagine it. Ancient Egypt lasted 1000 years longer than Christianity has been around, and about 800 years longer than that other super-long-lived civilization, China.

So there was an entire culture that lasted longer than Western Civilization has existed, and it had run its course before "the West" was even born.

Next week, we'll look at the... Persians and the Greeks.

### **The Persians & Greeks: Crash Course World History #5**

Hi, I'm John Green, this is Crash Course World History, and today we're going to do some legitimate comp. civ., for those of you into that kind of thing... Stan, I can't help but feel that we have perhaps too many globes. That's better.

Today we're going to learn about the horrible totalitarian Persians and the saintly, democracy-loving Greeks. But of course we already know this story—there were some wars in which no one wore any shirts, and everyone was reasonably fit. The Persians were bad; the Greeks were good. Socrates and Plato were awesome; the Persians didn't even philosophize. The West is the Best; Go Team! Yeah, well, no.

Let's start with the Persian empire, which became the model for pretty much all land-based empires throughout the world. Except for—wait for it—the Mongols.

Much of what we know about the Persians and their empire comes from an outsider writing about them, which is something we now call history, and one of the first true historians was Herodotus, whose famous book *The Persian Wars* talks about the Persians quite a bit. Now the fact that Herodotus was a Greek is important because it introduces us to the idea of historical bias. But more on that in a second.

So the Persian Achaemenid dynasty... Achaemenid? Hold on...

[computer] AkEEmenid or AkEHmenid.

So they're both right? I was right twice!

Right, so the Persian AkEEmenid or AkEHmenid dynasty was founded in 539 BCE by King Cyrus the Great. Cyrus took his nomadic warriors and conquered most of Mesopotamia, including the Babylonians, which ended a sad period in Jewish history called *The Babylonian Exile*, thus ensuring that Cyrus got great press in the Bible.

But his son, Darius the First, was even greater: He extended Persian control east to our old friend the Indus Valley, west to our new friend Egypt, and north to Crash Course newcomer Anatolia. By the way, there were Greeks in Anatolia called Ionian Greeks who will become relevant shortly.

So even if you weren't Persian, the Persian Empire was pretty dreamy. For one thing, the Persians ruled with a light touch: Like, conquered kingdoms were allowed to keep their kings and their elites as long as they pledged allegiance to the Persian King and paid taxes, which is why the Persian king was known as *The King of Kings*.

Plus, taxes weren't too high, and the Persians improved infrastructure with better roads and they had this pony express-like mail service of which Herodotus said: "... they are stayed neither by snow nor rain nor heat nor darkness from accomplishing their appointed course with all speed."

And the Persians embraced freedom of religion. Like they were Zoroastrian, which has a claim to being the world's first monotheistic religion. It was really Zoroastrianism that introduced to the good/evil dualism we all know so well. You know: god and Satan, or Harry and Voldemort... But the Persians weren't very concerned about converting people of the empire to their faith. Plus, Zoroastrianism forbid slavery, and so slavery was almost unheard of in the Persian Empire.

All in all, if you had to live in the 5th century BCE, the Persian Empire was probably the best place to do it. Unless, that is, you believe Herodotus and the Greeks. We all know about the Greeks: Architecture. Philosophy. Literature. The very word music comes from Greek, as does so much else in contemporary culture. Greek poets and mathematicians playwrights and architects and philosophers founded a culture we still identify with. And they introduced us to many ideas, from democracy to fart jokes.

And the Greeks gave the west our first dedicated history, they gave us our vocabulary for talking about politics. Plus they gifted us our idealization of democracy, which comes from the government they had in Athens.

Mr. Green, Mr. Green, Mr. Green, Mr Green— did you say fart jokes?

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Uhh. You don't ask about Doric, Ionian, or Corinthian columns. You don't ask about Plato's allegory of the cave. It's all scatological humor with you— It's time for the open letter? Really? Already? Alright.

An open letter [the whoopee cushion sounds]... Stan! To Aristophanes. Dear Aristophanes... Oh right, I have to check the secret compartment. Stan, what... oh. Thank you, Stan. It's fake dog poo. How thoughtful.

So, good news and bad news, Aristophanes.

2,300 years after your death— this is the good news— you're still a reasonably famous. Only eleven of your forty plays survived, but even so, you're called the Father of Comedy; there are scholars devoted to your work.

Now, the bad news: Even though your plays are well-translated and absolutely hilarious, students don't like to read them in schools. There always like, why do we gotta read this boring crap? And this must be particularly galling to you, because so much of what you did in your career was make fun of boring crap, specifically in the form of theatrical tragedies. Plus, you frequently used actual crap to make jokes. Such as when you had the chorus in *The Acharnians* imagining a character in your play throwing crap at a real poet you didn't like.

You, Aristophanes, who wrote that under every stone lurks a politician, who called wealth the most excellent of all the gods... You, who are responsible for the following conversation:

Praxagora: I all to have a share of everything and everything to be in common; there will no longer be either rich or poor; [...] I shall begin by making land, money, everything that is private property, common to all. [...]

Blepyrus: But who will till the soil?

Praxagora: The slaves.

Blepyrus: Oh.

And yet you're seen as homework! Drudgery! That, my friend, is a true tragedy. On the upside, we did take care of slavery. It only took us two thousand years.

Best wishes, John Green

When we think about the high point of Greek culture, exemplified by the Parthenon and the plays of Aeschylus, what we're really thinking about is Athens in the fourth century BCE, right after the Persian Wars. But Greece was way more than Athens; Greeks lived in city-states which consisted of a city and its surrounding area. Most of these city-states featured at least some form of slavery, and in all of them citizenship was limited to males. Sorry ladies...

Also, Each of the city-states had its own form of government, ranging from very democratic— unless you were a woman or a slave— to completely dictatorial. And the people who lived in these cities considered themselves citizens of that city, not of anything that might ever be called Greece. At least until the Persian wars.

So between 490 and 480 BCE, the Persians made war on the Greek City states. This was the war that featured the battle of Thermopylae where three hundred brave Spartans battled— if you believe Herodotus— five million Persians.

And also the battle of Marathon, which is a plain about 26.2 miles away from Athens.

The whole war started because Athens supported those aforementioned Ionian Greeks when they were rebelling in Anatolia against the Persians. That made the Persian king Xerxes mad, so he led two major campaigns against the Athenians, and the Athenians enlisted the help of all the other Greek city-states. And in the wake of that shared Greek victory, the Greeks began to see themselves as Greeks, rather than as Spartans, or Athenians or whatever.

And then Athens emerged as the de facto capital of Greece and then got to experience a Golden Age, which is something that historians make up. But a lot of great things did happen during the Golden Age, including the Parthenon, a temple that became a church and then a mosque and then an armory until finally settling into its current gig as a ruin.

You also had statesmen like Pericles, whose famous funeral oration brags about the golden democracy of Athens with rhetoric that wouldn't sound out of place today. "If we look to the laws, they afford equal justice to all in their private differences... if a man is able to serve the state, he is not hindered by the obscurity of his condition."

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When you combine that high-minded rhetoric with the undeniable power and beauty of the art and philosophy that was created in ancient Athens, it's not hard to see it as the foundation of Western civilization. And if you buy into this, you have to be glad that the Greeks won the Persian Wars. But even if you put aside the slavery and other injustices in Greek society, there's still trouble.

Do I have to say it, seriously? FINE. TROUBLE RIGHT HERE IN RIVER CITY WITH A CAPITAL T WHICH RHYMES WITH P AND THAT STANDS FOR THE PELOPONNESE.

Pericles's funeral oration comes from a later war, The Peloponnesian War, a thirty year conflict between the Athens and the Spartans. The Spartans did not embrace democracy but instead embraced a kingship that functioned only because of a huge class of brutally mistreated slaves. But to be clear, the war was not about Athens trying to get Sparta to embrace democratic reform; wars rarely are. It was about resources and power. And the Athenians were hardly saintly in all of this, as evidenced by the famous Melian Dialogue.

Let's go to the Thought Bubble.

So in one of the most famous passages of Thucydides' history of the Peloponnesian War, the Athenians sailed to the island of Melos, a Spartan colony, and demanded that the Melians submit to Athenian rule. The Melians pointed out they'd never actually fought with the Spartans and were like, "Listen, if it's all the same to you, we'd like to go Switzerland on this one," except of course they didn't say that because there was no Switzerland.

To which the Athenians responded, and here I am quoting directly, "The strong do what they can, and the weak suffer what they must."

Needless to say, this is not a terribly democratic or enlightened position to take. This statement, in fact, is sometimes seen as the first explicit endorsement of the so-called theory of Realism in international relations. For realists, interaction between nations (or peoples or cultures) is all about who has the power. Whoever has it can compel whoever doesn't have it to do pretty much anything.

So what did the meritocratic and democratic Athenians do when the Melians politely asked not to participate in the fight? They killed all the Melian men and enslaved all the women and children.

So, yes, Socrates gave us his interrogative Method; Sophocles gave us Oedipus; but the legacy of Ancient Greece is profoundly ambiguous, all the more so because the final winner of the Peloponnesian War were the dictatorial Spartans.

Thanks for the incredible bummer, Thought Bubble.

So here's a non-rhetorical question: Did the right side win the Persian wars?

Most classicists and defenders of the Western Tradition will tell you that of course we should be glad the Greeks won. After all, winning the Persian war set off the cultural flourishing that gave us the Classical Age. And plus, if the Persians had won with their monarchy that might have strangled democracy in its crib and given us more one-man rule. And that's possible, but as a counter that argument, let's consider three things:

First, it's worth remembering that life under the Persians was pretty good, and if you look at the last five thousand years of human history, you'll find a lot more successful and stable empires than you will democracies.

Second, life under the Athenians wasn't so awesome, particularly if you were a woman or a slave, and their government was notoriously corrupt. And ultimately the Athenian government derived its power not from its citizens, but from the imperialist belief that Might Makes Right. It's true that Athens gave us Socrates, but let me remind you, they also killed him. Well, I mean they forced him to commit suicide. Whatever, Herodotus, you're not the only one here who can engage in historical bias.

And lastly, under Persian rule the Greeks might have avoided the Peloponnesian War, which ended up weakening the Greek city-states so much that Alexander "Coming Soon" the Great's father was able to conquer all of them, and then there were a bunch of bloody wars with the Persians and all kinds of horrible things, and Greece wouldn't glimpse democracy again for two millennia. All of which might have been avoided if they'd just let themselves get beaten by the Persians.

All of which forces us to return to the core question of human history: What's the point of being alive? I've got good news for you, guy. You're only going to have to worry about it for about 8 more seconds. Should we try to ensure

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the longest, healthiest, and most productive lives for humans? If so, it's easy to argue that Greece should have lost the Persian Wars. But perhaps lives are to be lived in pursuit of some great ideal worth sacrificing endlessly for. And if so, maybe the glory of Athens still shines, however dimly.

Those are the real questions of history: What's the point of being alive? How should we organize ourselves, what should we seek from this life? Those aren't easy questions, but we'll take another crack at them next week when we talk about the Buddha.

### **Buddha and Ashoka: Crash Course World History #6**

Hi, my name is John Green; you're watching Crash Course World History and today we're going to talk about India, which is hard because:

A. I only have 10 minutes...

Mr. Green, Mr. Green!

... I don't have time for you today, Me from the Past!

B. When we study history we tend to study unified polities that we can label like "The Roman Empire" or "China" or "Beliebers," and this emphasis on unity tends to:

C. lead to labels that mask a lot of historical difference, like for instance "Europe," which is such a weird and nebulous word that we don't even know what it means. Plus:

D, no offense Europe, but there are not many histories more complex than India, and...

E. a lot of what we know about Indian history comes from British historians, who both used and embodied the phrase "historical bias," all of which

F. makes it very unfortunate that we only have 10 minutes. But we will do our best!

Okay, we're gonna make this like Voldemort's soul and split up into eight parts.

Part 1, The Vedas. So as you no doubt remember, the Indus River Valley was one of the earliest cradles of civilization, But that original civilization basically disappeared sometime after 1750 BCE. Then there was a long period of Aryan migration, and by Aryans we do not mean like prehistoric Nazis, we mean people from the Caucasus who migrated down into the Indo-Gag gig gag gi... Stan, can you just spell it for me? Thank you.

We know about these Aryans primarily because they left behind religious texts, the earliest of which is called the Vedas. The Vedas are also the earliest texts of what will come to be known as Hinduism, although it wasn't known as Hinduism then. And they're responsible for tons of stuff, but we only have 10 minutes so let's just cut to:

Part 2, The Caste System. The caste system is one of India's most enduring and fascinating institutions. Let us read from one of the Vedas about Purusha, the universe-pervading spirit. When they divided Purusha, in how many different portions did they arrange him? What became of his mouth, what of his two arms? What were his two thighs and his two feet called? His mouth became the Brahmin, his two arms were made into the Kshatriya; his two thighs the vaisyas; from his two feet the shudra was born.

So this section gives a divine explanation for the caste system. Brahmins – who as Purusha's mouth speak to the gods are at the top. Kshatriyas – from Purusha's arms became the warriors, as you no doubt know if you've ever attended my gun show. Vaisyas – the merchants and artisans who provide money for the priests and the warriors came from Purusha's thighs. Because everybody knows that the thighs are the money makers. And the Shudras – are at the bottom. They're the feet, the laborers and farmers who are the foundation of the social order. Also, the rest of us stand on them.

The caste system becomes much more complicated than this, but that basic division into 4 classes remains throughout much of Indian history. In spite of the efforts of many reformers whom we'll be meeting in future episodes of Crash Course. The Caste System is the foundation for another big concept in Hinduism,

Part 3, Dharma. Dharma is basically one's role in life and society and it is defined primarily by birth and by caste. The whole idea is explained nicely by this passage from the Bhagavad Gita, where Krishna is talking to the warrior,

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Arjuna. “Having regard to your own duty also, you ought not to falter, for there is nothing better for a Kshatriya than a righteous battle.” The Bhagavad Gita is a section of a much larger epic poem the Mahabharata which tells the complicated and long story of a war between two kingdoms.

And we can really see how important dharma is in this passage because Krishna is basically telling Arjuna that because he is a warrior, a Kshatriya, he must fight. Even if he’s bad at it – like for instance if he gets killed – it’s still preferable to not living his dharma. It’s better to be a bad warrior if you’re a Kshatriya than to be the world’s best baker. Basically, you’re better off fulfilling your own dharma poorly than doing someone else’s well. That leads us to:

Part 4, Saṃsāra, Moksha, and Karma – there are both personal and social reasons for doing your dharma. Right, the social reason is obvious that dharma and caste combine for excellent social cohesion. You get the exact right number of bakers and the exact right number of warriors.

We could stand in to implement this system in the United States, actually, where everyone knows we suffer from a shortage of electrical engineers and a surplus of people who want to be on reality TV shows. That would not have happen in ancient India. But, say that your dharma is to scoop animal dung your entire life, why do you keep doing that when you see other lives that at least appear to be far more fulfilling?

That leads us to the concept of Saṃsāra, or the cycle of rebirth often called reincarnation. The basic idea is that when you die your soul is transferred to another living thing as it is being born. And if you fulfill your dharma, things improve and you get re-born into a higher being. You don’t have to scoop elephant dung anymore.

But the ultimate goal is not to be re-born as a Brahmin. The ultimate goal is to be released from the merry-go-round altogether. And that release is called moksha. The law that holds all this together is Karma which is summarized really nicely in the Aranyaka Upanishad. The doer of good becomes good. The doer of evil becomes evil. One becomes virtuous by virtuous action, bad by bad action.

The Upanishads, by the way, are later religious texts that began as commentaries on the Vedas, but later became sacred writings in their own right. This is a really great way to organize a social order from top to bottom. Everyone has a role, and, because that role has a religious dimension, society stays in balance.

But as a religion, Hinduism has a problem, at least if you want to start an empire; everyone’s path to “salvation” is individual. The original Brahmins tried to set themselves up as political leaders, but Hinduism doesn’t really place a premium on worshippers obeying their leaders. And if you are a leader trying to make your subjects listen to you, that’s kind of a bummer. Which brings us to:

Part 5, Buddhism. We can’t establish this historically, but according to traditional biographies, our story begins in the 6th century BCE.

Let’s go to the Thought Bubble.

So there was this prince, Siddhartha Gautama, whose father kept him locked away in a palace because a prophecy foretold that the family would lose the kingdom if he ever left. But as house arrests go, this was a good one: Siddhartha had great food, great entertainment, a hot cousin for a wife, etc.

But he suspected that there was more to life, so he snuck out of the palace a few times. On these travels, he encountered an old man, a sick man, and finally a corpse. Having realized the ubiquity of suffering, Siddhartha left the palace, renounced the crown and sought out all the holiest men to try to find out how it could be possible that life would come to such a terrible end.

Eventually Gautama became an ascetic, fasting and meditating for days at a time, hoping to find enlightenment. And finally, after meditating for about a month under a tree, it came to him. Nirvana. No, not that one. Yes, that one.

He finally understood the meaning of life and began teaching it to people who would become his disciples. He had become the Buddha, which means teacher, and he taught the Four Noble Truths. Which are:

1. All life is suffering.
2. The source of suffering is desire. Not just sexual desire, but all wanting of stuff and prestige.
3. To stop suffering, you must rid yourself of desire. This sounds simple enough, but if you’ve ever been dumped by someone, you know that it is not that easy to just stop desiring.



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4. So how do you do it? By following the Eightfold Path, which as you might suspect is a set of eight prescriptions on how to live that we don't have time to talk about. Because, oh wait look, Thought Bubble, you put some learning in our learning so we can learn while we learn.

Thanks, Thought Bubble.

So as a religion, Buddhism involves a lot of meditating and moderation and there aren't that many fun rituals, and if you're a Buddhist monk you don't get to have power like most holy people do; you have to renounce everything, including your hair. And, yes, some of them get to be kung-fu monks, but only in China, where Buddhism eventually migrated and became a religion with fun rituals and all kinds of great stuff that Siddhartha Gautama probably wouldn't even have recognized.

But we're not talking about fun populist religion, we're talking about old-skool ascetic Buddhism. Sure, you might be happy and fulfilled if you follow the Eightfold Path, but from everything we've learned so far, it would appear that humans don't want to be happy and fulfilled or else they never would've stopped foraging.

But Buddhism was very attractive if you were a low-caste Hindu, because there is no caste system. In theory, anyone who follows the Eightfold Path and renounces desire can be freed from suffering and achieve nirvana, maybe even in THIS life. Instead of having to get re-born for maybe millennia and knowing that each time there is only a tiny chance that you will end up something awesome, like a honey badger. By the way...

Totally Tangential Part 6, Did you know the game Chutes and Ladders has its origins in ancient India? They call it Snakes and Ladders. The ladders are steps forward on the path to moksha, and the snakes take you away from it. Which reminds me, it's time for the Open Letter.

That is very close to my head. Wow. But first let's see what's in The Secret Compartment. Oh look, it's a golf club. Must be so I can play Disco Golf.

An open letter to Chutes and Ladders:

Dear Chutes and Ladders, This is Disco Golf. It's a game of skill. My success at Disco Golf is entirely dependent on whether I am good at Disco Golf. Now, listen Chutes and Ladders, I remember your game being awesome when I was a kid, but I have a 2-year-old son myself and I recently bought him Chutes and Ladders and you know what happened the first time we played? HE BEAT ME.

Chutes and Ladders, this is a child who regularly refers to helicopters as helloflopsters. I don't want to say that he's not my intellectual equal, but I'm potty trained. You know why he beat me? Because there is no skill involved in Chutes and Ladders at all. It is completely random and capricious and arbitrary and cold – just like the universe.

I don't want to play games that are like the universe – I want to play games so that I can forget what the universe it like.

Best wishes, John Green

Okay, Part 7, Ashoka. Remember that for most of Indian history, India it was not one unified place. It was tons of different principalities and city-states and everything else. But India did experience indigenous political unification twice, first under the Mauryan Dynasty in the 3rd century BCE. And then again under the Gupta Dynasty from the 300's to the 500's CE, but we're not going to talk about that because it bores me.

Right now, we're interested in one particular leader from the Mauryan Dynasty, Ashoka, because Ashoka attempted to rule through quasi-Buddhist principles from 269 to 232 BCE. So Ashoka was initially a warrior who ended up expanding the empire that his grandfather started. And Ashoka experienced this conversion to Buddhism after he saw his own army devastate the Kingdom of Kalinga, something I bring up primarily so that I can say Kingdom of Kalinga.

Stan, is there anyway we can write a song a song about that, like, Kingdom of Kalinga/ I'm sorry you got destroyed...

So, Ashoka built stupas, (stoopas?) Hold on...

Could he have said that any more pretentiously? [straightens posture to mimic] Stupas.

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So Ashoka built stupas, these mound-like monuments to the Buddha, all over his kingdom to show his devotion. And he also put up pillars throughout his empire that proclaimed his benevolent rule and said he was going to rule through something he called dhamma, which according to one of the pillars went like this: proper behavior towards servants and employees, respect for mother and father, generosity to friends, companions, relations, Brahmins and ascetics, and not killing living beings.

So those are not individualistic goals like we see in Hinduism; they're relational goals, like we're gonna see next week when we study Confucianism. And that's one of the reasons why Ashoka's empire wasn't actually very Buddhist because ultimately Buddhism isn't that concerned with the order of the world. Buddhism argues that the fulfillment of the self will lead to the order of the world. In the end, Ashoka's empire didn't outlast him by much, and soon enough Buddhism declined in India, almost to the point of extinction.

Part 8: The Big Finish. So as anyone who has ever practiced yoga knows, Hinduism is the most flexible of all the world religions, which is part of the reason it's often described as polytheistic. The belief that god(s) can take many different forms makes it easy for Hinduism to assimilate other religious traditions. Which is exactly what happened with Buddhism. In time the Buddha came to be worshipped as another incarnation of one of the Hindu gods, and not as a mortal teacher. So in the end, Hinduism, rather than purging the Buddha, enveloped him.

So all this means that while Hinduism has a tremendous amount of variety and flexibility, its core tenets of samsara, karma, and the caste system have provided a remarkable amount of cultural and social unity to the Indian subcontinent for millennia.

Fortunately for the Buddha, his teachings migrated East to China. We're gonna make that same journey next week.

### **2,000 Years of Chinese History! The Mandate of Heaven and Confucius: World History #7**

Hi, I'm John Green, this is Crash Course World History, and today we're going to talk about China, which these days is discussed almost constantly on television and in newspapers - wait, are they still a thing?

So, we used to print information on thinly sliced trees and then you would pay someone to take these thinly sliced trees and throw them onto your front lawn, and that's how we received information. No one thought this was weird, by the way.

Right, but anyway, you hear a lot about how China is going to overtake the U.S. and bury us under a pile of inexpensive electronics, but I don't want to address those fears today. Instead, I want to talk about how the way you tell a story shapes the story.

China was really the first modern state – by which I mean it had a centralized government and a corps of bureaucrats who could execute the wishes of that government. And it lasted, in pretty much the same form, from 150 BCE until 1911 CE, which is technically known as a long-ass time.

The Chinese were also among the first people to write history. In fact, one of the Confucian Classics is called the Shujing, or Classic of History. This is great for us, because we can now see the things that the Chinese recorded as they were happening, but it is also problematic because of the way the story is told.

So even Me From The Past with his five minutes of World History knows that Chinese History is conveniently divided into periods called Dynasties.

Mr. Green, I didn't even say anything. That doesn't seem very fair-

Shh! What makes a dynasty a dynasty is that it's ruled by a king, or as the Chinese know him, an emperor, who comes from a continuous ruling family. As long as that family produces emperors - and they are always dudes-

No they aren't. First off, there were several empress dowagers who wielded tremendous power throughout Chinese history, and there was one very important full-fledged empress, Empress Wu, who WU-led China for more than 20 years and founded her own freaking dynasty!

-and those emperors keep ruling, the dynasty gets to be a dynasty.

So the dynasty can end for two reasons: either they run out of dudes (which never happened thanks to the hard work of many, many concubines), or the emperor's overthrown after a rebellion or a war. This is more or less what

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happened to all the dynasties, which makes it easy for me to go over to camera two and describe them in a single run-on sentence: Hi there – camera two.

Leaving aside the Xia dynasty, which was sadly fictional, the first Chinese dynasty was the Shang, who were overthrown by the Zhou, which disintegrated into political chaos called the Warring States period, in which states warred over periods - oh, no, wait, it was a period in which states warred, which ended when the Qin emperor was able to extend his power over most of the heretofore warring states, but the Qin were replaced by the Han, which was the dynasty that really set the pattern for most of China's history and lasted for almost 400 years after which China fell again into political chaos – which only means there was no dynasty that ruled over all of China – and out of this chaos rose the Sui, who were followed quickly by the Tang, who in turn were replaced, after a short period of no dynasty by the Song, who saw a huge growth in China's commerce that was still not enough to prevent them from being conquered by the Yuan, who were both unpopular and unusual... because they were Mongols- (cuts to a clip of the Mongols) -which sparked rebellions resulting in the rise of the Ming, which was the dynasty that built the Great Wall and made amazing vases, but didn't save them from falling to the Manchus, who founded a dynasty that was called the Qing, which was the last dynasty because in 1911 there was a rebellion like the ones in, say, America, France or Russia, and the whole dynastic system which at this point had lasted for a long-ass time, came to an end.

And... breathe. So that's what happened, but what's interesting, as far as capital-H History is concerned, is why it happened, and especially why the people who were writing history at the time said it happened. Which leads us to the Mandate of Heaven.

The concept of the Mandate of Heaven dates from the Zhou Dynasty, and current historians think that they created it to get rid of the Shang. Before the Zhou, China didn't even have a concept of "Heaven" or T'ian, but they did have a "high god" called Shangdi.

But the Zhou believed in T'ian, and they were eager to portray the idea of heaven as eternal, so they ascribed the concept of the Mandate of Heaven back to a time even before the Shang, explaining that the Shang were able to conquer the Xia only because the Xia kings had lost the Mandate of Heaven. (This, of course, would have been impossible, partly because the Xia kings had no concept of "heaven", and partly because, as previously noted, they didn't exist, but let's just leave that aside.)

The Shujing is pretty specific about what caused the Xia kings to lose the Mandate, by the way, explaining: "The attack on Xia may be traced to the orgies in Ming Tiao." Sadly, the Shujing is woefully short on details of these orgies, but orgies are the kind of behavior that is not expected of a ruler, and therefore Heaven saw fit to come in, remove the Mandate and allow the Shang to take power.

But then the Shang lost the Mandate. Why? Well, the last Shang emperor was reported to have roasted and eaten his opponents, which, you know, bit of a deal breaker as far as the Mandate of Heaven is concerned. Of course, that might not actually have happened, but it would explain why Heaven would allow the Zhou to come to power.

So basically the fact that one dynasty falls and is replaced by another in a cycle that lasts for 3000 years is explained, in the eyes of early Chinese historians, by divine intervention based on whether the ruler behaves in a proper, upright manner. It's after-the-fact analysis that has the virtue of being completely impossible to disprove, as well as offering a tidy explanation for some very messy political history. And even more importantly, it reinforces a vision of moral behavior that is a cornerstone of Confucianism, which I will get to momentarily.

But first, let's see an example of the Mandate of Heaven in action. The Qin dynasty on lasted only 38 years, but it's one of the most important dynasties in Chinese history, so important in fact that it gave the place its name, "Chin-uh." (laughing) Can I just tell you guys, that we literally just spent 20 minutes on that shot? We shot it like 40 times. Stan, you are in love with puns.

The accomplishment of the Qin was to re-unify China under a single emperor for the first time in 500 years, ending the warring states period. As you can imagine, the making of that particular omelette required the cracking of quite a few eggs, and the great Qin emperor Qin Shi Huangdi and his descendants developed a reputation for brutality that was justified.

But it was also exaggerated for effect so that the successor dynasty, the Han, would look more legitimate in the eyes of Heaven. So when recounting the fall of the Qin, historians focused on how a bunch of murderous eunuchs turned the Qin emperors into puppets, not literal puppets, although that would have been awesome. And these crazy eunuchs like tricked emperors into committing suicide when they started thinking for themselves, et cetera.

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So the Mandate of Heaven turned away from these suicidal puppet emperors, which set up a nice contrast with the early Han emperors, such as Wen, who came to power in 180 BCE and ruled benevolently, avoiding extravagance in personal behavior and ruling largely according to Confucian principles.

Under Wen, there were no more harsh punishments for criticizing the government, executions declined, and, most importantly for the Confucian scholars who were writing the history, the government stopped burning books. Thus, according to the ancient Chinese version of history, Emperor Wen, by behaving as a wise Confucian, maintains the Mandate of Heaven. So who is this Confucius I won't shut up about?

Let's go to the Thought Bubble.

Confucius was a minor official who lived during the Warring States period and developed a philosophical and political system he hoped would lead to a more stable state and society. He spent a great deal of his time trying to convince one of the powerful kings to embrace his system, but while none ever did, Confucius got the last laugh because his recipe for creating a functioning society was ultimately adopted and became the basis for Chinese government, education, and, well, most things.

So Confucius was conservative. He argued that the key to bringing about a strong and peaceful state was to look to the past and the model of the sage emperors. By following their example of upright, moral behavior, the Chinese emperor could bring order to China. Confucius' idea of morally upright behavior boils down to a person's knowing his or her place in a series of hierarchical relationships and acting accordingly.

Everyone lives his life (or her life, but like most ancient philosophical traditions, women were marginalized) in relationship to other people, and is either a superior or an inferior. There are five key relationships - but the most important is the one between father and son, and one of the keys to understanding Confucius is filial piety - a son treating his father with reverential respect.

The father is supposed to earn this respect by caring for the son and educating him, but this doesn't mean that a son has the right to disrespect a neglectful father. Ideally, though, both the father and the son will act accordingly: the son will respect the father, and the father will act respectably.

Ultimately, the goal of both father and son is to be a "superior man" (Junzi in Chinese). If all men strive to be Junzi, the society as a whole will run smoothly. This idea applies especially to the emperor, who is like the father to the whole country.

Oh, it's time for the Open Letter? Alright.

God, that's good. But first, let's see what's in the Secret Compartment today. Oh, an iPhone? Stan, this doesn't factor into Chinese history until much later. An Open Letter to the Xia Dynasty.

Dear Xia Dynasty,

Why you gotta be so fictional?

You contain all of the most awesome emperors, including my favorite emperor of all time, Yu the Engineer. There are so many The Greats and The Terribles among royalty and so few The Engineers. We need more kings like Yu The Engineer: Peter The Mortgage Broker; Danica The Script Supervisor; Stan The Video Editing and Producer Guy. Those should be our kings!

I freakin' love you, Yu The Engineer. And the fact that you're not real - it breaks my heart, in a way that could only be fixed by Yu The Engineer. The circularity actually reminds me of the Mandate of Heaven.

Best wishes, John Green

But back to the Junzi: So how do you know how to behave? Well, first you have to look to historical antecedents, particularly the sage emperors. The study of history, as well as poetry and paintings in order to understand and appreciate beauty, is indispensable for a Junzi. The other important aspects of Junzi-ness are contained in the Confucian ideas of ren and li. Ren and Li are both incredibly complex concepts that are difficult to translate, but we're going to do our best.

Ren is usually translated as "propriety". It means understanding and practicing proper behavior in every possible situation, which of course depends on who you're interacting with, hence the importance of the five relationships. Li

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is usually translated as “ritual” and refers to rituals associated with Chinese religion, most of which involve the veneration of ancestors.

Which brings us back, in a very roundabout way, to the fundamental problem of how early Chinese historians wrote their history. Traditional Chinese historians were all trained in the Confucian classics, which emphasized the idea that good emperors behaved like good Confucians. Would-be historians had to know these classics by heart and they’d imbibed their lessons, chief among which was the idea that in order to maintain the Mandate of Heaven, you had to behave properly and not engage in orgies or eat your enemies or eat your enemies while engaging in orgies.

In this history the political fortunes of a dynasty ultimately rest on one man and his actions - whether he behaves properly. The Mandate of Heaven is remarkably flexible as an explanation of historical causation. It explains why, as dynasties fell, there were often terrible storms and floods and peasant uprisings... If the emperor had been behaving properly, none of that stuff would have happened.

Now, a more modern historian might point out that the negative effects of terrible storms and floods, which includes peasant uprisings, sometimes lead to changes in leadership. But that would take the moral aspect out of history and it would also diminish the importance of Confucian scholars.

Because the scholars can tell you that one of the best ways to learn how to be a good emperor, and thereby maintain the Mandate of Heaven, is to read the Confucian Classics, which were written by scholars.

In short, the complicated circularity of Chinese history is mirrored by the complicated circularity of the relationship between those who write it and those who make it. Which is something to think about no matter what history you’re learning, even if it’s from Crash Course.

Next week we’ll talk about Alexander the Grape— really, Stan, for an entire episode? That seems excessive to me. They’re just like less sour, grapey-er lemonheads - ohhh Alexander the GREAT. That makes more sense.

### **Alexander the Great and the Situation ... the Great? Crash Course World History #8**

Hi there my name’s John Green; this is Crash Course World History, and today we’re gonna talk about Alexander the Great, but to do that we’re going to begin by talking about ideals of masculinity and heroism and Kim Kardashian and the Situation.

Mr Green, Mr Green, Mr. Green! Which Situation?

Oh, Me from the Past, I forgot you wanted to go to Columbia. Me from the Present regrets to inform you that you do not get in.

But since you live in the past, you have no way of knowing who I’m talking about, and it occurs to me that this video may be watched in some glorious future when Kim Kardashian and the Situation have mercifully disappeared from public life, and the supermarket tabloids, instead of talking about celebrities, talk about Foucault and the Higgs-Boson particle, so Kim Kardashian is a professional famous person who rose to notoriety by skoodilypooping with someone named Ray Jay, and Mike “The Situation” I forgot his last name is a professional stupid person with big muscles. They’re both known by millions, lives in luxury, and people literally pay to own their odors.

Why do these people crave fame? Why do any of us? Well, I’d argue it’s not about money. If it were, our tabloids would be devoted to the lives and times of bankers. I think we all want to leave a legacy. We want to be remembered. We want to be Great.

For a long time, history was all about the Study of Great Men, and it was common to call people as “the Great,” but these days historians are less likely to do that, because they recognize that one man’s Great is generally another man’s Terrible.

And also “the Great” has some misogynistic implications, like, it’s almost always men who are called "the Great". You never hear about Cleopatra the Great or Elizabeth the Great. There was, of course, Catherine the Great of Russia, but for her masculine Greatness she was saddled with the completely untrue rumor that she died trying to skoodilypoop with a horse. Saddled? Get it? Anybody? Saddled with the rumor?

Anyway, they could’ve soiled Catherine the Great’s name just by telling the truth: which is that like so many other Great men and women, she died on the toilet. Get it? soiled? Toilet? Yes? Yes!

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So, quick biography of Alexander of Macedon, born in 356 BCE, died in 323 BCE at the ripe old age of 32. Alexander was the son of King Philip the 2nd, and when just 13 years old he tamed a horse no one else could ride named Bucephalus, which impressed his father so much he said: “Oh thy son, look thee at a kingdom equal to and worthy of thyself, for Macedonia is too little for thee.”

By that time, he was already an accomplished general, but over the next decade he expanded his empire with unprecedented speed and he is famous for having never lost a battle. Today we’re going to look at Alexander of Macedon’s story by examining three possible definitions of greatness.

First, maybe Alexander was great because of his accomplishments. This is an extension of the idea that history is the record of the deeds of great men. Now, of course, that’s ridiculous. For one thing, half of people are women; for another, and this is important, there are lots of historic events that no one can take responsibility for, like for instance the Black Plague.

But still, Alexander was accomplished. I mean, he conquered a lot of territory. Like, a lot. His father, Philip, had conquered all of Greece, but Alexander did what the Spartans and Athenians had failed to do: He destroyed the Persian Empire. He conquered all the land the Persians had held including Egypt, and then marched toward India, stopping at the Indus River only because his army was like, “Hey, Alexander, you know what would be awesome? Not marching.”

Also, Alexander was a really good general, although historians disagree over whether his tactics were truly brilliant or if his army just happened to have better technology, specifically these extra long spears called sarissas. Much of his reputation as a general, and his reputation in general, anybody? Puns? Maybe I should stop? OK. Is because of Napoleon. Napoleon, like many other generals through the Millennia, was obsessed with Alexander the Great, but more on that in a moment.

That said, Alexander wasn’t very good at what we might now call empire-building. Alexander’s empire was definitely visually impressive, but it wasn’t actually much of an empire.

Like, Alexander specialized in the tearing down of things, but he wasn’t so great at the building up of institutions to replace the things he’d torn down. And that’s why, pretty soon after his death, his Empire broke into three empires, called the Hellenistic Kingdoms. Each was ruled by one of Alexander’s generals, and they became important dynasties. The Antigonos in Greece and Macedonia, the Ptolemies in Egypt, the Seleucids in Persia, all of which lasted longer than Alexander’s empire.

A Second Greatness: Maybe Alexander was Great because he had an enormous impact on the world after his death. Like King Tut, Alexander the Great was amazingly good at being a dead person.

Let’s go to the Thought Bubble.

So, After Alexander of Macedon died, everyone from the Romans to Napoleon to Oliver Stone loved him, and he was an important military model for many generals throughout history. But his main post-death legacy may be that he introduced the Persian idea of Absolute Monarchy to the Greco-Roman world, which would become a pretty big deal.

Alexander also built a number of cities on his route that became big deals after his death, and it’s easy to spot them because he named most of them after himself and one after his horse. The Alexandria in Egypt became a major center of learning in the classical world, and was home to the most amazing library ever, which Julius Caesar probably “accidentally” burned down while trying to conquer a bunch of land to emulate his hero, Alexander the Great.

Plus, the dead Alexander had a huge impact on culture. He gave the region its common language, Greek, which facilitated conversations and commerce. Greek was so widespread that archaeologists have found coins in what is now Afghanistan with pictures of their kings and the word “king” written beneath the pictures — in Greek. This is also why, incidentally, the New Testament was eventually written in Greek.

Although Alexander was mostly just conquering territory for the glory and heroism and greatness of it all, in his wake emerged a more closely connected world that could trade and communicate with more people more efficiently than ever before. Alexander didn’t make those things happen, but they probably wouldn’t have happened without him.

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But here's a question: If you're watching Jersey Shore and get so involved in The Situation's romantic conquest that you leave the bath water running, thereby flooding your apartment, and you have to call a plumber, and the plumber comes over and you fall in love with him and get married and live happily ever after, does that make The Situation responsible for your marriage?

Thanks, Thought Bubble.

Okay, a third definition of greatness: Maybe Alexander is great because of his legend: Since no accounts of his life were written while he lived, embellishment was easy, and maybe that's where true greatness lies. I mean the guy died at 32, before he ever had a chance to get old and lose battles. He was tutored by Aristotle, for God's sakes.

Then there's Alexander's single-minded Ahab-esque pursuit of the Persian King Darius, who he chased across modern-day Iraq and Iran for no real reason except he desperately wanted to kill him, and when Bessus, one of Darius's generals, assassinated him before Alexander had the chance, Alexander chased Bessus around until he could at least kill him.

These almost-comical pursuits of glory and heroism are accompanied in classical histories by stories of Alexander walking through the desert, and then suddenly raining, and these ravens coming to lead him to the army he's supposed to fight, and stories of his hot Persian wife Roxana, who supposedly while still a teenager engineered the assassinations of many of Alexander's fellow wives.

And even at his death, people tried to make Alexander live up to this heroic ideal. Like, Plutarch tells us that he died of a fever, but that's no way for a masculine, empire-building, awesome person to die! So rumors persist that he died either of alcohol poisoning or else of assassination-y poisoning. I mean, no great man can die of a fever. Speaking of Great Men, it's time to strip down for the Open Letter.

So elegant. But first let's see what's in the Secret Compartment today. Oh. It's Kim Kardashian's perfume. Thanks Stan. I'll wear this. I'll check it out, I'll give it a try. C'ah. Wow. That is... mmm... it's like all the worst parts of baby powder and all the worst parts of cat pee. An Open Letter to the Ladies.

Hello, Ladies,

You've really been unfairly neglected in Crash Course World History and also in World History textbooks everywhere. Like, there will be a whole chapter exploring the exploits of great men and then at the end there will be one sentence that's like "also women were doing stuff at the time and it was important, but we don't really know what it was, so back to Alexander the Great..."

History has been very good at marginalizing and demeaning women and we're going to fight against that as we move forward in the story of human civilization. Ladies, I have to go now because my eyes are stinging from the biological weapon known as Kim Kardashian's Gold. Seriously, don't wear it.

Best wishes, John Green

So in Alexander the Great we have a story about a man who united the world while riding a magical horse only he could tame across deserts where it magically rained for him so that he could chase down his mortal enemy and then leave in his wake a more enlightened world and a gorgeous, murderous wife.

But of course it's not just Assassin's Creed and Call of Duty that celebrate the idea that ennobled violence can lead to a better world. And that takes us to my opinion of how Alexander really came to be Great. Millennia after his death in 323, Napoleon invaded Egypt, not because he particularly needed to invade Egypt but because he wanted to do what Alexander had done.

And long before Napoleon, the Romans really worshipped Alexander, particularly the Roman General Pompey, AKA Pompeius Magnus, AKA Pompey the Great. Pompey was so obsessed with Alexander that he literally tried to emulate Alexander's boyishly disheveled hair style.

In short, Alexander was Great because others decided he was Great. Because they chose to admire and emulate him. Yes, Alexander was a great general. Yes, he conquered a lot of land. The Situation is also really good at picking up girls... of a certain type. And Kim Kardashian is good at- Stan, what is Kim Kardashian good at?

We made Alexander Great, just as today we make people great when we admire them and try to emulate them. History has traditionally been in the business of finding and celebrating great men, and only occasionally great

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women, but this obsession with Greatness is troubling to me. It wrongly implies, first, history is made primarily by men and secondly, that history is made primarily by celebrated people, which of course makes us all want to be celebrities.

Thankfully, we've left behind the idea that the best way to become an icon is to butcher people and conquer a lot of land, but the ideals that we've embraced instead aren't necessarily worth celebrating either. All of which is to say we decide what to worship and what to care about and what to pay attention to. We decide whether to care about The Situation. Alexander couldn't make history in a vacuum, and neither can anyone else.

### **The Silk Road and Ancient Trade: Crash Course World History #9**

Hi there, I'm John Green; you're watching Crash Course World History, and today we're gonna talk about the Silk Road, so called because it was not a road and not made of silk.

So this is a t-shirt. It was designed in Belgium and contains cotton from both Brazil and the Texas, which was turned into cloth in China, stitched in Haiti, screen-printed in the Washington, sold to me in Indiana, and now that I am too fat to wear it, it will soon make its way to Cameroon or Honduras or possibly even back to Haiti. Can we just pause for a moment to consider the astonishing fact that most t-shirts see more of the world than most of us do—

Mr. Green, Mr. Green, the t-shirt can't see the world because they don't have eyes—

Look, Me from the Past, it's difficult for me to isolate what I hate most about you because there is so much to hate. But very near the top is your relentless talent for ignoring everything that is interesting and beautiful about our species in favor of pedantic sniveling in which no one loses or gains anything of value. I'm gonna go put on a collared shirt because we're here to tackle the big picture.

So the Silk Road didn't begin trade, but it did radically expand its scope, and the connections that were formed by mostly unknown merchants arguably changed the world more than any political or religious leaders.

It was especially cool if you were rich, because you finally had something to spend your money on other than temples. But even if you weren't rich, the Silk Road reshaped the lives of everyone living in Africa and Eurasia, as we will see today.

Let's go straight to the Thought Bubble.

As previously mentioned, the Silk Road was not a road. It's not like archaeologists working in Uzbekistan have uncovered a bunch of yield signs and baby on board stickers. It was an overland route where merchants carried goods for trade. But it was really two routes: One that connected the Eastern Mediterranean to Central Asia and one that went from Central Asia to China.

Further complicating things, the Silk Road involved sea routes: Many goods reached Rome via the Mediterranean, and goods from Central Asia found their way across the Pacific to Japan and even Java. So we shouldn't think of the Silk Road as a road but rather as a network of trade routes.

But just as now, the goods traveled more than the people who traded them: Very few traders traversed the entire Silk Road: Instead, they'd move back and forth between towns, selling to traders who'd take the goods further toward their destination, with everybody marking up prices along the way.

So what'd they trade? Well silk, for starters. For millennia, silk was only produced in China. It is spun from the cocoons of mulberry tree-eating worms and the process of silk making as well as the techniques for raising the worms were closely guarded secrets, since the lion's share of China's wealth came from silk production.

The Chinese used silk as fishing line, to buy off nomadic raiders to keep things peaceful, and to write before they invented paper. But as an export, silk was mostly used for clothes: Silk clothing feels light in the summer and warm in the winter, and until we invented \$700 pre-distressed designer jeans, decking yourself out in silk was the #1 way to show people that you were wealthy.

Thanks, Thought Bubble.

But the Silk Road wasn't all about silk. The Mediterranean exported such cliched goods as olives, olive oil, wine, and mustachioed plumbers. China exported raw materials like jade, silver, and iron. India exported fine cotton



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textiles; the ivory that originated in East Africa made its way across the Silk Road; and Arabia exported incense and spices and tortoise shells. Oh, god, it's a red one, isn't it? It's just gonna chase me, I just – Ow.

Up until now on Crash Course, we've been focused on city-dwelling civilizational types, but with the growth of the Silk Road, the nomadic people of Central Asia suddenly become much more important to world history. Much of Central Asia isn't great for agriculture, but it's difficult to conquer, unless you are, wait for it – the Mongols.

It also lends itself fairly well to herding, and since nomads are definitionally good at moving around, they're also good at moving stuff from Point A to Point B, which makes them good traders. Plus all their travel made them more resistant to diseases.

One group of such nomads, the Yuèzhī, were humiliated in battle in the 2nd century BCE by their bitter rivals the Xiongnu, who turned the Yuèzhī king's skull into a drinking cup, in fact. And in the wake of that, the Yuèzhī migrated to Bactria and started the Kushan Empire in what is now Afghanistan and Pakistan.

Although Silk Road trading began more than a century before the birth of Jesus, it really took off in the second and third centuries CE, and the Kushan Empire became a huge hub for that Silk Road trade. By then, nomads were being eclipsed by professional merchants who travelled the Silk Roads, often making huge profits, but those cities that had been founded by nomadic peoples became hugely important.

They continued to grow, because most of the trade on the Silk Road was by caravan, and those caravans had to stop frequently, you know, for like food and water and prostitutes. These towns became fantastically wealthy: one, Palmyra, was particularly important, because all of the incense and silk that travelled to Rome had to go through Palmyra. Silk was so popular among the Roman elite that the Roman senate repeatedly tried to ban it, complaining about trade imbalances caused by the silk trade and also that silk was inadequately modest.

To quote Seneca the Younger, "I see clothes of silk, if materials that do not hide the body, nor even one's decency, can be called clothes." He also said of the woman who wears silk, "her husband has no more acquaintance than any outsider or foreigner with his wife's body."

And yet all attempts to ban silk failed, which speaks to how much, even in the ancient world, wealth shaped governance. And with trade, there was a way to become wealthy without being a king or lord who takes part of what your citizens produce.

The merchant class that grew along with the Silk Road came to have a lot of political clout, and in some ways that began the tension that we still see today between wealth and politics. Whether it's, you know, corporations making large donations or Vladimir Putin periodically jailing billionaires. Mr. Putin, I just want to state for the record that I did not mean that in any way, I was – Stan wrote that joke. Oh, it's time for the Open Letter.

An Open Letter to Billionaires. But first, let's see what's in the Secret Compartment today. Oh, it's some fake silk; the stuff that put real silk out of business.

Dear Billionaires,

I've wrapped myself in the finest of polyester so that you will take my message seriously. Here at Crash Course we've done a lot of research into our demographics and our show is watched primarily by Grammar Nazis, Muggle Quidditch Players, People Who Have a Test Tomorrow, and Billionaires.

I have a message for you Billionaires: It will never be enough. Your relentless yearning is going to kill us all.

Best wishes, John Green

Speaking of billionaires, the goods that travelled on the Silk Road really only changed the lives of rich people. Did the Silk Road affect the rest of us? Yes, for three reasons.

First, wider economic impact. Relatively few people could afford silk, but a lot of people devoted their lives to making that silk. And as the market for silk grew, more and more people chose to go into silk production rather than doing something else with their lives.

Second, the Silk Road didn't just trade luxury goods. In fact, arguably the most important thing traded along the Silk Road: ideas. For example, the Silk Road was the primary route for the spread of Buddhism. When we last saw the Buddha's Eightfold Path to escaping the cycle of suffering and desire that's inherent to humans, it was beginning to dwindle in India.

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But through contacts with other cultures and traditions, Buddhism grew and flourished and became one of the great religious traditions of the world. The variation of Buddhism that took root in China, Korea, Japan, and Central Asia is known as Mahayana Buddhism, and it differed from the original teachings of the Buddha in many ways, but one that was fundamental.

For Mahayana Buddhists, the Buddha was divine. (I mean, we can — and religious historians do — fight over the exact definition of divine, but in Mahayana Buddhism, there's no question that the Buddha is venerated to a greater degree. The idea of Nirvana also transformed from a release from that cycle of suffering and desire to something much more heavenly and frankly more fun, and in some versions of Mahayana Buddhism, there are lots of different heavens, each more awesome than the last.

Rather than focusing on the fundamental fact of suffering, Mahayana Buddhism offered the hope that through worship of the Buddha, or one of the many Bodhisattvas — holy people who could have achieved nirvana but chose to hang out on Earth with us because they're super nice — one could attain a good afterlife.

Many merchants on the Silk Road became strong supporters of monasteries which in turn became convenient weigh stations for caravans. And by endowing the monasteries, rich merchants were buying a form of supernatural insurance; monks who lived in the monasteries would pray for the success of trade missions and the health of their patrons. It was win-win, especially when you consider that one of the central materials used in Mahayana Buddhist rituals is ... silk.

And a third reason the Silk Road changed all our lives: worldwide interconnectedness of populations led to the spread of disease. Measles and Smallpox traveled along it, as did bubonic plague, which came from the East to the West in 534, 750, and — most devastatingly — in 1346. This last plague — known as the Black Death — resulted in the largest population decimation in human history, with nearly half of Europeans dying in a four-year period. A sizable majority of people living in Italy died as did two-thirds of Londoners. And it quite possibly wouldn't have happened without the Silk Road.

If you were living in London during the fourteenth century, you probably didn't blame the Silk Road for your community's devastation, but it played a role. If you look at it that way, the interconnectedness fostered by Silk Road affected way, way more people than just those rich enough to buy silk, just as today's globalization offers both promise and threat to each of us.

Next week we'll talk about Julius Caesar and in what situation, if any, it's okay to stab your friend in the gut.

### **The Roman Empire. Or Republic. Or...Which Was It?: Crash Course World History #10**

Hi, I'm John Green; this is Crash Course World History and today we're going to learn about the Roman Empire, which of course began when two totally nonfictional twins, Romulus and Remus, who'd been raised by wolves, founded a city on seven hills.

Mr Green, Mr Green, what... what does SPQR stand for?

It means shut pie hole quickly, rapscallion. No, it means Senātus Populusque Rōmānus, one of the mottoes of the Roman Republic.

So today we're going to do some old school Great Man History and focus on Julius Caesar while trying to answer a question: When, if ever, is it OK to stab someone 23 times?

Shakespeare answers that question by saying that Roman senators killed Caesar because he was going to destroy the Roman republic, but even if that's true, we still have to answer whether:

- a. The Roman Republic was worth preserving, and
- b. whether Caesar actually destroyed it.

One of the things that made the Roman republic endure, both in reality and in imagination was its balance. According to the Greek historian Polybius, "THE THREE kinds of government, monarchy, aristocracy and democracy, were all found united in Rome. And... it was no easy thing to determine with assurance, whether the entire state was an aristocracy, a democracy, or a monarchy."

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At the heart of this blended system was the Senate, a body of legislators chosen from a group of elite families. (Rome was divided into two broad classes: the Patricians – the small group of aristocratic families and the Plebeians, basically everybody else. The Senators were drawn from the Patricians.) The Senate was a sort of a mixture of legislature and giant advisory council. Their main job was to set the policy for the Consuls.

Each year the Senate would choose from among its ranks 2 co-Consuls to serve as sort of the chief executives of Rome. There needed to be two so they could check each other's ambition, and also so that one could, you know, take care of Rome domestically, while the other was off fighting wars, and conquering new territory.

There were two additional checks on power: First, the one-year term. I mean, how much trouble could you really do in a year, right? Unless you're the CEO of Netflix, I mean he destroyed that company in like two weeks.

And secondly, once a senator had served as consul, he was forbidden to serve as consul again for at least 10 years. Although that went a little bit like you say you're only going to eat one Chipotle burrito per week, and then there are a few exceptions, and then all of a sudden you're there every day, and YES, I know guacamole is more, JUST GIVE IT TO ME!

But right, we were talking about the Romans. The Romans also had a position of dictator, a person who would who'd take over in the event the Republic was in imminent danger. The paradigm for this selfless Roman ruler was Cincinnatus, a general who came out of comfortable retirement at his plantation, took command an army, defeated whatever enemy he was battling, and then laid down his command and returned to his farm, safe in the knowledge that one day the second largest city in Ohio would be named for him.

If that model of leadership sounds familiar to Americans by the way, it's because George Washington was heavily influenced by Cincinnatus when he invented the idea of a two term president. So along comes Caesar. Gaius Ju-Gay-us? No it's Gaius, I know from Battlestar Galactica.

Gaius Julius Caesar was born around 100 BCE to one of Rome's leading families. His birth was somewhat miraculous, requiring a surgical procedure that we know as Caesarian section. Coming as he did from the senatorial class, it was natural that Caesar would serve in both the army and the Senate, which he did. He rose through the ranks, and after some top-notch generalling, and a gig as the governor of Spain, he decided to run for consul.

In order to win, Caesar needed financial help, which he got from Crassus, one of Rome's richest men. Crassus ran a private fire company whose business model was essentially, "Hey, I notice your house is on fire. Give me some money and I'll help you out with that."

Caesar succeeded in becoming consul in 59 BCE and thereafter sought to dominate Roman politics by allying himself with Crassus and also with Rome's other most powerful man, the general Pompey. You'll no doubt remember Pompey from his fascination with Alexander the Great. Pompey, Crassus, and Caesar were the so-called first triumvirate, and the alliance worked out super well, for Caesar. Not so well for the other two.

Let's go to the Thought Bubble.

After a year as consul that included getting the senate to pass laws largely because of intimidation by Pompey's troops, Caesar landed the governorship of Gaul, at least the southern part of Gaul that Rome controlled. He quickly conquered the rest of Gaul and his four loyal armies — or legions, as the Romans called them — became his source of power. Caesar continued his conquests, invading Britain and waging another successful war against the Gauls.

While he was away, Crassus died in battle with the Parthians and Pompey, who had become Caesar's rival and enemy, was elected Consul. Pompey and the Senate decided to try to strip Caesar of his command and recall him to Rome. If he returned to Rome without an army, Caesar would have been prosecuted for corrupt consuling and also probably exceeding his authority as governor, so instead he returned with the 13th Legion.

He crossed the Rubicon River, famously saying, "The die is cast" or possibly, "Let the die be cast." Sorry, Thought Bubble, sources disagree. Basically, Caesar was invading his own hometown. Pompey was in charge of Rome's army but like a boss fled the city, and by 48 BCE Caesar was in total command of all of Rome's holdings, having been named both dictator and consul.

Caesar set out to Egypt to track down Pompey only to learn that he'd already been assassinated by agents of the Pharaoh Ptolemy. Egypt had its own civil war at the time, between the Pharaoh and his sister/wife Cleopatra. Ptolemy was trying to curry favor with Caesar by killing his enemy, but Caesar was mad in that the-only-person-

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who-gets-to-tease-my-little-brother-is-me kind of way, except with murder instead of teasing. So Caesar sided with — and skoodilypooped with — Cleopatra.

Thank you, Thought Bubble.

Cleopatra went on to become the last Pharaoh of Ancient Egypt and bet on Marc “I am the Wrong Horse” Antony instead of Emperor “There is a Baby Attached to My Leg” Augustus. But before all that, Caesar made his way back from Egypt to Rome, stopping off to defeat a few kings in the east, and was declared dictator again. That position that was later extended for ten years, and then for life.

He was elected consul in 46 BCE and then again in 45 BCE, this last time without a co-consul. By 45 BCE Caesar was the undisputed master of Rome and he pursued reforms that strengthened his own power. He provided land pensions for his soldiers, restructured the debts of a huge percentage of Rome’s debtors, and also changed the calendar to make it look more like the one we use today.

But by 44 BCE, many Senators had decided that Caesar controlled too much of the power in Rome, and so they stabbed him 23 times on the floor of the Roman senate. Caesar was duly surprised about this and everything, but he never said, “Et Tu, Brute” when he realized Brutus was one of the co-conspirators. That was an invention of Shakespeare.

The conspirators thought that the death of Caesar would bring about the restoration of the Republic, and they were wrong. For one thing, Caesar’s reforms were really popular with the Rome’s people, who were quick to hail his adopted son Octavian, as well as his second-in-command Mark “I am the Wrong Horse” Antony and a dude named Lepidus, as a second triumvirate.

This triumvirate was an awesome failure, degenerating into a second civil war. Octavian and Antony fought it out. Antony, being the wrong horse, lost. Octavian won, changed his name to Caesar Augustus, became sole ruler of Rome, attached a baby to his leg, adopted the title Emperor, and started printing coins identifying himself as Divini Filius: The Son of God. More on that next week.

Although Augustus tried to pretend that the forms of the Roman republic were still intact, the truth was that he made the laws and the Senate had become nothing more than a rubber stamp. Which reminds me, it’s time for the open letter.

Movie magic! An open letter to the Roman Senate. Oh, but first, let’s see what’s in the secret compartment. Ah, it’s a harmonica! Stan, do you want me to play some old, Roman folk songs? Very well. Stan, I just want to thank you for doing such a good job of overdubbing there.

Dear Roman Senate,

Whether you were rubber stamping the laws of Emperor Augustus, or stabbing Caesar on the floor of your sacred hall, you were always doing something! I don’t want to sound nostalgic for a time when people lived to be 30, a tiny minority of adults could vote, and the best fashion choice was bed-sheets, but oh my god, at least you did something!

Your senate was chosen from among the Patrician class. Our senate here in the United States is chosen from among the obstructionist class. But don’t get me wrong, Roman senate, you were terrible.

Best wishes, John Green.

So did Caesar destroy the Republic? Well, he started a series of civil wars, he seized power for himself, he subverted the ideas of the republic, he changed the constitution, but he’s only really to blame if he was the first one to do that. And he wasn’t.

Take the general Marius, for instance, who rose to power on the strength of his generalship and on his willingness to open up the army to the poor, who were loyal to him personally, and not to Rome, and whom he promised land in exchange for their good service in the army. This of course required the Romans to keep conquering new land so they could keep giving it to new legionnaires. Marius also was consul 5 times in a row, 60 years before Caesar.

Or look at the general Sulla who, like Marius, ensured that his armies would be more loyal to him personally than to Rome, but who marched against Rome itself, and then became its dictator, executing thousands of people in 81 BCE, 30 years before Caesar entered the scene.

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There is another way of looking at this question altogether if we dispense with great man history. Maybe Rome became an empire before it had an emperor. Like, remember the Persian Empire? You'll recall that empire had some characteristics that made it, imperial. Like a unified system of government, continual military expansion, and a diversity of subject peoples.

The Roman empire had all three of those characteristics long before it became The Roman Empire. Like Rome started out as a city, and then it became a city state, then a kingdom, and then a Republic, but that entire time, it was basically comprised of the area around Rome.

By the 4th century BCE, Rome started to incorporate its neighbors like the Latins and the Etruscans, and pretty soon they had all of Italy under their control, but that's not really diversity of subject peoples. I mean, nothing personal, Italians, but you have a lot of things in common, like the constant gesticulations.

If you want to talk about real expansion and diversity, you've got to talk about the Punic Wars. These were the wars that I remember, primarily because they involved Hannibal crossing the Alps with freaking war-elephants, which was probably the last time that the elephants could have risen up, and formed their awesome secret elephant society with elephant planes and elephant cars.

In the First Punic War, Rome wanted Sicily, which was controlled by the Carthaginians. Rome won, which made Carthage cranky, so they started the second Punic war. In 219 BCE, Hannibal attacked a Roman town and then led an army across Spain, and then crossed the freaking Alps with elephants.

Hannibal and his elephant army almost won, but alas, they didn't, and as a result the Romans got Spain. People in Spain are definitely NOT Romans (despite Russell Crowe's character in Gladiator), which means that by 201 BCE Rome was definitely an empire.

The third Punic War was a formality – Rome found some excuse to attack Carthage and then destroyed it so completely that these days you can't even find it on a map. Eventually this whole area, and a lot more, would be incorporated into a system of provinces and millions of people would be ruled by the Roman Empire.

And it's ridiculous to say that Rome was a Republic until Augustus became Rome's first official emperor, because by the time he did that, Rome had been an empire for almost 200 years. There's a reason I'm arguing that the death of the Republic came long before Caesar and probably around the time that Rome became an Empire.

If anything destroyed the idea of Republican Rome, it was the concentration of power into the hands of one man. And this man was always a general. I mean, you can't march on Rome without an army, after all. Why were there such powerful generals? Because Rome had decided to become an Empire, and empires need to expand militarily. Particularly, the Roman empire needed to expand militarily because it always needed new land to give its retired legionnaires.

That expansion created the all-powerful general and the incorporation of diverse peoples made it easier for them to be loyal to him, rather than to some abstract idea of the Republic. Julius Caesar didn't create emperors: Empire created them.

Next week we'll be discussing Christianity, so that shouldn't be controversial.

### **Christianity from Judaism to Constantine: Crash Course World History #11**

Hi there my name's John Green; this is Crash Course World History and today we're going to talk about Jesus.

So this is a Roman coin from around the time Jesus was born in the Roman Empire, and it calls Augustus, the emperor, the son of God. So let's just state at the outset that in 4 BCE, being the son of God, or at least being the son of a god was not such an unusual thing. But a poor Jew being the son of God — that was news.

Any understanding of Christianity has to start with Judaism, because Jesus was born a Jew, and he grew up in the Jewish tradition. He was one of many teachers spreading his ideas in the Roman province of Judea at the time, and he was part of a messianic tradition that helps us understand why he was thought of not only teacher but something much, much more.

Let's go straight to the Thought Bubble today.

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The people who would become the Jews, were just one of many tribal peoples eking out an existence in that not-very Fertile Crescent world of Mesopotamia after the agricultural revolution.

The Hebrews initially worshipped many gods, making sacrifices to them in order to bring good weather and good fortune. But they eventually developed a religion centered around an idea that would become key to the other great western religions.

This was monotheism, the idea that there is only one true god (or at least that if there are other gods around, they are total lameoids). The Hebrews developed a second concept that is key to their religion as well: the idea of the covenant, a deal with God.

The main man in this, the big macher was Abraham. Not to make this too much of a scripture lesson, but it's kind of hard to understand the Jews without understanding Abraham, or Abram as he was known before he had his big conversation with God. Recorded in Genesis 17: "When Abram was ninety years and nine, the LORD appeared to Abram, and said unto him, 'I am the Almighty God; walk before me, and be thou perfect.'" And I'm a make a covenant with you and a bunch of cool things will happen like you're gonna have kids and your descendants will number the stars and you can have all the land of Canaan forever, it's gonna be awesome. I'm paraphrasing by the way, Thought Bubble.

So God promised that Abram would have kids with his wife even though the dude was already like 99, but there was a catch: "This is my covenant, which ye shall keep, between me and you and thy seed after thee; Every man child among you shall be circumcised." Keep it PG-13, Thought Bubble.

Now that is asking a lot from a guy, especially a 99-year-old geezer like Abram living in a time before general anesthesia. But those were the terms of the deal, and in exchange God had chosen Abraham and his descendants to be a great nation. From this we get the expression that the Jews are the Chosen people.

Thanks for keeping it clean, Thought Bubble.

So, some important things about this god:

One, singularity. He — and I'm using the masculine pronoun because that's what Hebrew prayers use — does not want you to put any gods before Him.

He is also transcendent, having always existed and he is deeply personal — he chats with prophets, sends locusts, etc. But he doesn't take corporeal form like the Greek and Roman Gods do.

He is also involved in history, like he will destroy cities, and bring floods, and determine the outcomes of wars, and possibly football games. Stan, no! FOOTBALL games!

Probably most important to us today, and certainly most important to Jesus, this god demands moral righteousness and social justice. So, this is the god of the Hebrews, Yahweh, and despite many ups and downs, the Jewish people have stuck with him for- according to the Hebrew calendar, at least- over 5700 years.

And He has stuck by them too, despite the Jews being, on occasion, something of a disappointment to him. Which leads to various miseries, and also to a tradition of prophets who speak for God and warn the people to get back on the right path lest there be more miseries.

Which brings us back to our friends, the Romans. By the time that Jesus was born, the land of the Israelites had been absorbed into the Roman Empire as the province of Judea. At the time of Jesus' birth, Judea was under the control of Herod the Great, best known for building the massive temple in Jerusalem, that the Romans would later destroy.

And by the time Jesus died, an expanded Judea was under the rule of Herod Antipater. Also, unhelpfully, known as Herod. Both Herods ultimately took their orders from the Romans, and they both show up on the list of rulers who are oppressive to the Jews, partly because there's never that much religious freedom in an empire.

Unless you are, wait for it... The Mongols or the Persians.

Also, they were Hellenizers, bringing in Greek theater and architecture, and rationalism. And in response to those Hellenistic influences, there were a lot of preachers trying to get the Jews to return to the traditions and the godly ways of the past, including the Sadducees, and the Pharisees, and the Essenes, and the Zealots.

## Crash Course World History – Video Transcript

And one of those preachers, who didn't fit comfortably into any of these four groups, was Jesus of Nazareth. Jesus was a preacher who spread his message of peace, love and, above all, justice, across Judea over the course of his actually average-length life for his time.

He was remarkably charismatic, attracting a small but incredibly loyal group of followers, and he was said to perform miracles — although it's worth noting that miracles weren't terribly uncommon at the time.

Jesus' message was particularly resonant to the poor and downtrodden and pretty radical in its anti-authoritarian stance. He said it was easier for a camel to get through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to get to heaven, he said the meek were blessed, that the last would be first and the first would be last — all of which was kind of threatening to the powers that be, who accordingly had him arrested, tried and then executed in the normal method of killing rebels at that time, crucifixion.

Also, just to put this question to bed, the Romans that crucified Jesus, because he was a threat to their authority. Later traditions saying that the Jews killed Jesus? Very unfortunate. Also, very untrue.

We're not going to discuss Jesus' divinity, because:

1. This isn't a theology class, and
2. Flame wars on the Internet make me so uncomfortable I have to turn to camera 2. Hi there camera 2, I'm here to remind you that
3. Fighting over such things, like fighting over whether the proverbial cake is a lie, rarely accomplishes anything, plus
4. What matters to us is the historical fact that people at the time believed that Jesus was the Messiah, the Anointed One, the son of God. And they believed that he would return some day to redeem the world.

Which leads us to two questions about Christianity:

First, Why did this small group of people believe this? And second, why and how did that belief become so widespread?

So why would people believe that Jesus was the Messiah?

First. The Jews had a long tradition of believing that a savior who would come to them in a time of trouble. And Judea under the rule of Herod and the Romans... definitely a time of trouble.

And many of the prophecies about this savior point to someone whose life looks a lot like Jesus'. For instance, Isaiah 53 says the person will be misunderstood and mistreated, just like Jesus was: "He was despised, and rejected by men; a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief: and as one from whom men hide their face he was despised; and we didn't respect him."

And a lot of the prophecies like Daniel 7:14, for instance, explained that when the Messiah comes there will be this awesome, new, everlasting kingdom. And that had to sound pretty good to people who'd had their autonomy taken away from them.

So some religious Jews saw Jesus in those prophecies and came to believe either during his life or shortly thereafter, that he was the messiah. Most of them thought the new everlasting kingdom was right around the corner, which is probably why no one bothered to write down much about the life of Jesus for several decades, by which time it was clear that we might have to wait a bit for this brilliant new everlasting kingdom.

I should note, by the way, that the idea of a messiah was not unique to the Jews at the time. Even the Romans got in on the action. For instance, the Roman poet Virgil wrote of a boy who: "Shall free the earth from never-ceasing fear. He shall receive the life of gods, and see Heroes with gods commingling." Sound familiar?

But Virgil was writing about Emperor Augustus in that poem, not Jesus, which points again to the similarities between the two. Both called sons of God. Both sent to free the earth from never-ceasing fear. But one ruled the largest empire in the world; and the other believed that empire, and the world, needed to change dramatically.

So why did the less wealthy and famous son of God become by far the more influential? Well, here are three possible historical reasons:

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Reason #1: The Romans continued to make things bad for the Jews. In fact, things got much worse for the Jews, especially after they launched a revolt between 66-73 CE, which did not go well.

By the time the dust settled, the Romans had destroyed the Temple and expelled the Jews from Judea, beginning what we now know as the Jewish Diaspora.

And without a Temple or geographic unity, the Jews had to solidify what it meant to be a Jew and what the basic tenants of the religion were. This forced the followers of Jesus to make a decision: were they going to continue to be Jews following stricter laws set forth by rabbis, or were they going to be something else.

The decision to open up their religion to non-Jews, people who weren't part of the covenant, is the central reason that Christianity could become a world religion instead of just a sect of Judaism. (08: 30) And it probably didn't hurt that the main proponent of sticking with Judaism was James, Jesus' brother, who was killed by the Romans.

Reason #2: Is related to Reason #1 and it's all about a dude named Saul.

No, not that Saul. Yes, Saul of Tarsus, thank you.

Saul, having received a vision on the road to Damascus, became Paul and began visiting and sending letters to Jesus followers throughout the Mediterranean. And it was Paul who emphatically declared that Jesus followers did NOT have to be Jews, that they did not have to be circumcised or keep to Jewish laws or any of that stuff.

This opened the floodgates for thousands of people to convert to this new religion. And the other thing to remember about Paul is that he was a Roman citizen. Which meant that he could travel freely throughout the Roman Empire. This allowed him to make his case to lots of different people and facilitated the geographic spread of Christianity.

Oh, it's time for the open letter? Alright. An open letter, to the fish.

But first, lets see what's in the secret compartment today. Oh, Stan. It's my favorite album Jesus Christ Superstar, finally available in my favorite format, the cassette. Did I color-coordinate my shirt to Jesus Christ Superstar? Yes.

Dear Ichthys, So check this out: In the first century when it was still super underground and hipster to be a Christian, you were a secret symbol of Christianity, used to kind of hide from the Romans. Ichthys, the Greek word for fish, was an acronym and it was a super clever way to talk about religion without anyone knowing that you were talking about it.

But you'll never guess what happened - even in places where it's completely fine to talk about Christianity now and to use, you know, regular Christian symbols, like the cross, you have had a huge resurgence thanks to the plastic automobile decal industry. I mean seriously, Ichthys, I haven't seen a comeback like this since Jesus. Best wishes, John Green

And lastly, Christianity was born and flourished an empire with a common language that allowed for its spread. And crucially, it was also an Empire in decline.

Like even by the end of the first century CE, Rome was on its way down. And for the average person, and even for some elites, things weren't as good as they had been, in fact they were getting worse so fast that you might have thought the end of the world was coming.

And Roman religion offered no promise of an afterlife, and a bunch of squabbling whiny gods - sorry if I offended adherents to Roman religion, but seriously, they squabble. So even though early Christians were persecuted by the Roman Empire and sometimes fed to the lions and other animals, the religion continued to grow, albeit slowly.

But then as the Roman decline continued, Emperor Constantine allowed the worship of Jesus and then eventually converted to Christianity himself. And then the religion really took off. I mean, Rome wasn't what it used to be, but everybody still wanted to be like the Emperor. And soon enough there was a new son of God on coins.

### **Fall of The Roman Empire...in the 15th Century: Crash Course World History #12**

Hi there, my name's John Green, this is Crash Course World History, and today we're going to talk about the fall of Rome.

Mr. Green, Mr. Green, Mr. Green! Who's that pretty lady?



## Crash Course World History – Video Transcript

That lady, me-from-the-past, is Emperor Justinian. We'll get to him in a minute.

How and when Rome fell remains the subject of considerable historical debate — but today I'm going to argue that the Rome didn't really fall until the middle of the 15th century.

But first, let me introduce you to the traditional view: Barbarians at the Gates. My, don't you look traditional? If you want to be really technical about it, the city of Rome was conquered by bar bar bar barbarians in 476 CE. There was a last Roman Emperor Romulus Augustus, who ruled the empire for less than a year before being deposed and sent into exile by Odoacer, who was some kind of barbarian- we don't know for sure. Ostrogoth, Hun, Visigoth, Vandals; they all looked the same to the Romans. Rome had been sacked by barbarians before, most notably by Alaric the Visigoth in 410- Is it Uh-lar-ick or Uh-lair-ick? The dictionary says Uh-lair-ick but The Vampire Diaries say Uh-lar-ick so I'm going to go with Uh-lar-ick.

But anyway, after 476, there was never again a "Roman" emperor in Rome. Then there's the hipper anti-imperialistic argument — that's nice, but if you really want to go full hipster you should probably deny that you're being hipster — right, exactly — which goes like this: Rome was doomed to fall as soon as it spread outside of Italy because the further the territory is from the capital, the harder it is to govern. Thus imperialism itself sowed the seeds of destruction in Rome. This was the argument put forth by the Roman historian Tacitus, although he put it in the mouth of a British chieftain. That sounded dirty, but it's not, it's all about context here on Crash Course. "To robbery, slaughter, plunder, they give the lying name of empire; they make a desert and call it peace."

There are two ways to overcome this governance problem: First, you rule with the proverbial topaz fist — that's not the proverb? Really, Stan? It's an iron fist? But topaz is much harder than iron. Don't these people know their Mohs scale of mineral hardness?.. Regardless, the Romans couldn't do this because their whole identity was wrapped up in an idea of justice that precluded indiscriminate violence.

The other strategy is to try to incorporate conquered people into the empire more fully: In Rome's case, to make them Romans. This worked really well in the early days of the Roman Republic and even at the beginning of the Empire, but it eventually led to Barbarians Inside the Gates. The decline of the Roman legions started long before Rome started getting sacked. It really began with the extremely bad decision to incorporate Germanic warriors into the Roman Army.

Rome had a long history of absorbing people from the empire's fringes into the polity, first by making them allies and then eventually by granting them full citizenship rights. But usually these "foreign" citizens had developed ties to Rome itself; they learned Latin, they bought into the whole idea of the aristocratic republic. But by the 3rd and 4th centuries CE, though, the empire had been forced to allow the kind of riffraff into their army who didn't really care about the idea of Rome itself. They were only loyal to their commanders. And as you no doubt remember from the historical examples of Caesar, Pompey, Marius, contemporary Afghanistan, this is not a recipe for domestic bliss.

So here is Rome, stuck with a bunch of expensive and bloody wars against Germanic peoples who were really good at fighting and then they had a great idea: Why not fight with these guys? So they essentially hired them and soon the Roman Legions were teeming with these mercenaries who were loyal mostly to gold, secondarily to their commanders, and not at all to Rome which is a place that very few of them ever even saw. I mean, why would they give a crap about the health and well-being of the Roman Empire? Am I allowed to say crap, Stan? Nice.

This was of course a recipe for civil war, and that's exactly what happened with general after general after general declaring himself Emperor of Rome. So there was very little stability in the West. For instance, between 235 and 284 CE, 41 different people were either emperor or claimed to be emperor. And after the year 200, many of the generals who were powerful enough to proclaim themselves emperors weren't even Roman. In fact, a lot of them didn't speak much Latin. Oddly enough, one of the best symbols of the new face of the Roman Empire was sartorial. Instead of the traditional tunic and toga of the glory days of the Senate, most of the new general-emperors adopted that most practical and most barbaric of garments: pants. Oh, which reminds me, it's time for the Open Letter.

An Open Letter to Pants. But first, let's see what's in the Secret Compartment. Oh look, it's Rosie the Riveter. And she's wearing pants!

Dear Pants,

## Crash Course World History – Video Transcript

Although you eventually became a symbol of patriarchal oppression, in your early days you were worn by both men and women. And in the days of the Roman Republic, they hated you. They thought you barbarous. They thought that people wearing you was the definition of people lacking civilization. They ventured north and the wind blew up through their togas and lo and behold, they adopted pants. And there's a history lesson in that, pants, which is that when people have to choose between civilization and warm genitals, they choose warm genitals.

Best wishes, John Green

And now a note from our sponsor: Today's episode of crash course is brought to you by the all-new Oldsmobile Byzantium, mixing power and luxury in a way- Really? Oldsmobile isn't a company anymore? And Byzantium is a place? Are you sure?

So remember when I said the Roman Empire survived 'til the 15th century? Well that was the Eastern Roman Empire, commonly known as the Byzantine Empire (although not by the people who lived in it who identified themselves as Romans). So while the Western Roman Empire descended into chaos, the eastern half of the Empire had its capital in Byzantium, a city on the Bosphorus Strait that Constantine would later rename Constantinople, thereby paving the way for They Might Be Giants only mainstream hit.

Constantine moved his headquarters, and thereby the headquarters of the Roman Empire to Constantinople in 324 C.E. Constantine had lots of reasons to move his capitol east. For one thing he was born in modern-day Croatia. Also he probably spoke better Greek than Latin, and plus the eastern provinces were a lot richer than the Western provinces and from a looting perspective, you just want to be closer to where the good warring is. The enemies in the East, like the Persian Parthians and the Persian Sassanians, were real empires, not just bands of warriors. And no matter who you were in world history, if you wanted to make a name for yourself in terms of war, you really needed to be up against the Persians. EVEN IF you were — the Mongols. Not this time, friends.

As the political center of the Roman Empire shifted east, Constantine also tried to re-orient his new religion, Christianity, toward the east, holding the first Church council in Nicaea in 325. The idea was to get all Christians to believe the same thing- that worked- but it did mark the beginning of the emperor having greater control over the Church. That trend would of course later lead to tensions between the church centered at Constantinople and the one centered in Rome. But, more on that in a bit.

To give you a sense of how dramatic this shift was, by the 4th century CE, Constantinople's population had soared while Rome's had gone from 500,000 to 80,000. And although the Byzantines spoke Greek not Latin, they considered themselves Romans and if they did then we probably should too.

Let's go to the Thought Bubble.

There was a lot of continuity between the old, Western Roman Empire, and the new, Eastern one. Politically, each was ruled by a single man (sometimes there were two, and once there were four- but let's forget about that for now) who wielded absolute military power. War was pretty much constant as the Byzantines fought the Persian Sassanian Empire and then various Islamic empires.

Trade and valuable agricultural land that yielded high taxes meant that the Byzantine Empire was, like the Western Roman Empire, exceptionally rich, and it was slightly more compact as a territory than its predecessor and much more urban, containing as it did all of those once independent Greek city states, which made it easier to administer.

Also like their Western counterparts, the Byzantines enjoyed spectacle and sport. Chariot races in Constantinople were huge, with thousands turning out at the Hippodrome to cheer on their favorites. Big bets were placed and there was a huge rivalry, not just about sports, but also about political affiliations between the two main teams, the Blues and the Greens- Thanks for putting us on the Greens, Thought Bubble. That rivalry was so heated that riots often broke out between them. In one such riot, an estimated 30,000 people were killed.

Thanks, Thought Bubble.

But perhaps the most consistently Roman aspect of Byzantine society was that they followed Roman law. The Romans always prided themselves on being ruled by laws, not by men, and even though wasn't actually the case after the second century BCE, there's no question that the Eastern Roman Empire's codification of Roman laws was one of it's greatest achievements. And much of the credit for that goes to the most famous Byzantine Emperor, at least after Constantine, Justinian. I like your brooch, sir.

## Crash Course World History – Video Transcript

In 529 Justinian published the Digest, an 800,000-word condensation of 1,528 Latin law books. And to go along with this he published the Institutes, which was like a curriculum for the Roman law schools that existed all through the Empire.

Justinian, incidentally, was by far the most awesome of the Byzantine emperors. He was like the David Tennant of Doctors. He was born a peasant somewhere in the Balkans and then rose to become emperor in 527. He ruled for almost 30 years and in addition to codifying Roman law, he did a lot to restore the former glory of the Roman Empire. He took Carthage back, he even took Rome back from the Goths, although not for long. And he's responsible for the building of one of the great churches of all of time — which is now a mosque — the Hagia Sophia or Church of Saint Wisdom.

So after one of those sporting riots destroyed the previous church, he built this, which with its soaring domes became a symbol for the wealth and opulence of his empire. The Romans were remarkable builders and engineers and the Hagia Sophia is no exception: a dome its equal wouldn't be build for another 500 years.

But you would never mistake it for a Roman temple; it doesn't have the austerity or the emphasis on engineering that you see in, for instance, the Coliseum. And this building in many ways functions a symbol for the ways the Eastern Roman Empire was both Roman and not.

But maybe the most interesting thing Justinian ever did was be married to his controversial Theater Person of a wife, Theodora. Hey Danica, can we get Theodora up here? Wow that is perfect. It's funny how married couples always look like each other. Theodora began her career as an actress, dancer, and possible prostitute before becoming Empress. And she may have saved her husband's rule by convincing him not to flee the city during riots between the Blues and Greens. She also mentored a eunuch who went on to become a hugely important general—Mentoring a eunuch sounds like a euphemism, but it's not. And she fought to expand the rights of women in divorce and property ownership, and even had a law passed taking the bold stance that adulterous women should not be executed.

So, in short, the Byzantines continued the Roman legacy of empire and war and law for almost 1000 years after Romulus Augustus was driven out of Rome. The Byzantines may not have spoken Latin, and few of their emperors came from Rome, but in most important ways they were Romans.

Except one REALLY IMPORTANT way. The Byzantines followed a different form of Christianity, the branch we now call Eastern or sometimes Greek Orthodox. How there came to be a split between the Catholic and Orthodox traditions is complicated – you might even call it Byzantine. What matters for us are the differences between the churches, the main doctrinal one being about the dating of Easter, and the main political one being about who rules whom. Did I get my whom right there, Stan? YES!

In the West there was a Pope and in the East there was a Patriarch. The Pope is the head of the Roman Catholic Church. He sort of serves as God's regent on earth and he doesn't answer to any secular ruler. And ever since the fall of Rome, there has been a lot of tension in Western Europe between Popes and kings over who should have the real power. But in the Orthodox church they didn't have that problem because the Patriarch was always appointed by the Emperor. So it was pretty clear who had control over the church, so much that they even have a word for it—caesaropapism: Caesar over Pope. But the fact that in Rome there was no emperor after 476 meant there was no one to challenge the Pope, which would profoundly shape European history over the next, like, 1200 years.

So I would argue that in some important ways, the Roman Empire survived for a thousand years after it left Rome, but in some ways it still survives today. It survives in our imagination when we think of this as east and this as west, it survives in football rivalries that have their roots in religious conflicts, and it survives in the Justinian law code which continues to be the basis for much of civil law in Europe.

Next week we'll talk about the emergence of Islam over here... How'd I do, Stan? Well, you can't win 'em all.

### **Islam, the Quran, and the Five Pillars All Without a Flamewar: Crash Course World History #13**

Hi there, I'm John Green, this is Crash Course World History, and today we're going to talk about Islam, which like Christianity and Judaism grew up on the east coast of the Mediterranean, but unlike Christianity and Judaism, it's not terribly well understood in the West. For instance, you probably know what this is and what this is, you probably don't know what that is. Google it.

## Crash Course World History – Video Transcript

Mr. Green, Mr. Green! Why do you think people know so little about Islamic history?

Did you just ask an interesting, non-annoying question, me from the past? I think we don't know much about early Islamic history because we don't learn about it, because we're taught that *our* history is the story of Christianity in Europe, when in fact *our* history is the story of people on the planet, so let's try to learn something today.

So in less than 200 years, Islam went from not existing to being the religious and political organizing principle of one of the largest empires in the world.

And that story begins in the 7th century CE when the angel Gabriel appeared to Muhammad, a 40-ish guy who made his living as a caravan trader, and told him to begin reciting the word of God. Initially, this freaked Muhammad out, as, you know, it would — but then his wife and a couple of other people encouraged him and slowly he came to accept the mantle of prophet.

A few things to know about the world Islam entered: First, Muhammad's society was intensely tribal. He was a member of the Quraysh tribe, living in Mecca, and tribal ties were extremely important.

Also, at the time, the Arabian peninsula was like this crazy religious melting pot. Like, most tribal Arabs worshipped gods very similar to the Mesopotamian gods you'll remember from episode 3. And by the time of Muhammad, cult statues of many of those gods had been collected in his hometown of Mecca in this temple-like structure called the Kaaba. But Arabia was also a home for monotheisms like Christianity and Judaism, even a bit of Zoroastrianism. So the message that there was only one God wouldn't have been like as surprising to Muhammad as it was, for instance, to Abraham.

Also, and this will become very important, the northern part of Arabia was sandwiched between the Byzantine Empire and the Persian Sassanian Empire — and you'll remember, those guys were always fighting. They were like snowboarders and skiers, or like the Westboro Baptist Church and everyone else.

At its core, Islam is what we call a radical reforming religion — just like Jesus and Moses sought to restore Abrahamic monotheism after what they perceived as straying, so too did Muhammad. Muslims believe that God sent Muhammad as the final prophet to bring people back to the one true religion, which involves the worship of, and submission to, a single and all-powerful God.

The Quran also acknowledges Abraham and Moses and Jesus among others as prophets, but it's very different from the Hebrew and Christian bibles. For one thing it's much less narrative, but also it's the written record of the revelations Muhammad received — which means it's not written from the point of view of people, it is seen as the actual word of God.

The Quran is a really broad-ranging text, but it returns again and again to a couple themes. One is strict monotheism, and the other is the importance of taking care of those less fortunate than you. The Quran says of the good person "spends his substance — however much he himself may cherish it — upon his near of kin, and the orphans, and the needy, and the wayfarer, and the beggars, and for the freeing of human beings from bondage".

These revelations also radically increased the rights of women and orphans, which was one of the reasons why Muhammad's tribal leaders weren't that psyched about them.

To talk more about Islamic faith and practice, let's go to the Thought Bubble.

The five pillars of Islam are the basic acts considered obligatory, at least by Sunni Muslims. First is the shahada, or the profession of the faith: There is no god but god and Muhammad is God's prophet, which is sometimes translated as "There is no god but Allah and Muhammad is Allah's prophet", which tries to make Muslims sound other and ignores the fact that the Arabic word for God — whether you are Christian or Jewish or Muslim — is Allah.

Second, salat, or ritual prayer five times a day — at dawn, noon, afternoon, sunset, and late evening — which are obligatory unless you haven't hit puberty, are too sick, or are menstruating. Keep it PG, ThoughtBubble.

Third, sawm, the month-long fast during the month of Ramadan, in which Muslims do not eat or drink or smoke cigarettes during daylight hours. Since Ramadan is a lunar-calendar month, it moves around the seasons, and obviously it's most fun during the winter, when the days are shorter, and least fun during the summer, when days are both long and hot.

## Crash Course World History – Video Transcript

Fourth is zakat, or almsgiving, in which non-poor Muslims are required to give a percentage of their income to the poor.

And lastly hajj, the pilgrimage to Mecca that Muslims must try to fulfill at least once in their lives, provided they are healthy and have enough money.

And there's also more to understanding Islam than just knowing the Quran. Like Judaism with its Talmud, and Christianity with its lives of saints and writings of Church fathers, Islam has supplementary sacred texts, chief among which is the Hadith, a collection of sayings and stories about the Prophet.

Thanks ThoughtBubble.

Oh, it's time for the open letter?

Magic! An Open Letter to the 72 Virgins.

Oh, but first let's check what's in the Secret Compartment. Huh, it's Andre the Giant. Did you know that Andre the Giant died a virgin- is a fact that I made up?

Dear 72 Virgins,

Hey there, it's me, John Green. Did you know that not all Hadiths were created equal? Some sayings of the Prophet are really well sourced, like, for instance, a good friend or a relative heard the Prophet say something and then it ended up as a Hadith. But some Hadiths are terribly sourced like, not to be irreverent, but some of it is like middle school gossip; like Rachel told Rebekah that her sister's brother's friend kissed Justin Bieber on the face.

And the vast majority of Muslims don't treat terribly sourced Hadiths as scripture. And the idea that you go to heaven and get 72 virgins is not in the Quran; it's in a terribly sourced Hadith so it is my great regret to inform you, 72 Virgins, that in the eyes of almost all Muslims, you do not exist.

Best wishes, John Green

One more thing about Islam: Like Christianity and Judaism, it has a body of law. You might have heard of it — it's called Sharia. Although we tend to think of Sharia as this single set of laws that all Muslims follow, that's ridiculous; there are numerous competing ideas about Sharia, just as there are within any legal tradition.

So people who embraced this worldview were called Muslims, because they submitted to the will of God, and they became part of the ummah, or community of believers. This would be a good moment for an Uma Thurman joke, but sadly she is no longer famous. I'm sorry if you're watching this, Uma Thurman. Being part of the ummah trumped all other ties, including tribal ties, which got Muhammad into some trouble and brings us, at last, back to history.

So as Muhammad's following in Mecca grew, the ummah aroused the suspicion of the most powerful tribe, the Quraysh. And it didn't matter that Muhammad himself was born into the Quraysh tribe, because he wouldn't shut up about how there was only one God, which was really bad news to the Quraysh tribe, because they managed the pilgrimage trade in Mecca, and if all those gods were false, it would be a disaster economically. Although come to think of it, in the end the Meccan pilgrimage business turned out just fine.

So the Quraysh forced Muhammad and his followers out of Mecca in 622 CE, and they headed to Yathrib, also known as Medina. This journey, also known as the Hijra, is so important that it marks year 0 in the Islamic calendar. In Medina, Muhammad severed the religion's ties to Judaism, turning the focus of prayer away from Jerusalem to Mecca.

Also in Medina, the Islamic community started to look a lot more like a small empire than like a church. Like, Jesus never had a country to run. But Muhammad did almost from the beginning. And in addition to being an important prophet, he was a good general, and in 630, the Islamic community took back Mecca. They destroyed all those idols in the Kaaba, and soon Islam was as powerful a political force in the region as it was a religious one.

And it's because the political and religious coexisted from the beginning, that there's no separate tradition of civic and religious law like there is in Christianity and Judaism.

So then when Muhammad died in 632 CE, there wasn't a religious vacuum left behind: Muhammad was the final prophet, the revelation of the Quran would continue to guide the ummah throughout their lives.

## Crash Course World History – Video Transcript

But the community did need a political leader, a caliph. And the first caliph was Abu Bakr, Muhammad's father-in-law, who was not without his opponents. Many people wanted Ali, Muhammad's son-in-law, to lead the community, and although he did become the fourth caliph, that initial disagreement — to radically oversimplify because we only have ten minutes — began the divide between the two of the major sects of Islam: Sunni and Shi'a.

And even today, Sunnis Muslims believe Abu Bakr was rightly elected the first caliph and Shi'a Muslims believe it should've been Ali. To Sunnis, the first four caliphs — Abu Bakr, Umar, Uthman, and Ali — are known as the Rightly Guided Caliphs, and many of the conservative movements in the Islamic world today are all about trying to restore the Islamic world to those glory days, which — like most glory days — were not unambiguously glorious.

Abu Bakr stabilized the community after Muhammad's death, and began the process of recording the Quran in writing, and started the military campaigns against the Byzantine and Sassanian Empires that within 116 years would allow the Islamic Empire to go from this to this.

His successor Umar was both an uncommonly good general and a brilliant administrator, but like so many other great men, he proved terrible at avoiding assassination. Which led to the caliphate of Uthman, who standardized the Quran and continued both his predecessor's tradition of conquest and his predecessor's tradition of getting assassinated.

Then Ali finally got his turn at caliph, but his ascension was very controversial, and it ultimately led to a civil war. Which eventually led to the emergence of Uthman's tribe, the Umayyads, as the dynasty ruling over an ever-expanding Islamic Empire for more than a hundred years.

It's common to hear that in these early years Islam quote "spread by the sword", and that's partly true, unless you are — wait for it — the Mongols. Actually, as usual, the truth is more complicated. Many people, including the Mongols, but also including lots of people in Central and East Asia, embraced Islam without any military campaigns.

And in fact, the Quran says that religion must not be an act of compulsion, but this much is true: the early Islamic empire was really good at winning wars. And situated as they were between two very wealthy empires — the Byzantines and the Sassanians — there was plenty to fight for.

The first to fall was the Sassanians, the last non-Muslim successor to the Persian Empire. They were relatively easy pickings because they'd been fighting the Byzantines for like 300 years and they were super tired. Also they had recently been struck by plague. Plague, man, I'm telling you: It's like the red tortoise shell of history.

But in those early days, they did pry away some valuable territory like Egypt and the holy land and eventually they got into Spain, where various Muslim dynasties would entrench themselves until being expelled in 1492. But as a good as they were at making war, it's still tempting to chalk up the Arabs' success to, you know, the will of God.

And certainly a lot of the people they conquered felt that way. Wars in this part of the world didn't just pit people against each other, they also pitted their gods against each other. So while the Islamic Empire didn't require its subjects to convert to Islam, their stunning successes certainly convinced a lot of people that this monotheism thing was legit. Once again, John Green proving super hip to the slang of today's young'ns. Also, you paid lower taxes if you converted, and just as taxes on cigarettes lead to people not wanting to smoke, taxes on worshipping your idols lead to people not wanting to worship them anymore.

So in a period of time that was, historically speaking, both remarkably recent and remarkably short, a small group of people from an area of the world with no natural resources managed to create one of the great empires of the world and also one of its great religions. And that very fact may be why people of Western European descent remain largely ignorant about this period.

Not only were the Muslims great conquerors, they spawned an explosion of trade and learning that lasted hundreds of years. They saved many of the classic texts that form the basis of the "Western Canon" while Europe was ignoring them, and they paved the way for the Renaissance.

While it's important to remember that much of the world between Spain and the Indus River wasn't Arabized, most of it was so thoroughly Islamicized that these days we can't think of the world we now call the Middle East without thinking of it as Islamic. Perhaps the greatest testimony to Islam's power to organize peoples lives and their communities is that, in Egypt, 5 times a day, millions of people turn away from the Pyramids and toward Mecca.

## Crash Course World History – Video Transcript

Egypt, birthplace to one of the longest continuous cultures the world has ever known, is now the largest Arab country in the world.

Next week we'll talk about the Dark Ages. Spoiler alert: they were darkest in the evening.

### **The Dark Ages...How Dark Were They, Really?: Crash Course World History #14**

Hi there! My name's John Green; this is Crash Course World History and today we're going to talk about the Dark Ages, possibly the most egregious Eurocentrism in all of history, which is really saying something.

We're Europe! The Prime Meridian runs through us; we're in the middle of every Map; and we get to be a continent even though we're not a continent.

But let's begin today with a pop quiz: What was the best year of your life, and what was the worst year?

Mr. Green, Mr. Green: Best 1994, Worst 1990.

Oh, me from the past. It gets so much better, and also so much worse. For worst year I'm gonna go with 2001. Best year 2006. All right now it's your turn, dear pupils: share your best and worst years in comments during the intro.

Right, so what you will quickly find is that your worst year was someone else's best year. So, too, with history. The period between 600 and 1450 CE is often called the Middle Ages in Europe because it came between the Roman Empire — assuming you forget the Byzantines — and the beginning of the Modern Age. And it's sometimes called the Dark Ages, because it was purportedly unenlightened.

But was the age really so dark? Depends on what you find depressing. If you like cities and great poetry, then the Dark Ages were indeed pretty dark in Europe. But if like me your two favorite things are not dying from wars and not dying from anything else, then the Dark Ages actually weren't that bad — at least until the plague came in the 14th century. And meanwhile, outside of Europe, the Dark Ages were truly an Age of Enlightenment. But we'll get boring Europe out of the way first.

Let's go to the Thought Bubble.

Medieval Europe had less trade, fewer cities, and less cultural output than the original Roman Empire. London and Paris were fetid firetraps with none of the planning or sewage management of places 5,000 years older like Mohenjo-daro in the Indus Valley Civilization, let alone Rome.

But with fewer powerful governments, wars were at least smaller, which is one reason why Europeans living in Medieval Times — *Ugh Thought Bubble, I knew you were going to do that*. Anyway, people in medieval times lived slightly longer — life expectancy was 30 — than Europeans during the Roman Empire — when life expectancy was 28.

Instead of centralized governments, Europe in the middle ages had feudalism, a political system based on reciprocal relationships between lords, who owned lots of land, and vassals, who protected the land and got to dress up as knights in exchange for pledging loyalty to the lords. The lords were also vassals to more important lords, with the most important of all being the king. Below the knights were peasants who did the actual work on the land in exchange for protection from bandits and other threats.

Feudalism was also an economic system, with the peasants working the land and keeping some of their production to feed themselves while giving the rest to the landowner whose land they worked. The small scale, local nature of the feudal system was perfect for a time and place where the threats to peoples' safety were also small scale and local. But of course, this system reinforces the status quo — there's little freedom and absolutely no social mobility. Peasants could never work their way up to lords, and they almost never left their villages.

Thanks, Thought Bubble.

One more point that's really interesting from a world history perspective: this devolution from empire to localism has happened in lots of places at lots of different times. And in times of extreme political stress, like after the fall of the Han dynasty in China, power tends to flow into the hands of local lords who can protect the peasants better than the state can. We hear about this a lot in Chinese history and also in contemporary Afghanistan, but instead of being called feudal lords, these landlords are called warlords. Eurocentrism striking again.

## Crash Course World History – Video Transcript

The other reason the Dark Ages are called "dark" is because Europe was dominated by superstition and by boring religious debates about like how many angels can fit on the head of a pin. And while there's something to that, the Middle Ages also saw theologians like Thomas Aquinas, who was quite an important philosopher, and women like Hildegard of Bingen, who wrote all this important liturgical music and also basically invented the genre of the morality play.

All that noted, things were certainly brighter in the Islamic world, or Dar al Islam. So when we last left the Muslims, they had expanded out of their homeland in Arabia and conquered the rich Egyptian provinces of the Byzantines and the entire Sassanian empire, all in the space of about 100 years.

The Umayyad Dynasty then expanded the empire west to Spain and moved the capital to Damascus, because it was closer to the action, empire-wise but still technically in Arabia. That was really important to the Umayyad's because they'd established this hierarchy in the empire with Arabs like themselves at the top and in fact they tried to keep Arabs from fraternizing with non-Arab Muslims throughout the Empire. This of course annoyed the non-Arab Muslims, who were like, "I don't know if you're reading the same Quran we are, but this one says that we're all supposed to be equal." And pretty quickly the majority of Muslims weren't Arabs, which made it pretty easy for them to overthrow the Umayyad's, which they did in 750 CE.

Their replacements, the Abb(ah)sids, Abb(uh)sids? Hold On...

Computer: Abb(ah)sids or Abb(uh)sids

D'ahh, I'm right twice! Right, so the Abbasids were from the Abb(ah)si or the Abb(uh)si family which hailed from the Eastern, and therefore more Persian, provinces of the Islamic Empire. The Abbasids took over in 750 and no one could fully defeat them — until 1258, when they were conquered by — wait for it — the Mongols.

The Abbasids kept the idea of a hereditary monarchy, but they moved the capital of the empire to Baghdad, and they were much more welcoming of other non-Arab Muslims into positions of power. And under the Abbasids, the Dar al Islam took on a distinctly Persian cast that it never really lost. The Caliph now styled himself as a king of kings, just like the Achaemenids had, and pretty soon the caliph's rule was a lot more indirect, just like the original Persians'. This meant that his control was much weaker, and by about 1000CE, the Islamic Caliphate which looks so incredibly impressive on a map had really descended into a series of smaller kingdoms, each paying lip-service to the caliph in Baghdad. This was partly because the Islamic Empire relied more and more on soldiers from the frontier, in this case Turks, and also slaves pressed into military service, in order to be the backbone of their army, a strategy that has been tried over and over again and has worked exactly zero times. Which you should remember if you ever become an emperor. Actually our resident historian points out that that strategy has worked-- if you are the Mongols.

More important than the Persian-style monarchy that the Abbasids set up was their openness to foreigners and their ideas. That tolerance and curiosity ushered in a golden age of Islamic learning centered in Baghdad. The Abbasids oversaw an effervescence of culture unlike anything that had been seen since Hellenistic times. Arabic replaced Greek not only as the language of commerce and religion, but also of culture. Philosophy, medicine, and poetry were all written in Arabic (although Persian remained an important literary language). And Baghdad became the world's center of scholarship with its House of Wisdom and immense library.

Muslim scholars translated the works of the Greek Philosophers including Aristotle and Plato as well as scientific works by Hippocrates, Archimedes and especially the physician Galen. And they translated and preserved Buddhist and Hindu manuscripts that might have otherwise been lost.

Muslims made huge strides in medicine as well. One Muslim scholar, ibn Sīnā, wrote the Canon of Medicine, which became the standard medical textbook or centuries in both Europe and the Middle East. And the Islamic empire adopted mathematical concepts from India such as the zero, a number so fascinating and beautiful that we could write an entire episode about it but instead I'm just gonna write it a little love poem:

Oh, zero. Pretty little zero. They say you're nothing but you mean everything to mathematical history ...and me.

Oh, it's time for the Open Letter? An Open Letter to science and religion.

But first lets see what's in the Secret Compartment. Oh, champagne poppers? Stan, what am I supposed to do with these?



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Dear Science and Religion,

You're supposed to be so irreconcilable and everything, but not so much in the Abbasid Empire. I mean, Muslim mathematicians expanded math to such a degree that we now call the base ten number system and the symbols we use to denote it "Arabic numerals". And religion was at least part of what pushed all that learning forward. Like the great philosopher Ibn Rushd argued that the only path to religious enlightenment was through Aristotelian reasoning. And Muslim mathematicians and astronomers developed algebra partly so they could simplify Islamic inheritance law. Plus they made important strides in trigonometry to help that people understand where to turn when trying to turn toward Mecca.

You were working so well together, science and religion, but then like Al and Tipper Gore, just couldn't last forever. Nothing gold can stay in this world, nothing gold can stay.

Best wishes, John Green

Baghdad wasn't the only center of learning in the Islamic world. In Spain, Islamic Cordoba became a center for the arts, especially architecture. This is perhaps best exemplified by the Great Mosque at Cordoba, built by the Umayyad ruler Abd al-Rahman I In 785-786 CE. That's right, this building, still standing today and one of the most amazing mosques in the world, was built in a year, whereas medieval cathedrals took, like, a million years to finish.

The Muslims of Spain were also engineers who rivaled the Romans. Aqueducts in Cordoba brought drinkable water into the city, and Muslim scholars took the lead in agricultural science, improving yields on all kinds of new crops, allowing Spanish lives to be longer and less hungry.

Everybody wanted to live in Spain, even the greatest Jewish philosopher, Maimonides, wanted to live in Spain, but sadly he was expelled and ended up in Alexandria, Egypt. There he wrote his awesomely titled defense of rationality, *A Guide for the Perplexed*. I'm translating the title, of course, because the original text was written ...in Arabic.

Meanwhile, China was having a Golden Age of its own. The Tang Dynasty made China's government more of a meritocracy, and ruled over 80 million people across four million square miles. And they might've conquered all of Central Asia had it not been for the Abbasids, whom they fought at the Most Important Battle You've Never Heard Of, the Battle of the Talas River. This was the Ali-Frasier of the 8th century. The Abbasids won, which ended up defining who had cultural influence where with the -- with the Abbasids dominating to the west of the river and China dominating to the east.

The Tang also produced incredible art that was traded all throughout Asia. Many of the more famous sculptures from the Tang Dynasty feature figures who are distinctly not-Chinese, which again demonstrates the diversity of the empire. The Tang was also a golden age for Chinese poetry with notables like Du Fu and Li Bo plying their craft, encouraged by the official government.

And the Song Dynasty, which lasted from 960 to 1258, kicked even more ass-it's-not-cursing-if-you're-talking-about-donkeys. By the 11th century, Chinese metalworkers were producing as much iron as Europe would be able to produce in the 18th century. Some of this iron was put to use in new plows, which enabled agriculture to boom, thereby supporting population growth. Porcelain was of such high quality that it was shipped throughout the world, which is why we call it "china." And there was so much trade going on that the Chinese ran out of metal for coins, leading to another innovation— paper money. And by the 11th century, the Chinese were writing down recipes for a mixture of saltpeter, sulfur and charcoal, that we now know as gunpowder. That becomes kind of a big deal in history, paving the way, as it does, for modern warfare and arena rock pyrotechnics, and — ohhhh, *that's* why.

### **The Crusades - Pilgrimage or Holy War?: Crash Course World History #15**

Hi there! My name is John Green; this is Crash Course World History, and today we're going to talk about the Crusades. Ohhh, Stan, do we have to talk about the Crusades? I hate them...

Here's the thing about the Crusades, which were a series of military expeditions from parts of Europe to the Eastern coast of the Mediterranean. The real reason they feature so prominently in history is because we've endlessly romanticized the story of the Crusades. We've created this simple narrative with characters to root for and root

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against, and it's all been endlessly idealized by the likes of Sir Walter Scott. And there are knights with swords and lion hearts... NO, STAN. LIONHEARTS. Thank you.

Let's start by saying that initially the Crusades were not a "holy war" on the part of Europeans against Islam, but in important ways the Crusades were driven by religious faith.

Mr. Green, Mr. Green! Religion causes all wars. Imagine no war —

I'm gonna cut you off right there before you violate copyright, me-from-the-past. But as usual, you're wrong. Simple readings of history are rarely sufficient. By the way, when did my handwriting get so much better?

I mean, if the Crusades had been brought on by the lightning-fast rise of the Islamic empire and a desire to keep in Christian hands the land of Jesus, then the Crusades would've started in the 8th century. But early Islamic dynasties, like the Umayyads and the Abbasids, were perfectly happy with Christians and Jews living among them, as long as they paid a tax. And plus the Christian pilgrimage business was awesome for the Islamic Empire's economy.

But then a new group of Muslims, the Seljuk Turks, moved into the region and they sacked the holy cities and made it much more difficult for Christians to make their pilgrimages. And while they quickly realized their mistake, it was already too late. The Byzantines, who'd had their literal-asses kicked at the Battle of Manzikert in 1071, felt the threat and called upon the West for help.

So the first official crusade began with a call to arms from Pope Urban II in 1095 CE. This was partly because Urban wanted to unite Europe and he'd figured out the lesson the rest of us learn from alien invasion movies: the best way to get people to unite is to give them a common enemy. So Urban called on all the bickering knights and nobility of Europe, and he saideth unto his people: "Let us go forth and help the Byzantines because then maybe they will acknowledge my awesomeness and get rid of their stupid Not Having Me as Pope thing, and while we are at it, let's liberate Jerusalem!" I'm paraphrasing, by the way.

Shifting the focus to Jerusalem is really important, because the Crusades were not primarily military operations; they were pilgrimages. Theologically, Christianity didn't have an idea of a holy war – like, war might be just, but fighting wasn't something that got you into heaven. But pilgrimage to a holy shrine could help you out on that front, and Urban had the key insight to pitch the Crusade as a pilgrimage with a touch of warring on the side. I do the same thing to my kid every night: I'm not feeding you dinner featuring animal crackers. I'm feeding you animal crackers featuring a dinner. Oh, it's time for the open letter?

An Open Letter to Animal Crackers.

But first let's see what's in the Secret Compartment today. Oh, it's animal crackers. Thanks, Stan...

Hi there, Animal Crackers, it's me, John Green. Thanks for being delicious, but let me throw out a crazy idea here: Maybe foods that are ALREADY DELICIOUS do not need the added benefit of being PLEASINGLY SHAPED. I mean, why can't I give my kid animal spinach or animal sweet potato or even animal cooked animal? I mean, we can put a man on Mars but we can't make spinach shaped like elephants? What Stan? We haven't put a man on Mars? Stupid world, always disappointing me.

Best wishes, John Green

One last myth to dispel: The Crusades also were NOT an early example of European colonization of the Middle East, even if they did create some European-ish kingdoms there for a while. That's a much later, post-and-anti-colonialist view that comes, at least partially, from a Marxist reading of history.

In the case of the Crusades, it was argued, the knights who went adventuring in the Levant were the second and third sons of wealthy nobles who, because of European inheritance rules, had little to look forward to by staying in Europe and lots to gain – in terms of plunder – by going to the East. Cool theory, bro, but it's not true. First, most of the people who responded to the call to Crusade weren't knights at all; they were poor people. And secondly, most of the nobles who did go crusading were lords of estates, not their wastrel kids.

But more importantly, that analysis ignores religious motivations. We've approached religions as historical phenomena — thinking about how, for instance, the capricious environment of Mesopotamia led to a capricious cadre of Mesopotamian gods. But just as the world shapes religion, religion also shapes the world.

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And some modern historians might ignore religious motivations, but medieval crusaders sure as hell didn't. I mean, when people came up with that idiom, they clearly thought Hell was for sure. To the Crusaders, they were taking up arms to protect Christ and his kingdom. And what better way to show your devotion to God than putting a cross on your sleeve, spending 5 to 6 times your annual income to outfit yourself and all your horses, and heading for the Holy Land?

So when these people cried out "God Wills It!" to explain their reasons for going, we should do them the favor of believing them. And the results of the First Crusade seemed to indicate that God had willed it. Following the lead of roving preachers with names like Peter the Rabbit- Peter the Hermit? Stan, you're always making history less cool! Fine, following preachers like Peter the Hermit, thousands of peasants and nobles alike volunteered for the First Crusade.

It got off to kind of a rough start because pilgrims kept robbing those they encountered on the way. Plus, there was no real leader so they were constant rivalries between nobles about who could supply the most troops. Notable among the notables were Godfrey of Bouillon, Bohemond of Taranto, and Raymond of Toulouse.

But despite the rivalries, and the disorganization the crusaders were remarkably — some would say miraculously — successful. By the time they arrived in the Levant, they were fighting not against the Seljuk Turks but against Fatimid Egyptians, who had captured the Holy Land from the Seljuks, thereby making the Turks none too pleased with the Egyptians. At Antioch the Crusaders reversed a seemingly hopeless situation when a peasant found a spear that had pierced the side of Christ's side hidden under a church, thereby raising morale enough to win the day. And then they did the impossible: They took Jerusalem, securing it for Christendom and famously killing a lot of people in the al-Asqa mosque.

Now the Crusaders succeeded in part because the Turkish Muslims, who were Sunnis, did not step up to help the Egyptians, who were Shia. But that kind of complicated, intra-Islamic rivalry gets in the way of the awesome narrative: The Christians just saw it as a miracle.

So by 1100CE European nobles held both Antioch and Jerusalem as Latin Christian kingdoms. I say Latin to make the point that there were lots of Christians living in these cities before the Crusaders arrived, they just weren't Catholic- they were Orthodox, a fact that will become relevant shortly.

We're going to skip the second Crusade because it bores me and move on to the Third Crusade because it's the famous one. Broadly speaking, the Third Crusade was a European response to the emergence of a new Islamic power, neither Turkish nor Abbasid: the Egyptian (although he was really a Kurd) Sultan al-Malik al-Nasir Salah ed-Din Yusuf, better known to the west as Saladin.

Saladin, having consolidating his power in Egypt, sought to expand by taking Damascus and, eventually Jerusalem, which he did successfully, because he was an amazing general. And then the loss of Jerusalem caused Pope Gregory VIII to call for a third crusade. Three of the most important kings in Europe answered the call: Philip "cowardly schemer" the Second of France, Richard "Lionheart" the First of England, and Frederick "I am going to drown anticlimactically on the journey while trying to bathe in a river" Barbarossa of the not-holy, not-roman, and not-imperial Holy Roman Empire. Both Richard and Saladin were great generals who earned the respect of their troops.

And while from the European perspective the crusade was a failure because they didn't take Jerusalem, it did radically change crusading forever by making Egypt a target. Richard understood that the best chance to take Jerusalem involved first taking Egypt, but he couldn't convince any crusaders to join him because Egypt had a lot less religious value to Christians than Jerusalem.

So Richard was forced to call off the Crusade early, but if he had just hung around until Easter of 1192, he would've seen Saladin die. And then Richard probably could have fulfilled all his crusading dreams, but then, you know, we wouldn't have needed the 4th Crusade.

Although crusading continued throughout the 14th century, mostly with an emphasis on North Africa and not the Holy Land, the 4th Crusade is the last one we'll focus on, because it was the crazy one.

Let's go to the thought bubble.

So a lot of people volunteered for the fourth crusade — more than 35,000 — and the generals didn't want to march them all the way across Anatolia, because they knew from experience that it was A. dangerous and B. hot, so they

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decided to go by boat, which necessitated the building of the largest naval fleet Europe had seen since the Roman Empire.

The Venetians built 500 ships, but then only 11,000 Crusaders actually made it down to Venice, because, like, oh I meant to go but I had a thing come up... etc. There wasn't enough money to pay for those boats, so the Venetians made the Crusaders a deal: Help us capture the rebellious city of Zara, and we'll ferry you to Anatolia.

This was a smidge problematic, Crusading-wise, because Zara was a Christian city, but the Crusaders agreed to help, resulting in the Pope excommunicating both them and the Venetians.

Then after the Crusaders failed to take Zara and were still broke, a would-be Byzantine emperor named Alexius III promised the Crusaders he would pay them if they helped him out, so the (excommunicated) Catholic Crusaders fought on behalf of the Orthodox Alexius, who soon became emperor in Constantinople. But it took Alexius a while to come up with the money he'd promised the Crusaders, so they were waiting around in Constantinople, and then Alexius was suddenly dethroned by the awesomely named Mourtzouphlus, leaving the crusaders stuck in Constantinople with no money.

Christian holy warriors couldn't very well sack the largest city in Christendom, could they? Well, it turns out they could and boy, did they. They took all the wealth they could find, killed and raped Christians as they went, stole the statues of horses that now adorn St. Mark's Cathedral in Venice, and retook exactly none of the Holy Land.

Thanks, Thought Bubble.

So you'd think this disaster would discredit the whole notion of Crusading, right? No. Instead, it legitimized the idea that Crusading didn't have to be about pilgrimage: that any enemies of the Catholic Church were fair game.

Also, the fourth crusade pretty much doomed the Byzantine Empire, which never really recovered. Constantinople, a shadow of its former self, was conquered by the Turks in 1453. So ultimately the Crusades were a total failure at establishing Christian kingdoms in the Holy Land long term. And with the coming of the Ottomans, the region remained solidly Muslim, as it (mostly) is today.

And the Crusades didn't really open up lines of communication between the Christian and Muslim worlds, because those lines of communication were already open. Plus, most historians now agree that the Crusades didn't bring Europe out of the Middle Ages by offering it contact with the superior intellectual accomplishments of the Islamic world. In fact, they were a tremendous drain on Europe's resources.

For me, the Crusades matter because they remind us that the medieval world was fundamentally different from ours. The men and women who took up the cross believed in the sacrality of their work in a way that we often can't conceive of today. And when we focus so much on the heroic narrative or the anti-imperialist narrative, or all the political in-fighting, we can lose sight of what the Crusades must have meant to the Crusaders. How the journey from pilgrimage to holy war transformed their faith and their lives. And ultimately, that exercise in empathy is the coolest thing about studying history.

## **Mansa Musa and Islam in Africa: Crash Course World History #16**

Hi, my name's John Green, this is Crash Course World History, and today we're gonna talk about Africa.

Mr. Green Mr. Green! We've already talked about Africa. Egypt is in Africa, and you haven't shut up about it the entire course –

Yeah that's true, Me from the Past. But Africa's big - it's like, super big - much bigger than it appears on most maps, actually.

I mean, you can fit India and China, and the United States if you fold in Maine. All of that fits in Africa! Like any huge place, Africa is incredibly diverse, and it's a mistake to focus just on Egypt. So today let's go here, south of the Sahara desert.

First, let's turn to written records. Oh, right. We don't have very many, at least not written by Sub-Saharan Africans. Much of African history was preserved via oral rather than written tradition.

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These days, we tend to think of writing as the most accurate and reliable form of description, but then again, we do live in a print-based culture. And we've already said that writing is one of the markers of civilization, implying that people who don't use writing aren't civilized, a prejudice that has been applied over and over again to Africa. But:

1. If you need any evidence that it's possible to produce amazing literary artifacts without the benefits of writing, let me direct your attention to the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey*, which were composed and memorized by poets for centuries before anyone ever wrote them down. And,

2. No less an authority than Plato said that writing destroys human memory by alleviating the need to remember anything.

And 3. You think the oral tradition is uncivilized but here you are listening to me talk!

But we do have a lot of interesting records for some African histories, including the legendary tale of Mansa Musa. By legendary I mean some of it probably isn't true, but it sure is important.

Let's go to the Thought Bubble.

So there was this king Mansa Musa, who ruled the west African empire of Mali, and in 1324-ish, he left his home and made the hajj, the pilgrimage to Mecca.

He brought with him an entourage of over 1000 people (some sources say 60,000) and, most importantly, 100 camel loads of gold. I wish it had been donkeys so I could say he had 100 assloads of gold, but no. Camels.

Right, so along the way Mansa Musa spent freely and gave away lots of his riches. Most famously, when he reached Alexandria, at the time one of the most cultured cities in the world, he spent so much gold that he caused runaway inflation throughout the city that took years to recover from.

He built houses in Cairo and in Mecca to house his attendants, and as he traveled through the world, a lot of people - notably the merchants of Venice - no, Thought Bubble, like actual merchants of Venice - right - they saw him in Alexandria and returned to Italy with tales of Mansa Musa's ridiculous wealth, which helped create the myth in the minds of Europeans that West Africa was a land of gold, an El Dorado. The kind of place you'd like to visit. And maybe, you know, in five centuries or so, begin to pillage.

Thanks, Thought Bubble.

So what's so important about the story of Mansa Musa? Well, first, it tells us there were African kingdoms, ruled by fabulously wealthy African kings. Which undermines one of the many stereotypes about Africa, that its people were poor and lived in tribes ruled by chiefs and witch doctors. Also, since Mansa Musa was making the hajj, we know that he was:

A. Muslim, and

B. relatively devout.

And this tells us that Africa, at least western Africa, was much more connected to the parts of the world we've been talking about than we generally are led to believe. Mansa Musa knew all about the places he was going before he got there, and after his visits, the rest of the Mediterranean world was sure interested in finding out more about his homeland.

Mansa Musa's pilgrimage also brings up a lot of questions about west Africa, namely, what did his kingdom look like and how did he come to convert to Islam? The first question is a little easier, so we'll start with that one.

The empire of Mali, which Mansa Musa ruled until the extremely elite year of 1337, was a large swath of West Africa, running from the coast hundreds of miles into the interior, and including many significant cities, the largest and best-known of which was Timbuktu.

The story of the Islamization of the Empire, however, is a bit more complicated. Okay, so pastoral North Africans called Berbers had long traded with West Africans, with the Berbers offering salt in exchange for West African gold. That may seem like a bad deal until you consider that without salt, we die, whereas without gold, we only have to face the universe's depraved indifference to us without the benefit of metallic adornment.

That went to an ominous place quickly.

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Right, so anyway the Berbers were early converts to Islam, and Islam spread along those pre-existing trade routes between North and West Africa.

Right, so the first converts in Mali were traders, who benefited from having a religious as well as commercial connection to their trading partners in the North and the rest of the Mediterranean. And then the kings followed the traders, maybe because sharing the religion of more established kingdoms in the north and east would give them prestige, not to mention access to scholars and administrators who could help them cement their power.

So Islam became the religion of the elites in West Africa, which meant that the Muslim kings were trying to extend their power over largely non-Muslim populations which worshipped traditional African gods and spirits. In order not to seem too foreign, these African Muslim kings would often blend traditional religion with Islam - for instance, giving women more equality than was seen in Islam's birthplace.

Anyway, the first kings we have a record of adopting Islam were from Ghana, which was the first "empire" in western Africa. It really took off in the 11th century. As with all empires, and also everything else, Ghana rose and then fell, and it was replaced by Mali. The kings of Mali - especially Mansa Musa, but also Mansa Suleyman, his successor - tried to increase the knowledge and practice of Islam in their territory. So for example, when Mansa Musa returned from his hajj, he brought back scholars and architects to build mosques.

And the reason we know a lot about Mali is because it was visited by Ibn Battuta, the Moroccan cleric and scholar who kind of had the best life ever. He was particularly fascinated by gender roles in the Malian empire - and by Malian women - writing, "They are extremely beautiful, and more important than the men." Oh. It must be time for the open letter.

An Open Letter to Ibn Battuta: I wonder what's in the Secret Compartment today. Oh. It appears to be some kind of fake beard... Movie magic! Stan, why did you do this to me?

Dear Ibn Battuta,

Bro, I love twitter and my x-box and Hawaiian pizza, but if I had to go into the past and live anyone's life, it would be yours! Because you were this outlandishly learned scholar who managed to parlay your knowledge of Islam into the greatest road trip in history.

You went from Mali to Constantinople to India to Russia to Indonesia; you were probably the most well-traveled person before the invention of the steam engine. And everywhere you went, you were treated like a king and then you went home and wrote a really famous book called the *Rihla*, which people still read today and also, you could grow a real beard and I'M JEALOUS!

Best wishes, John Green

One more thing about Mansa Musa: There are lots of stories that Mansa Musa attempted to engage in maritime trade across the Atlantic Ocean, and some historians even believe that Malians reached the Americas. DNA investigation may one day prove it, but until then, we'll only have oral tradition.

The Malian Empire eventually fell to Songhai, which was itself eventually overthrown for being insufficiently Islamic, all of which is to say that - like China or India or Europe - West Africa had its own empires that relied upon religion and war and incredibly boring dynastic politics. Man, I hate dynastic politics.

If I wanted to live in an ostensibly independent country that can't let go of monarchy, I'd be like Thought Bubble and move to Canada. Oh, come on, Thought Bubble, that's not fair. Shut up and take back Celine Dion!

All right, now let's move to the other side of Africa where there was an alternative model of "civilizational" development. The eastern coast of Africa saw the rise of what historians called Swahili civilization, which was not an empire or a kingdom but a collection of city states - like Zanzibar and Mombasa and Mogadishu - all of which formed a network of trade ports. There was no central authority - each of these cities was autonomously ruled, usually, but not always, by a king. But there were three things that linked these city states such that we can consider them a common culture: language, trade and religion.

The Swahili language is part of a language group called Bantu, and its original speakers were from West Africa. Their migration to East Africa changed not only the linguistic traditions of Africa, but everything else, because they brought with them ironwork and agriculture. Until then, most of the people living in the East had been hunter-

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gatherers or herders, but once introduced, agriculture took hold, as it almost always does. Unless, wait for it, you're the Mongols.

Modern day Swahili, by the way, is still a Bantu-based language, although it's been heavily influenced by Arabic. On that topic, for a long time historians believed that the East African cities were all started by Arab or Persian traders, which was basically just racist - they didn't believe that Africans were sophisticated enough to found these great cities. Now scholars recognize that all the major Swahili cities were founded well before Islam arrived in the region and that, in fact, trade had been going on since the first century CE.

But Swahili civilization didn't begin its rapid development until the 8th century, when Arab traders arrived, seeking goods that they could trade in the vast Indian Ocean network, the Silk Road of the sea. And of course those merchants brought Islam with them, which, just like in West Africa, was adopted by the elites who wanted religious as well as commercial connections to the rest of the Mediterranean world.

In many of the Swahili states, these Muslim communities started out quite small, but at their height, between the 13th and 16th century, most of the cities boasted large mosques. The one in Kilwa even impressed Ibn Battuta, who of course visited the city, because he was having the best life ever.

Most of the goods exported were raw materials, like ivory and animal hides and timber - it's worth noting, by the way, that when you're moving trees around, you have a level of sophistication to your trade that goes way beyond the Silk Road. I mean, if you'll recall they weren't just trading, like, tortoise shells and stuff - not again!

Africans also exported slaves along the east coast, although not in HUGE numbers, and they exported gold, and they imported finished luxury goods like porcelain and books. In fact, archaeological digs in Kilwa have revealed that houses often featured a kind of built-in bookshelf.

Learning of books through architecture nicely captures the magic of studying history. Archaeology, writing, and oral tradition all intermingle to give us glimpses of the past. And each of those lenses may show us the past as if through some fun house mirror, but if we're conscious about it, we can at least recognize the distortions.

Studying Africa reminds us that we need to look at lots of sources, and lots of kinds of sources if we want to get a fuller picture of the past. If we relied on only written sources, it would be far too easy to fall into the old trap of seeing Africa as backwards and uncivilized. Through approaching it with multiple lenses, we discover a complicated, diverse place that was sometimes rich and sometimes not - and when you look at it that way, it becomes not separate from, but part of, our history.

### **Wait For It...The Mongols!: Crash Course World History #17**

Hi I'm John Green; this is Crash Course World History and today we're gonna discuss... wait for it... THE MONGOLS.

So you probably have a picture of the Mongols in your head. Yes, that's the picture: brutal, bloodthirsty, swarthy, humorously mustachioed warriors riding the plains, wearing fur, eating meat directly off the bone, saying, "Bar bar bar bar bar bar bar". In short, we imagine the Mongol empire as stereotypically barbarian. And that's not entirely wrong.

But if you've been reading recent world history textbooks like we here at Crash Course have, you might have a different view of the Mongols, one that emphasizes the amazing speed and success of their conquests — how they conquered more land in 25 years than the Romans did in 400. How they controlled more than 11 million contiguous square miles. And you may even have read that the Mongols basically created nations like Russia and even Korea. One historian has even claimed that the Mongols, “smashed the feudal system” and created international law. Renowned for their religious tolerance, the Mongols, in this view, created the first great free trade zone, like a crazy medieval Eurasian NAFTA. And that's not entirely wrong either. Stupid truth, always resisting simplicity.

So remember herders? We talked about them back in episode one as an alternative to hunting and gathering or agriculture. Here are the key things to remember:

1. Nomads aren't Jack Kerouac: They don't just go on like random road trips. They migrate according to climate conditions so they can feed their flocks.

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2. Nomads don't generally produce manufactured goods which means they need to trade, so they almost always live near settled people.

And 3. Because they live in generally live close to nature and in harsh conditions, pastoralists tend to be tougher than diamond-plated differential calculus. Like, think of the Huns, or the Xiongnu. Or the Mongols. Okay, Stan. That's enough. Back to me. Stan. I AM THE STAR OF THIS SHOW NOT THE MONGOLS!!! Hi. Sorry about that.

Right, so one last thing: pastoral people also tend to be more egalitarian, especially where women are concerned. Paradoxically, when there's less to go around, humans tend to share more, and when both men and women must work for the social order to survive, there tends to be less patriarchal domination of women. Although Mongol women rarely went to war. I can't tell your gender. I mean you've got the pants, but then you also have the floopity flop, so... That's the technical term, by the way. I'm a historian.

If you had to choose a pastoral nomadic group to come out of central Asia and dominate the world, you probably wouldn't have chosen the Mongols. Because for most of the history we've been discussing, they just hung out in the foothills bordering the Siberian forest, mixing herding and hunting, quietly getting really good at archery and riding horses. Also, the Mongols were much smaller than other pastoral groups like the Tatars or the Uyghurs. And not to get like all Great Man History on you or anything, but the reason the Mongols came to dominate the world really started with one guy, Genghis Khan.

Let's go to the Thought Bubble.

The story goes that Genghis or Chingus Khan was born around 1162 with the name Temüjin to a lowly clan. His father was poisoned to death, leaving Temüjin under the control of his older brothers, one of whom he soon killed during an argument. By 19 he was married to his first and most important wife, Börte, who was later kidnapped. This was pretty common among the Mongols, Temüjin's mom had also been kidnapped. In rescuing his wife, Temüjin proved his military mettle and he soon became a leader of his tribe, but uniting the Mongol confederations required a civil war, which he won, largely thanks to two innovations.

First, he promoted people based on merit rather than family position, and second, he brought lower classes of conquered people into his own tribe while dispossessing the leaders of the conquered clans. Thus he made the peasants love him. The rich hated him — but they didn't matter anymore, because they were no longer rich.

With these two building block policies, Temüjin was able to win the loyalty of more and more people and in 1206 he was declared the Great Khan, the leader of all the Mongols. How? Well, the Mongols chose their rulers in a really cool way. A prospective ruler would call a general council called a kurultai, and anyone who supported his candidacy for leadership would show up on their horses, literally voting with their feet.

Mr. Green, Mr. Green! But horses don't have feet they have hooves.

I hate you, Me From the Past. Also, NO INTERRUPTING THE THOUGHT BUBBLE!

After uniting the Mongols, Genghis Khan went on to conquer a lot of territory. By the time he died in his sleep in 1227, his empire stretched from the Mongol homeland in Mongolia all the way to the Caspian Sea.

Thanks, Thought Bubble.

So that's a pretty good looking empire, and sure a lot of it was pasture or mountains or desert, but the Mongols did conquer a lot of people, too. And in some ways with Genghis' death, the empire was just getting started. His son Ögedei Khan expanded the empire even more. And Genghis' grandson Möngke was the Great Khan in 1258 when Baghdad, the capitol of the Abbasid Empire, fell to the Mongols. And another of Genghis' grandsons, Kublai Khan, conquered the Song Dynasty in China in 1279. And if the Mamluks hadn't stopped another of Genghis' grandsons at the battle of Ain Jalut, they probably would have taken all of North Africa. Genghis Khan sure had a lot of grandkids... It must be time for the open letter.

An Open Letter To Genghis Khan's Descendants. But first, let's check what's in the secret compartment today. Oh. A noisemaker and champagne poppers? Stan, you know I suck at these. What's all this for? Ohhh, it's because it's a BIRTHDAY PARTY!! YAY. Happy birthday to Genghis Khan's descendants.

How do I know it's your birthday, Genghis Khan's descendants? Because every day is your birthday. Because right now on the planet Earth, there are 16 million direct descendants of Genghis Khan, meaning that every day is the



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birthday of 43,000 of them. So, good news, Genghis Khan: Your empire might be gone, but your progeny lives on. And on, and on, and on. HAPPY BIRTHDAY!!!

Best wishes, John Green

Unfortunately for the Mongols, those guys weren't always working together, because Genghis Khan failed to create a single political unit out of his conquests. Instead, after Genghis' death, the Mongols were left with four really important Empires called Khanates: The Yuan Dynasty in China, the Il-Khanate in Persia, the Chagatai Khanate in Central Asia, and the Khanate of the Golden Horde in Russia.

If you remember all the way back to the Hellenistic period, this is similar to what happened to another good general who wasn't much for administration, Alexander the Great. Also, neither of them ever conquered India.

The Mongols succeeded primarily because of their military skill. Genghis Khan's army, which never numbered more than 130,000 was built on speed and archery. Just like this guy. Mongol mounted archers were like super fast tanks, compared to the foot soldiers and knights they were up against.

But wait, all the military history nerds are saying, once people knew that the Mongols were coming, why didn't they just hole up in castles and forts? It's not like the Mongols had flying horses. EXCEPT THEY DID. They didn't? Stan, why are you always making history boring?

So the Mongols apparently didn't have flying horses, but they were uncommonly adaptable. So even though they'd never seen a castle before they started raiding, they became experts at siege warfare by interrogating prisoners. And they also adopted gunpowder, probably introducing it to Europeans, and they even built ships so they could attack Japan. That might have worked, too except there happened to be a typhoon.

Also, people were terrified of the Mongols. Often cities would surrender the moment the Mongols arrived, just to escape slaughter. But of course, that only happened because there were occasions when the Mongols, did, you know, slaughter entire towns.

So with all that background, let us return to the question of Mongol awesomeness. First, five arguments for awesome.

1. The Mongols really did reinvigorate cross-Eurasian trade. The Silk Road trading routes that had existed for about 1000 years by the time the Mongols made the scene had fallen into disuse, but the Mongols valued trade because they could tax it, and they did a great job of keeping their empire safe. It was said that a man could walk from one end of the Mongol empire to the other with a gold plate on his head without ever fearing being robbed.
2. The Mongols increased communication throughout Eurasia by developing this pony express-like system of way stations with horses and riders that could quickly relay information. It was called the yam system and also included these amazing bronze passports, which facilitated travel.
3. Another thing that travelled along the Mongol trade routes was cuisine. For example, it was because of the Mongols that rice became a staple of the Persian diet. Which I mention entirely because I happen to like Persian food.
4. The Mongols forcibly relocated people who were useful to them, like artists and musicians and, especially administrators. As you can imagine, the Mongols weren't much for administrative tasks like keeping records, so they found people were good at that stuff and just moved them around the empire. This created the kind of cross-cultural pollination that world historians these days get really excited about.

And 5. The Mongols were almost unprecedentedly tolerant of different religions. They themselves were shamanists, believing in nature spirits, but since their religion was tied to the land from which they came, they didn't expect new people to adopt it and they didn't ask them to. So you could find Muslims and Buddhists and Christians and people of any other religion you can think of prospering throughout the Mongol empire. And it's that kind of openness that has led some historians to go back and re-evaluate the Mongols, seeing them as kind of a precursor to modernity.

But there's another side to the story that we should not forget, so, here are five reasons why the Mongols might not be so great.

1. Here is Genghis Khan's definition of happiness: "The greatest happiness is to vanquish your enemies, to chase them before you, to rob them of their wealth, to see those dear to them bathed in tears, to clasp to your bosom their

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wives and daughters." Off-topic, but if that quote rings a bell, it might be because Oliver Stone blatantly plagiarized Genghis Khan in the movie *Conan the Barbarian*.

2. Is an extension of one. The Mongols were seriously brutal conquerors. I mean, not uniquely brutal, but still: the Mongols destroyed entire cities, and most historians estimate the numbers they killed to be in the millions.
3. Their empire didn't last. Within 80 years they'd left China and been replaced by a new dynasty, the Ming. And in Persia they blended in so completely that by the 15th century they were totally unrecognizable. I mean, they'd even taken up agriculture! Agriculture, the last refuge for scoundrels who want to devote their lives to working instead of skoodilypooping.
4. They also weren't particularly interested in artistic patronage or architecture. I mean, your palace may last forever, but my yurt can go anywhere.
5. The Mongols were probably responsible for the Black Death. By opening up trade they also opened up vectors for disease to travel, in the case of the Plague via fleas infected with *Yersinia pestis*. And at least according to one story, the Mongols intentionally spread the plague by catapulting their plague-ridden cadavers over the walls of Caffa in the Crimea. While this primitive act of biological warfare might have happened, it's unlikely to be what actually spread the plague. More likely it was the fleas on the rats in the holds of Black Sea ships that were trading with Europe. But that trade only existed because of the Mongols.

All right Stan, one last time- cue the Mongol-tage.

So the Mongols promoted trade, diversity, and tolerance, and they also promoted slaughter and senseless destruction. And what you think about the Mongols ends up saying a lot about you: Do you value artistic output over religious diversity? Is imperialism that doesn't last better or worse than imperialism that does? And are certain kinds of warfare inherently wrong? If you think those are easy questions to answer, than I haven't been doing my job. Regardless, I look forward to reading your answers in comments.

### **Int'l Commerce, Snorkeling Camels, and The Indian Ocean Trade: Crash Course World History #18**

Hi, I'm John Green, this is Crash Course World History, and today we're going to be discussing trade here, in the Indian Ocean. [How'd my handwriting get so good?] Oh, my globe had a globe! We're gonna do some new-school history where we talk about a system instead of talking about individuals or some boring boring dynasty — no, Stan, not that kind of Dynasty — yes, that kind of dynasty.

So many world history classes still focus on People Who Wore Funny Hats, and how their antics shaped our lives, right? And while it's interesting and fun to note that, like, King Charles VI of France believed that he was made out of glass, relentlessly focusing on the actions of the Funny-Hatted-People who ruled us makes us forget that we also make history.

Mr. Green, Mr. Green! Did Charles VI of France really believe that he was made out of glass?

Yes, he did, but today we're talking about Indian Ocean trade and it's going to be interesting, I promise. So pay attention. ALSO, NO HATS! This is a classroom, not a Truman Capote beach party.

So Indian Ocean trade was like the Silk Road, in that it was a network of trade routes that connected people who had stuff to people who wanted it and were willing to pay for it. And just as the Silk Road was not a single road, there were lots of Indian Ocean trade routes connecting various port cities around the Indian Ocean Basin, including Zanzibar and Mogadishu and Hormuz and Canton.

By the way, before you criticize my pronunciation, please remember that mispronunciation is my thing and I've been doing it since episode one, and nobody ever notices that it's a thing! Sorry, I lost it there... But Indian Ocean trade was bigger, richer, and featured more diverse players than the Silk Road, but it is much less famous probably because it does not have a snazzy name.

What do you think, Stan? Like the "Neptunian Network"? No. "The Wet Web"? No, that's definitely not it. "The Sexy Sea Lanes of South Asia"? No, that's too hard for me to say with my lisp... "THE MONSOON MARKETPLACE"! Thanks, Danica. And now the tyranny of dates: By about 700 CE, there was a recognizable Monsoon Marketplace, but it really blew up between 1000 CE and 1200. It then declined a bit during the Pax

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Mongolica, when overland trade became cheap and safe, because--- wait for it--- The Mongols. But then the Indian Ocean trade surged again in the 14th and 15th centuries. So who was trading? Swahili coast cities, Islamic empires in the Middle East, India, China, Southeast Asia, and NOT EUROPE, which is probably one of the reasons that Monsoon Marketplace isn't as famous as it should be.

Let's go to the Thought Bubble.

So if you live in China, and you need some ivory to make the handle for a sword, you have to trade for it, because elephants only live in India and Africa. One of the reasons Indian Ocean trade took off is that there were a wide range of resources available and a wide range of import needs — from ivory to timber to books to grain. But the most important thing was the wind.

The Indian Ocean is home to a set of very special winds called Monsoons. You generally hear about Monsoons in the context of rain in India, but rather than thinking of Monsoons as the rain itself, think of them as the wind that bring a rainy season. The great thing about seasons is that they come regularly — and so do the Monsoon winds. So if you were a sailor, you could count on the wind to bring you from Africa to India if you sailed between April and September, and one that would bring you back to Africa if you sailed between November and February. In fact, these winds were so predictable that early maritime travel guides often listed ideal times of departure down to the week and sometimes even the day.

Predictable winds make trade a lot less risky: Like, back in the day when the only power for ships were sails and oarsmen, your cargo might not arrive on time, or it might spoil, or you might die, all of which are bad for the health of global economic trade. But predictable winds meant lower risk, which meant cheaper trade, which meant more trade, which meant more people could have awesome sword handles.

Thanks Thought Bubble.

Okay, there are a few more facets of Indian Ocean trade worth mentioning. First, Indian Ocean trade incorporated many more people than participated in Silk Road trade. There were Jewish people and people from Africa to Malaysia and India and China, all sailing around and setting up trading communities where they would act as middle men, trying to sell stuff for more than they bought it for and trying to find new stuff to buy that they could sell later.

But despite this diversity, for the most part, especially on the Western half of the Indian Ocean basin, the trade was dominated by Muslim merchants. Why? Largely because they had the money to build ships, although we will see that in the 15th century the Chinese state could have changed that balance completely. By the way, I need to point out that when I say that the trade was dominated by Muslim merchants, the emphasis should be on the merchants- not the Muslim or the dominated.

As previously noted, we tend to think that states and governments and the funny-hatted people who rule them are the real movers and shakers in history, but that's really not the case. In the Indian Ocean, the terms of trade were set by the merchants and by the demands of the market, not by the whims of political rulers. And the self-regulating nature of that trade was remarkable and pretty much unprecedented. I mean, the most amazing thing, except for a few pirates, all of this trade was peaceful.

For the better part of seven hundred years these merchant ships were free to sail the seas without the need for protection from any state's navy. This despite the fact that some pretty valuable crap was being traded. No, Bubble, I meant that colloquially. Alright, we need to do the open letter before Thought Bubble tries more puns. Magic!

For today's Open Letter, to further discuss the relationship between merchants and nobles, we're going to go inland to Kashmir where Kota Rani was the ruler until 1339. Mostly I just love this story... But first, let's find out what's in the Secret Compartment. Oh, it's Blowouts. Stan, are you asking me to make a diarrhea joke? Because I'm above that. I will, however, give you a party blower solo.

Dear Kota Rani,

So, you had a pretty crazy life. When you were a kid you were kidnapped by a rival noble who disguised his army as a bunch of merchants. Then you were forced to marry your kidnapper who was the ruler of Kashmir, but, then he died. And then you became the ruler and you were really good at it and everything was going awesome and you were lining things up for your sons, but then some dude comes in and decides he's going to marry you and forces you to do it by attacking you. And so what do you do? Immediately after your second wedding you commit suicide by slicing open your belly and offer your intestines to your horrible new husband as a wedding present. Oh, Stan. I

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don't want to say it but I have to; That really took guts, Kota Rani! Sorry... And all this because your father welcomed an army into your house thinking they were merchants.

Best wishes, John Green

So, right. You wouldn't let an army, or a rival noble, into your house, but everyone welcomes a merchant — and not just royalty. The great thing about seaborne trade is that you can trade bulk goods like cotton cloth, foodstuffs, and timber that's all too heavy to strap onto a camel or mule. So for the first time we see the beginnings of goods being traded for a mass market, instead of just luxury goods, like silk for elites.

Wood, for instance, can be used to build houses — but it's not all that plentiful in the Arabian peninsula, however, when it becomes cheaper thanks to trade, suddenly more people can have better houses. Much of the timber that was shipped in the Monsoon Marketplace came from Africa, which is kind of emblematic.

Africa produced a lot of the raw materials like animal hides and skin and ivory and gold. The Swahili city states imported finished goods such as silk and porcelain from China and cotton cloth from India. Spices and foodstuffs like rice were shipped from Southeast Asia and especially Sri Lanka where black pepper was a primary export good, and the Islamic world provided everything from coffee to books and weapons. But it wasn't just products that made their way around the eastern hemisphere thanks to the Indian Ocean.

Technology spread, too. Like the magnetic compass, which is kind of crucial if you like to know where you're going, came from China. Muslim sailors popularized the astrolabe which made it easier to navigate by the stars. Boats using stern-post rudders were easier to steer, so that technology quickly spread throughout the Monsoon Marketplace. The Islamic world also produced the triangular Latin sail, which became super important because it allowed for ships to tack against the wind. This meant that a skilled crew could make their way through the ocean even if they didn't have a strong tailwind. And just as with the Silk Road, ideas also traveled in the Monsoon Marketplace.

For instance today, more Muslims live in Indonesia than in any other country. And yes, I know Indonesia has more than two islands. This is not to scale, obviously. Knowing what you've already learned about the growth of Islam and the spread of trade, it won't surprise you to learn that Islam spread to Indonesia via the Monsoon Marketplace. After the 1200s, the region which had previously been heavily influenced by the Indian religions of Hinduism and Buddhism, like witness this temple, for instance: ...became increasingly Islamic as rulers and elites adopted the religion so they could have religious as well as economic ties to the people they were trading with. The conversion of most of a region to Islam, where it continues to flourish today is a pretty big deal. But Islam didn't spread as effectively to the Thailand, Laos, Cambodia or Vietnam because they weren't centers of trade.

How do you become a center for trade? Well, let's zoom in here to the strait of Malacca. You can see how it could act as a choke point for trade. Any city that controlled that strait could stop the ships from going through it, or more likely tax them. And that's exactly what happened, to such an extent that a powerful merchant state called Srivijaya rose up on Sumatra. And for a while, Srivijaya dominated trade in the region, because there were so many ships going through the Strait of Malacca going to and from China. But, as we'll see in another episode that this trade abruptly declined in the 15th century. And with it, so did Srivijaya. This brings up a key point about Indian Ocean Trade: which is that it was indispensable to the creation of certain city states, like Srivijaya and the city states of the Swahili Coast. Without trade, those places wouldn't have existed, let alone become wealthy and grand.

Trade was a huge source of wealth for these cities because they could tax it; through import and export duties or port fees. But the fact that they are no longer powerful shows that trade can be a pretty weak foundation on which to build a polity, even a small one. There are many reasons for this: like high taxes can motivate traders to find other routes, for instance, but the main one is this: Reliance upon trade makes you especially vulnerable to the peaks and troughs in the global economy. The legacy of the merchant kingdom in Southeast Asia is still alive and well in Singapore, for instance. But one of the great lessons of cities that have declined or disappeared is that there's usually a town nearby that's eager to take your place and happy to offer lower taxes. It's almost as if the merchants decide where the people with the funny hats go, rather than the other way around.

## **Venice and the Ottoman Empire: Crash Course World History #19**

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Hi, I'm John Green, this is Crash Course World History and today we're going to talk about a relationship. No, not you, college girlfriend. No, not that kind of relationship either. No. STAN, THIS IS A HISTORY CLASS. We're gonna talk about the relationship between a city, Venice, and an empire, the Ottomans, and in doing so, we're going to return to an old theme here on Crash Course World History: How studying history can make you a better boyfriend and/or girlfriend. Probably or, but I'm not here to judge.

Mr. Green! Mr. Green! No offense, but you don't really seem like an expert in how to get girls to like you.

Here's something amazing, Me From the Past. You know that girl, Sarah, in 10th grade, who's super super smart?

Yeah, she's really hot. She's like three or four leagues hotter than I am.

Yeah, I married her. So shut up and listen.

Ten minutes from now, I'm hoping you'll understand how one mutually beneficial relationship, between the Venetians and the Ottomans, led to two really big deals: the European Renaissance and Christopher Columbus. Not like his birth, I mean he wasn't like a half-Ottoman, half-Venetian baby, his travels!

So Venice is a city made up of hundreds of islands at the northern tip of the Adriatic Sea, but walking around it, you can't help but feel that the city is essentially a collection of floating buildings tied together by some canals. If ever there was a place where geography was destiny, it was Venice. Venice was literally built for ocean-going trade. As you can imagine, Venice didn't have a lot of natural resources — except for fish and mustaches — so if they wanted to grow, they had to rely on trade.

Let's go to the Thought Bubble.

First, Venetians became experts in shipbuilding. Remember that when the crusaders needed ships for their crazy Fourth Crusade, they headed to Venice, because the Venetians were famous for their ships, including merchant ships like the galley and the cog. Not only could they build ships; they could also sail them to pleasant locales like Constantinople and the Levant, so the Venetians formed trade treaties, sometimes called concessions, with the Byzantines, and then when Constantinople fell to the Ottomans and became Istanbul, the Venetians were quick to make trade treaties with their new neighbors, famously saying that while Istanbul had been Constantinople, the matter of Constantinople getting the works was nobody's business but the Turks.

But even before the Ottomans, Venice had experience trading with the Islamic world: It initially established itself as the biggest European power in the Mediterranean thanks to its trade with Egypt's sultan in the outlandishly lucrative pepper business. Can't blame the Europeans, really, that stuff is delicious. Oh, you mean like actual pepper? Ah, that's good too, especially since it masks the taste of spoiled meat, which most meat was in the days before refrigeration. Due to some awkward... Crusades... the Egyptian merchants weren't terribly welcome in...ya know...Europe. But they had all the pepper, because the Egyptians imported it from India and controlled both overland and oversea access to the Mediterranean. And when others cited moral or religious opposition to trade, the Venetians usually found a way. Which is why the whole freaking town is made of marble.

Thanks, Thought Bubble.

To avoid the sticky situation of having to consort with the heathen Egyptians, the Venetians employed a handy story. This is the Piazza San Marco, the #1 Destination in the Entire World for People Who Like to Be Pooped on by Pigeons. It's also home to this church, which includes some bronze horses you may remember that were looted from Constantinople. And it contains the body of St. Mark, author of the Gospel According to St. Mark, who had once been the bishop of Alexandria, in Egypt.

So naturally he died and was buried in Alexandria, but the Venetians claimed him as their own, because apparently one time he visited Venice, and these two merchants hatched a very clever plan. They went to Alexandria on business, stole St. Mark's body and then hid it in a shipment of pork, which the Muslims didn't check very carefully because, you know, they were disgusted by it.

You can even see a version of this on the mosaics in the Basilica of St. Mark, complete with the Muslims shouting an Arabic version of "ewww gross." And then, forever after, the Venetians were like, "Listen, we HAVE to trade with these guys. We use it as a secret way to ferry saint bodies out of Egypt. We don't WANT to become fantastically wealthy. It's just a necessary byproduct of our saint-saving."

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So what did Venice import? Lots, but notable for us, they imported a lot of grain, because if you've ever been to Venice, then you might have noticed that it is basically made out of marble and therefore kind of difficult to farm. The Ottomans, on the other hand, had abundant grain, even before they conquered Egypt and its oh-so-fertile Nile River in 1517. Also, while trade was certainly the linchpin of Venice's economic success, they had a diverse economy. They also produced things like textiles and glass. And in fact, Venice is still known for its glass, but they couldn't produce it without a special ash that they used to make the colors. And you'll never guess where the ash came from. The Ottomans.

Am I making you a better boyfriend yet? You have to add to your partner's life. You have to color their glass. That sounds like a euphemism. but it's not-- BACK TO HISTORY.

One last thing about Venice that makes it special, at least for its time. Venice was a republic, not a monarchy or, god forbid, an empire. So its leaders were elected, and had to answer to the populace- I mean, at least the property-owning male populace. The ruler was the doge and he got to live in a very nice house and wear a funny hat.

The Sultan of the Ottoman empire also got to live in a nice house and wear a funny hat, but there the similarities end. To begin, the Ottomans were an empire that lasted from around 1300 CE until 1919, making it one of the longest-lasting and richest empires in world history. The Ottomans managed to blend their pastoral nomadic roots with some very un-nomadic empire building, and some really impressive architecture, like this and this and this, making them very different from, wait for it, the Mongols.

The empire, or at least the dynasty, was founded by Osman Bey, and Ottoman is a Latinization of Osmanli, which basically means like the House of Osman. No, Stan, the house, y-, yes. Oh my Gosh. The Ottomans were greatest in the 15th and 16th centuries under two famous sultans: First, Mehmed the Conqueror ruled from 1451 to 1481 and expanded Ottoman control to the Balkans, which is why there are Bosnian Muslims today. But Ottoman expansion reached its greatest extent under Suleiman the Magnificent, who ruled from 1520 to 1566. He took valuable territory in Mesopotamia and Egypt, thus securing control over the western parts of the Asian trade – both overland and oversea. He also defeated the king of Hungary and laid siege to Vienna in 1526. And he turned the Ottomans into a huge naval power. Also, judging from his hat, he had the largest brain in human history.

The Ottomans basically controlled about half of what the Romans controlled, but it was much more valuable because of all the Indian Ocean trade you'll remember from last week. So all this land brought a lot of wealth, but it needed to be ruled. The Ottomans could have followed the Roman model, where you send out generals and nobles to rule over conquered territories, or they could've demanded the allegiance of client kings like the Persians, or developed a civil service system like the Chinese, but instead, they created an entirely new ruling class, a system that some historians call the slave aristocracy.

So if you are a King, one of your main problems is hereditary nobles, because they always want to replace you, and they don't want to give you your money, & they want their ugly sons to marry your gorgeous daughters, etc. One way to deal with this problem is to make them part of the government so they feel included and shut up. Another way is to kill them. That's what they usually do in Russia. I'm whispering so Putin doesn't hear me. Ahh! Putin!

The Ottomans just bypassed the problem of hereditary nobles altogether by creating both an army and a bureaucracy from scratch so they would be loyal only to the Sultan. How? The devshirme, a program in which they kidnapped Christian boys, converted them to Islam, and raised them either to be members of an elite military fighting force called the Janissaries, or to be government bureaucrats. Incidentally, which of those gigs would you prefer? Because I think that says a lot about you as a person. Either way, you weren't allowed to have kids, which prevented the whole hereditary nobles problem, and also ensured that the Ottoman government would contain quite a lot of Eunuchs. Oh, it's time for the Open Letter?

An Open Letter to Ottoman Eunuchs. But first, let's see what's in the secret compartment today. Oh, its a blow up globe. See what quitting smoking will get you, Me From the Past?

Hey there Ottoman Eunuchs,

How's it hanging? I'm just kidding, that was mean. Listen, there've been eunuchs all around this great planet of ours. But you're special. I'm not going to give you the details why, because they're horrifying. I'm just going to link to an article in the video info.

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You started out just being harem guards, Ottoman Eunuchs, which is kind of an obvious gig for you, but then, you expanded. As had happened in China, you made yourselves indispensable, and you were often the center of palace intrigue.

In fact, few people in the Ottoman Empire were as wealthy and important as many of you were. Way to turn lemons into lemonade. I'm sorry, I shouldn't have brought up lemons.

Best wishes, John Green

This system eventually broke down as Janissaries (who had guns) lobbied to be allowed to have families. But until that happened, the Ottomans system of using a mix of slave administrators and Eunuchs to run everything worked incredibly well. But to return to the relationship between the Ottomans and the Venetians: After the Ottomans captured Egypt, they pretty much controlled the flow of trade through the Mediterranean, but the Venetians had centuries of experience as mariners, and also lots of boats. Speaking of ships, I ship these guys. So the Ottomans were content to let the Venetians do all the like, trading and carrying of goods, and they just made their money from taxes. And that worked because both Venice and the Ottomans added value to the other.

Healthy relationships — listen up, Me From the Past — aren't about extracting value; they have to be mutually beneficial to work. And boy, was that a mutually beneficial relationship. For instance, Venice became super rich, and being super rich was a prerequisite for the European Renaissance because all that art and learning required money, which is why Venice was a leading city at the beginning of the European Renaissance before being eclipsed by Florence, Rome, and I don't know, say Rotterdam.

Also, this relationship established firm connections between Europe and Islamic world, which allowed ideas to flow again especially old Greek ideas that had preserved and built upon by Muslims. I mean, I guess those connections had existed for a long time, but crusades aren't a great way to exchange ideas.

But perhaps the most crucial result of the Venetian and Ottoman control of trade was that it forced other Europeans to look for different paths to the riches of the East. And that fueled huge investments in exploration. The Portuguese sailed south and east around the southern tip of Africa, and the Spanish went west, believing that the Indies and China were much closer than they turned out to be.

### **Russia, the Kievan Rus, and the Mongols: Crash Course World History #20**

Hi, I'm John Green, this is Crash Course World History, and today we're gonna talk about Russia, which means we get to talk about this guy again! We haven't talked about Russia much so far because one, it's complicated, and two, ya actually gavaryu pa ruski a little bit, because I had some Russian in college, and that makes it difficult to mispronounce things, which is my thing!

Mr. Green, Mr. Green! Why'd you take Russian?

Well, because I had this big crush on a Russian major. But, anyway, I'm sure I'll still mispronounce everything.

So, today we're going to talk about persistent stereotypes about Russia, and how Russia came to take its current shape, a turn of events we owe largely to the Mongols.

But before we discuss the Mongol conquest of Russia, let's discuss exactly what got conquered. So before there was a Russian empire, or even a Russian kingdom, there was the Kievan Rus. We know Kiev was a powerful city-state, but who exactly founded it is a subject of debate. Most historians now believe that the settlers of Kiev were Slavic people who migrated from around the Black Sea. But there's an older theory that the settlers of Kiev were actually, like, Vikings. That theory goes that Vikings came down to Kiev from rivers like the Dnieper and founded a trading outpost similar to ones they'd founded in Iceland and Greenland. Which is an awesome idea and everything, but Russian, the language that developed from what the Rus spoke, sounds a lot more Slavic than it sounds, you know, Swedish. To illustrate, here is a Swede fighting with a Russian over who founded Kiev.

Right, okay, so trade was hugely important to Kiev. Almost all of their wars ended with trade concession treaties, and their law codes were unusually devoted to the subject of commerce. The Rus traded raw materials like fur, wax, and also slaves — We're not gonna venture into the astonishingly intense etymological debate over whether the word "Slav" derives from the Latin word for slave because there's nothing more terrifying and verbose than an etymologist flame war. But, yeah, the Rus traded slaves. They also relied on agriculture — and your relationships to

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the land determined both your social status and your tax burden. And if you fell into tax debt, which a lot of peasants did, then you became bonded to the land you farmed for the rest of your life. I guess that slave-like dynamic is okay as a model for social organization, but if you step on the proletariat for too long, you might end up with a Communist revolution.

But I'm getting way ahead of myself. Couple more things about Kiev: First, the ruler of Kiev was called the Grand Prince, and he became the model for future Russian Kings. Also, the early grand princes made a fateful decision: They became Byzantine Christians. According to legend, prince Vladimir chose to convert the Rus to Byzantine Christianity in the 11th century. He purportedly chose Christianity over Islam because of Islam's prohibition on alcohol saying: "Drink is the joy of the Russian."

Anyway, the Kievan Rus eventually fell in 1240 when these guys showed up and replaced them. By that time the Rus had been at war with pastoral nomads for centuries; from the Khazars to the Pechenegs to the Cumans, and they were tired. Which made them easy targets.

The period of Mongol "rule" over Russia is also known as Appanage Russia. An Appanage is principedom, and this period basically featured a bunch of Russian princes vying for control over territory, which is not a recipe for political stability or economic growth, another theme that will re-emerge in Russian history.

By the way, I'm describing all of this as Russia even though if you did that in the 13th century, people would look at you funny. They'd be like, "What do you mean, Russia? Also, where'd you get those pants? And all those teeth?" "MMMM... YOU SMELL PRETTY." Right.

So, to discuss how important the Mongols were to Russia, let's go to the Thought Bubble.

The Mongols did set up the Khanate of the Golden Horde in Russia, but it didn't leave much lasting impact on the institutions of the region, which had already been set up by the Kievans. But they did bring about a population shift — away from the South, where Kiev was, toward the Northeast. This was partly to get away from the Mongols and their massacring, but that noted, the Mongols were comparatively light rulers: They were happy to live in their yurts and collect tribute from the ever-bickering Russian princes. And all the princes had to do in exchange for their relative freedom was recognize the Mongol khans as their rulers and allow the Mongols to pick the Grand Prince from among the Russians. Perhaps most importantly, Mongol rule cut the Russians off from the Byzantines and further isolated them from Europe, leaving Russia not Byzantine, not European, and not really Mongol either, since they hated the Mongols and generally believed the Mongols were a scourge sent from God to punish them for their sinfulness and everything.

But the Mongols did help propel Moscow to prominence and in doing so, created the idea that this was Russia. And as an aside, they also did what Napoleon, Hitler, and many others couldn't: The Mongols successfully conquered Russia in the winter.

Thanks, Thought Bubble.

So how did the Mongols help catapult Moscow and its princes to prominence? Well, first, they named Muscovite princes The Grand Prince on more than one occasion. More importantly, the Muscovite princes won — that is to say purchased — the right to collect tribute on behalf of the Khan from other princes. That's a good gig because it's easy to skim a little bit off the top before you send it down the line to the Mongols. Which is precisely what the Muscovites did to enrich themselves. One prince who was particularly good at this was known as Ivan Kalita. Using my Russian, I can tell you that that translates to "Johnny Moneybags." As my Russian professor would tell you, I'm a "creative" translator.

All this loot helped Moscow expand their influence and buy principalities. The Mongols also helped them more directly by attacking their enemies. Plus Moscow was at the headwaters of four rivers which made it well-positioned for trade. And because they were kind of the allies of the Mongols, the Mongols rarely attacked them — which meant that lots of people went to Moscow because it was relatively safe. Including churchy people. In fact, Moscow also became the seat of the Eastern Orthodox church in 1325, when the Metropolitan Peter moved there.

So you might think that the Muscovites would be grateful for all this help from the Mongols, but you would be wrong. As the Mongols' position weakened in Russia in the latter half of the 14th century, one of Moscow's princes Dmitry Donskoy made war on them and inflicted the first major defeat of Mongols in Russia at battle of Kulikovo Field. This showed that the Mongols weren't invincible, which is always really bad for an imperial force. Plus it



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made Moscow look like the hero of the Russians. And that helped strengthen the idea of a unified Russia, just as you'll remember the Persians helped unify the Greeks a long time ago. Aiding this growth was stability, which Moscow owed largely to luck: Muscovite princes usually had sons which allowed them to have successors. In fact, there was only one major succession struggle and it was between two blind guys named Basil. That's not a joke by the way. Oh, it's time for the Open Letter?

An Open Letter to Basil and Basil.

But first, let's see in the Secret Compartment. Oh, it's Grizzlor! Yeah, I guess that is kind of how the Russians saw the Mongols.

Dear Basils,

The 15th century Muscovite civil war was insanely complicated, but it culminated with you guys essentially blinding each other. First, Basil II, the eventual winner of the civil war, had Basil the cross-eyed blinded. Because being cross-eyed wasn't bad enough. And that was seen as the end of the political career of Basil the Cross-Eyed. But then Basil the Cross-Eyed's brother tracked down Basil II and he was like "Imma blind you back!" And of course, everybody thought that would end Basil II's political career, but they were wrong. It turns out you can rule Russia like a Boss even if you're blind.

Best wishes, John Green

After Basil the Blind came the real man who expanded Moscow's power, Ivan III, later known as Ivan the Great. First, he asserted Russian independence from the Mongols and stopped paying tribute to the khan-- after the khan had named him Grand Prince, of course. Then, Ivan purchased, negotiated for or conquered multiple appanages, thus expanding Muscovite power even more. Ivan later declared himself sovereign of all Russians and then married the niece of the last Byzantine emperor, thus giving him even more legitimacy. And he took titles autocrat and tsar, which means Caesar. Basically, Ivan created the first centralized Russian state and for doing that he probably deserves title "the Great."

And that would be a good place to stop, except then we won't see the type of absolute rule that characterized Russia for most of the rest of its history, even unto Putin. OH GOD. JUST KIDDING PUTIN! YOU'D NEVER RIG AN ELECTION.. N-NO...PLEASE DON'T PUT ME IN JAIL!

While Ivan III consolidated Muscovite power, the undeniable brutal streak in Russian governance comes not from the Mongols, but from Ivan IV, better known as Ivan the Terrible. Ivan IV ruled from 1533 to 1584, taking the throne at age 16, yet more evidence that adolescents should not be trusted with emerging empires. Ivan the Terrible's reign represents the end of princely power and the beginning of the autocracy that Russia is famous for. But in the beginning, he was really an innovative leader. As a young king, he worked with a group of advisers called the Chosen Council, which certainly sounds like a good thing. He also called the very first meeting of the zemsky sobor, a grand council of representatives similar to the estates general that would become so important in France two hundred years later. And also reformed the army, emphasizing the new technology of muskets.

But in the second part of his reign, Ivan earned his nickname, the Terrible — which can mean either bad or just awe-inspiring, depending on your perspective. Psychological historians will point out that things started go terribly wrong with Ivan after the death of his beloved wife, Anastasia Romanov. Or they might point to the fact that he enjoyed torturing animals when he was a kid.

Regardless, Ivan set out to break the power of the nobility-- the former princes and landowners called the boyars. They were the last link to princely rule. And after an odd episode that saw him briefly "abdicate," Ivan returned to Moscow and declared he had the right to punish all traitors and evildoers. To help him in this effort, Ivan created the oprichniki, a corps of secret police who rode around on black horses, wearing all black, whose job it was to hunt down and destroy any enemies of the tsar. See also: Nazgûl and Dementors. So this was the first of Russia's purges. And over the latter half of Ivan's reign, whole towns were destroyed. It was, in effect, a civil war, except with no resistance. One historian called it a civil massacre. In the end, Ivan IV established absolute control of the tsar over all the Russian people, but he also set the precedent of accomplishing this through terror, secret police, and the suspension of law. And that would echo through the ages of Russian history... I mean, until Vladimir Putin heroically put an end to it. His little eyes. They're scary...

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So, hence the stereotype of Russian brutality and barbarism, but here's the truth; the rest of Europe also knew a lot about brutality and secret police forces. But for centuries, Russia was seen by western Europe as both European and not, an "Other" that was to be doubly feared because it was not fully Other. And when we think of all these historical stereotypes about Russia, it's worth remembering that what you see as barbaric about others is often what they see as barbaric about you.

### **Columbus, de Gama, and Zheng He! 15th Century Mariners. Crash Course: World History #21**

Hi, I'm John Green; this is Crash Course World History and today we're going to do some compare and contrast, because that's what passes for hip in world history.

Right, so you've probably heard of Christopher Columbus who in 1492 sailed the ocean blue and discovered America, a place that had been previously discovered only by millions of people—

Mr Green, Mr Green! Columbus was just a lucky idiot.

Yeah, no. Here's a little rule of thumb, Me from the Past: If you are not an expert in something, don't pretend to be an expert. This is going to serve you well both in your academic career and in your Kissing Career. MOVING ON.

So unlike Me from the Past, I'd argue that Columbus has a deserved reputation in history — but was he really the greatest sailor of the 15th Century? Well, let's meet the other contestants. In the red corner, we have Zheng He, who, when it comes to ocean-going voyages was the first major figure of the 15th century. And in the blue corner is Vasco da Gama, from scrappy little Portugal, who managed to introduce Europeans to the Indian Ocean trade network. Columbus, you have to sit in the polka-dotted corner.

As you'll no doubt remember from our discussion of Indian Ocean trade, it was dominated by Muslim merchants, involved ports in Africa and the Middle East and India and Indonesia and China, and it made a lot of people super rich. This last point explains why our three contestants were so eager to set sail. Well, that and the ceaseless desire of human beings to discover things and contract scurvy.

Let's begin with Zheng He, who is probably the greatest admiral you've never heard of. Couple of important things about Zheng He, First, he was a Muslim. That may seem strange until you consider that by the late 14th century, China had long experience with Muslims, especially when they were ruled by, wait for it... The Mongols.

Secondly, Zheng He was a eunuch. Fortunately, 15th century China had excellent general anesthesia, so I'm sure it didn't hurt at all when they castrated him — what's that, Stan? They didn't have any anesthesia? Oh, boy. Oh. Stan! I'M SEEING IT! I can see, AH AH AH HHH. Stan! SHOW ME SOMETHNG CUTE RIGHT NOW! Oh, hi there kitty! How'd you get in that little teacup? Thank you, Stan. Right, so Zheng He rose from humble beginnings to lose both of his testicles, and become the greatest admiral in Chinese history.

Let's go to the thought Bubble.

Between 1405 and 1433, Zheng He led seven voyages throughout the Indian Ocean, the expeditions of the so-called treasure ships, and they were huge. Columbus' first voyage consisted of three ships. Zheng He led an armada of over 300, with a crew of over 27,000 — more than half of London's population at the time. And some of these ships were, well, enormous. The flagships, known as the treasure ships, were over 400 feet long and had 7 or more masts. See that little tiny ship there in front of the Treasure Ship? That's a to-scale rendering of Christopher Columbus's flagship, the Santa Maria.

Zheng He wasn't an explorer: The Indian Ocean trade routes were already known to him and other Chinese sailors. He visited Africa, India, and the Middle East, and in a way, his journeys were trade missions, but not in the sense of filling his ships up with stuff to be sold later for higher prices.

At the time, China was the leading manufacturer of quality goods in the world, and there wasn't anything they actually needed to import. What they needed was prestige and respect so that people would continue to see China as the center of the economic universe, so there was a tribute system through which foreign rulers or their ambassadors would come to China and engage in a debasing ritual called the kowtow wherein they acknowledged the superiority of the Chinese emperor and offered him - or her, but usually him - gifts in exchange for the right to trade with China.

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The opportunity to humble yourself before the Chinese emperor was so valuable that many a prince was happy to jump on a treasure ship and sail back to China with Zheng He. Also, these tribute missions brought lots of crazy things to China, including exotic animals: from Africa, Zheng He brought back a zoo's worth of rhinos, zebras, and even giraffes. Basically, he was like the medieval Chinese Noah.

Thanks, Thought Bubble.

So the Chinese were world leaders in naval technology, and they wanted to dominate trade here in the Indian Ocean. So why, then, did these voyages end? One reason was that Zheng He couldn't live forever, and sure enough, he didn't. Also his patron, the Yongle Emperor, died. And the emperor's successors weren't very interested in maritime trade. They were more concerned with protecting China against its traditional enemies, nomads from the steppe. To do this, they built a rather famous wall. The Great Wall was mostly built under the Ming Dynasty using resources that they only had because they stopped building gigantic ships. Just imagine what might have happened if the Ming emperors had embraced a different strategy. One that was based on outreach instead of isolationism.

And now, to the blue corner. Representing Portuguese exploration, we have Vasco da Gama. Couple things about Portugal: first, it has a fair bit of coastline. Secondly, it was relatively resource-poor, which meant it relied upon trade in order to grow. Also, the Iberian peninsula was the only place in Europe where Muslims could be found in large numbers in the 15th century, which meant the Christian crusading spirit was quite strong there, presumably because Muslims had brought so much stability and prosperity to the region.

And chief among these would-be crusaders was Prince Henry the Navigator, so called because he was not a navigator. He was, however, a patron, not only of sailors themselves, but of a special school at Sagres in which nautical knowledge was collected and new maps were made, and all kinds of awesome stuff happened. And all that knowledge gave Portuguese sailors a huge competitive advantage when it came to exploration.

Henry commissioned sailors to search for two things. First, a path to the Indian Ocean so they could get in on the lucrative spice trade. And second, to find the kingdom of Prester John, a mythical Christian King who was supposed to live in Africa somewhere, so that Henry could have Prester John's help in a crusade.

Da Gama was the first of Henry's protégés to make it around Africa, and into the Indian Ocean. In 1498, he landed at Calicut, a major trading post on India's west coast. And when he got there, merchants asked him what he was looking for. He answered with three words: Gold and Christians. Which basically sums up Portugal's motivations for exploration.

So, once the Portuguese breached the Indian Ocean, they didn't create, like, huge colonies, because there were already powerful empires in the region. Instead, they apparently sat in the middle of the Indian Ocean doing nothing. Actually, they were able to capture & control a number of coastal cities, creating what historians call a "trading post empire." They could do this thanks to their well-armed ships, which captured cities by firing cannons into city walls like IRL Angry Birds.

But since the Portuguese didn't have enough people or boats to run the Indian Ocean trade, they had to rely on extortion. So, Portuguese merchant ships would capture other ships and force them to purchase a permit to trade called a cartaz. And without a cartaz, a merchant couldn't trade in any of the towns that Portugal controlled. To merchants, who'd plied the Indian Ocean for years in relative freedom, the Portuguese were just glorified pirates, extracting value from trade without adding to its efficiency or volume.

So, the cartaz strategy sort of worked for a while, but the Portuguese never really took control of Indian Ocean trade. They were successful enough that their neighbors, Spain, became interested in their own route to the Indies, and that brings us to Columbus.

But first, let's dispel some myths:

One, Columbus and his crew knew the earth was round. He was just wrong about the earth's size. Columbus used Ptolemy's geography and the Imago Mundi, based on Muslim scholarship — and ended up overestimating the size of Asia and underestimating the size of the oceans.

Two, Columbus never thought he'd made it to China. He called the people he encountered "Indians" because he thought that he'd made it to the East Indies, what we know as Indonesia.

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And three, Columbus was not a lucky idiot. He navigated completely unknown waters primarily relying on a technique known as dead reckoning, in which you figure out your position based on three pieces of information: the direction you're going, your speed, and the time, which you figure out via hourglass. With only that technology to guide you, it's not actually that easy to hit a continent. Come here, people who are saying he didn't hit a continent, that he only hit some islands. Come here. DAHHH!

Oh, it's time for the Open Letter?

An open letter to the Line of Demarcation. But first, let's see what's in the secret compartment today. Oh, its a globe. Thanks Stan! Just what I always needed.

Dear Line of Demarcation, You have so much to teach us about the way that the world used to work, and the way that it works now. In 1494, Pope Alexander VI settled a dispute between Portugal and Spain by dividing the world into two parts: The Spanish part, and the Portuguese part. This whole thing, at least according to Pope Alexander VI, could be split between Spain and Portugal.

At least when it came to so-called unclaimed land. I mean, unclaimed by whom? You know all the American Indians were like, "wait, this land is available? In, in that case, we'll just, we'll just keep it. If it's all the same to you."

Anyway, Line of Demarcation, I have great news for you. What Alexander VI did totally worked. We haven't had a problem since.

Best wishes, John Green

So, Columbus's first journey (he made four, the last three of which were pretty calamitous) was tiny, and he initially landed on a small Caribbean island he called San Salvador in search, like the Portuguese, of Gold and Christians. He was able to convince Ferdinand and Isabella of Spain to fund his expedition by promising riches and conversions of the natives, hopefully to sign them up for yet another crusade.

And there's a long-standing myth that Columbus tricked Ferdinand and Isabella into paying for his trip, but in fact they'd commissioned two different sets of experts to analyze his plans, both of which agreed, he was crazy. One called the plan, "Impossible to any educated person."

But even so, Ferdinand and Isabella footed the bill, partly because they were full of Crusading zeal after expelling the Muslims from Spain, and partly because they were desperate to get their hands on some of that pepper richness. Columbus, of course, failed at finding riches — he returned with neither spices nor gold. He did create some Christians, as we'll discuss in a future episode, but in terms of goal accomplishment, Columbus was much less successful than either Zheng He or Vasco de Gama.

But within two generations of Columbus, Spain would become fantastically wealthy, and for a time they were the leading power in Europe. Columbus's voyages also had a huge, largely negative, impact on the people the Spanish encountered in the Americas. And excitingly from my perspective, once Columbus returned from San Salvador, we can speak for the first time of a truly world history. Except for you, Australia.

So who was the greatest mariner of the 15th century? Well, as usual, it depends on your definition of greatness. If you value administrative competence over ill-advised adventure, than Zheng He is certainly the winner. But the reason we remember Columbus over him or Vasco de Gama is that Columbus's voyages had a lasting impact on the world, even if it wasn't necessarily a positive one. And that makes me wonder what kind of person you'd want to be: A capable administrator and brilliant sailor like Zheng He? A daring captain like de Gama? Or the bearer of a complicated but famous legacy like Columbus?

### **The Renaissance: Was it a Thing? - Crash Course World History #22**

Hi, I'm John Green, this is Crash Course: World History and today we're going to talk about something that ought to be controversial: the Renaissance.

So you probably already know about the Renaissance thanks to the work of noted teenage mutant ninja turtles Leonardo, Michelangelo, Donatello, and Raphael. But that isn't the whole story.

Mr. Green, Mr. Green. What about Splinter? I think he was an architect.

## Crash Course World History – Video Transcript

Ugh, me-from-the-past, you're such an idiot. Splinter was a painter, sculptor, AND an architect. He was a quite a Renaissance rat.

Right, so the story goes that the Renaissance saw the rebirth of European culture after the miserable Dark Ages, and that it ushered in the modern era of secularism, rationality, and individualism. And those are all in the list of things we like here at Crash Course.

Mr. Green. I think you're forgetting Cool Ranch Doritos?

Yeah, fair enough. Then what's so controversial? Well, the whole idea of a European Renaissance presupposes that Europe was like an island unto itself that was briefly enlightened when the Greeks were ascendant and then lost its way and then rediscovered its former European glory. Furthermore, I'm going to argue that the Renaissance didn't even necessarily happen.

But first, let's assume that it did. Essentially, the Renaissance was an efflorescence of arts (primarily visual, but also to a lesser extent literary) and ideas in Europe that coincided with the rediscovery of Roman and Greek culture.

It's easiest to see this in terms of visual art, Renaissance art tends to feature a focus on the human form, somewhat idealized, as Roman and especially Greek art had. And this *classicizing* is also rather apparent in the architecture of the Renaissance which featured all sorts of Greek columns and triangular pediments and Roman arches and domes.

In fact, looking at a Renaissance building you might even be able to fool yourself into thinking you're looking at an actual Greek building, if you sort of squint and ignore the fact that Greek buildings tend to be, you know, ruins.

In addition to rediscovering, that is, copying Greek and Roman art, the Renaissance saw the rediscovery of Greek and Roman writings and their ideas. And that opened up a whole new world for scholars as well, not a new world, actually since the texts were more than 1000 years old, but you know what I mean.

The scholars who examined, translated, and commented upon these writings were called humanists, which can be a little bit of a confusing term, because it implies they were concerned with, you know, humans rather than, say, the religious world. Which can add to the common, but totally incorrect, assumption that Renaissance writers and artists and scholars were, like, secretly not religious. That is a favorite area of speculation on the Internet and in Dan Brown novels, but the truth is that Renaissance artists were religious. As evidence, let me present you with that fact that they painted the Madonna over and over and over and over and over and STAN! Anyway, all humanism means is that these scholars studied what were called the humanities: literature, philosophy, history.

Today, of course, these areas of study are known as the so-called dark arts. What? Liberal arts? Aw, Stan, you're always making history less fun. I WANT TO BE A PROFESSOR OF THE DARK ARTS.

The Dark Arts job, it's a dangerous position.

Yeah, I guess that's true, so we'll stick with this.

Right. So here at Crash Course, we try not to focus too much on dates, but if I'm going to convince you that the Renaissance didn't actually happen, I should probably tell you, you know, when it didn't happen. So traditionally the Renaissance is associated with the 15th and 16th centuries. Ish.

The Renaissance happened all across Europe, but we're going to focus on Italy, because I want to and I own the video camera. Plus, Italy really spawned the Renaissance. What was it about Italy that lent itself to Renaissancing? Was it the wine? The olives? The pasta? The plumbers? The relative permissiveness when it comes to the moral lassitude of their leaders?

Well, let's go to the Thought Bubble.

Italy was primed for Renaissance for exactly one reason: Money. A society has to be super rich to support artists and elaborate building projects and to feed scholars who translate and comment on thousand-year-old documents. And the Italian city states were very wealthy for two reasons.

First, many city states were mini-industrial powerhouses each specializing in a particular industrial product like Florence made cloth, Milan made arms. Second, the cities of Venice and Genoa got stinking rich from trade. Genoa turned out a fair number of top-notch sailors, like for instance Christopher Columbus. But the Venetians became the richest city state of all.

## Crash Course World History – Video Transcript

As you'll remember from the Crusades, the Venetians were expert sailors, shipbuilders, and merchants and, as you'll remember from our discussions of Indian Ocean trade, they also had figured out ways to trade with Islamic empires, including the biggest economic power in the region: the Ottomans. Without trading with the Islamic world, especially in pepper, Venice couldn't have afforded all those painters nor would they have had money to pay for the incredibly fancy clothes they put on to pose for their fancy portraits. The clothes, the paint, the painters, enough food to get a double chin, all of that was paid for with money from trade with the Ottomans.

I know I talk a lot about trade, but that's because it's so incredibly awesome, and it really does bind the world together. And while trade can lead to conflicts, on balance, it has been responsible for more peaceful contacts than violent ones because, you know, death is bad for business.

This was certainly the case in the Eastern Mediterranean where the periods of trade-based diplomacy were longer and more frequent than periods of war, even though all we ever talk about is war because it's very dramatic, which is why my brother Hank's favorite video game is called Assassin's Creed, not Some Venetian Guys Negotiate A Trade Treaty.

Thanks, Thought Bubble.

So here's another example of non-Europeans supporting the Renaissance: The Venetians exported textiles to the Ottomans. They were usually woven in other cities like Florence, and the reason Florentine textiles were so valuable is because their color remained vibrant.

That is because they were dyed with a chemical called alum, which was primarily found in Anatolia, in the Ottoman Empire. So to make the textiles the Ottomans craved, the Italians needed Ottoman alum, at least until 1460. When Giovanni d'Castro, Pope Pius II's godson, discovered alum, in Italy, in Tolfa.

And he wrote to his godfather, the Pope: "Today I bring you victory over the Turk. Every year they wring from the Christians more than 300,000 ducats for the alum with which we dye wool various colors... But I have found seven mountains so rich in this material that they could supply seven worlds. If you will give orders to engage workmen, build furnaces, and smelt the ore, you will provide all Europe with alum and the Turk will lose all his profits. Instead they will accrue to you"

So the Pope was like, "Heck yeah." More importantly, he granted a monopoly on the mining rights of alum to a particular Florentine family, the Medicis. You know, the ones you always see painted. But vitally, Italian alum mines didn't bring victory over the Turks, or cause them to lose all their profits, just as mining and drilling at home never alleviate the need for trade.

Okay, one last way contact with Islam helped to create the European Renaissance, if indeed it happened: The Muslim world was the source of many of the writings that Renaissance scholars studied. For centuries, Muslim scholars had been working their way through ancient Greek writings, especially Ptolemy and Aristotle, who despite being consistently wrong about everything managed to be the jumping off point for thinking both in the Christian and Muslim worlds.

And the fall of Constantinople in 1453 helped further spread Greek ideas because Byzantine scholars fled for Italy, taking their books with them. So we have the Ottomans to thank for that, too. And even after it had become a Muslim capital, Istanbul was still, like, the number one destination for book nerds searching for ancient Greek texts.

Plus, if we stretch our definition of Renaissance thought to include scientific thought, there is a definite case to be made that Muslim scholars influenced Copernicus, arguably the Renaissance's greatest mind.

Oh, it's time for the open letter? An Open Letter to Copernicus.

But first, let's see what's in the secret compartment today. Wow, the heliocentric solar system? Cool. Earth in the middle, sun in the middle, earth in the middle, sun in the middle. Ptolemy. Copernicus. Ptolemy. Copernicus.

Right, an open letter to Copernicus.

Dear Copernicus,

Why you always gotta make the rest of us look so bad? You were both a lawyer and a doctor? That doesn't seem fair. You spoke four languages and discovered that the earth is not the center of the universe.

Come on.

### Crash Course World History – Video Transcript

But at least you didn't discover it entirely on your own. Now, there's no way to be sure that you had access to Muslim scholarship on this topic. But one of your diagrams is so similar to a proof found in an Islamic mathematics treatise that it's almost impossible that you didn't have access to it. Even the letters on the diagram are almost the same. So at least I can tell my mom that when she asks why I'm not a doctor and a lawyer and the guy who discovered the heliocentric solar system.

Best wishes, John Green

Alright, so now having spent the last several minutes telling you why the Renaissance happened in Italy and not in, I don't know, like India or Russia or whatever, I'm going to argue that the Renaissance did not in fact happen.

Let's start with the problem of time. The Renaissance isn't like the Battle of Hastings or the French Revolution where people were aware that they were living amid history. Like, when I was eleven and most of you didn't exist yet, my dad made my brother and me turn off the Cosby Show and watch people climbing on the Berlin Wall so we could see history.

But no one, like, woke their kids up in a Tuscan village in 1512 like, "Mario, Luigi, come outside! The Renaissance is here! Hurry, we're living in a glorious new era, where man's relationship to learning is changing. I somehow feel a new sense of individualism based on my capacity for reason."

No. In fact, most people in Europe were totally unaware of the Renaissance, because its art and learning affected a tiny sliver of the European population. Like, life expectancy in many areas of Europe actually went down during the Renaissance. Art and learning of the Renaissance didn't filter down to most people the way that technology does today.

And really the Renaissance was only experienced by the richest of the rich and those people, like painters, who served them. I mean, there were some commercial opportunities, like for framing paintings or binding books, but the vast majority of Europeans still lived on farms either as free peasants or tenants.

And the rediscovery of Aristotle didn't in any way change their lives, which were governed by the rising and setting of the sun, and, intellectually, by the Catholic Church.

In fact, probably about 95% of Europeans never encountered the Renaissance's opulence or art or modes of thought. We have constructed the Renaissance as important not because it was so central to the 15th century. I mean, at the time Europe wasn't the world's leader in, anything other than the tiny business of Atlantic trade.

We remember it as important because it matters to us now. It gave us the ninja turtles. We care about Aristotle and individualism and the Mona Lisa and the possibility that Michelangelo painted an anatomically correct brain onto the ceiling of the Sistine Chapel, because these things give us a narrative that makes sense.

Europe was enlightened, and then it was unenlightened, and then it was re-enlightened, and ever since it's been the center of art and commerce and history. You see that cycle of life, death, and rebirth a lot in historical recollection, but it just isn't accurate.

So it's true that many of the ideas introduced to Europe in the 15th and 16th centuries became very important. But remember, when we talk about the Renaissance, we're talking about hundreds of years. I mean, although they share ninja turtledom, Donatello and Raphael were born 97 years apart. And the Renaissance humanist Petrarch was born in 1304, 229 years before the Renaissance humanist Montaigne. That's almost as long as the United States has existed.

So was the Renaissance a thing? Not really. It was a lot of mutually interdependent things that occurred over centuries. Stupid truth always resisting simplicity.

### **The Columbian Exchange: Crash Course World History #23**

Hi. I'm John Green, this is Crash Course World History and today's video is kind of a response to one of the most riveting history books you'll ever read - The Columbian Exchange by David Crosby. He had a good year in 1969 - published The Columbian Exchange, played Woodstock, he was still on his first liver. What? It was Albert Crosby? Gash! History, never being as interesting as I want it to be.

## Crash Course World History – Video Transcript

Right, so it was Alfred Crosby Jr, and in that book he wrote, "The big questions are really the only ones worth considering, and colossal nerve has always been a prerequisite for such consideration." I love it!

Before 1492, we couldn't really talk about a world history at all, we could only talk about the different histories of separate regions, but Columbus changed all of that, and everything else. The Columbian Exchange irrevocably homogenized the world's biological landscape. Since Columbus, the number of plant and animal species has continually diminished, and the variation in species from place to place has diminished dramatically. I mean, the first European visitors to the Americas had never seen a tomato or a catfish; Native Americans had never seen a horse, and by making our planet biologically singular, the Columbian Exchange completely remade the populations of animals, particularly humans. And vitally, this cross-pollination also made possible such wonders as contemporary pizza.

So we're going to break the Columbian Exchange down into four categories: Diseases, boy, you're looking good Smallpox, I'm glad you've been eliminated; Animals, Plants, and People.

Mr. Green, Mr. Green! People are animals.

Yeah, that's true, me from the past, but just for the sake of simplicity we're-

Also, when you think about it, microbes are kinda animals and plants are, too, I mean-

Oh my god, shut up before I kill you and create a time travel paradox.

Microbes, like those hairy blokes back there, were a definite negative in terms of the Columbian Exchange. Terminology is hard here, but the majority of Caribbean Islanders or Native Americans or Amerindians had exactly one response to the arrival of Europeans: death.

We can't be sure of how many natives died as a result of European arrival but it was definitely more than 50% and some estimates place it as high as 90%. Historians used to blame European brutality, which was definitely a factor, but the main culprit was disease.

Smallpox is usually seen as the villain of the story but it is more likely that a series of diseases in combination did the damage. Along with smallpox, Americans were killed by: measles and mumps, typhus, chicken pox, none of which they had been previously exposed to. This astonishing decrease of population was definitely the worst effect of these diseases, both psychologically and demographically.

But the secondary effects were almost as bad. For one thing the deaths of Aztec and Incan rulers touched off wars which made it easier to spread disease, because you know, the number one way to catch smallpox is via hand-to-hand combat. Plus leaders kept dying. Huayna Capac, the leader of the Incan empire, succumbed to smallpox before Pizarro even arrived. His death led to a violent succession struggle between his sons which was won by Atahualpa, who in turn was captured and killed by Pizarro. And without that war, the Incas would have had a much better chance against the Spaniards, whose numbers were comparatively tiny. A similar thing happened to the Aztecs. The Moctezuma who eventually lost to Cortés was the nephew of a much more powerful king who died of smallpox. And the death of that great king encouraged some of the smaller states in the Aztec empire to rebel, and some of them even fought for the Spaniards.

Another effect of disease was starvation, because there simply weren't enough people left to grow crops to feed the living. And the malnutrition made survivors that much more susceptible to disease. In short, it sucked.

The transmission of disease largely went one way, from the Old World to the New, but the Americans did have one gift for Europe: venereal syphilis. It showed up in Europe around 1493, and even though Europeans are very fond of ascribing syphilis to each other: Italians called it the French disease; the French called it the disease of Naples; Poles called it the German disease; Russians called it the Polish disease. The truth is, venereal syphilis was spread by sailors who'd returned from the Americas. In fact, in his book, *The Columbian Exchange*, Crosby tells it like this: "Sailors, by the nature of their profession, are men without women and therefore men of many women. We can imagine no group more perfectly suited for guaranteeing that venereal syphilis would have worldwide distribution." Who says history books are boring? Syphilis would go on to infect a veritable who's who of Europe: from Baudelaire to Gauguin to Nietzsche, not to mention numerous family members of the famously infertile Tudor and Valois families, meaning that syphilis may be responsible for many of those miserably boring dynastic power struggles of post-Columbus Europe. Anyway, nothing against syphilis, but it pales in comparison to the devastation wrought by Old World diseases arriving in the New World.



Crash Course World History – Video Transcript

But the New World did have one gift for the Old World that was pretty destructive: tobacco.

Oh, it's time for the open letter and there's been a costume change? That doesn't bode well.

An Open Letter to Tobacco:

But first let's see what's in the secret compartment don't be cinnamon don't be cinnamon don't be - dang it!

I guess that I'm going to do the cinnamon challenge. Oh, I am not happy about this Stan, for the record - alright, I'm going to do the cinnamon challenge: one tablespoon of cinnamon in my mouth, no water.

Huh, boy, that - that sucked. I, I uh regret r-regret doing that to be honest with you.

Dear Tobacco,

I just did something really stupid but at least it was cheap. I'm gonna tell you two stories about smoking, the first come from my high school history teacher Raoul Meyer who also writes Crash Course: When I was a senior in high school he walked up to me and he said

"I want you to keep smoking. I want you to smoke until the day after your 65th birthday, and then I want you to die so that I collect all of your social security." That inspired me, Mr. Meyer, to quit smoking just eight short years later.

Here is an amazing statistic: cigarettes were handed out to American servicemen during World War II and more soldiers who started smoking during the war died from smoking than died from the war.

So if the New World was looking to extract some measure of revenge for smallpox, and measles, and chicken pox: Mission accomplished.

Best Wishes, John Green

Now onto animals. American animals, like llamas and guinea pigs, never really caught on in Eurasia. But imports to the Americas, like pigs, cows and horses were revolutionary.

Let's go to the thought bubble:

First of all, these animals, especially pigs, completely remade the food supply. Pigs breed really quickly, they eat anything and they turn into bacon, which made them heroes to the new world just as today they are heroes to the internet. Here's how quickly pigs breed:

When Hernando de Soto arrived in Florida in 1539, he brought 13 pigs. By the time of his death, there were 700 - that was 3 years later. The abundance of meat and plentiful land for agriculture and grazing meant that Europeans in the Americas very rarely experienced famine, and despite what you may have learned about religious and political freedom, the main reason Europeans came to America was to eat.

Large European animals also changed the nature of work in the Americas. Before Europeans, the largest beast of burden was the llama, and at best it could carry like, 100 lbs. This meant that for the long distance travel that the Inca engaged in, the primary transportation animal was Incas. Oxen, when combined with their plows, made it possible to bring more land under cultivation and also made transportation easier and more efficient, and plus European animals remade culture.

The grossly stereotypical American Indian, like from the movies, riding the Great Plains with an eagle feather headdress and war paint, well he didn't exist before the Columbian Exchange because there were no horses for him to ride. And the introduction of horses allowed many Native Americans to abandon agriculture in favor of a nomadic lifestyle because riding around hunting buffalo made them far richer than farming ever had.

Thanks Thought Bubble.

While animals and diseases completely reshaped the New World, it was New World plants that had the biggest effect on Eurasia.

Sure, Europeans brought over some crops that we now grow here in the Americas like wheat and grapes, both of which are necessary for Catholic mass, but New World plants radically changed the lives of millions, maybe hundreds of millions of Africans, Asians and Europeans, specifically by making pizza possible.

### Crash Course World History – Video Transcript

I mean until 500 years ago Italians lived without tomatoes, without modern pizza or marinara sauce or pizza or ketchup or pizza or even pizza. Indians lived without curry, which contains chilies, a New World food. Persians lived without corn, which is a New World food, as are beans and potatoes and avocados and peanuts and blueberries - the list goes on and on.

And these New World crops led to probably the greatest population increase in history. To quote Crosby:

"It is crudely true that if man's caloric intake is sufficient, he will somehow stagger to maturity, and he will reproduce."

And New World food was far more caloric than Old World food, which is the central reason that the world population doubled between 1650 and 1850. Plants like corn and potatoes could grow in soils that were useless for Old World crops. Potatoes were actually introduced to Europe as an aphrodisiac, but it turns out that you have to distill those potatoes into vodka before they have the desired effect. Anyway, if potatoes are an aphrodisiac, the Irish quickly became the hottest people on Earth.

An acre and a half of potato cultivation could feed an Irish family for a year, and the average Irish worker often ate 10 lbs. of potatoes every day. Surviving primarily on potatoes, the Irish more than doubled their population between 1754 and 1845, when the Potato Famine showed up and ruined everything.

And it wasn't just Europe. Manioc, or cassava is a New World plant with roots that provide more calories than any other plant on Earth, provided they are properly processed (otherwise they're poisonous). Manioc is so prevalent in Africa that many Africans swear that the plant is native to the continent, but it isn't.

Nor are sweet potatoes, and while New World grains never replaced rice in Southeast, or East Asia, the sweet potato was so common that it is known as the "poor person's staple" in China. Even in Japan, the tomb of the farmer who is reputed to have first brought them to the islands is known as the Temple of the Sweet Potato. And it's also worth noting that corn, while it may not feature prominently in European diets, has been the central source of food for animals in Europe for centuries.

And in fact, that's still the case. In 2005, 58% of the corn grown in America went to animal feed (is the kind of thing you learn when you live in Indiana).

Alright, so last but not least, the Columbian exchange involved the transfer of lots of people. Again, in the early stages this movement was mostly one way, with Europeans and Africans - the Africans usually against their will - making their way to the Americas.

So the Columbian Exchange led to the re-population of the New World following the disease devastation of the initial encounter. And better nutrition allowed the population of the Old World to grow which in turn placed population pressure on Eurasia which led to more people coming to the Americas. In the process, the world's human inhabitants became more genetically and ethnically interconnected. But it also led to the horrors of Atlantic slavery, which we'll be discussing next week.

What are we to make of the Columbian Exchange? It devastated the population of the Americas, it led to the widespread slavery of Africans, but it also allowed for a worldwide population increase and the lives of some Natives including Plains tribes like the Lakota became better and more secure, at least for a while.

Fewer people have starved since the Columbian Exchange began, but the diversity of life on Earth has diminished dramatically and planting crops where they don't belong has hurt the environment.

So on the whole, should we be grateful for the Columbian Exchange? And should we work to continue and deepen its legacy of globalism and monoculture?

Crosby didn't think we were better off:

"The Columbian Exchange has included man, and he has changed the Old and New Worlds sometimes inadvertently, sometimes intentionally, often brutally. It is possible that he and the plants and animals he brings with him have caused the extinction of more species of life forms in the last four hundred years than the usual processes of evolution might kill off in a million... The Columbian Exchange has left us with not a richer but a more impoverished genetic pool. We, all of the life on the planet, are the less for Columbus, and the impoverishment will increase."

## Crash Course World History – Video Transcript

But let's give you the last word today: Do you agree with Crosby? Are longer, healthier lives for more humans worth the sacrifice of an impoverished biosphere? And most importantly, how will your conclusions about those questions shape the way that you live your life?

### **The Atlantic Slave Trade: Crash Course World History #24**

Hi, my name is John Green, this is Crash Course World History and today we're gonna talk about slavery.

Slavery is not funny. In fact, it is very near the top of the list of things that aren't funny, so today's episode is gonna be a little light on the jokes but, I'm gonna help you understand what pre-Civil War Americans often euphemistically refer to as "the peculiar institution."

Slavery is as old as civilization itself, although it is not as old as humanity thanks to our hunting and gathering foremothers, but the numbers involved in the Atlantic slave trade are truly staggering.

From 1500 to 1880CE somewhere between 10 and 12 million African slaves were forcibly moved from Africa to the Americas and about 15% of those people died during the journey.

I know you're saying that looks like a very nice ship, I mean my God, it's almost as big as South America, yeah, not to scale, and those who didn't die became property; bought and sold like any commodity.

Where Africans came from and went to changed over time, but in all 48% of slaves went to the Caribbean, and 41% to Brazil, although few Americans recognize this, relatively few slaves were imported to the U.S, only about 5% of the total.

It's also worth noting that by the time Europeans started importing Africans into the Americas, Europe had a long history of trading slaves.

The first real European slave trade began after the 4th Crusade in 1204; the crusade that you will remember as "The Crazy One". Italian merchants imported thousands of Armenians, Circassian and Georgian slaves to Italy. Most of them were women who worked as household servants but many worked processing sugar, and sugar is of course a crop that African slaves later cultivated in the Caribbean.

Camera 2 side note; none of the primary crops grown by slaves--sugar, tobacco, coffee--is necessary to sustain human life. So in a way, slavery is a very early by-product of a consumer culture that revolves around the purchase of goods that bring us pleasure, but not sustenance.

You are welcome to draw your own metaphorically resonant conclusions from this fact.

One of the big misconceptions about slavery, or at least when I was growing up, is that Europeans somehow captured Africans, put them in chains, stuffed them on boats and then took them to the Americas.

The chains and ships bit is true as is the America part if you define America as America and not as 'Merica, but Africans were living in all kinds of conglomerations. From small villages to city-states to empires and they were much too powerful for the Europeans to just conquer. And in fact, Europeans obtained African slaves by trading for them.

Because trade is a two-way proposition, this meant that Africans were captured by other Africans and then traded to Europeans in exchange for goods; usually like metal tools or fine textiles or guns; and for those Africans, slaves were a form of property, and a very valuable one.

In many places, slaves were one of the only sources of private wealth because land was usually owned by the state.

And this gets to a really important point; if we're gonna understand the tragedy of slavery, we need to understand the economics of it; we need to get inside what Mark Twain famously called "a deformed conscience." We have to see slaves both as they were, as human beings, and as they were viewed, as an economic commodity.

Right, so you probably know about the horrendous conditions aboard slave ships, which at their largest could hold 400 people. but it's worth underscoring that each slave had an average of four square feet of space. That is 4 square feet. As one eye-witness testified before Parliament in 1791, "They had not so much room as a man in his coffin."

## Crash Course World History – Video Transcript

Once in the Americas, the surviving slaves were sold in a market very similar to the way cattle would be sold. After purchase, slave owners would often brand their new possession on the cheeks, again, just as they would do with cattle. The lives of slaves were dominated by work and terror, but mostly work.

Slaves did all types of work, from housework to skilled crafts work, and some even worked as sailors, but the majority of them worked as agricultural laborers. In the Caribbean and Brazil, most of them planted, harvested and processed sugar, working ten months out of the year, dawn until dusk.

The worst part of this job, which is saying something, because there were many bad parts, was fertilizing the sugar cane. This required slaves to carry 80 pound baskets of manure on their heads up and down hilly terrain.

"Mr. Green, Mr. Green! ...Isn't there a poop joke in there somewhere?"

No, me-from-the-past, because this whole thing is too depressing!

When it came time to harvest and process the cane, speed was incredibly important because once cut, sugar sap can go sour within a day. This meant that slaves would often work 48 hours straight during harvest time, working without sleep in the sweltering sugar press houses where the cane would be crushed in hand rollers and then boiled. Slaves often caught their hands in the rollers, and their overseers kept a hatchet on hand for amputations.

Ugh.....I told you this wasn't going to be funny.

Given these appalling conditions, it's little wonder that the average life expectancy for a Brazilian slave on a sugar plantation in the late 18th century was 23 years.

Things were slightly better in British sugar colonies like Barbados, and in the U.S., living and working conditions were better still. So relatively good that, in fact, slave populations began increasing naturally, meaning that more slaves were born than died.

This may sound like a good thing, but it is of course its own kind of evil because it meant that slave owners were calculating that if they kept their slaves healthy enough, they would reproduce and then the slave owners could steal and sell their children. Or use them to work their land, either way, blech!

Anyway, this explains why even though the percentage of slaves imported from Africa to the United States was relatively small, slaves and other people of African descent came to make up a significant portion of the U.S. population. The brutality of working conditions in Brazil, on the other hand, meant that slaves were never able to increase their population naturally, hence the continued need to import slaves into Brazil until slavery ended in the 1880s.

So I noted earlier that slavery isn't new, it's also a hard word to define. Like Stalin forced millions to work in the gulags, but we don't usually consider those people slaves.

On the other hand, many slaves in history had lives of great power, wealth, and influence. Like remember Zheng He, the world's greatest admiral? He was technically a slave, so were many of the most important advisors to Suleiman the Magnificent. So was Darth Vader!

But Atlantic slavery was different and more horrifying, because it was chattel slavery, a term historians use to indicate that the slaves were move-able property.

Oh, it's time for the open letter?

An open letter to the word slave.

But first lets see what's in the secret compartment today. Oh. It's Boba Fett. Noted owner of a ship called *Slave One*. And apparently a ballet dancer. (Singing) Do do doloo do do doo...

That's a fine approximation of ballet music.

Thank you Stan.

Alright, dear slave, as a word. You are over used.

Like Britney Spears, *I'm a Slave 4 U*, no you're not! Boba Fett's ship, *Slave One*, a ship can't be a slave!

## Crash Course World History – Video Transcript

But more importantly slave, you are constantly used in political rhetoric, and never correctly! There's nothing new about this, witness for instance, all the early Americans claiming that paying the stamp tax would make them slaves. And that was in a time when they knew exactly what slavery looked like!

Taxes, as I have mentioned before, can be very useful. I, for instance like paved roads. But even if you don't like a tax, it's not slavery. Here, I have written for you a list of all the times it is okay to use the word slave, oh, it is a one item long list!

Best Wishes, John Green.

So what exactly makes slavery so horrendous? Well, definitions are slippery, but I'm going to start with the definition of slavery proposed by sociologist Orlando Patterson.

It is "the permanent, violent and personal domination of natively alienated and generally dishonoured persons." According to this definition a slave is removed from the culture, land and society of his or her birth suffers from what Patterson called "social death".

Ultimately then, what makes slavery slavery is that slaves are de-humanized. The Latin word that gave us 'chattel', also gave us 'cattle'.

In many ways Atlantic slavery drew from previous models of slavery, and took every that sucked about each of them and combined them into a big ball so that it would be the biggest possible ball of suck.

Stan am I allowed to say suck on this show? (pause) Nice.

Now to understand what I'm talking about we need to look at some previous models of slavery.

Let's go to the Thought Bubble.

The Greeks were among the first to consider otherness a characteristic of slaves. Most Greek slaves were Barbarians and their inability to speak Greek kept them from talking back to their masters, and also indicated their slave status.

Aristotle, who despite being spectacularly wrong about almost everything was incredibly influential, believed that some people were just naturally slaves, saying "It is clear that there are certain people who are free, and certain people who are slaves by nature, and it is both to their advantage, and just, for them to be slaves"

This idea, despite being totally insane, remained popular for millennia. The Greeks popularized the idea that slaves should be traded from far away, but the Romans took it to another level.

Slaves probably made up 30% of the total Roman population, similar to the population of America at slavery's height. The Romans also invented the plantation, using mass numbers of slaves to work the land on giant farms called latifundia, so called because they were not fun.

The Judeo-Christian world also contributed as well, and though we are not going to venture into the incredibly complicated role that slavery plays in the Bible because I vividly remember the comments section of the Christianity episode, the Bible was widely used to justify slavery. And in particular the enslavement of Africans, because of the moment in Genesis when Noah curses Ham, saying "cursed be Canaan, the lowest of slaves shall he be to his brothers".

This encapsulates the two ideas vital to Atlantic slavery: 1. that slavery can be a hereditary status passed down through generations, and 2. that slavery is the result of human sin.

Both ideas serve as powerful justifications for holding an entire race in bondage.

Thanks Thought Bubble.

But there were even more contributors to the ideas that led to Atlantic slavery. For instance, Muslim Arabs were the first to import large number of Bantu speaking Africans to their territory as slaves. The Muslims called these Africans Zanj and they were a distinct and despised group, distinguished from other North Africans by the colour of their skin.

The Zanj and territory held by the Abbasid staged one of the first big slave revolts in 869CE, and it may be that this revolt was so devastating that it convinced the Abbasid that large scale, plantation-style agriculture on the Roman model just wasn't worth it.

### Crash Course World History – Video Transcript

But by then they'd connected the Aristotelian idea that some people are just naturally slaves with the appearance of Sub-Saharan Africans. The Spanish and the Portuguese, you no doubt remember, were the Europeans with the closest ties to the Muslim world because there were Muslims living on the Iberian Peninsula until 1492. So it makes sense that the Iberians were the first to these racist attitudes towards blacks.

And as the first colonizers of the Americas and the dominant importers of slaves, the Portuguese and the Spanish helped define the attitudes that characterized Atlantic slavery, beliefs they'd inherited from a complicated nexus of all the slave holders who came before them.

In short Atlantic slavery was a monstrous tragedy, but it was a tragedy in which the whole world participated, and it was the culmination of millennia of imagining the other as inherently lesser. It's tempting to pin all the blame for Atlantic slavery on one particular group, but to blame one group is to exonerate all the others, and by extension ourselves.

The truth that we must grapple with is that a vast array of our ancestors, including those we think of as ours, whoever they may be, believed it was possible for their fellow human being to be mere property.

### **The Spanish Empire, Silver, & Runaway Inflation: Crash Course World History #25**

Hi. I'm John Green, this is Crash Course World History and today we're going to talk about the entire fracking globe over the course of several centuries so let's get right to it!

Mr. Green! Fracking?

You don't know about Battlestar Galactica yet, Me From The Past? Oh, man, there are so many great things in your future!

Today, I'm going to try to show you how tiny Spain's influence spread around the world and shaped the lives of almost every human on the planet, generally in negative ways.

I know, everything is such a bummer on Crash Course recently. It's the sixteenth century. People are getting richer, they're living more connected lives and all I can do is whine about how much better the old days were.

What am I, your grandpa? Let's get festive. Woooo!

So the Aztecs weren't the first impressive polity in Mesoamerica, that honor would go to the Olmecs or the Mayans. But they were probably the greatest.

The Aztecs formed out of an alliance of three major cities in modern day Mexico in about 1430, just 89 years before Cortez and his conquistadors showed up.

The Aztec state was very hierarchical, with an emperor at the top and a group of unruly nobles beneath him, just like Europe! And in addition, there was a class of powerful priests whose job it was to keep order in the cosmos.

So, Aztec religion held that history was cyclical and punctuated by terrible disasters and then would ultimately end with a massive apocalypse. And the job of the priests was to avoid these disasters, by appeasing the gods, generally through human sacrifice.

The Aztecs extended their control over most of southern Mexico, parts of Guatemala and the Yucatan, and they demanded tribute from conquered people in the form of goods, precious metals, and people to sacrifice.

If you're familiar with *The Hunger Games*, it won't surprise you to learn that this didn't sit very well with said conquered people. And the fact that the Aztecs were basically ruling over thousands of people who hated them made it a lot easier for Cortez to come in and find allies to overthrow them.

All that noted, in less than a hundred years, the Aztecs accomplished some amazing things. Especially the building of their capital city Tenochtitlan, on the site of modern day Mexico City, which was like Venice in that it was divided and serviced by canals.

They also had floating gardens, called chinampas, which provided food for the city. Oh, it's already time for the open letter? Alright.

## Crash Course World History – Video Transcript

An open letter to Human Sacrifice. But first, let's see what's in the secret compartment today. Oh, nice! Come on. Be a mushroom, be a mushroom, be a- ohhh dahh!

Dear Human Sacrifice,

Look, I'm not going to defend you. But if you really believe that the world is going to end if the gods are not appeased, then human sacrifice... kind of makes sense.

And as evidence for this, let me submit to you that we engage in human sacrifice all the time. Remember the movie, *The Dirty Dozen*? No? Because you're too young? That makes me hate myself.

Anyway, it was all about glorious sacrifice and how a few have to die in order for many to live. Did you at least see that uh, that meteor movie that Ben Affleck was in? What was that called, *Stan*? Asteroid. Asteroid! Armageddon. Armageddon! Armageddon. Right. Like that. Human sacrifice.

Best wishes, John Green

Alright, now let's head south to the Inca civilization, which was older than the Aztecs and in some ways even more impressive. Founded in the 13th century, the Inca empire ruled between 4 and 6 million people by the time the Spanish showed up in 1532.

Trade and a very effective administrative structure held the empire together, which was even more impressive when you consider all the roads and temples that were built atop mountains with nothing to haul things up those mountains, except for llamas and people.

The Inca had no written language but they were able to keep records with knotted strings called quipus. And they were really good at integrating conquered people into the empire, mandating that people learn the Incan language and vitally, they ordered every male peasant under the Inca control to do unpaid work for the Inca government for a specified period of time each year.

This system, which the Inca called mit'a allowed them to build all those roads and temples. The Spanish would later adopt this system, and the hierarchical system with the emperor at the top, except they would make it all, you know, much suckier. And, yes, that is a technical historian term.

So, the Spanish arrived in Mexico in 1519, and in Peru in 1532, benefiting in both cases from total chaos due to disease. And after conquering the Incas and the Aztecs, they created an empire with two administrative divisions. The Vice royalty of New Spain, founded in 1521, and the Vice royalty of Peru, founded in 1542.

In some ways, the Aztec and Inca empires were perfect for Spanish conquest. Their administrative structures were similar, there was a similar link between secular and religious power, albeit different religions. All of which made it relatively easy for the Spanish crown to step into the void left by those two great empires and send their own administrators to run the place.

While most of the Spanish aristocrats who came over ran large agricultural operations, you don't see a lot of movies called, like, *Indiana Jones and the Search for A Nice Farm in the Countryside*. The real glory for conquistadors was gold.

Initially they found some, both in the Caribbean and in Mexico, but never enough to get, like, super-rich. Fortunately, or as I will argue, unfortunately, they did find a mountain made of silver.

So the Spanish adapted the mita, which the Incas had used to build roads and public buildings, to mine and process that silver. So one seventh of the adult male Indian population from each district was required to work in the silver mines for a year, being paid only subsistence wages.

Now, you might wonder why the Spanish didn't purchase African slaves to work in the mines. They did in Mexico, but in South America it was cheaper to use indigenous labor.

Purchasing slaves was inefficient because one: They didn't have experience working at high altitudes, and two: Mine work was super deadly.

Mercury, which can be used to refine silver ore, was found at the mountain of Huancavelica. And mercury poisoning among miners was so common that parents would often maim their children to keep them from having to work the mines. You can see why I'm struggling to be festive!

## Crash Course World History – Video Transcript

Let's go to the Thought Bubble.

So Spanish mines in the Americas produced over 150,000 tons of silver between the 16th and the 18th centuries, over 80% of the world's supply. Spain became the richest nation in Europe and Spanish silver pesos became the de-facto currency.

But the Spanish royal family does not appear to have understood inflation, and the huge influx of silver caused skyrocketing inflation, and since they never set tax rates to account for it, they collected the same amount of money sixty years after the discovery of silver, but that money was worth a fraction of what it once had been. And in general, it's not clear that Spain benefited much from the discovery of silver.

Rich countries have a way of finding their way into expensive and not totally necessary wars, and Spain was no exception. While empire wasn't the central cause of Spain's many 16th century wars, it sure did fund them.

So in 1519, which was a heck of a year for Spain, Charles V united the kingdoms of Spain and Austria by being named head of the Holy Roman Empire, so called because it was not holy, not Roman, and not an empire.

Charles had this dream of a unified central Europe, which was constantly being thwarted by German nobles, who had a dream of a non-unified central Europe, and eventually Charles V's ambitions were shattered and he gave the Austrian half of his kingdom to his son Ferdinand, and gave Spain with the American stuff to Philip in 1556.

Thanks, Thought Bubble.

So, Philip II didn't only inherited all of Spain's holdings in the Americas and in Europe and in the Phillip-not-a-coincidence-ines. He also inherited a rebellion in the Netherlands, because the Dutch were like, "We're gonna be Protestant, also you guys know nothing about economics," which, incidentally, the Dutch are still saying to the Spanish.

And then the English sided with the Dutch and there was a war featuring a disastrous invasion of England, called the Spanish Armada, in 1588. England's success against the Spanish, even though it can largely be chalked up to the weather, was credited to Queen Elizabeth I.

That led to a period of wealth and national pride, which meant that people had both the money and the desire to see, I don't know, plays about old English Kings named Richard. And that, my friends, is how the discovery of silver in Bolivia contributed to the genius of William Shakespeare.

Anyway, American silver didn't cause these wars anymore than it wrote Hamlet, but the new wealth made both more possible. Knowing that they had this enormous silver "war chest" at their disposal made them much more inclined to build all those ships that got sunk in 1588.

And soon enough even a mountain of silver couldn't pay for all their warring, and the Spanish crown had to borrow money, which they couldn't pay back, so they defaulted on their debt several times in the 17th century. Yay, silver!

So, most of the silver mined in the Americas went to Europe, but at least a third of it went to China. Either directly, on Spanish galleons, or indirectly through through the purchase of Chinese goods.

China had encountered inflation of its own after printing the world's first paper money in the 12th century, so they switched back to coins. Initially, Chinese coins were made out of copper or bronze, but their economy was so big — they were the leading producer of consumer goods until the 19th century — that they ran out. So they went to silver.

Now, China didn't have a lot of silver itself, but Japan did, so they traded manufactured goods for it, but soon even that wasn't enough. This was mostly because in the 16th century, China changed its tax structure. Taxes, man, they're at the center of human history.

In the early part of the Ming Dynasty, Chinese farmers paid their taxes in goods, mainly grain, and labor. But as more silver entered the economy, the Ming government changed its policy and required taxes to be paid in silver.

This meant that almost everyone in China had to produce something that could be sold for silver, which usually meant silk. In fact, the Ming government often required people to make silk.



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That glut of silk inevitably led to a price drop, which hurt the Chinese economy but not nearly as much as it hurt the Spanish economy, where almost every silk producer was put out of business. So much for the idea that global outsourcing is a new problem.

You'd think all this silver would make the Chinese incredibly rich, just like the Spanish, right? Well, yes, just like the Spanish, in that they got rich, but they didn't stay rich. The Ming government also failed to peg taxes to inflation, and spent too much on defense, notably the Great Wall.

And by the 17th century the Ming were overthrown by the Fu Manchus. Oh, it's just the Manchus? Guh! History, always disappointing me. As the historian Dennis Flynn put it, "A significant hunk of the GDP of China – then the world's biggest economy – was surrendered in order to secure a white metal that was produced mostly in Spanish America and Japan. ... Think about what else those resources could have been used for."

The Spanish empire's silver trade was the first truly global market — even India was involved, but we're really out of time — and its consequences are dire, even if it did make some people rich.

Both Spain and China experienced inflation that weakened their governments. The environment suffered. The search for precious metals led the Spanish to find and eventually destroy two of the world's great empires, the Aztecs and the Inca.

And many thousands were killed mining silver and the mercury used to refine it. But before you say it wasn't worth it, remember that this process led to the life that you have today, one where I can teach you history through the magic of the Internet. Worth the sacrifices, human and otherwise? I don't know. You tell me.

### **The Seven Years War: Crash Course World History #26**

Hi, my name is John Green, this is Crash Course World History-OH MY GOSH- today we're gonna talk about war-GYAAA EXPLOSIONS EVERYWHERE!

So traditionally historians are pretty keen on wars because they feature clearly delineated beginnings and middles and ends and because they always have a fair bit of death and drama, and mortally wounded generals who have great last words like "Let us cross over the river and rest under the shade of those trees." Whereas the last words of plague victims were always like "uuuughhh." Sorry plague victims. As if you don't have enough troubles now you've got me teasing you about your uninspired death throes.

Wars have easy where's, when's, who's and why's: 1861 to 1865, the United States, the North Vs. the South, to end slavery and save the Union.

Mr. Green, Mr. Green, are you gonna show us the hidden complexities behind something we already think we understand again?

Sorry me-from-the-past, but yes. However, to placate you, here's some more explosions. B-boom boom boom boom boooooom!

The 17th and 18th centuries saw a bunch of top-notch wars, but today we're gonna focus on the Seven Years War, also called the French and Indian Wars, because it was the first truly global war.

In fact, no less a historian than Winston Churchill called it the First World War. Though we've been so euro-centric here on Crash Course that all we're going to say about the entire war in Europe is that Prussia and Great Britain fought France and Austria and that the Austrian Habsburgs wanted to win back Silesia, which they failed to do-THERE. That's all you get, Europe!

So the Seven Years War lasted for-anyone? Anyone?

23 years?

I hate you me-from-the-past, but as it happens, by sheer coincidence, you are not necessarily wrong.

So the when. The Seven Years War began in 1756 and ended in 1763. Unless you believe, as many historians do, that the Seven Years War lasted 23 years, because it was really a continuation of the war for Austrian succession. Then you have the fact that much of the information in today's episode is taken from a book called "The Global

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Seven Years War 1754-1763," a 9 year period. As for the 'whos', it was mainly fought between the British and the French, seen here re-enacting the knife fight from either Beat It or West Side Story, depending on your age.

But some of the British were actually Americans and both the British and the French were supported by American Indians, and there was fighting in India between Indian-Indians, the British and the French, and as previously noted, the French were fighting the Prussians and the British were fighting the Austrians.

The where: Europe, the continental US, the Caribbean sea, off the coast of Africa, India, basically the world.

And the why? Ostensibly, land. British colonists wanted to expand into land west of the original 13 colonies. And that land was technically held by the French, who left it alone except for a bunch of trading posts and they were like "Je ne veux pas l'Anglais!" Thank you, 4 years of high school French.

Anyway, the war wasn't really about land, it was really about our old friend 'trade'. The British wanted to expand into the American interior to allow for more colonists, because the British benefited both from the export of raw materials from the Americas, and the import of British consumer goods to the Americas. So more colonists meant more trade, which meant more wealth, which meant ever fancier hats.

And the French realized that this British Atlantic maritime trade was making Britain so rich that Britain might come for France's actually valuable colonies, which were not in the continental US, but those slave-based sugar plantations in the Caribbean. So the fighting began around here and while the British did send over actual British troops, much of the early fighting was done by colonial militias.

Probably the most famous commander of the British troops was a Virginia colonel named George Washington. In fact, he may have actually started the shooting at the Battle of Fort Mifflin in May of 1776. Washington was captured in that battle but then he was immediately released because 18th century war was super weird.

Anyway, the real North American action was in New York and Canada. At the battle of the Plains of Abraham in 1759 for instance, the British defeated the French and captured the city of Quebec. Both the British commander General Wolfe and the French commander General Montcalm were killed in that battle with the death of the former being immortalized in this famous painting by Benjamin West. As indicated by the picture, almost all the battles in North America featured significant participation by Native Americans.

Different native tribes sided with both the British and the French, but as a broad generalization, Native Americans were more likely to support the French.

Up to this point shrewd Indian tribes had been able to play the British and the French off each other and maintain a degree of autonomy for themselves. And as long as the French were present, the British were prevented from encroaching too much on lands Native Americans were using for hunting and agriculture.

Now we haven't talked much about American Indians, mostly because they were geographically isolated and didn't have a written language, but let's at least give them a Thought Bubble.

Before the arrival of the Europeans, most Native Americans lived in tribal groups, and they subsisted on a combination of small-scale agriculture and hunting and gathering, depending on where they were situated. There were too many tribes to generalize about specific social structures, but it's probably safe to say that in terms of gender they were much more egalitarian than the Europeans, who they met up with, which may explain why European women who were taken captive by Indians sometimes preferred to stay with the tribe, rather than be rescued, although that's somewhat controversial.

One thing we can say about the Indians: their notions of what it meant to hold property were very different from those of the Europeans. Individual Indians did not 'own' land in the European sense. They used it. And not always particularly intensively. Europeans, when they came to North America, had a hard time even recognizing that the Indians were raising crops, because their forms of farming were so different from European agriculture. So the French and especially the English just assumed that the Indians weren't improving the land, which meant that they didn't own the land, so that meant that it was okay for Europeans to take it. As you might imagine, that was problematic for the Indians.

In general, Indian tribes initially got along better with the French than with the Dutch or English because 1. the French didn't settle in large numbers, as they were mostly traders and fur trappers, and 2. French missionaries who

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made the journey to the Americas were Catholic, often Jesuits, who were so intent on converting the Indians that they took the time to learn Indian languages and try to make Catholicism more amenable to Indian religion.

The end result of the war: a greatly reduced French presence on the American mainland meant that Indians could no longer easily play the British and French off each other, which opened the floodgates of British settlers. In the end, the American Indians were perhaps the biggest losers of the Seven Years War.

Thanks, Thought Bubble.

So 2000 miles south, in the Caribbean, there was also quite a lot of fighting between the British and the French over sugar colonies. Most of these were naval battles and by 1761 Spain got involved because you know, they had some sugar colonies of their own.

While these battles get a lot of ink, it's interesting to know that by far the greatest threat to combatants was disease. By October of 1761 the British had lost about 1000 men to war, and 5000 to disease.

Meanwhile, in West Africa, the British and the French were fighting there too, because, you know, why not? The British attacked the French at a trading post called St. Louis- oh, Stan, don't make me say it right... fine... Saint Louis. And at a town called Goré, both in Senegal. Why? Well, trade, of course. Senegal was the main source of gum arabic, which is notable for many reasons, but most importantly it is a key ingredient in the Diet Coke and Mentos phenomenon, so of course the British wanted lots of it.

And the French were also fighting the British in India!

In the 18th century India was nominally ruled by Mughul Empire, but I'm saying that wrong, aren't I?

Moh-gul

Yeah, that sounds more plausible. But as throughout most of it's history, the real power in India lay with local Kings and Princes, sometimes called Nawabs. And these Princes, just like their European counterparts, were constantly vying for power and control over more territory. And to get it they often enlisted the help, especially the military help, of Europeans.

This is what happened in the most notorious event in the Seven Years War in India, The Black Hole of Calcutta. In June of 1756 the British governor of Calcutta, Roger Drake made the mistake of insulting the emissary sent by the Nawab Siraj ud-Daulah who duly besieged and captured the British garrison of 500 with his own army of 30,000.

Drake escaped to nearby ships with the towns women and children, you know the old saying, women children and governors first. But the towns defenders remained and the survivors were imprisoned in a small windowless room that came to be known as the Black Hole and 40 of 63 prisoners suffocated overnight.

This story is mostly famous, in a war that killed 1 million people because the British press exaggerated the numbers in order to build support for the war in India. Not the last time that exaggerations of enemy brutality would be used to gin up support for a war.

Perhaps the most interesting thing about the military campaigns in this part of the world is that at least initially they were not undertaken by governments themselves but by corporations that had their own armies. The British East India company was the most successful of these corporations, primarily because of the military skill of its leader, Robert Clive.

Oh, it's time for the open letter? An open letter to Robert Clive. But first, let's see what's in the secret compartment today. Oh, bubbles! That makes sense, Stan. The British East India company was involved in several early market bubbles.

Mmmmm. Bubbles.

Dear Robert Clive,

You were a complicated man, and not entirely likeable, but you did win a very important battle at Plassey in 1757. And the way you won it says a lot about the relationship between Europe and its colonies. So the key to your success was a conspiracy to overthrow the existing Nawab orchestrated by a Bengali banking family called the Seths. No, Stan. The Seths. Yes. Come on.

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And in thanks for your support of their conspiracy, the new Nawab quickly signed a treaty with your company, the East India Company. And thereafter the British has effective control over trade in Bengal, and the French were excluded from it. This was an incredibly valuable region because it produced silk and inexpensive cotton cloth for export and it gave the British a decisive advantage over the French and eventually allowed them to control all of India. And you accomplished this, Robert Clive, primarily by fomenting revolution. Why does this work for you and it never works for the CIA?

Best wishes, John Green.

So by now you've probably figured out that since the French kept losing battles, they eventually lost the war. The main peace treaty signed in Paris in 1763 limited French presence in the Caribbean, in India and in North America. Although not completely otherwise they couldn't have sold Louisiana to Thomas Jefferson in 1803.

So France was obviously dramatically weakened, but overall, so was Britain. One thing rarely mentioned is the actual human cost of war. As many as 1 million combatants died in the Seven Years War, but even that doesn't tell the whole story. In the 18th century, armies usually fed themselves by foraging which really meant just pillaging the countryside. In Europe a single Prussian province lost a fifth of its population to pillaging and in North America settlers in frontier regions lived in constant fear of raids.

And one of the perhaps lesser know outcomes of the war was the systematic deportation of French Acadians from Maine to Louisiana, where they became Cajuns. Meaning that the stars of the television shows Lobster Wars and Swamp Wars are basically the same people. What's that? There's no television show called Swamp Wars? Stan, cancel everything and get me on the phone with the Discovery Channel!

One last thing about wars, they are expensive. In 1756 the British national debt was 75 million pounds, in 1763 it was 133 million pounds. Someone had to pay for this, and the British felt it was only fair that the American colonists should foot the bill. And those taxes which helped fuel the American Revolution were a direct result of the Seven Years War. So in one way, winning the Seven Years War cost Britain its first Empire. But when we remember that it was a global war, and especially when we think about what happened in India, then the Seven Years War also begins to look like the beginning of Britain's second and much greater empire.

Winning is losing is winning is losing. Such is life and such is history.

### **The Amazing Life and Strange Death of Captain Cook: Crash Course World History #27**

Hi, I'm John Green, this is Crash Course World History and today we're going to talk about the life and astonishing death of Captain James Cook. Who's death by a crocodile ch- what? James Cook? There's no crocodiles? HGGG! Stupid history, always disappointing me. Well, Captain Cook is pretty interesting too and his death is a nice entree into one of the great historian feuds of recent times. God, I love historian feuds.

So Captain Cook was born in 1728. He was a sailor and eventually a British Naval Officer, who saw action in the Seven Years War (which you will no doubt remember from last week) But he's best know for his three voyages of exploration and scientific discovery that took place in the Pacific Ocean.

The first was between 1768 and 1771, the second between 1772 and 1775, and the third between 1776 and 1780. Although on the last one, Cook's journey ended in 1779 because he died. And as you can see from the map, Cook pretty much OWNED the Pacific.

He mapped the coast of Australia, paving the way for British colonization and also paving the way for the near destruction of aboriginal peoples and their culture. As with the Columbian Exchange, Cook's voyages to Australia remade the biological landscape. He introduced sheep, which paved the way for Australia's huge wool industry. Right, there was a penal colony established in Australia; but the real story of Australia is its success as a colony. Within 80 years, Australia went from a 1,000 Anglo-Australians to 1.2 million.

Equally important, Cook explored and mapped out New Zealand. Again paving the way for colonization and paving the way for Crash Course World History to make an announcement! We did it! We finally talked about Australia and New Zealand! We're a real world history class! Huzzah! (plows party horn) Now all you Australians have to shut up about how we've never mentioned you!

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Right, so in his voyage Cook also determined there was no such thing as the mythical continent of "Terra Australis" said to have existed here. And he helped to dispel the idea of a North-West Passage, which Europeans had been obsessed with for centuries. He was the first European to describe Hawaii and also the first to keep his ships' crews free of scurvy!

Cook and his successors were part of the middle wave of European colonization. The one that took place after Europeans settled in the Americas, but before they set their sights on Africa. One more thing to mention about the context of these voyages, or rather their impact. Besides huge territorial gains and increased wealth, exploration of the Pacific contributed to Europe's romantic fascination with science. In the 18th and 19th centuries, Europeans became obsessed with mapping and charting and classifying the world. Which maybe isn't like candle-light dinner romantic, but if you think about visiting never before seen lands and bringing back odd life-forms. Well, I mean think about how we feel about space. And then of course as they colonized people, Europeans portrayed themselves as a civilizing force; bringing both science and religion.

Oh, it's time for the Open Letter? An Open Letter to "The White Man's Burden." But first, let's see what's in the secret compartment today. Ah! It's a moustache, so I can look like Kipling!

Dear White Man's Burden,

I'mma go ahead and take this off Stan. I think Tumblr has had enough to get their GIFs.

So White Man's Burden, you're a poem. And more that a century after Kipling wrote you, scholars still disagree over whether he was kidding. And this speaks to how weird and insane Imperialism really was. Europeans seemed to genuinely believe that it was their unfortunate duty to extract massive wealth from the rest of the world. Seriously, were you kidding when you called natives "Half Devil and Half Child?" Because in retrospect, that seems to describe... ya know... you.

Best Wishes, John Green

Right, so now having discussed the life of Captain Cook, we shall turn to the most controversial thing he ever did. Die.

Let's go to the Thought Bubble.

So Cook landed in Hawaii at Kealahou Bay in early 1779 and explored the island. While he was ashore he was greeted by an important person, either a Chief or a God. And then in early February, he left. But the ship had trouble and was forced to return to the bay for repairs. During this second visit, he had difficulty with the Hawaiians, who'd previously had been pretty hospitable. And there was a fracas, in which Captain Cook was killed by at least one Hawaiian. We know this from journals kept by various crewmen, but the historical controversy arises from the details and interpretation of his death. Why, in short, was Cook killed?

The traditional view is that Cook was killed for some religious reason, although what isn't always clear. One of the most fleshed out versions of this story comes from the anthropologist Marshall Sahlins, in his book "Islands of History." So in the Hawaiian religious system Ku, the God of War and Human Sacrifice, rules for eight or nine months out of the year. The other months are reserved for the Fertility God, Lono. The season long festival for Lono is called "Makahiki" and during this the Hawaiian King, who is associated with Ku, is ritually defeated. During the Makahiki, an image of Lono tours the island, gets worshipped, and collects taxes. And at the end of the Makahiki period, Lono is ritually defeated and returned to his native Tahiti.

The thinking goes that because Cook arrived in the middle of the Makahiki, the Hawaiians perceived him as Lono. So Cook took part in the rituals and sacrifices that were made as part of the Makahiki and in Sahlins' view, Cook was killed as a ritual murder to mark the end of Makahiki. For Ku to return, the festival to end, and the normal political order to be restored, \*\*\*\*\* Lono had to be defeated and presumably killed! For Sahlins, Cook's death fits perfectly with the ritual structure of Hawaiian culture.

Thanks Thought Bubble.

So the big problem with this interpretation, which admittedly sounds pretty cool, is that we don't have much evidence that Hawaiians would have actually seen Cook this way.

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We find a really interesting opposing view from Gananath Obeyesekere and I will remind you that mispronunciation is my thing! Sorry Gananath. Anyway, he criticized Sahlins' interpretation of Cook's death for looking a lot more like European myth than like a Hawaiian ritual.

First off, Obeyesekere argues that Cook himself would not easily be confused with Lono. In fact if he were taken for a God, it would probably be Ku, the War God, what with all the cannons and muskets. Also there's the fact that the name Cook sounds more like Ku than Lono. Also, arguing that native Hawaiians would see a European and think him a God has all kinds of troubling implications. One of them being that native Hawaiians aren't terribly smart. When in fact we know that they are very smart because unlike the rest of us, they live in Hawaii. And last but definitely not least, Lono is associated with fertility and the Hawaiians would have associated the Europeans with the exact opposite of fertility because they introduced gonorrhea to Hawaii.

And there's a further problem with the "Cook equals Lono" equation, which is that nothing in Hawaiian religion has any of their gods being ritually killed. Part of their mythology can be seen as sanctioning a ritual killing of the King, but not of a god and also it's a long way from ritual killing to actual killing!

The truth is probably a lot less spectacular, which is that Cook was probably killed during a melee in which a bunch of Hawaiians were also killed. Before his death, Cook had attempted to take a Hawaiian King hostage in response to Hawaiians taking a bunch of stuff from Cook's boats. This was common practice for Cook. He had done the same thing in Tahiti and other Polynesian Islands after Islanders had taken European goods. Which by the way happened everywhere Cook went in the Pacific, so maybe he should have figured out that it was like a thing! That you were allowed to take stuff off boats in exchange for the right to hang out there! Great sailor, terrible anthropologist. Although to be fair, anthropology hadn't be invented.

Additionally, right before Cook was killed there were rising tensions between the Hawaiians and the Europeans. Even though at first their relationship had been quite cordial as evidenced by all that gonorrhea. So why the tension? Probably because the Europeans dismantled a Hawaiian ritual space, some sources call it a temple, and used it for firewood. Cook attempted to pay for it, but his low-ball offer of two hatchets, I'm not making that up, was refused!

I'm sorry we destroyed your temple, but I'll give you two hatchets! One for each hand! I mean, what would you even do with a third hatchet?!?

So unfortunately, the earliest Hawaiian account offering this explanation for why Cook was killed comes well after the accounts. But at least it's a Hawaiian explanation. Of course it's also possible that the Hawaiians were just upset that Cook had attempted to kidnap their King! Most accounts from the time portray a chaotic scene in which Cook himself fired at least two shots, probably killing at least one Islander. And one thing that seem pretty clear, even as described by European chroniclers, is that Cook's death does not look premeditated and it sure doesn't look like a ritual.

But even so, the idea that Hawaiians saw Cook as a God has ended up in a good many accounts of his demise. Why? Well one explanation is that it fits in with other stories of explorers. You've all probably heard that Taínos thought Columbus was a god and that the Aztecs supposedly thought Cortés was a god. And this just makes Captain Cook one in a long line of Europeans who were thought to be gods by people who Europeans felt were savages. And making Cook a god also sets up a stark contrast between the enlightened West and primitive Polynesia, because Captain Cook often appears in history books as a model man of the Enlightenment.

Sure he never had much formal schooling, but his voyages were all about increasing knowledge and scientific exploration. And having him die at the hands of a people who were so obviously mistaken in thinking him a god makes an argument for the superiority over the intellectualism of the Enlightenment versus the so called "Primitive Religion" of the colonies. But whenever a story seems to fit really well into such a framework, we need to ask ourselves, "Who's telling that story?"

One of the reasons we know so much about Captain Cook and the reason he shows up in so many history textbooks is because we have tons of records about him, but they're almost all European records. Even the Hawaiian records we have about Cook have been heavily influenced by later contact with Europeans. So if we cast Cook's death as part of a native ritual, we're implying that Hawaiians were just performing a ritual script. Which takes away all their agency as human beings. Are we making them recognizable, having them respond as we think Europeans would by flying off the handle? I don't have an answer, but the debate between these two historical anthropologists brings up something that we need to keep in mind.

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Very often in history, we make statements about people who haven't written their own story. Whether it's Hawaiians or Native Americans or working class people. And we try to imagine that we're seeing the world as they have seen it. But the best we can really do is offer an approximation. So is it really possible to present a Hawaiian version of Captain Cook's death? Or is the exercise inherently condescending and paternalistic? And most importantly, is our inability to escape our biases a good excuse for not even trying? As usual, those aren't rhetorical questions.

### **Tea, Taxes, and The American Revolution: Crash Course World History #28**

Hi, I'm John Green, this is Crash Course World History and today you aren't going to get a blow by blow chronology of the American Revolution, and you aren't going to get cool biographical details about Thomas Jefferson or George Washington. But you are going to get me not wearing any pants.

Mr. Green, Mr. Green! Did you know that George Washington might have had slave teeth implanted into his jaw?

Yeah, I did, Me from the Past, and while it's fun to focus on metaphorically resonant details, what we're concerned with here is why the American Revolution happened and the extent to which it was actually revolutionary. Plus, for the first time in Crash Course history, I have a legitimate chance of getting through an entire episode without butchering a single pronunciation. Unfortunately, next week we will be in France, and je parle français comme un idiot.

So, intellectual historians might put the roots of the American Revolution earlier, but I'm going to start with the end of the 7 Years War in 1763, which as you will recall from last week was:

1. Expensive, and
2. A victory for the British, including British subjects living in America, who now had more land and therefore more money.

Right, so, in 1765 the British government was like, “Hey, since we went into this debt to get you all this new land, we trust that you won't mind if we pass the Stamp Act, in which we place a fancy stamp on your documents, newspapers, playing cards, etc., and in return, you give us money.”

Well, it turns out the colonists weren't so keen on this, not so much because the tax was high because they had no direct representation in the parliament that had levied the tax. And plus, they were cranky about the Crown keeping large numbers of British troops in the colonies even after the end of the 7 Years War.

And then the British government was like, “You are inadequately grateful,” and the colonists were like, “Shut up we hate you,” and the British government was like, “As long as you live under our roof, you live by our rules,” and so on, but eventually the British backed down and repealed the Stamp Act. The repeal inspired a line of commemorative teapots, thereby beginning America's storied tradition of worthless collectible ceramics.

But, in the end, this only emboldened the colonists when the British tried to put new taxes on the Americans in the form of the Townshend Acts. These led to further protests and boycotts and most importantly, more organization among the colonists.

The protests escalated: 1770 saw the Boston Massacre, which with its sum total of five dead was perhaps the least massacrey massacre of all time, and in 1773, a bunch of colonists dumped about a million dollars worth of tea into Boston Harbor, in protest of British government decisions that actually would have made British tea cheaper. Oh it's time for the open letter?

Ah... oh, that did not go well. An Open Letter to Tea. But first, let's see what's in the secret compartment today. Oh, it's a gigantic teabag. Hm. Let's see what flavor it is... Bitter tyranny variety!

Dear Tea,

Like all Americans who love justice and freedom, I hate you. But I understand you're quite popular in the UK where the East India Company would periodically go to war for you.

But, what fascinates me about you, tea, I mean, aside from the fact that people choose to drink you when there are great American refreshments available, like Mountain Dew, is that even though you're stereotypically English,

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you're not English. It's Chinese, or Burmese, or Indian. No one really knows, but it's definitely not English. You didn't even have tea until, like, the 1660s. Posers.

Best wishes, John Green

So, The Boston Tea Party led to further British crackdowns and then mobilization of colonial militias and then Paul Revere and then actual war, but you can hear all about that stuff on, like, TV miniseries. I want to focus on one of the ways that colonists protested unfair taxation.

Let's go to the Thought Bubble.

As previously noted, the English Crown benefited tremendously from the import of consumer goods to the American colonies, and one of the most effective ways American colonists could protest taxation without representation was by boycotting British products.

In order to enforce these boycotts, the protesters created Committees of Correspondence, which spread information about who was and was not observing the boycotts. And these committees also could coerce non-compliers into compliance - which is to say that they were creating and enforcing policy, kind of like a government does.

The Maryland Committee of Correspondence, in fact, was instrumental in setting up the first Continental Congress, which convened to coordinate a response to the fighting that started in 1775. This was back when congresses did things, by the way. It was awesome.

Anyway, the Continental Congress is most famous for drafting and approving the Declaration of Independence. No, Thought Bubble. That's the Will Smith vehicle Independence Day. I mean the Declaration of Independence. Right, that one. It's not your fault, you guys are Canadian. You've never declared independence. Worth noting, by the way, that the congress edited out more than a quarter of Jefferson's original declaration, and he forever after insisted they'd "mangled" it.

Anyway, I would argue the heavy lifting of the American Revolution was already done by the Declaration. In truth, by the time the shooting started, most of the colonists were already self-governing and had developed a sense of themselves as something separate and different from Great Britain - as evidenced by these "Committees of Correspondence," which functioned as shadow governments - eventually reaching out to foreign governments, establishing an espionage network, tarring and feathering loyalists and royal officials which, by the way is incredibly painful and dangerous to the victim, and even recruiting physicians to tell American men that drinking British tea would make them weak and effeminate.

Thanks, Thought Bubble.

Now, despite all this, about 20% of colonists remained loyal to Great Britain throughout the war, especially in the major cities that Britain occupied. Also lots of slaves continued to support the British, especially after Britain promised that any slaves who fought with them would be freed.

And it's worth noting that while we generally celebrate the Revolution and see it as a step toward justice and equality, the people who most needed the protection of a government might have been better off and more free, if Britain had won. Especially since Britain ended slavery well before America did, and, you know, without a civil war.

Also, even though most Americans had come to see themselves as separate from Britain before 1776, the British certainly didn't see it that way. They continued to fight either until 1781 or 1783, depending on whether you calculate by when they actually gave up or when the peace treaty was signed.

So you can't really say the American Revolution was won before the fighting even started. But the truth is, the American Revolution and the war for independence weren't like this. They were like this.

So, here's what was pretty revolutionary about the American Revolution: The colonists threw off the rule of an imperial monarchy and replaced it with a government that didn't have a king, a radical idea in a world that didn't feature many non-monarchical forms of government.

And, if you look at the explanations for the revolution, especially those contained in, like, the Declaration of Independence and in pamphlets, like Thomas Paine's Common Sense, there's definitely a revolutionary zeal that's



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informed by the Enlightenment. And that's especially true if you focus on the idea of liberty, as many of the pamphleteers did.

That said, if you look at the actual outcome of the revolution, aside from the whole no king thing, it wasn't that revolutionary. Let's look, for instance, at two ideas central to the revolution: property rights and equality.

So the Articles of Confederation gave the government no power to tax, which had the effect of making sure that people who had property were able to keep it because they never had to pay the government anything in exchange for the right to own and use it. And that's very different from taxation systems dating all the way back to, like, Mesopotamia and Ancient Egypt.

And it's probably not a coincidence that most of the writers and signers of the Declaration of Independence were men of property, and they wanted to keep it that way. So, basically, the white guys who controlled the land and its production before the American Revolution were the same white guys who controlled it after the American Revolution.

And this leads us to the second, and more important way that as a revolution, the American one falls a bit short. So, if you've ever studied American history, you're probably familiar with the greatest line in the Declaration of Independence: "We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal." Sorry, ladies.

And, you also may know that at the time those words were written, a large segment of the American population, perhaps as much as 30%, were slaves of African descent who were held as property and were definitely, 100% not treated as equal to whites. In fact, the guy who wrote those words held slaves, and was fighting against a government who promised to free any slaves who supported it.

Furthermore, women couldn't vote, and neither could white men who didn't own enough property - meaning that the government of, for, and by the people was, in fact of, for, and by about 10-15% of the people.

But here's the real question: Was the American Revolution what the historian Jonathan Israel called "a revolution of mind?" Did it change the way we think about what people are and how we should organize ourselves? Addressing those questions will involve a brief foray into the history of ideas. Let's study the Enlightenment!

The Enlightenment was primarily a celebration of humans' ability to understand and improve the natural world through reason. The Enlightenment had a number of antecedents, including the European Renaissance and the Scientific Revolution, but what made it special was that some of its more radical proponents - like, Immanuel Kant, for instance - went so far as to argue that human reason rendered a belief in God unnecessary and, by extension, proclaimed that any belief in divine intervention or a divine plan for humanity was just superstition.

Given that this was coming out of an overwhelmingly Christian Europe, this was a pretty controversial suggestion, and not all Enlightenment thinkers would go that far. And more moderate Enlightenment thinkers were also more willing to countenance hierarchical social and political structures.

Like John Locke, a major Enlightenment thinker, formulated his version of inalienable rights as life, liberty, and property. And that's much more traditional than arguing, for instance, that property should be held communally.

And it's no coincidence that the more moderate Enlightenment thinkers, like Locke and Adam Smith, happened to be British, and the real radicals were French. And the founders of the United States, were far more closely linked to those British Enlightenment thinkers than to the French, who influenced the French Revolution, which as we will see next week, goes swimmingly.

But even if the government that America's revolutionaries came up with didn't overturn privilege or tear apart the social order as the French Revolution tried to do, it did make significant changes. America made sure that there would never be a formal nobility, except for the Count of Chocula.

And, it recognized the equal rights of daughters and widows, when it came to inheriting and possessing property. Also, it created a world in which future countesses could rehabilitate their reputations in New York.

But, the real seismic change was that after the Revolution, Americans came to view themselves as equal to each other. And, in the context of the 18th century, that was pretty radical. "Ordinary Americans came to believe that no one in a basic down-to-earth and day-in-and-day-out manner was really better than anyone else. That was equality as no other nation had ever quite had it."

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And in the end, the ideas of the American revolution - ideas about property and equality and representation - are still hugely important in shaping political discourse around the world, and particularly in America. And by America, I mean the United States. I'm sorry Canadians and Mexicans and Central Americans and South Americans. We're provincial, okay? I mean, here in the United States, our Presidential candidates must both know how to wear a suit and how to bowl.

But the American Revolution also reminds us - as the French one will next week - that revolutionary ideas and values are not always easy to live up to. Nothing challenges one's belief in equality quite like becoming rich and powerful. Indeed, rare is the revolutionary who doesn't become, on some level, like Orwell's pigs, insisting that while all animals were created equal, some were created more equal than others.

In short, if you're going to base your new society on philosophy, you should try to found it on ideals that are as inclusive and humanistic as possible - because the people executing those ideas will never be ideal.

### **The French Revolution: Crash Course World History #29**

Hi, my name is John Green, this is Crash Course World History, and today we're going to talk about The French Revolution. Admittedly, this wasn't the French flag until 1794, but we just felt like he looked good in stripes. As does this guy. Huh?

So, while the American Revolution is considered a pretty good thing, the French Revolution is often seen as a bloody, anarchic mess, which...

Mr. Green, Mr. Green! I bet, like always, it's way more complicated than that.

Actually no. It was pretty terrible. Also, like a lot of revolutions, in the end it exchanged an authoritarian regime for an authoritarian regime. But even if the revolution was a mess, its ideas changed human history - far more, I will argue, than the American Revolution.

Right, so France in the 18th century was a rich and populous country, but it had a systemic problem collecting taxes because of the way its society was structured. They had a system with kings and nobles we now call the Ancien Régime. Thank you, three years of high school French.

And for most French people, it sucked, because the people with the money - the nobles and the clergy - never paid taxes. So by 1789, France was deeply in debt thanks to their funding the American Revolution - thank you, France; we will get you back in World Wars I and II. And King Louis XVI was spending half of his national budget to service the federal debt.

Louis tried to reform this system under various finance ministers. He even called for democracy on a local level, but all attempts to fix it failed and soon France basically declared bankruptcy. This nicely coincided with hailstorms that ruined a year's harvest, thereby raising food prices and causing widespread hunger, which really made the people of France angry, because they love to eat.

Meanwhile, the King certainly did not look broke, as evidenced by his well-fed physique and fancy footwear. He and his wife Marie Antoinette also got to live in the very nice Palace at Versailles thanks to God's mandate, but Enlightenment thinkers like Kant were challenging the whole idea of religion, writing things like: "The main point of enlightenment is of man's release from his self-caused immaturity, primarily in matters of religion."

So basically the peasants were hungry, the intellectuals were beginning to wonder whether God could or should save the King, and the nobility were dithering about, eating foie gras and songbirds, failing to make meaningful financial reform.

In response to the crisis, Louis XVI called a meeting of the Estates General, the closest thing that France had to a national parliament, which hadn't met since 1614. The Estates General was like a super parliament made up of representatives from the First Estate, the nobles, the Second Estate, the clergy, and the Third Estate, everyone else.

The Third Estate showed up with about 600 representatives, the First and Second Estates both had about 300, and after several votes, everything was deadlocked, and then the Third Estate was like, "You know what? Forget you guys. We're gonna leave and we're gonna become our own National Assembly."

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This did not please King Louis XVI. So when the new National Assembly left the room for a break, he locked the doors, and he was like, "Sorry, guys, you can't go in there. And if you can't assemble, how you gonna be a National Assembly?"

Shockingly, the Third Estate representatives were able to find a different room in France, this time an indoor tennis court where they swore the famous Tennis Court Oath. And they agreed not to give up until a French constitution was established.

So then Louis XVI responded by sending troops to Paris primarily to quell uprisings over food shortages, but the revolutionaries saw this as a provocation, so they responded by seizing the Bastille Prison on July 14th, which, coincidentally, is also Bastille Day. The Bastille was stormed ostensibly to free prisoners - although there were only seven in jail at the time - but mostly to get guns.

But the really radical move in the National Assembly came on August 4, when they abolished most of the Ancien Régime - feudal rights, tithes, privileges for nobles, unequal taxation, they were all abolished - in the name of writing a new constitution.

And then, on August 26th, the National Assembly proclaimed the Declaration of Rights of Man and Citizen, which laid out a system of rights that applied to every person, and made those rights integral to the new constitution. That's quite different from the American bill of rights, which was, like, begrudgingly tacked on at the end and only applied to non-slaves.

The DoRoMaC, as I called it in high school, declared that everyone had the right to liberty, property, and security - rights that the French Revolution would do an exceptionally poor job of protecting, but as noted last week, the same can be argued for many other supposedly more successful revolutions.

Okay, let's go to the Thought Bubble.

Meanwhile, back at Versailles, Louis XVI was still King of France, and it was looking like France might be a constitutional monarchy. Which might've meant that the royal family could hang on to their awesome house, but then, in October of 1789, a rumor started that Marie Antoinette was hoarding grain somewhere inside the palace.

And in what became known as the Women's March, a bunch of armed peasant women stormed the palace and demanded that Louis and Marie Antoinette move from Versailles to Paris. Which they did, because everyone is afraid of armed peasant women. And this is a nice reminder that to many people at the time, the French Revolution was not primarily about fancy Enlightenment ideas; it was mostly about lack of food and a political system that made economic contractions hardest on the poor.

Now, a good argument can be made that this first phase of the revolution wasn't all that revolutionary. The National Assembly wanted to create a constitutional monarchy; they believed that the king was necessary for a functioning state and they were mainly concerned that the voters and office holders be men of property. Only the most radical wing, the Jacobins, called for the creation of a republic. But things were about to get much more revolutionary - and also worse for France.

First, the Jacobins had a huge petition drive that got a bit unruly, which led troops controlled not by the King but by the National Assembly to fire on the crowd, killing 50 people. And that meant that the National Assembly, which had been the revolutionary voice of the people, had killed people in an attempt to reign in revolutionary fervor. You see this a lot throughout history during revolutions. What looked like radical hope and change suddenly becomes "The Man" as increasingly radical ideas are embraced.

Thanks, Thought Bubble.

Meanwhile, France's monarchical neighbors were getting a little nervous about all this republic business, especially Leopold II, who in addition to being the not holy, not Roman, and not imperial Holy Roman Emperor, was Marie Antoinette's brother. I should note, by the way, that at this point, the Holy Roman Empire was basically just Austria.

Also, like a lot of monarchs, Leopold II liked the idea of monarchies, and he wanted to keep his job as a person who gets to stand around wearing a dress, pointing at nothing, owning winged lion-monkeys made out of gold. And who can blame him? So he and King William Frederick II of Prussia together issued the Declaration of Pillnitz, which promised to restore the French monarchy.

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At this point, Louis and the National Assembly developed a plan: Let's invade Austria. The idea was to plunder Austria's wealth and maybe steal some Austrian grain to shore up French food supplies, and also, you know, spread revolutionary zeal. But what actually happened is that Prussia joined Austria in fighting the French. And then Louis encouraged the Prussians, which made him look like an enemy of the revolution, which, of course, he was. And as a result, the Assembly voted to suspend the monarchy, have new elections in which everyone could vote (as long as they were men), and create a new republican constitution.

Soon, this Convention decided to have a trial for Louis XVI, who was found guilty and, by one vote, sentenced to die via guillotine. Which made it difficult for Austria and Prussia to restore him to the throne. Oh, it's time for the open letter?

An Open Letter to the Guillotine. But first, let's see what's in the secret compartment today.

Oh, there's nothing. Oh my gosh, Stan! Jeez. That's not funny!

Dear Guillotine,

I can think of no better example of Enlightenment thinking run amok. Dr. Joseph Guillotine, the inventor of the guillotine, envisioned it as an egalitarian way of dying. They said the guillotine was humane and it also made no distinction between rich or poor, noble or peasant. It killed equally.

You were also celebrated for taking the torture out of execution. But I will remind you, you did not take the dying out of execution. Unfortunately for you, France hasn't executed anyone since 1977. But you'll be happy to know that the last legal execution in France was via guillotine.

Plus, you've always got a future in horror movies.

Best wishes, John Green

The death of Louis XVI marks the beginning of The Terror, the best known or at least the most sensational phase of the revolution. I mean, if you can kill the king, you can kill pretty much anyone, which is what the government did under the leadership of the Committee of Public Safety (Motto: We suck at protecting public safety), led by Maximilien Robespierre.

The terror saw the guillotining of 16,000 enemies of the revolution including Marie "I never actually said Let them eat cake" Antoinette and Maximilien Robespierre himself, who was guillotined in the month of Thermidor in the year Two.

Alright, so while France was broke and fighting in like nine wars, the Committee of Public Safety changed the measurements of time because, you know, the traditional measurements are so irrational and religion-y. So they renamed all the months and decided that every day would have 10 hours and each hour 100 minutes.

And then, after the Terror, the revolution pulled back a bit and another new constitution was put into place, this one giving a lot more power to wealthy people. At this point, France was still at war with Austria and Britain, wars that France ended up winning, largely thanks to a little corporal named Napoleon Bonaparte.

The war was backdrop to a bunch of coups and counter coups that I won't get into right now because they were very complicated, but the last coup that we'll talk about, in 1799, established Napoleon Bonaparte as the First Consul of France. And it granted him almost unlimited executive power under yet another constitution. And when he was declared First Consul of France, Napoleon proclaimed "Citizens! The revolution is established on the principals with which it began. It is over." By which he presumably meant that France's government had gone all the way from here to here to here.

As with the American revolution, it's easy to conclude that France's revolution wasn't all that revolutionary. I mean, Napoleon was basically an emperor and, in some ways, he was even more of an absolute monarch than Louis XVI had been. Gradually the nobles came back to France, although they had mostly lost their special privileges. The Catholic Church returned, too, although much weaker because it had lost land and the ability to collect tithes.

And when Napoleon himself fell, France restored the monarchy, and except for a four-year period, between 1815 and 1870, France had a king who was either a Bourbon or a Bonaparte. Now, these were no longer absolute monarchs who claimed that their right to rule came from God; they were constitutional monarchs of the kind that the

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revolutionaries of 1789 had originally envisioned. But the fact remains that France had a king again, and a nobility, and an established religion and it was definitely not a democracy or a republic.

And perhaps this is why the French Revolution is so controversial and open to interpretation. Some argue the revolution succeeded in spreading enlightenment ideals even if it didn't bring democracy to France. Others argue that the real legacy of the Revolution wasn't the enhancement of liberty, but of state power.

Regardless, I'd argue that the French Revolution was ultimately far more revolutionary than its American counterpart. I mean, in some ways, America never had an aristocracy, but in other ways it continued to have one - the French enlightenment thinker, Diderot, felt that Americans should "fear a too unequal division of wealth resulting in a small number of opulent citizens and a multitude of citizens living in misery." And the American Revolution did nothing to change that polarization of wealth.

What made the French Revolution so radical was its insistence on the universality of its ideals. I mean, look at Article 6 of the Declaration of Rights of Man and Citizen: "Law is the expression of the general will. Every citizen has a right to participate personally, or through his representative, in its foundation. It must be the same for all, whether it protects or punishes."

Those are radical ideas, that the laws come from citizens, not from kings or gods, and that those laws should apply to everyone equally. That's a long way from Hammurabi - and in truth, it's a long way from the slaveholding Thomas Jefferson.

In the 1970s, Chinese President Zhou Enlai was asked what the affects of the French Revolution had been. And he said, "It's too soon to say." And in a way, it still is. The French Revolution asked new questions about the nature of people's rights and the derivation of those rights. And we're still answering those questions and sorting through how our answers should shape society today - must government be of the people to be for the people? Do our rights derive from nature or from God or from neither? And what are those rights?

As William Faulkner said, "The past is never dead. It's not even past."

### **Haitian Revolutions: Crash Course World History #30**

Hi, I'm John Green. This is Crash Course World History. And apparently it's Revolutions Month here at Crash Course, because today we are going to discuss the often-neglected Haitian Revolutions. The Haitian Revolutions are totally fascinating and they involve two of my very favorite things:

1. Ending slavery, and
2. Napoleon getting his feelings hurt. I can't help myself, Napoleon. I like to see you suffer.

So, the French colony in Saint-Domingue began in the 17th century as a pirate outpost. And its original French inhabitants made their living selling leather and a kind of smoked beef called boucan. All that beef actually came from cattle left behind by the Spanish, who were the first Europeans to settle the island.

But anyway, after 1640, the boucan-sellers started to run low on beef. And they were like, "You know what would pay better than selling beef jerky? Robbing Spanish galleons," which as you'll recall were loaded with silver mined from South America. So, by the middle of the 17th century, the French had convinced many of those buccaneering captains to give up their pirating and settle on the island.

Many of them invested some of their pirate treasure in sugar plantations, which, by 1700 were thriving at both producing sugar and working people to death. And soon, this island was the most valuable colony in the West Indies, and possibly in the world. It produced 40% of Europe's sugar, 60% of its coffee, and it was home to more slaves than any place except Brazil.

And as you'll recall from our discussion of Atlantic slavery, being a slave in a sugar-production colony was exceptionally brutal. In fact, by the late 18th century, more slaves were imported to Saint-Domingue EVERY YEAR— more than 40,000— than the entire white population of the island. By the 19th century, slaves made up about 90% of the population.

And most of those slaves were African born, because the brutal living and working conditions prevented natural population growth. Like, remember Alfred Crosby's fantastic line, "it is crudely true that if man's caloric intake is

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sufficient, he will somehow stagger to maturity, and he will reproduce?” Yeah, well, not in 18th century Haiti, thanks to Yellow Fever and smallpox and just miserable working conditions. So, most of these plantations were pretty large, they often had more than 200 slaves, and many of the field workers— in some cases, a majority— were women.

Colonial society in Saint-Domingue was divided into four groups, which had important consequences for the revolution. At the top, were the Big White planters who owned the plantations and all the slaves. Often these Grand Blancs were absentee landlords who would just rather stay in France and let their agents do, you know, the actual brutality.

Below them were the wealthy free people of color. Most of the Frenchmen who came to the island were, you know, men, and they frequently fathered children with slave women. These fathers would often free their children. Wasn't that generous of them. So, by 1789, there were 24,800 free people of color along with about 30,000 white people in the colony. The free people of color contributed a lot to the island's stability. They served in the militia, and in the local constabulary, and many of the wealthier ones eventually owned plantations and slaves of their own.

And then, below them on the social ladder were the poor whites, or the petit blancs, who worked as artisans and laborers. And at the bottom were the slaves who made up the overwhelming majority.

I know what you're thinking: this is a recipe for permanent social stability. No, it wasn't. Okay, so when the French Revolution broke out in 1789, all these groups had something to complain about. The slaves, obviously, disliked being slaves. The free people of color were still subject to legal discrimination, no matter how wealthy they became.

And the poor whites, in addition to being poor, were resentful of all the privileges held by the wealthy people of color. And the Grand Blancs were complaining about French trade laws and the government's attempts to slightly improve the living and working conditions of slaves. Basically they were saying that government shouldn't be in the business of regulating business. So everyone was unhappy, but the slaves were by far the worst off.

Mr. Green, Mr. Green! You're always saying how much slavery sucks, but is it really any worse than having to work for, like, subsis...

Yeah, I'm gonna stop you right there, Me from the Past, before you further embarrass yourself. You often hear from people attempting to comprehend the horrors of slavery that slavery couldn't have been all that bad, and that it wasn't that different from working for minimum wage. And that we know this because if it HAD been so bad, slaves would have just revolted, which they never did. Yeah. Well,

1. equating slavery to poor working conditions ignores the fact that if you work at, like, Foxconn, Foxconn doesn't get to sell your children to other corporations. And
2. As you are about to see, SLAVES DID REVOLT.

So, the unrest in what became Haiti started in 1789 when some slaves heard a rumor that the King of France had freed them. Even though it was across the ocean, word of the changes in France reached the people of Haiti, where The Declaration of Rights of Man and Citizen, while terrifying to planters, gave hope both to free people of color and to slaves.

At the same time, some petit blancs argued that there was inadequate discrimination against blacks. They identified with the third estate in France, and they called for interest rates to be lowered so they could more easily pay their debts. And they began lobbying for colonial independence.

The psychology here shows you the extent to which slaves were not considered people. I mean, these radical petit blancs thought that they were the oppressed people in Saint-Domingue because they couldn't afford to own slaves. And they thought if they could become independent from France, they could take power from the people of privilege and institute a democracy where everyone had a voice-- except for the 95% of people who weren't white.

Then in 1791, these radical petit blancs seized the city of Port-au-Prince. You'll remember that by 1791, France was at war with most of Europe, and just like with the 7 Years' War, the wars of Revolutionary France played out in the colonies as well as at home. So the French government sent troops to Saint-Domingue.

Meanwhile, urges toward liberty, fraternity, and equality were only growing in France, and it didn't seem very equitable to grant citizenship based solely on race. So in May of 1791, the National Assembly gave full French citizenship to all free men of color. I mean, if they owned property, and had enough money, and weren't the children

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of slaves. The petit blancs weren't thrilled about this, and that led to fighting breaking out between them and the newly French free people of color.

And then in August of 1791, the slaves were like, "Um, hi, yes. Screw all of you." And a massive slave revolt broke out. Among the leaders of this revolt was Toussaint Breda, a former slave of full African descent, who later took the name Toussaint L'Ouverture. L'Ouverture helped mold the slaves into a disciplined army that could withstand attacks from the French troops.

But again, the context of the wider revolution proves really important here. So, the Spanish had consistently supported slave revolts in Saint-Domingue hoping to weaken the French. But, by 1793 they were offering even more support. In fact, L'Ouverture became an officer in the Spanish military because the emancipation of the slaves was more important to him than maintaining his rights as a French Citizen.

So then, in October of 1793 the British, whom as I'm sure you'll recall were also at war with France, decided to invade Saint-Domingue. And at that point, the French military commanders were like, We are definitely going to lose this war if we fight the British, the Spanish, and the slaves, so let's free the slaves. So they issued decrees freeing the slaves and on February 4, 1794 the National Convention in Paris ratified those decrees.

By May, having learned of the Convention's actions, L'Ouverture switched allegiances to the French and turned the tide of the war. Thus, the most successful slave revolt in human history won freedom and citizenship for every slave in the French Caribbean. But emancipation didn't end the story because the French were still at war with the Spanish and the English in Saint-Domingue. Luckily for France, L'Ouverture was an excellent general, and luckily for the people of the island, L'Ouverture was also an able politician. And between 1794 and 1802, he successfully steered the colony toward independence.

So, although slavery was abolished, this didn't end the plantation system because both L'Ouverture and his compatriot André Rigaud believed that sugar was vital to the economic health of the island. But now at least people were paid for their labor and their kids couldn't be sold. Now you can compare it to Foxconn.

But soon, L'Ouverture and Rigaud came into conflict over Rigaud's refusal to give up control over one of the Southern states on the island, and there was a civil war, which L'Ouverture, with the help of his able lieutenant Jacques Dessalines, was able to win after 13 months of hard fighting. L'Ouverture then passed a new constitution, and things were going pretty well on Saint-Domingue with the small problem that it was still technically part of France, which meant that it was about to be ruled by Napoleon Bonaparte.

Let's go to the Thought Bubble.

So, in 1799, Napoleon seized power in France in a coup. And, his new regime, called the Consulate (because he was the First Consul à la the Roman Republic) established a new constitution that specifically pointed out its laws did not apply to France's overseas colonies.

Napoleon had plans to reconstruct France's empire in North America that it had lost most of in the 7 Years' War, and to do this he needed tons of money from France's most valuable colony, Saint-Domingue. And the best way to maximize profits? Why, to reintroduce slavery, of course. That's certainly what the former slaves thought was the plan when in 1802, a French expedition commanded by Napoleon's brother-in-law Charles-Victor-Emmanuel "I-Have-Too-Many-Names" Leclerc showed up in Saint-Domingue.

This started the second phase of the Haitian revolution, the fight for independence. So, Leclerc eventually had L'Ouverture arrested and shipped to France where he died in prison in 1803. But this itself did not spark an uprising against the French because L'Ouverture wasn't actually that popular, largely because he wanted most blacks on the island to continue to grow sugar.

Instead, the former slaves only started fighting when Leclerc tried to take away their guns, thus beginning a guerrilla war that the French, despite their superior training and weapons, had absolutely no chance of winning. Although the French were exceedingly cruel, executing women as well as men and importing man-eating dogs from Cuba, the Haitians had the best ally of all: Disease, specifically in the form of Yellow Fever, which killed thousands of French soldiers, including Leclerc himself.

Oh, it's time for the Open Letter?

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Stan! Where is my chair? Stan, you're telling me the yellow chair has been lost? The yellow chair is the star of the show. The stars, in order, are 1. me, 2. yellow chair, 3. the chalkboard, 4. Danica, 5. Meredith the Intern, 6. you, Stan. You're sixth. Oh, I'm mad. Let's see what's in the secret compartment today. It's a giant squid of anger!!! I'M A GIANT SQUID OF ANGER!!!! Oh, no. It broke.

An open letter to disease. Dear disease, why do you always put yourself at the center of human history?

Most of you are just tiny, little single-celled organisms, but you're so self-important and self-involved that you're always interfering with us. Admittedly, sometimes you work for the good guys, but usually you don't. It seems like even though you're constantly interfering with human history, you don't even care about it.

I just hate when people, and also microbes, are super self-involved. Like, don't tell me you gotta take a day off to go to your mom's birthday party, Stan. That's not imagining me complexly. I've got needs over here.

Best wishes, John Green.

So continued defeat and the death of his troops eventually convinced Napoleon to give up his dreams of an American empire and cut his losses. He recalled his surviving troops, of the 40,000 who left, only 8,000 made it back. And then, he sold Thomas Jefferson Louisiana. And that is how former slaves in Haiti gave America all of this.

On January 1, 1804, Dessalines who had defeated the French, declared the island of Saint-Domingue independent and re-named it Haiti, which is what the island had been called by the native inhabitants before the arrival of Columbus. The Haitian Declaration of Independence was a rejection of France and, to a certain degree of European racism and colonialism.

It also affirmed, to quote from the book *Slave Revolution in the Caribbean*, “a broad definition of the new country as a refuge for enslaved peoples of all kinds.” So, why is this little island so important that we would devote an entire episode to it? First, Haiti was the second free and independent nation state in the Americas. It also had one of the most successful slave revolts ever. Haiti became the first modern nation to be governed by people of African descent, and they also foiled Napoleon's attempts to build a big new world empire.

Of course, Haiti's history since its revolution has been marred by tragedy, a legacy of the loss of life that accompanied the revolution. I mean, 150,000 people died in 1802 and 1803 alone. But the Haitian revolutions matter. They matter because the Haitians, more than any other people in the age of revolutions, stood up for the idea that none should be slaves, that the people who most need the protection of a government should be afforded that protection. Haiti stood up for the weak when the rest of the world failed to. The next time you read about Haiti's poverty, remember that.

### **Latin American Revolutions: Crash Course World History #31**

Hi, I'm John Green, this is Crash Course World History, and today things are going to get a little bit confusing, because we're going to talk about revolution and independence in Latin America.

It's a bit confusing because:

1. Latin America is big,
2. It's very diverse,
3. Napoleon makes everything complicated, and
4. As we've seen in the past, sometimes revolutions turn out not to be not that revolutionary.

Witness, for instance, the New England Revolution, who instead of, like, trying to form new and better governments are always just kicking balls around like all the other soccer teams.

Right, so before independence, Latin American society was characterized by three institutions that exercised control over the population.

The first was the Spanish Crown, or if you are Brazilian, the Portuguese crown. So, as far as Spain was concerned, the job of the colonies was to produce revenue in the form of a 20% tax on everything that was called “the royal



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fifth.” So government administration was pervasive and relatively efficient - because it had to be in order to collect its royal fifth.

Then there was the Catholic Church. Even more than royal officials, the church exercised influence over people's everyday lives. I mean, the church even controlled time – the church bells tolled out the hours and they mandated a seven day work week so that people could go to church on Sunday.

And finally, there was patriarchy. In Latin America, like much of the world, husbands had complete control over their wives and any extra-or-pre-marital skoodilypooping was severely punished. I mean, when it was the women doing the illicit skoodilypooping. Men could basically get up to whatever. This was mainly about property rights because illegitimate children could inherit their father's property, but it was constructed to be about, you know, purity.

To get a sense of how patriarchy shaped Latin American lives, take a gander at Sor Juana Ines de la Cruz, whose name I'm actually abbreviating. A child prodigy who spoke five languages by the age of 16, de la Cruz wanted to disguise herself as a boy so she could attend University, but she was forbidden to do so. Still, she wrote plays and poetry, she studied math and natural science, and for being one of the leading minds of the 17th century, she was widely attacked, and eventually forced to abandon her work and sell all 4,000 of her books. That's a shame because she had a great mind, once writing that “Aristotle would have written more if he had done any cooking.”

Couple other things:

First, Latin America led the world in transculturation, or Cultural Blending.

A new and distinct Latin American culture emerged mixing:

1. Whites from Spain called Peninsulares,
2. Whites born in the Americas called creoles,
3. Native Americans, and
4. African slaves.

This blending of cultures may be most obvious when looking at Native American and African influences on Christianity. The Virgin of Guadalupe, for instance, was still called Tonantzin, the indigenous earth goddess, by Indians, and the profusion of blood in Mexican iconography recalls the Aztec use of blood in ritual. But transculturation pervaded Latin American life, from food to secular music to fashion.

Somewhat related: Latin America had a great deal of racial diversity and a rigid social hierarchy to match. There were four basic racial categories: white, black, mestizo – a mix of white and American Indian - and mulatto, a mix of white and black. We try not to use that word anymore because it's offensive, but that's the word they used.

And from the 16th century on, Latin America had a huge diversity of mixed race people, and there were constant attempts to classify them and divide them into castes. You can see some of these in so called casta paintings, which attempted to establish in a very weird and Enlightenment-y way all the possible racial combinations.

But of course that's not how race works, as evidenced by the fact that successful people of lower racial castes could become “legally white” by being granted *gracias al sacar*.

So by 1800, on the eve of Latin America's independence movements, roughly a quarter of people were mixed race.

All right, now let's have us some revolutions. How shall we organize this, Stan? Let's begin with Latin America's most successful country as defined by quality of soccer team.

So Brazil - he said as thousands of Argentinians booed him - is obviously different because it was ruled, not by Spain, but by Portugal. But like a lot of revolutions in Latin America, it was fairly conservative. The creoles wanted to maintain their privilege while also achieving independence from the Peninsulares.

And also like a lot of Latin American revolutions, it featured Napoleon. Freaking Napoleon. You're everywhere. He's behind me, isn't he? Gah! So when Napoleon took over Portugal in 1807, the entire Portuguese royal family and their royal court decamped to Brazil. And it turned out, they loved Brazil. King Joao loved Brazil so much...

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Off topic, but do you think that J-Woww named herself after King Joao? I mean, does she have that kind of historical sensibility? I think she does.

So King Joao's life in Rio was so good that even after Napoleon was defeated at the Battle of Waterloo, he just kind of stayed in Brazil. And then, by 1820, the Portuguese in Portugal were like, "Hey, maybe you should come back and, like, you know, govern us, King of Portugal."

So in 1821, he reluctantly returned to Lisbon, leaving his son Prince Pedro behind. Meanwhile, Brazilian creoles were organizing themselves around the idea that they were culturally different from Portugal, and they eventually formed a Brazilian Party - no, Stan, not that kind of party, come on - yes, that kind - a Brazilian party to lobby for independence. Then in 1822, they convinced Prince Pedro of boring, old Portugal that he should just become King Pedro of sexy, big Brazil. So Pedro declared Brazil an independent constitutional monarchy with himself as king.

As a result, Brazil achieved independence without much bloodshed and managed to hold on to that social hierarchy with the plantation owners on top. And that explains why Brazil was the last new world country to abolish slavery, not fully abandoning it until 1888.

Right, so even when Napoleon wasn't forcing Portuguese royals into an awesome exile, he was still messing with Latin America.

Let's go to the Thought Bubble.

So Latin America's independence movements began not with Brazil, but in Mexico when Napoleon put his brother on the Spanish throne in 1808. Napoleon wanted to institute the liberal principles of the French Revolution, which angered the ruling elite of the Peninsulares in what was then called New Spain. They were aristocrats and they just wanted to go back to some good old-fashioned divine right monarchy with a strong church. So the Mexican Creoles, seeking to expand their own power at the expense of the Peninsular elite saw an opportunity here. They affirmed their loyalty to the new king, who was French even though he was the king of Spain. I told you this was complicated.

Then, a massive peasant uprising began, led by a renegade priest Padre Hidalgo, and supported by the Creoles because it was aimed at the Peninsulares, even though they weren't actually the ones who supported Spain. This was further complicated by the fact that to the mestizo peasants led by Hidalgo, Creoles and Peninsulares looked and acted basically identical - they were both white and imperious - so the peasants often attacked the Creoles, who were technically on their side in trying to overthrow the ruling peninsulares. Even though it had tens of thousands of supporters, this first peasant uprising petered out.

But, a second peasant revolt, led by another priest, Father Morelos, was much more revolutionary. In 1813, he declared independence and the revolt lasted until his death in 1815. But since he was a mestizo, he didn't gain much Creole support, so revolutionary fervor in Mexico began to fade... until 1820, when Spain, which was now under the rule of a Spanish, rather than a French king, had a REAL liberal revolution with a new constitution that limited the power of the church.

Thanks, Thought Bubble.

So, in the wake of Spain's liberalizing movements, the Mexican elites, who had previously supported Spain, switched sides and made common cause with the creoles in the hopes that they could somehow hold onto their privileges. And pushing for independence together, things went very well. The Creole general Iturbide and the rebel mestizo commander Guerrero joined forces and won independence with most of the Peninsulares returning to Spain.

Iturbide – the whiter of the two generals – became king of Mexico in 1822 (remember, this was a revolution essentially AGAINST representative government). But that didn't work out and within a year he was overthrown by the military and a republic was declared.

Popular sovereignty was sort of victorious, but without much benefit to the peasants who actually made independence possible. This alliance between conservative landowning elites and the army - especially in the face of calls for land reform or economic justice - would happen over and over again in Latin America for the next century and a half. But before we come to any conclusions, let's discuss one last revolution.

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So Venezuela had a cadre of well-trained creole revolutionaries, who by 1811 had formed a revolutionary junta that seized power in Caracas and formed a republic. But, the interior of Venezuela was home to mixed-race cowboys called Llaneros who supported the king. They kept the Caracas revolutionaries from extending their power inland.

And that, is where Simon Bolivar, “el Libertador,” enters the picture. Bolivar realized that the only way to overcome the various class divisions (like the one between the Caracas creoles and Llaneros) was to appeal to a common sense of South American-ness. I mean, after all, the one thing that almost all South Americans had in common: they were born in South America, NOT SPAIN.

So then, partly through shows of toughness that included, like, crossing flooded plains and going without sleep, Bolivar convinced the Llaneros to give up fighting for Spain and start fighting against them. He quickly captured the viceregal capital at Bogota and by 1822 his forces had taken Caracas and Quito.

Hold on, hold on. Lest I be attacked by Argentinians who are already upset about what I said about their really good soccer team, I want to make one thing clear: Argentina’s general Jose de San Martin was also vital to the defeat of the Spanish. He led an expeditions against the Spanish in Chile and also a really important one in Lima.

And then, in December of 1824, at the battle of Ayacucho, the last Spanish viceroy was finally captured and all of Latin America was free from Spain. Oh, it’s time for the open letter? That’s A chair, Stan, but it’s not THE chair.

An Open Letter to Simón Bolívar. But first, let’s see what’s in the secret compartment today. Oh, Llanero. I wonder if his hips swivel when I wind him up. Context is everything. They do! Hey there, cowboy.

Dear Simón Bolívar,

First, you had fantastic muttonchops. It’s as if you’re some kind of handsome Martin Van Buren. You were a man of immense accomplishments, but those accomplishments have been richly rewarded. I mean, you have a country named after you. Not to mention, two different currencies.

But for my purposes, the most important thing you ever did was die. You may not know this, Simón Bolívar, but when I’m not a world history teacher sitting next to a fake fireplace, I am a novelist. And your last words, “Damn it, how will I ever get out of this labyrinth,” feature prominently in my first novel,

Looking for Alaska. Except it turns out, those weren’t your last words!

Your last words were probably, “Jose, bring the luggage.” But I decided to use your fancy, romantic, inaccurate last words. It’s called artistic license. Put that in your luggage.

Anyway, fantastic life; I just wish you’d nailed it a little bit better with your last words.

Best wishes, John Green.

So by 1825, almost the entire western hemisphere – with a few exceptions in the Caribbean - was free from European rule. Oh, right. And Canada. I’m just kidding, Canadians. It’s so easy to make fun of you because you’re so nice. So I tease you and then you’re like, “Aw, thanks for noticing that we exist.” It’s my pleasure!

Anyway, this is pretty remarkable, especially when you consider that most of this territory had been under Spanish or Portuguese control for almost 300 years. The most revolutionary thing about these independence movements were that they enshrined the idea of so called popular sovereignty in the New World. Never again would Latin America be under the permanent control of a European power, and the relatively quick division of Latin America into individual states, despite Bolivar’s pan South American dream, showed how quickly the people in these regions developed a sense of themselves as nations distinct from Europe, and from each other.

This division into nation states prefigures what would happen to Europe in the mid-19th century, and in that sense, Latin America is the leader of 19th century world history. And Latin American history presages another key theme in modern life - multiculturalism.

And all of that makes Latin America sound very modern, but in a number of ways, Latin American independence wasn’t terribly revolutionary. First, while the Peninsulares were gone, the rigid social hierarchy, with the wealthy creoles at the top, remained. Second, whereas revolutions in both France and America weakened the power of the established church, in Latin America, the Catholic Church remained very powerful in people’s everyday lives.

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And then, there is the patriarchy. Although there were many women who took up arms in the struggle for independence, including Juana Azurduy who led a cavalry charge against Spanish forces in Bolivia, patriarchy remained strong in Latin America. Feminist ideas like those of Mary Wollstonecraft would have to wait. Women weren't allowed to vote in national elections in Mexico until 1953. And Peru didn't extend voting rights to women until 1955.

Also, Latin America's revolutionary wars were long and bloody: 425,000 people died in Mexico's war for independence. And they didn't always lead to stability: Venezuela, for instance, experienced war for much of the 19th century, leading to as many as a million deaths.

And it's important to note that fighting for freedom doesn't always lead to freedom; the past two centuries in Latin America have seen many military dictatorships that protect private property at the expense of egalitarian governance.

"Freedom," "independence," and "autonomy" are complicated terms that mean different things to different people at different times. So too with the word "revolutionary."

### **Coal, Steam, and The Industrial Revolution: Crash Course World History #32**

Hi, I'm John Green; this is Crash Course World History, and today we're going to discuss the series of events that made it possible for you to watch Crash Course. And also made this studio possible. And made the warehouse containing the studio possible. A warehouse, by the way, that houses stuff for warehouses. That's right, it's time to talk about the Industrial Revolution.

Although it occurred around the same time as the French, American, Latin American, and Haitian Revolutions - between, say, 1750 and 1850 - the industrial revolution was really the most revolutionary of the bunch.

Me from the past: No way, dude. All those other revolutions resulted in, like, new borders and flags and stuff.

We've studied 15,000 years of history here at Crash Course, Me from the Past. And borders and flags have changed plenty, and they're going to keep changing. But in all that time, nothing much changed about the way we disposed of waste or located drinking water or acquired clothing. Most people lived on or very close to the land that provided their food.

Except for a few exceptions, life expectancy never rose above 35 or below 25. Education was a privilege, not a right. In all those millennia, we never developed a weapon that could kill more than a couple dozen people at once, or a way to travel faster than horseback. For 15,000 years, most humans never owned or used a single item made outside of their communities. Simon Bolivar didn't change that and neither did the American Declaration of Independence.

You have electricity? Industrial Revolution. Blueberries in February? Industrial Revolution. You live somewhere other than a farm? Industrial Revolution. You drive a car? Industrial Revolution. You get twelve years of free, formal education? Industrial Revolution. Your bed, your antibiotics, your toilet, your contraception, your tap water, your every waking and sleeping second: Industrial Revolution.

Here's one simple statistic that sums it up: Before the industrial revolution, about 80% of the world's population was engaged in farming to keep itself and the other 20% of people from starving. Today, in the United States, less than 1% of people list their occupation as farming.

I mean, we've come so far that we don't even have to farm flowers anymore. Stan, are these real, by the way? I can't tell if they're made out of foam or digital. So what happened? TECHNOLOGY! Here's my definition:

The Industrial Revolution was an increase in production brought about by the use of machines and characterized by the use of new energy sources. Although this will soon get more complicated, for our purposes today, industrialization is NOT capitalism - although, as we will see next week, it is connected to modern capitalism. And, the industrial revolution began around 1750 and it occurred across most of the earth, but it started in Europe, especially Britain. What happened?

Well, let's go to the Thought Bubble.

The innovations of the Industrial Revolution were intimately interconnected. Like, look, for instance, at the British textile industry: The invention of the flying shuttle by John Kay in 1733 dramatically increased the speed of

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weaving, which in turn created demand for yarn, which led to inventions like the Spinning Jenny and the water frame. Soon these processes were mechanized using water power, until the steam engine came along to make flying shuttles really fly in these huge cotton mills.

The most successful steam engine was built by Thomas “They Didn’t Name Anything After Me” Newcomen to clear water out of mines. And because water was cleared out of those mines, there was more coal to power more steam engines, which eventually led to the fancying up of the Newcomen Steam Engine by James “I Got a Unit of Power and a University Named After Me” Watt, whose engine made possible not only railroads and steamboats but also ever-more-efficient cotton mills.

And, for the first time, chemicals other than stale urine, I wish I was kidding, were being used to bleach the cloth that people wore - the first of which was sulfuric acid, which was created in large quantities only thanks to lead-lined chambers, which would’ve been impossible without lead production rising dramatically right around 1750 in Britain, thanks to lead foundries powered by coal.

And all these factors came together to make more yarn that could be spun and bleached faster and cheaper than ever before, a process that would eventually culminate in \$18 Crash Course Mongols shirts. Available now at DFTBA.com. Thanks, Thought Bubble, for that shameless promotion of our beautiful, high-quality t-shirts available now at DFTBA.com.

So, the problem here is that with industrialization being so deeply interconnected, it’s really difficult to figure out why it happened in Europe, especially Britain. And that question of why turns out to be one of the more contentious discussions in world history today.

For instance, here are some Eurocentric reasons why industrialization might have happened first in Europe: There’s the cultural superiority argument that basically holds that Europeans are just better and smarter than other people. Sometimes this is formulated as Europeans possessing superior rationality. By the way, you’ll never guess where the people who make this argument tend to come from - unless you guessed that they come from Europe.

And then, others argue that only Europe had the culture of science and invention that made the creation of these revolutionary technologies possible. Another argument is that freer political institutions encouraged innovation and strong property rights created incentives for inventors.

And, finally, people often cite Europe’s small population because small populations require labor-saving inventions. Oh, it’s time for the Open Letter?

An Open Letter to the Steam Engine. But first, let’s see what’s in the secret compartment today. Oh, it’s a TARDIS. Truly the apex of British industrialization.

Dear Steam Engine,

You know what’s crazy? You’ve really never been improved upon. Like this thing, which facilitates time travel, probably runs on a steam engine. Almost all electricity around the world, whether it’s from coal or nuclear power, is just a steam engine.

It’s all still just water and heat, and it speaks to how truly revolutionary the Industrial Revolution was that since then, it’s really just been evolution.

Best Wishes, John Green

So, you may have heard any of those rationales for European industrialization, or you may have heard others. The problem with all of them, is that each time you think you’re at the root cause it turns out there’s a cause of the root cause. To quote Leonardo DiCaprio, James Cameron, and coal mine operators, “We have to go deeper.”

But, anyway, the problem with these Eurocentric why answers, is that they all apply to either China or India or both. And it’s really important to note that in 1800, it was not clear that Europe was going to become the world’s dominant manufacturing power in the next hundred years. At the time, China, India, and Europe were all roughly at the same place in terms of industrial production.

First, let’s look at China. It’s hard to make the European cultural superiority argument because China had been recording its history since before Confucius, and plus there was all that bronze and painting and poetry.

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It's also kind of difficult to make a blanket statement that China was economically inferior to Europe, since they invented paper money and led the world in exports of everything from silk to china. I mean, pre-Industrial Revolution, population growth was the surest sign of economic success, and China had the biggest population in the world. I guess that answers the question of whether they're digital.

It's also difficult to say that China lacked a culture of invention when they invented gunpowder, and printing, and paper, and arguably compasses. And China had more free enterprise during the Song dynasty than anywhere in the world.

Some argue that China couldn't have free enterprise because they had a long history of trying to impose monopolies on items like salt and iron. And that's true, but when it comes to enforcing those monopolies, they also had a long history of failure. So really, in a lot of ways, China was at least as primed for an Industrial Revolution as Britain was.

So, why didn't it happen? Well, Europeans - specifically the British - had two huge advantages: First, Coal. When you trace the story of improved transportation, or communication, or industrial efficiency, or better chemical manufacturing, it always comes back to coal, because the Industrial Revolution was all about using different forms of energy to automate production.

And, England had large supplies of coal that were near the surface, which meant that it was cheap to mine, so it quickly replaced wood for heating and cooking and stuff. So that encouraged the British to look for more coal. The only problem with coal mining, aside from it being, you know, like, deadly and everything, is that the coal mines flooded all the time. I guess coal mining is also a little problematic for, like, the health of, you know, like, the planet.

But, because there was all this incentive to get more coal out of the ground, steam engines were invented to pump water out of the mines. And because those early steam engines were super inefficient, they needed a cheap and abundant source of fuel in order to work - namely, coal, which meant they were much more useful to the British than anyone else. So steam engines used cheap British coal to keep British coal cheap, and cheap British coal created the opportunity for everything from railroads to steel, which like so much else in the Industrial Revolution, created a positive feedback loop. Because they run on rails, railroads need steel. And because it is rather heavy, steel needs railroads.

Secondly, there were Wages. Britain (and to a lesser extent the Low Countries) had the highest wages in the world at the beginning of the 18th century. In 1725, wages in London were the equivalent of 11 grams of silver per day. In Amsterdam, they were 9 grams. In Beijing, Venice, and Florence, they were under 4. And in Delhi, they were under 2.

It's not totally clear why wages were so high in Britain. Like, one argument is that the Black Death lowered population so much that it tightened labor markets, but that doesn't explain why wages remained low in, like, plague-ravaged Italy. Mainly, high wages combined with cheap fuel costs meant that it was economically efficient for manufacturers to look to machines as a way of lowering their production costs. To quote the historian Robert Allen: "Wages were high and energy was cheap. These prices led directly to the industrial revolution by giving firms strong incentives to invent technologies that substituted capital and coal for labor."

Ugh, Stan, I'm a little worried that people are still going to accuse me of Eurocentrism. Of course, other people will accuse me of an anti-European bias. I don't have a bias against Europe. I love Europe. Europe gave me many of my favorite cheeses and cross-country skiing and Charlie Chaplin, who inspired today's Danica drawing.

Like, the fact of coal being near the surface in Britain can't be chalked up to British cultural superiority. But the wages question is a little different because it makes it sound like only Europeans were smart enough to pay high wages.

But here's one last thing to consider: India was the world's largest producer of cotton textiles, despite paying basically the lowest wages in the world. Indian agriculture was so productive that laborers could be supported at a very low cost. And that, coupled with a large population, meant that Indian textile manufacturing could be very productive without using machines, so they didn't need to industrialize.

But more importantly from our perspective, there's a strong argument to be made that Indian cotton production helped spur British industrialization. It was cotton textiles that drove the early Industrial Revolution, and the main

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reason that Britain was so eager to produce cottons was that demand was incredibly high. They were more comfortable than woolens, but they were also cheaper, because cottons could be imported from India at such a low cost.

So, Indian cottons created the market and then British manufacturers invested in machines (and imported Indian know-how) to increase production so that they could compete with India. And that's at least one way in which European industrialization was truly a world phenomenon. For those of you who enjoy such highly contentious and thorny, cultural historical debates, good news. Next week, we'll be talking about capitalism.

### **Capitalism and Socialism: Crash Course World History #33**

Hi, I'm John Green, this is Crash Course World History, and today we're going to talk about capitalism.

Yeah, Mr. Green, capitalism just turns men into wolves. Your purportedly free markets only makes slave of us all.

Oh god Stan, it's me from college. Me from the past has become me from college. This is a disaster! The reason he's so unbearable, Stan, is that he refuses to recognize the legitimacy of other people's narratives. And that means that he will never ever be able to have a productive conversation with another human in his entire life.

So listen, me from the past. I'm gonna disappoint you by being too capitalist. And I'm gonna disappoint a lot of other people by not being capitalist enough. And I'm gonna disappoint the historians by not using enough jargon. But what can I do? We only have twelve minutes! Fortunately, capitalism is all about efficiency.

So let's do this, me from college: Randy [Ransom] Riggs becomes a best-selling author, Josh Radnor stars in a great sitcom, it is NOT going to work out with Emily, and do NOT go to Alaska with a girl you've known for ten days. Okay, let's talk capitalism.

So capitalism is an economic system, but it's also a cultural system. It's characterized by innovation and investment to increase wealth. But today, we're going to focus on production and how industrial capitalism changed it. Stan, I can't wear these emblems of the bourgeoisie while Karl Marx himself is looking at me, it's ridiculous.

I'm changing! Very hard to take off a shirt dramatically.

So let's say it's 1200 CE and you're a rug merchant. Just like merchants today, you sometimes need to borrow money in order to buy the rugs you want to resell at a profit, and then you pay that money back, often with interest, once you've resold the rugs. This is called mercantile capitalism, and it was a global phenomenon, from the Chinese, to the Indian Ocean trade network, to Muslim merchants who would sponsor trade caravans across the Sahara.

But by the 17th century, merchants in the Netherlands and in Britain had expanded upon this idea to create joint stock companies. Those companies could finance bigger trade missions and also spread the risk of international trade. But the thing about international trade is that sometimes boats sink or they get taken by pirates, and while that's bad if you're a sailor because, you know, you lose your life, it's really bad if you're a mercantile capitalist because you lost all your money. But if you own one-tenth of ten boats, your risk is much better managed. That kind of investment definitely increased wealth, but it only affected a sliver of the population and it didn't create a culture of capitalism.

Industrial capitalism was something altogether different, both in scale and in practice. Let's use Joyce Appleby's definition of industrial capitalism: "An economic system that relies on investment of capital in machines and technology that are used to increase production of marketable goods."

So imagine that someone made a Stan machine (by the way Stan, this is a remarkable likeness) and that Stan machine could produce and direct 10 times more episodes of Crash Course than a human Stan. Well, of course, even if there are upfront costs I'm going to invest in a Stan machine so I can start cranking out 10 times the knowledge - Stan, are you focusing on the robot instead of me? I AM THE STAR OF THE SHOW. Stanbot, you're going behind the globe.

So when most of us think about capitalism, especially when we think about its downsides - long hours, low wages, miserable working conditions, child labor, unemployed Stans - that's what we're thinking about. Now admittedly, this is just one definition of industrial capitalism among many, but it's the definition we're going with.

All right, let's go to the Thought Bubble.

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Industrial capitalism developed first in Britain in the 19th century. Britain had a bunch of advantages - it was the dominant power on the seas, and it was making good money off its trade with its colonies, including the slave trade; also, the growth of capitalism was helped by the half-century of civil unrest that resulted from the 17th century English Civil War.

Now, I'm not advocating for civil wars or anything but in this particular case it was useful because before the war, the British crown had put a lot of regulations on the economy: complicated licenses, royal monopolies, etc. But during the turmoil it couldn't enforce them, which made for freer markets.

Another factor was a remarkable increase in agricultural productivity in the 16th century. As food prices started to rise, it became profitable for farmers, both large and small, to invest in agricultural technologies that would improve crop yields. Those higher prices for grain probably resulted from population growth, which in turn was encouraged by increased production of food crops.

A number of these agricultural improvements came from the Dutch, who had chronic problems feeding themselves, and discovered that planting different kinds of crops, like clover, that added nitrogen to the soil and could be used to feed livestock at the same time, meant that more fields could be used at once. This increased productivity, eventually brought down prices, and this encouraged further innovation in order to increase yield to make up for the drop in prices.

Lower food prices had an added benefit: since food cost less and wages in England remained high, workers would have more disposable income, which meant that if there were consumer goods available, they would be consumed, which incentivized people to make consumer goods more efficiently, and therefore more cheaply. You can see how this positive feedback loop leads to more food, and more stuff, culminating in a world where people have so much stuff that we must rent space to store it, and so much food that obesity has become a bigger killer than starvation.

Thanks, Thought Bubble.

So this increased productivity also meant that fewer people needed to work in agriculture in order to feed the population. To put this in perspective, in 1520, 80% of the English population worked the land. By 1800, only 36% of adult male laborers were working in agriculture, and by 1850, that percentage had dropped to 25.

This meant that when the factories started humming, there were plenty of workers to hum along with them. Especially child laborers. So far all this sounds pretty good, right? I mean, except for the child labor - who wouldn't want more, cheaper food? Yeah, well, not so fast.

One of the ways the British achieved all this agricultural productivity was through the process of enclosure, whereby landlords would reclaim and privatize fields that for centuries had been held in common by multiple tenants. This increased agricultural productivity, but it also impoverished many tenant farmers, many of whom lost their livelihoods.

Okay, for our purposes capitalism is also a cultural system, rooted in the need of private investors to turn a profit. So the real change needed here was a change of mind. People had to develop the capitalist values of taking risks and appreciating innovation. And they had to come to believe that making an upfront investment in something like a Stan Machine could pay for itself and then some.

One of the reasons that these values developed in Britain was that the people who initially held them were really good at publicizing them. Writers like Thomas Mun, who worked for the English East India Company, exposed people to the idea that the economy was controlled by markets. And other writers popularized the idea that it was human nature for individuals to participate in markets as rational actors.

Even our language changed: the word "individuals" did not apply to persons until the 17th century. And in the 18th century, a "career" still referred only to horses' racing lives.

Perhaps the most important idea that was popularized in England was that men and women were consumers as well as producers and that this was actually a good thing because the desire to consume manufactured goods could spur economic growth. "The main spur to trade, or rather to industry and ingenuity, is the exorbitant appetite of men, which they will take pain to gratify," so wrote John Cary, one of capitalism's cheerleaders, in 1695, and in talking about our appetite, he wasn't just talking about food. That doesn't seem radical now, but it sure did back then.



## Crash Course World History – Video Transcript

So here in the 21st century it's clear that industrial capitalism - at least for now - has won. [Aside to Marx] Sorry buddy, but you know, you gave it a good run. You didn't know about Stalin.

But capitalism isn't without its problems, or its critics, and there were certainly lots of shortcomings to industrial capitalism in the 19th century. Working conditions were awful. Days were long, arduous, and monotonous. Workers lived in conditions that people living in the developed world today would associate with abject poverty. One way that workers responded to these conditions was by organizing into labor unions. Another response was in many cases purely theoretical: socialism, most famously Marxian socialism.

I should probably point out here that socialism is an imperfect opposite to capitalism, even though the two are often juxtaposed. Capitalism's defenders like to point out that it's "natural," meaning that if left to our own devices, humans would construct economic relationships that resemble capitalism. Socialism, at least in its modern incarnations, makes fewer pretenses towards being an expression of human nature; it's the result of human choice and human planning.

So, socialism, as an intellectual construct, began in France. How'd I do, Stan? Mm, in the border between Egypt and Libya.

There were two branches of socialism in France, Utopian and revolutionary. Utopian socialism is often associated with Comte de Saint Simon and Charles Fourier, both of whom rejected revolutionary action after having seen the disaster of the French Revolution.

Both were critical of capitalism and while Fourier is usually a punchline in history classes because he believed that, in his ideal socialist world, the seas would turn to lemonade, he was right that human beings have desires that go beyond basic self interest, and that we aren't always economically rational actors.

The other French socialists were the revolutionaries, and they saw the French Revolution, even its violence, in a much more positive light. The most important of these revolutionaries was Auguste Blanqui, and we associate a lot of his ideas with communism, which is a term that he used. Like the Utopians, he criticized capitalism, but he believed that it could only be overthrown through violent revolution by the working classes.

However, while Blanqui thought that the workers would come to dominate a communist world, he was an elitist. And he believed that workers on their own could never, on their own, overcome their superstitions and their prejudices in order to throw off bourgeois oppression.

And that brings us to Karl Marx, whose ideas and beard cast a shadow over most of the 20th century. Oh, it's time for the Open Letter? An Open Letter to Karl Marx's Beard.

But, first, let's see what's in the secret compartment today. Oh, robots. Stan Bots! Two Stan Bots, one of them female! Now I own all the means of production. You're officially useless to me, Stan. Now, turn the camera off. Turn the ca-- I'm going to have to get up and turn the camera off? Stan Bot, go turn the camera off.

Hey there, Karl Marx's beard.

Wow, you are intense. Karl Marx, these days there are a lot of young men who think beards are cool. Beard lovers, if you will. Those aren't beards, those are glorified milk mustaches. I mean, I haven't shaved for a couple weeks, Karl Marx, but I'm not claiming a beard.

You don't get a beard by being lazy, you get a beard by being a committed revolutionary. That's why hardcore Marxists are literally known as "Bearded Marxists." These days, that's an insult. But you know what, Karl Marx, when I look back at history, I prefer the bearded communists. Let's talk about some communists who didn't have beards: Mao Zedong, Pol Pot, Kim Jong-il, Joseph freakin' Stalin with his face caterpillar.

So, yeah, Karl Marx's beard, it's my great regret to inform you that there are some paltry beards trying to take up the class struggle these days.

Best Wishes, John Green

Although he's often considered the father of communism, because he co-wrote The Communist Manifesto, Marx was above all a philosopher and a historian. It's just that, unlike many philosophers and historians, he advocated for revolution.

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His greatest work, *Das Kapital*, sets out to explain the world of the 19th century in historical and philosophical terms. Marx's thinking is deep and dense and we're low on time, but I want to introduce one of his ideas, that of class struggle.

So, for Marx, the focus isn't on the class, it's on the struggle. Basically Marx believed that classes don't only struggle to make history, but that the struggle is what makes classes into themselves. The idea is that through conflict, classes develop a sense of themselves, and without conflict, there is no such thing as class consciousness.

So, Marx was writing in 19th century England and there were two classes that mattered: the workers and the capitalists. The capitalists owned most of the factors of production (in this case, land and the capital to invest in factories). The workers just had their labor. So, the class struggle here is between capitalists, who want labor at the lowest possible price, and the workers who want to be paid as much as possible for their work.

There are two key ideas that underlie this theory of class struggle. First, Marx believed that "production," or work, was the thing that gave life material meaning. Second, is that we are by nature social animals. We work together, we collaborate, we are more efficient when we share resources.

Marx's criticism of capitalism is that capitalism replaces this egalitarian collaboration with conflict. And that means that it isn't a natural system after all. And by arguing that capitalism actually isn't consistent with human nature, Marx sought to empower the workers.

That's a lot more attractive than Blanqui's elitist socialism, and while purportedly Marxist states like the USSR usually abandon worker empowerment pretty quickly, the idea of protecting our collective interest remains powerful. That's where we'll have to leave it for now, lest I start reading from *The Communist Manifesto*.

But, ultimately socialism has not succeeded in supplanting capitalism, as its proponents had hoped. In the United States, at least, "socialism" has become something of a dirty word.

So, industrial capitalism certainly seems to have won out, and in terms of material well-being and access to goods and services for people around the world, that's probably a good thing.

Ugh, you keep falling over. You're a great bit, but a very flimsy one. Actually, come to think of it, you're more of an 8-bit.

But how and to what extent we use socialist principles to regulate free markets remains an open question, and one that is answered very differently in, say, Sweden than in the United States. And this, I would argue, is where Marx still matters.

Is capitalist competition natural and good, or should there be systems in place to check it for the sake of our collective well-being? Should we band together to provide health care for the sick, or pensions for the old? Should government run businesses, and if so, which ones? The mail delivery business? The airport security business? The education business? Those are the places where industrial capitalism and socialism are still competing. And in that sense, at least, the struggle continues.

### **Imperialism: Crash Course World History #35**

Hi, I'm John Green, this is CrashCourse World History, and today we're gonna discuss 19th century imperialism. So the 19th century certainly didn't invent the empire, but it did take it to new heights, by which we mean lows, or possibly heights, I dunno, I can't decide, roll the intro while I think about it.

Yeah, I don't know, I'm still undecided. Let's begin with China! When last we checked in, China was a thriving manufacturing power, about to be overtaken by Europe, but still heavily involved in world trade, especially an importer of silver from the Spanish empire.

Europeans had to use silver because they didn't really produce anything else the Chinese wanted, and that state of affairs continued through the 18th century. For example, in 1793, the Macartney Mission tried to get better trade conditions with China and was a total failure.

Here's the Qianlong Emperor's well known response to the British: "Hither to all European nations including your own country's barbarian merchants have carried on their trade with our celestial empire at Canton. Such has been the

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procedure for many years, although our celestial empire possesses all things in prolific abundance and lacks no product within its own borders."

But then Europeans, especially the British, found something that the Chinese would buy: opium. By the 1830's, British free trade policy unleashed a flood of opium in China, which threatened China's favorable balance of trade. It also created a lot of drug addicts.

And then in 1839 the Chinese responded to what they saw as these unfair trade practices with...a stern letter that they never actually sent. Commissioner Lin Zexu drafted a response that contained a memorable threat to "cut off trade in rhubarb, silk, and tea, all valuable products of ours without which foreigners could not live."

But even if the British had received this terrifying threat to their precious rhubarb supply, they probably wouldn't have responded because selling drugs is super lucrative.

So the Chinese made like tea partiers, confiscating a bunch of British opium and chucking it into the sea. And then the British responded to this by demanding compensation, and access to Chinese territory where they could carry out their trade.

And then the Chinese were like, "Man that seems a little bit harsh," whereupon the British sent in gunships, opening trade with Canton by force.

Chinese General Yijiang made a counter attack in 1842 that included a detailed plan to catapult flaming monkeys onto British ships. Stan, is that true?

All right, apparently the plans actually involved strapping fireworks to monkeys' backs and were never carried out, but still!

Slightly off topic: obviously I don't want anyone to light monkeys on fire. I'm just saying that flaming monkeys lend themselves to a lot of great band names, like the Sizzling Simians, Burning Bonobos, Immolated Marmoset...Stan, sometimes I feel like I should give up teaching world history and just become a band name generator. That's my real gift.

Anyway, due to lack of monkey fireworks, the Chinese counterattacks were unsuccessful, and they eventually signed the treaty of Nanjing, which stated that Britain got Hong Kong and five other treaty ports, as well as the equivalent of two billion dollars in cash. Also, the Chinese basically gave up all sovereignty to European spheres of influence, wherein Europeans were subject to their laws, not Chinese laws.

In exchange for all of this, China got a hot slice of nothing. You might think the result of this war would be a shift in the balance of trade in Britain's favor, but that wasn't immediately the case. In fact, the British were importing so much tea from China that the trade deficit actually rose more than 30 billion dollars.

But eventually after another war and one of the most destructive civil rebellions in Chinese and possibly world history, the Taiping Rebellion, the situation was reversed, and Europeans, especially the British, became the dominant economic power in China.

Okay. So but when we think about the 19th century imperialism, we usually think about the way that Europe turned Africa from this [map] into this [map], the so-called scramble for Africa. Speaking of scrambles and the European colonization of Africa, you know what they say--sometimes to make an omelette, you have to break a few eggs. And sometimes, you break a lot of eggs and you don't get an omelette.

Europeans have been involved in Africa since the 16th century, when the Portuguese used their cannons to take control of cities on coast to set up their trading post empire, but in the second half of the 19th century, Europe suddenly and spectacularly succeeded at colonizing basically all of Africa. Why?

Well, the biggest reason that Europeans were able to extend their grasp over so much of the world was the same reason they wanted to do so in the first place: industrialization. Nationalism played its part, of course. European states saw it as a real bonus to be able say that they had colonies--so much so, that a children's rhyme in *An ABC for Baby Patriots* went, "C is for colonies. Rightly we boast. That of all great countries Great Britain has the most."

But it was mostly, not to get all Marxist on you or anything, about controlling the means of production. Europeans wanted colonies to secure sources of raw materials, especially cotton, copper, iron, and rubber, that were used to fuel their growing industrial economies.

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And in addition to providing the motive for imperialism, European industrialization also provided the means. Europeans didn't fail to take over territory in Africa until the late 19th century because they didn't want to; they failed because they couldn't. This was mostly due to disease.

Unlike in the Americas, Africans weren't devastated by diseases like smallpox because they'd had smallpox for centuries and were just as immune to it as Europeans were. Not only that, but Africa had diseases of its own, including yellow fever, malaria, and sleeping sickness, all of which killed Europeans in staggering numbers.

Also, nagana was a disease endemic to Africa that killed horses, which made it difficult for Europeans to take advantage of African grasslands, and also difficult for them to get inland, because their horses would die as they tried to carry stuff.

Also, while in the 16th century Europeans did have guns, they were pretty useless, especially without horses. So most fighting was done the old-fashioned way, with swords. That worked pretty well in the Americas, unless you were the Incas or the Aztecs, but it didn't work in Africa, because the Africans also had swords. And spears, and axes.

So as much as they might have wanted to colonize Africa in the 16th, 17th, and 18th centuries, Africa's mosquitoes, microbes, and people were too much for them.

So what made the difference? Technology.

First, steam ships made it possible for Europeans to travel inland, bringing supplies and personnel via Africa's navigable rivers. No horses? No problem.

Even more important was quinine medicine, sometimes in the form of tonic water, mixed into refreshing quintessentially British gin and tonics. Quinine isn't as effective as modern antimalarial medication, and it doesn't cure the disease, but it does help moderate its effects.

But of course the most important technology that enabled Europeans to dominate Africa was guns. By the 19th century, European gun technology had improved dramatically, especially with the introduction of the Maxim machine gun, which allowed Europeans to wipe out Africans in battle after battle. Of course, machine guns were effective when wielded by Africans, too, but Africans had fewer of them.

Oh, it's time for the open letter? And my chair is back!

An open letter to Hiram Maxim. But first, let's see what's in the secret compartment today. Oh, it's Darth Vader! What a great reminder of imperialism.

Dear Hiram Maxim,

I hate you. It's not so much that you invented the Maxim machine gun, although obviously that's a little bit problematic, or even that you look like the poor man's Colonel Sanders. First off, you're a possible bigamist. I have a long standing opposition to bigamy. Secondly, you were born an American but became a Brit, thereby metaphorically machine gunning our founding fathers. But most importantly, among your many inventions was the successful amusement park ride, the Captive Flying Machine. Mr. Maxim, I hate the Captive Flying Machine. The Captive Flying Machine has resulted in many a girlfriend telling me that I'm a coward. I'm not a coward, I just don't want to die up there! It's all your fault, Hiram Maxim, and nobody believes your story about the lightbulb.

Best wishes, John Green.

All right. So, here is something that often gets overlooked. European imperialism involved a lot of fighting and a lot of dying. And when we say that Europe came to dominate Africa, for the most part that domination came through wars, which killed lots of Africans and also lots of Europeans, although most of them died from disease. It's very, very important to remember that Africans did not meekly acquiesce to European hegemony: they resisted, often violently, but ultimately they were defeated by a technologically superior enemy.

In this respect, they were a lot like the Chinese, and also the Indians, and the Vietnamese, and--you get the picture.

So by the end of the 19th century, most of Africa and much of Asia had been colonized by European powers. I mean, even Belgium got in on it, and they weren't even a country at the beginning of the 19th century. I mean, Belgium has enjoyed like, 12 years of sovereignty in the last 3 millennia.

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Notable exceptions include Japan, which was happily pursuing its own imperialism, Thailand, Iran, and of course Afghanistan. Because no one can conquer Afghanistan, unless you are--wait for it--the Mongols. [Mongol montage]

It's tempting to imagine Europe ruling their colonies with the proverbial topaz fist, and while there was always the threat of violence, the truth is a lot more complicated.

Let's go to the Thought Bubble.

In most cases, Europeans ruled their colonies with the help of, and sometimes completely through, intermediaries and collaborators. For example, in the 1890's in India, there were fewer than 1,000 British administrators supposedly ruling over 300 million Indians. The vast majority of British troops at any given time in India, more than two-thirds, were in fact Indians under the command of British officers.

Because of their small numbers relative to local populations, most European colonizers resorted to indirect rule, relying on governments that were already there but exerting control over their leaders.

Frederick Lugard, who was Britain's head honcho in Nigeria for a time, called this "rule through and by the natives." This worked particularly well with British administrators, who were primarily middle class men but had aristocratic pretensions, and were often pleased to associate with the highest echelons of Indian or African society.

Now, this isn't to say that indigenous rulers were simply puppets. Often, they retained real power. This was certainly true in India, where more than a third of the territory was ruled by Indian princes. The French protectorates of Morocco and Tunisia were ruled by Arab monarchs, and the French also ruled through native kings in Laos, Cambodia, and Vietnam.

For the most part, Europeans could almost always rely on their superior military technology to coerce local rulers into doing what the Europeans wanted. And they could replace native officials with Europeans if they had to. But in general, they preferred to rule indirectly. It was easier and cheaper. Also, less malaria.

Thanks, Thought Bubble.

So while we can't know why all native princes who ruled in the context of European imperialism put up with it, we can make some pretty good guesses. First of all, they were still rulers. They got to keep their prestige and their fancy hats, and to some extent their power. Many were also able to gain advantages through their service, like access to European education for themselves and for their children. Mahatma Gandhi, for instance, was the son of an Indian high official, which made it possible for him to study law in England.

And we can't overlook the sheer practicality of it. The alternative was to resist, and that usually didn't work out well. I'm reminded of the famous couplet, "Whatever happens, we have got the Maxim gun, and they have not."

But even with this enormous technological advantage, it wasn't always easy. For example, it took 25 years, from 1845 to 1870, for the British to fully defeat the Maori on New Zealand. Because the Maori were kick-ass fighters who had mastered musketry and defensive warfare. And I will remind you, it is not cursing if you're talking about donkeys.

In fact, it took them being outnumbered three-to-one with the arrival of 750,000 settlers for the Maori to finally capitulate. And I will remind you that the rule against splitting infinitives is not an actual rule.

Those of you more familiar with U.S. history might notice a parallel between the Maori and some of the Native American tribes, like the Apaches and the Lakota, a good reminder that the United States did some imperial expansion of its own as part of its nationalizing project in the 19th century.

But back to Africa. Sometimes African rulers were so good at adapting European technology that they were able to successfully resist imperialism. Ethiopia's Menelik II defeated the Italians in battle, securing not just independence but an empire of his own.

But embracing European-style modernization could also be problematic, as Khedive Ismail of Egypt found out during his rule in the late 19th century. He celebrated his imperial success by commissioning an opera, Giuseppe Verdi's *Aida*, for the opening of the Cairo Opera House in 1871. Giuseppe Verdi, by the way--no relation to John Green.

And Ismail had ambitions of extending Egypt's control up the Nile, west toward Lake Chad. But to do that, he needed money, and that's where he got into trouble. His borrowing bankrupted Egypt and led to Britain's taking

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control over the country's finances and its shares in the Suez Canal that Ismail had built, with French engineers and French capital, in 1869. The British sent in 1,300 bureaucrats to fix Egypt's finances, an invasion of red tape that led to a nationalist uprising, which brought on a full-scale British intervention after 1881 in order to protect British interests.

This business imperialism, as it is sometimes known, is really at the heart of the imperialistic impulse. Industrialized nations push economic integration upon developing nations, and then extract value from those developing nations, just as you would from a mine or a field you owned.

And here we see political history and economic history coming together again. As western corporations grew in the latter part of the 19th century, their influence grew as well, both in their home countries and in the lands where they were investing.

But ultimately, whether the colonizer is a business enterprise or a political one, the complicated legacy of imperialism survives. It's why your bananas are cheap, why your call centers are Indian, why your chocolate comes from Africa, and why everything else comes from China.

These imperialistic adventures may have only lasted a century, but it was the century in which the world as we know it today began to take shape.

### **Archdukes, Cynicism, and World War I: Crash Course World History #36**

Hi, I'm John Green, this is Crash Course World History, and today we're gonna talk about World War I. The so-called, Great War?

World War I wasn't the most destructive war, or the first total war, and it certainly wasn't - despite its billing - the war to end all wars. But it was the war to change all wars. World War I changed our outlook, it normalized cynicism and irony, which, I think you'll agree, are kind of dominant lenses for describing our world today. Basically, I'd argue that World War I helped make possible everything from *The Simpsons* to intentionally unattractive mustaches.

Mr. Green, Mr. Green! are you referring to me?

Oh, Me From the Past, you're an embarrassment to our family. Also to all our other selves.

Most people think of World War I as a tragedy because it didn't need to happen and didn't really accomplish much, except for creating social and economic conditions that made World War II possible. So when we talk about the causes, inevitably, we're also assigning blame.

The immediate cause was, of course, the assassination in Sarajevo of the Austrian Archduke Franz Ferdinand on June 28, 1914, by a Bosnian Serb nationalist named Gavrilo Princip. Quick aside: It's worth noting that the first big war of the 20th century began with an act of terrorism.

So Franz Ferdinand wasn't particularly well-liked by his uncle, the Emperor Franz Joseph - now *that* is a mustache! But even so, the assassination led Austria to issue an ultimatum to Serbia, whereupon Serbia accepted some, but not all, of Austria's demands, leading Austria to declare war against Serbia. And then Russia, due to its alliance with the Serbs, then mobilized its army; Germany, because it had an alliance with Austria, told Russia to stop mobilizing, which Russia failed to do, so then Germany mobilized its own army, declared war on Russia, cemented an alliance with the Ottomans, and then declared war on France, because, you know, France.

Germany's War plan, the Schlieffen Plan, required that it invade France in the most expedient way possible, which as you can see is via Belgium, And Great Britain was a friend of Belgium, I mean, as much as anyone can be a friend of Belgium, and so they declared war on Germany.

So by August 4th, all the major powers of Europe are at war with each other. By the end of the month, Japan, honoring its alliance with Britain, would be at war with Germany and Austria as well. When all was said and done, counting colonies and spheres of influence, the world map would eventually look like this. You'll never guess who wins.

So there were many opportunities NOT to mobilize and declare war, none of which were taken. Some blame the web of alliances itself, which is what Woodrow Wilson tried to fix with the League of Nations. Some blame Russia, the first big country to mobilize. Some blame Germany for the inflexibility of the Schlieffen plan. Leninists claim

<https://nerdfighteria.info/category/116>

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war grew out of imperialism and was fueled by capitalist rivalries; and others claim it was a war between Germany's radical modernism and Britain's traditional conservatism.

But if I had to assign blame, I'd go with the alliance system and the cultural belief that war was, in general, good for nations. War helped define who was "them" and who was "us", and doing that strengthened the idea of us. And before World War I, war was perceived to be necessary and often even glorious.

The trench warfare on the Western Front is most famous for its brutal futility - Great Britain and France on one side, Germany on the other, with no man's land between. World War I was a writer's war, and there's a lot of metaphorical resonance in living men digging holes where they would in time die. The lines of trenches on the Western Front covered only about 400 miles as the crow flies, but because of the endless zigzagging, the trenches themselves may have run as much as 25,000 miles.

But the stalemate of trench warfare wasn't seen on every front. Especially at the beginning of the war, there was a lot of offensive movement, especially in the initial German strikes, especially on the Eastern Front, the Germans were pretty successful against the Russians, who had a large but pretty hapless army. Also, for those blessed few of you who sat through all of *Lawrence of Arabia*, you'll remember that T. E. Lawrence's exploits took place in the context of World War I, with the British battling the Ottomans.

This brings up an important point: World War I featured combatants from around the world - Britain's army, especially, included soldiers from India, Africa, Australia, New Zealand, and Canada, who was just happy to be invited. Africans served with the French, and for a lot of these people, their experiences helped build nationalist movements when survivors returned home after the war.

That's about as close as we get to a silver lining. The war itself was incredibly destructive. Over 15 million people were killed and over 20 million wounded. In France, 13.3% of the male population between the age of 15 and 49 died in the war. The war also saw a lot of civilians die, especially in the Ottoman Empire where more than 2 million of the 3 million people killed were non-combatants.

But like so many other wars, World War I's most efficient killer was disease. Stupid disease, always hijacking history. Dysentery, typhus, and cholera were rampant, and otherwise minor injuries would prove fatal when gangrene set in. I mean, 25% of arm wounds among German soldiers were fatal. And that's not even to mention the famous influenza epidemic that broke out toward the end of the war, which killed three times as many people as the war itself.

The main reason the war was so deadly was the combination of new technology and outdated tactics. While we may think about tanks, airplanes and poison gas, all of which made their debut in the First World War, the two most devastating technologies were American: machine guns and barbed wire. Attempting to march in lines towards an enemy's trench, soldiers of both sides were mowed down by machine gun fire.

According to one German machine gunner at the battle of the Somme in 1916: "The [British] officers went in front. I noticed one of them walking calmly, carrying a walking stick. When we started firing we just had to load and reload. They went down in their hundreds. You didn't have to aim, we just fired into them." At the Somme, the British lost 60,000 men in the first day of fighting. Remember the old colonialist verse, "Whatever happens / we have got / the maxim gun / and they have not"? Yeah, well, now everybody had machine guns.

One of the things we try to remember here at Crash Course is that people both make history and are made by it. World War I brings this fact into stark relief because we know so much about the soldiers who fought in it, and how they wrote about the war really changed our relationship with systemic violence.

For most soldiers, there was nothing glamorous or heroic about this war. For the British, for example, the trenches were two things above all: wet and smelly. The dampness came from the fact that the British trenches were in the wettest part of Flanders. The smell was mainly decomposing flesh. Nothing glorious about that.

On the upside, soldiers were at least rarely hungry, and there was a lot of food from home, which is worth underscoring, because it reminds us that home wasn't very far away. Even for the British, at their closest the front was only 70 miles from England. They could read newspapers from London one day later than Londoners could.

While going "over the top" - Stan, no puns in this episode! - Right, while going "over the top" of the trench to cross no-man's land and attack the enemy trench is what lights our romantic imagination, most soldiers' lives were dominated by the fear of shelling. According to a journal published by French soldiers: "There's nothing more

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horrible in war than being shelled. It's a form of torture that the soldier can't see the end of. Suddenly he's afraid of being buried alive... The man stays put in his hole, helplessly waiting for, hoping for, a miracle."

Although soldiers then, as now, lived under conditions it's difficult to imagine, there was more than even the threat of death to distress them. According to German officer Ernst Jünger, it was not "danger, however extreme ... that depresses the spirit of men, so much as over-fatigue and wretched conditions." And for most soldiers, especially the British and French, the pay for their efforts was pitiful. So why did they even keep fighting? Duty, nationalism, loyalty to comrades, and fear of being shot for desertion all played a role.

But so did alcohol. As one British medical officer said: "Had it not been for the rum ration, I do not think we should have won the war." Ernst Jünger also remarked on the propensity of soldiers to drink their troubles away: "Though ten out of twelve had fallen, still the last two, as sure as death, were to be found on the first evening of rest over the bottle drinking a silent health to their dead 'companions'".

Oh, it's time for the open letter? Whew! An open letter to alcohol. I wonder what's in today's secret compartment. Oh, shocking, it's a golf club. And an actual disco golf ball made by a crash course fan!

Dear Alcohol - oh, that's...

Like disease, you've been a key figure in human history, despite not actually being a person, and for millennia, you've played an important role in war, often helping soldiers do their duty, often distracting them from it.

But here's the thing, alcohol, in my experience, which is extensive, if you need to be drunk to do something, you should maybe not do the thing. Unless of course, the thing is golf.

Best wishes, John Green.

So what did we take away from the so-called Great War? Well, not much.

Let's go to the Thought Bubble.

The Treaty of Versailles, which ended World War I, fixed the blame for the war on Germany, which proved ruinous to the German economy and destructive to its political institutions. And unless you're really nostalgic for totalitarian communism, you've gotta say that World War I was also a disaster for Russia, because it facilitated the rise of the Bolsheviks.

The Russian Revolution had two phases. In the first phase, called the February Revolution, because get this, it occurred in February, army mutinies and civil unrest forced the overthrow of the Romanov dynasty which had been in power in Russia since, like, forever, to use a proper historian term.

The monarchy was replaced by a provisional government led (eventually) by Alexander Kerensky, which made the terrible decision to keep Russia in the war, which led to the October Revolution, so called because it happened in October, in which Vladimir Lenin and his Bolsheviks took over, famously promising the Russian people... "peace, bread, and land." To which the Russian people responded, "Hey, you just named of our three favorite things."

Lenin's first big achievement was signing a separate peace with Germany and getting Russia out of the war, which was helpful to him since he needed to fight a civil war that wouldn't end until 1922. This might've helped Germany, too, except the US entered the war on the side of the British and the French.

This led to another outcome of the war: increased geopolitical influence for the U.S. The U.S. was already becoming a major economic power, and being able to avoid the destruction and loss of manpower associated with World War I certainly didn't hurt. The war helped catapult the U.S. from being a debtor nation to a creditor one, and Wilson's leading role in the negotiations at Versailles – even though he actually didn't get what he wanted – made America a big player on the world stage for the first time.

Thanks, Thought Bubble.

Just so we don't get completely Eurocentric, another major outcome of the war was the end of the Ottoman Empire and the emergence of the nation-state of Turkey. The rest of the world saw some change too, but not much for the better: In Africa, Britain took Germany's colonies, and even though Indians fought and died in a higher percentage than Americans in World War I, India didn't gain any real autonomy.



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All these terrible outcomes led to a general sense of disappointment in literary circles. And this feeling of pointlessness and cynicism was expressed by the writers of the “lost generation.” It was a war full of loss: Millions of people were lost. Traditional ideals of war’s nobility and heroism were lost as well: I mean, what is heroism when you’re just sitting in a trench, waiting to be blown up?

And after World War I, war might be necessary, but it would never again be glorious. We see this shift in the writing and art that emerged from the Great War as artists transitioned from romanticism to modernism. Think of Hemingway’s *The Sun Also Rises*, which is about a man rendered not noble but impotent by war. This dark, cruel irony here - you go to war to become a man and war takes away the organ often called “your manhood” - that defined Hemingway’s worldview. And it also defines ours.

### **Communists, Nationalists, and China's Revolutions: Crash Course World History #37**

Hi I’m John Green, and this is Crash Course World History and today we’re going to return — sadly for the last time on Crash Course — to China.

By the way, Stan brought cupcakes. That’s good. I wish I could draw some parallel between this and China, but I got nothing. It’s just delicious.

I’ll sure miss you, piece of felt Danica cut out in the shape of China using blue because we felt red would be cliché.

Mr. Green, Mr. Green, Mr Green!

You don’t get to talk until you shave the mustache, Me From The Past.

So the 20th century was pretty big for China because it saw not one but two revolutions. China’s 1911 revolution might be a bigger deal from a world historical perspective than the more famous communist revolution of 1949, but you wouldn’t know it because:

1. China’s communism became a really big deal during the Cold War, and
2. Mao Zedong, the father of Communist China, was really good at self-promotion. Like, you know his famous book of sayings? Pretty much everyone in China just had to own it. And I mean, *had to*.

So as you no doubt recall from past episodes of Crash Course, China lost the Opium Wars in the 19th century, resulting in European domination, spheres of influence, et cetera, all of which was deeply embarrassing to the Qing dynasty and led to calls for reform. One strand of reform that called for China to adopt European military technology and education systems was called self-strengthening, and it was probably would have been a great idea, considering how well that worked for Japan. But it never happened in China-- well, at least not until recently.

Instead, China experienced the disastrous anti-Western Boxer Rebellion of 1900, which helped spur some young liberals, including one named Sun Yat Sen, to plot the overthrow of the dynasty. Oh, it’s already time for the Open Letter...

An open letter to Sun Yat Sen.

Oh, but first, let’s see what’s in the secret compartment today. Oh, more champagne poppers? Stan, at this point aren’t we sort of belaboring the fact that China invented fireworks? Wow! That is innovation at work right there. We used to not be able to fire off one of these, and now we can fire off six at a time if you count the two secret ones from behind me.

Dear Sun Yat Sen,

You were amazing! I mean the Republic of China calls you the father of the nation. The People’s Republic of China calls you the forerunner of the democratic revolution. You’re the only thing they can agree on! You lived in China, Japan, the United States, you converted to Christianity, you were a doctor, you were the godfather of an important science fiction writer.

But the infuriating thing is that you never actually got much of a chance to rule China, and you would have been great at it. I mean, your three principles of the people, Nationalism, Democracy, and the People’s Livelihood, are

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three really great principles. I mean the problem, aside from you not living long enough is that you just didn't have a face for Warhol portraits. Huh, it's too bad.

Best wishes, John Green

So the 1911 revolution that led to the end of the Qing dynasty started when a bomb accidentally exploded, at which point the revolutionaries were like, "we're probably going to be outed, so we should just start the uprising now". The uprising probably would've been quelled like many before it, except this time the army joined the rebellion, because they wanted to become more modern.

The Qing emperor abdicated, and the rebels chose a general, Yuan Shikai, as leader, while Sun Yat Sen was declared president of a provisional republic on Jan 1, 1912. A new government was created with a Senate and a Lower House, and it was supposed to write a new constitution. And after the first elections, Sun Yat Sen's party, the Guomindang were the largest, but they weren't the majority. So Sun Yat Sen deferred to Yuan, which turned out to be a huge mistake because he then outlawed the Guomindang party and ruled as dictator.

But when Yuan Shikai died in 1916, China's first non-dynastic government in over 3000 years completely fell apart. Localism reasserted itself with large-scale landlords with small-scale armies ruling all the parts of China that weren't controlled by foreigners. You might remember this phenomenon from earlier in Chinese history, first during the Warring States period and then again for three hundred years between the end of the Han and the rise of the Sui.

So the period in Chinese history between 1912 and 1949 is sometimes called the Chinese Republic, although that gives the government a bit too much credit. The leading group trying to re-form China into a nation state was the Guomindang, but after 1920 the Chinese Communist Party was also in the mix. And for the Guomindang to regain power from those big landlords and reunify China, they needed some help from the CCP.

Now if an alliance between Communists and Nationalists sounds like a match made in hell, well, yes. It was. That said, the two did manage to patch things up for a while in the early 1920s, you know, for the sake of the kids.

But then Sun Yat Sen died in 1925 and the alliance fell apart in 1927 when Guomindang leader Chiang Kai-Shek got mad at the communists for trying to foment socialist revolution, to which the communists were like, "But that's what we do, man. We're communists."

Anyway, this turned out to be a bad break up for a bunch of reasons, but mainly because it started a civil war between the Communists and the Nationalists. We're not going to get into exhausting detail on the civil war but, spoiler alert: the Communists won. But there are a few things to point out.

First, even though Mao emerged victorious, he and the communists were almost wiped out in 1934 except that they made a miraculous and harrowing escape, trekking from southern China to the mountains in the north in what has become famously known as the Long March, a great example of historians missing an opportunity since it could easily have been called the Long Ass March, as it featured donkeys.

Second, for much of the time the Kuomintang was trying to crush the CCP, significant portions of China were being occupied and/or invaded by Japan.

Thirdly, the Communists were just better at fighting the Japanese than the Nationalists were. In spite of the fact that Chiang Kai-Shek had extensive support from the U.S. And each time the Nationalists failed against the Japanese, their prestige among their fellow Chinese diminished. It wasn't helped by Nationalist corruption, or their collecting onerous taxes from Chinese peasants, or stories about Nationalist troops putting on civilian clothes and abandoning the city of Nanking during its awful destruction by the Japanese army in 1937. Meanwhile, the Communists were winning over the peasants in their northwestern enclave by making sure that troops didn't pillage local land and by giving peasants a greater say in local government.

Now, that isn't to say everything was rosy under Mao's communist leadership, even at its earliest stages. By the way, that is an actual chalk illustration. Very impressed. In a preview of things to come, in 1942 Mao initiated a "rectification" program, which basically meant students and intellectuals were sent down into the countryside to give them a taste of what "real China" was like in an effort to re-educate them. We try to be politically neutral here on Crash Course, but we are always opposed to intellectuals doing hard labor.

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But anyway, within four years of the end of World War II the Communists routed Chiang Kai-Shek's armies and sent them off to Taiwan, and these military victories paved the way for Mao to declare the People's Republic of China on October 1, 1949.

So once in power, Mao and the PRC were faced with the task of creating a new, socialist state. And Mao declared early on that the working class in China would be the leaders of a "people's democratic dictatorship." Oh democratic dictatorships. You're the BEST. It's all the best parts of democracy, and all the best parts of dictatorship. You get to vote, but there's only one choice. It takes all the pesky thinking out it.

The PRC promised equal rights for women, rent reduction, land redistribution, new heavy industry and lots of freedoms, including freedoms of "thought, speech, publication, assembly, association, correspondence, person, domicile, moving from one place to another, religious belief, and the freedom to hold processions and demonstrations." Yeah, NO. Even putting aside the PRC's failure to protect any of those rights, Mao's China wasn't much fun if you were a landlord or even if you were a peasant who'd done well. Land redistribution and reform meant destroying the power of landlords, often violently.

But centralizing power and checking individual ambition proved difficult for the government, and it was made harder by China's involvement in the Korean War, which helped spur the first mass campaign of Mao's democratic dictatorship. Designed to encourage support for the War, the campaign was called the "Resist America and Aid Korea campaign," and it resulted in almost all foreigners leaving China.

A second campaign, against "counterrevolutionaries" was much worse. People suspected of sympathizing with the Guomindang, or anyone insufficiently communist, was subject to humiliation and violence. Between October 1950 and August 1951, 28,332 people accused of being spies or counterrevolutionaries were executed in Guandong city alone.

A third mass campaign, the "Three Anti Campaign" was aimed at reforming the Communist party itself. And the final mass campaign, the Five Anti Campaign was an assault on all bourgeois capitalism, which effectively killed private industry in China. Very few of the victims of this last campaign actually died, but capitalism was weakened and state control bolstered.

Ok, let's go to the Thought Bubble.

Mao and the CCP set out to turn China into an industrial powerhouse by following the Soviet model. We haven't really talked about this, but under the Soviet system, Russia was able to accomplish massive industrialization-- not to mention tens of millions of deaths from starvation-- through centralized planning and collectivization of agriculture, following what were known as Five Year Plans.

The Chinese adopted the model of Five Year Plans beginning in 1953 and the first one worked, at least as far as industrialization was concerned. In fact, the plan worked even better than expected, with industry increasing 121% more than projected. In order for this to work though, the peasants had to grow lots of grain and sell it at extremely low prices. This kept inflation in check, and saving was encouraged by the fact that the Five Year Plan didn't have many consumer goods, so there was nothing to buy. For urban workers, living standards improved and China's population grew to 646 million.

So far, Mao's plan seemed to be working, but there was no way that China could keep up that growth, especially without some backsliding into capitalism. So Mao came up with a terrible idea called the Great Leap Forward. Mao essentially decided that the nation could be psyched up into more industrial productivity.

Among many other bad ideas, he famously ordered that individuals build small steel furnaces in their backyard to increase steel production. This was not a good idea. First off, it didn't actually increase steel production much. Secondly, it turns out that people making steel in their backyard who know nothing about making steel... make bad steel.

But the worst idea was to pay for heavy machinery from the USSR with exported grain. This meant there was less for peasants to eat — and as a result, between 1959 and 1962, 20 million people died, probably half of whom were under the age of 10. Jeez, Thought Bubble, that was sad.

And then in happier news came the Cultural Revolution! Just kidding, it sucked. By the middle of the sixties, Mao was afraid that China's revolution was running out of steam, and he didn't want China to end up just a bureaucratized police state like, you know, most of the Soviet bloc. And the Cultural Revolution was an attempt to

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capture the glory days of the revolution and fire up the masses, and what better way to do that than to empower the kids.

Frustrated students who were unable find decent, fulfilling jobs jumped at the chance to denounce their teachers, employers, and sometimes even their parents and to tear down tradition, which often meant demolishing buildings and art. The ranks of these “Red Guards” swelled and anyone representing the so-called “four olds” — old culture, old habits, old ideas, and old customs — was subject to humiliation and violence. Intellectuals were again sent to the countryside as they were in 1942; millions were persecuted; and countless historical and religious artifacts were destroyed.

But the real aim of the Cultural Revolution was to consolidate Mao’s revolution, and while his image still looms large, it’s hard to say that China these days is a socialist state. Many would argue that Mao’s revolution was extremely short-lived, and that the real change in China happened in 1911. That’s when the Chinese Republic ended 3,000 years of dynastic history and forever broke the cyclical pattern the Chinese had used to understand their past. I mean at least in some senses, those Nationalist revolutionaries literally put an end to history.

That sense of living in a truly New World has made many great and terrible things possible for China, but the legacy of China’s two revolutions is mixed at best. China, for instance, made most of the camera we use to film this video. And China made most of the computers we use to edit. But no one in the People’s Republic of China will legally be able to watch this video, because the government blocks YouTube.

### **World War II: Crash Course World History #38**

Hi, I’m John Green. This is Crash Course World History and today we’re going to talk about World War II. Finally, a war with some color film! So, here at Crash Course we try to make history reasonably entertaining, and fortunately, World War II was hilarious... said no one ever.

Mr. Green, Mr. Green! Is this, like, gonna be one of the unfunny ones where you build to the big melodramatic conclusion about how I have to imagine the world more complexly?

Me from the Past, as long as you have that eighth rate soup-strainer, I’m not even going to acknowledge your existence.

Right, so you’ve probably heard a lot about World War II from movies and books, The History Channel, before it decided that Swamp People were History, the incessant droning of your grandparents, etc. We’re not gonna try to give you a detailed synopsis of the war today. Instead, we’re going to try to give a bit of perspective on how the most destructive war in human history happened, and why it still matters globally.

So one of the reasons history classes tend to be really into wars is that they’re easy to put on tests. They start on one day and they end on another day. And they’re caused by social, political, and economic conditions that can be examined in a multiple choice kind of manner. Except, not really.

Like, when did World War II start? In September 1939, when the Nazis invaded Poland? I’d say no - it actually started when Japan invaded Manchuria in 1931, or at the very latest when the Japanese invaded China in 1937, because they didn’t stop fighting until 1945. Then again, you could also argue 1933, when Hitler took power, or 1941, when America started fighting. It’s complicated.

But anyway, in China the fighting was very brutal, as exemplified by the infamous rape of Nanking, which featured the slaughter of hundreds of thousands of Chinese people and is still so controversial today that:

1. It affects relations between Japan & China and
2. Even though I have not described it in detail, you can rest assured that there will be angry comments about my use of the word “slaughter.”

But the World War II we know the most about from movies and TV is primarily the war in the European theater, the one that Adolf Hitler started. Hitler is the rare individual who really did make history - specifically he made it worse - and if he hadn’t existed, it’s very unlikely that World War II would’ve ever happened. But he did exist, and after coming to power in 1933, with the standard revolutionary promises to return the homeland to its former glory,

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infused with quite a bit of paranoia and anti-Semitism, Germany saw rapid re-militarization and eventually, inevitably, war.

In the beginning, it was characterized by a new style of combat made possible by the mechanized technology of tanks, airplanes, and especially, trucks. This was the Blitzkrieg, a devastating tactic combining quick movement of troops, tanks, and massive use of air power to support infantry movements. And in the very early years of the war, it was extremely effective. The Nazis were able to roll over Poland, Norway, Denmark, the Netherlands, and then all of France, all within about 9 months between the fall of 1939 and the summer of 1940.

So after knocking out most of central Europe, the Nazis set their sights on Great Britain, but they didn't invade the island, choosing instead to attack it with massive air strikes. I mean, you look at this poster and think, "Man, the Queen wants me to finish my term paper, so I can do it," but when this poster was first produced in 1939, it was to quell terror in the face of bombardment.

The Battle of Britain was a duel between the Royal Air Force and the Luftwaffe, and while the RAF denied the Nazis total control of British airspace, the Nazis were still able to bomb Great Britain over and over again in what's known as the Blitz. STAN, NO. NO JOKES this time. Yes, the Blitz.

Meanwhile, Europeans were also fighting each other in North Africa. The Desert campaigns started in 1940 and lasted through 1942 - this is where British general "Monty" Montgomery outfoxed German general Irwin "the Desert Fox" Rommel. It's also the place where Americans first fought Nazis in large numbers. But most importantly, it's where Indiana Jones discovered the Ark of the Covenant.

Okay, let's go to the Thought Bubble.

1941 was a big year for World War II. First, the Nazis invaded Russia, breaking a non-aggression pact that the two powers had signed in 1939. This hugely escalated the war, and also made allies of the most powerful capitalist countries and the most powerful communist one, an alliance that would stand the test of time and never end... until like three seconds after the defeat of the Nazis.

The Nazi invasion of Russia opened the war up on the so-called Eastern Front, although if you were Russian, it was the Western Front, and it led to millions of deaths, mostly Russian. Also, 1941 saw a day that would "live in infamy" when the Japanese bombed Pearl Harbor, hoping that such an audacious attack would frighten the United States into staying neutral, which was a pretty stupid gamble because:

1. The U.S. was already giving massive aid to the Allies and was hardly neutral and
2. The United States is not exactly famed for its pacifism or political neutrality.

1941 also saw Japan invading much of Southeast Asia, which made Australia and New Zealand understandably nervous. As part of the British commonwealth, they were already involved in the war, but now they could fight the Japanese closer to home. And shut up about how I never talk about you Australians. I just gave you 1.5 sentences.

But by the time the Americans and Australians started fighting the Japanese, it was already a World War. Sometimes this meant fighting or starving or being bombed; other times, it meant production for the war - you don't think of Argentina as being a World War II powerhouse, for instance, but they were vital to the Allies, supplying 40% of British meat during World War II.

Thanks, Thought Bubble.

So, not to sound jingoistic, but the entry of the U.S. into the war really did change everything, although I doubt the Nazis could've taken Russia regardless. No one conquers Russia in the wintertime, unless you are - wait for it - the Mongols.

Okay, we're going to skip most of the big battles of 1942 - like the Battle of Midway, which effectively ended Japan's chance of winning the war - and focus on the Battle of Stalingrad. The German attack on Stalingrad, now known as Volgograd because Stalin sucks, was one of the bloodiest battles in the history of war, with more than two million dead. The Germans began by dropping more than 1,000 tons of bombs on Stalingrad, and then the Russians responded by "hugging" the Germans, staying as close to their front lines as possible so that German air support would kill Germans and Russians alike.

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This kind of worked, although the Germans still took most of the city. But then, a Soviet counterattack left the sixth army of the Nazis completely cut off. And after that, due partly to Hitler's overreaching megalomania and partly to lots of people being scared of him, the sixth army slowly froze and starved to death before finally surrendering. And of the 91,000 Axis POWs from Stalingrad, only about 6,000 ever returned home.

Stalingrad turned the war in Europe and by 1944, the American strategy of "island hopping" in the Pacific was taking GIs closer and closer to Japan. Rome was liberated in June by Americans and Canadians; and the successful British, Canadian, and American D-Day invasion of Normandy was the beginning of the end for the Nazis.

Oh, it's time for the Open Letter?

An Open Letter to Canada. But first, let's see what's in the secret compartment today. Oh, it's Canadian mittens. I wanna thank the Canadian Crash Course fans, who sent us these mittens. Canadians are just so nice, Stan. Like, all we ever do on this show is make fun of them, and they're just like, "It's so kind of you to mention us. Here's some mittens!"

Dear Canada,

We're not always nice to you here on Crash Course, but you are awesome. I'm pointing, but you can't tell because I'm wearing mittens. 45,000 Canadians died fighting for the Allies in World War II, which means that, per capita, Canada lost more people than the United States.

You fought with the Royal Air Force to defend Great Britain from the beginning of the war and you were there on D-Day, successfully invading Juno Beach. And, as many of you have pointed out in comments, you defeated the United States in the War of 1812, meaning that, arguably, Canada, you are the greater military power.

Plus, you have lumberjacks, and excellent beer, and hockey, and universal healthcare, and Justin Bieber. I'm jealous! That's what it is - I'm jealous!

Best Wishes, John Green.

So, by the end of 1944, the Allies were advancing from the West and the Russian Red Army was advancing from the East and then, the last-ditch German offensive at the battle of the Bulge in the winter of 1944-1945 failed. Mussolini was executed in April of 1945. Hitler committed suicide at the end of that month. And, on May 8, 1945 the Allies declared victory in Europe after Germany surrendered unconditionally.

Three months later, the United States dropped the only two nuclear weapons ever deployed in war, Japan surrendered, and World War II was over.

The war had a definite cause: unbridled military expansion by Germany, Japan, and, to a small extent, Italy. Now, it's easy to claim that Hitler was crazy or evil, and, in fact, he was certainly both, but that doesn't explain the Nazis decision to invade Russia, and it sure doesn't explain Japan's decision to bomb Pearl Harbor.

And there are many possible explanations beyond mere evil; but the most interesting one, to me, involves food. Hitler had a number of reasons for wanting to expand Germany's territory, but he often talked about Lebensraum or living space for the German people. German agriculture was really inefficiently organized into lots of small farms, and that meant that Germany needed a lot of land in order to be self-sufficient in food production.

The plan was to take Poland, the Ukraine, and Eastern Russia, and then resettle that land with lots of Germans, so that it could feed German people. This was called the Hunger Plan because the plan called for 20 million people to starve to death. Many would be the Poles, Ukrainians, and Russians who'd previously lived on the land. The rest would be Europe's Jews, who would be worked to death.

Six million Jews were killed by the Nazis, many by starvation, but many through a chillingly planned effort of extermination in death camps. These death camps can be distinguished from concentration camps or labor camps in that their primary purpose was extermination of Jews, Roma people, communists, homosexuals, disabled people, and others that the Nazis deemed unfit. Some historians believe that the Nazis opened the death camps because the Jews weren't dying as fast as The Hunger Plan had intended.

This was a sickening plan, but it made a kind of demented sense. Rather than becoming more involved in global trade, as the British had, the Germans would feed themselves by taking land and killing the people who'd previously lived there.

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Similarly, Japan, at the beginning of the war, was suffering from an acute fear of food shortage because its agricultural sector was having trouble keeping up with population growth. And the Japanese too, sought to expand their agricultural holdings by, for instance, resettling farmers in Korea.

So while it's tempting to say that World War II was about the Allies fighting for democratic ideals against the totalitarian militaristic imperialism of the fascist Axis powers, it just doesn't hold up to scrutiny. For instance, a hugely important Allied power, Stalin's Soviet Union, was, like, the least democratic place, ever. Stan just said that was hyperbole, but it's not. Stalin's Soviet Union is tied with all of the other completely undemocratic countries for last place on the democracy scale. It's a big community there, at last place, but they're definitely in there somewhere.

And, by far, the biggest imperialists of the war were the British. They couldn't have fed or clothed themselves - or resisted the Nazis - without their colonies and commonwealth. So, why is World War II so important? Well first, it proved the old Roman adage homo homini lupus: Man is a wolf to man. This is seen most clearly in the Holocaust, but all the statistics are staggering.

More than a million Indian British subjects died, mainly due to famine that could have been avoided if the British had redistributed food. And their failure to do so helped convince Indians that the so-called superior civilization of the British was a sham. More than a million Vietnamese died, mainly due to famine. 418,000 Americans. More than a million noncombatants in both Germany and Japan. And 20 million people in the Soviet Union, most of them civilians.

These civilians were targeted because they helped sustain the war, mostly through industrial and agricultural production. In a total war, when a nation is at war, not just its army, there is no such thing as a non-military target. From the firebombing of Dresden to Tokyo to Hiroshima, the line between soldier and civilian blurred.

And then, of course, there is the Holocaust, which horrifies us because the elements of Western progress - record-keeping, industrial production, technology - were used to slaughter millions. World War II saw modern industrial nations, which represented the best of the Enlightenment and the Scientific Revolution, descend into once unimaginable cruelty.

And what makes World War II such a historical watershed is that in its wake, all of us - in the West or otherwise - were forced to question whether Western dominance of this planet could, or should, be considered progress.

### **USA vs USSR Fight! The Cold War: Crash Course World History #39**

Hi, I'm John Green, this is Crash Course World History and today we're gonna talk about the Cold War, which actually lasted into my lifetime, which means that I can bore you with stories from my past like your grandpa does. When I was a kid, they made us practice hiding under our desks in the event of a nuclear attack, because, you know, school desks are super good at repelling radiation.

Mr. Green, Mr. Green! Right, remember in elementary school there was this special guest who'd defected from the Soviet Union, and he had--

Like this crazy Russian accent and he kept going on and on about how Reagan should spit in Gorbachev's face instead of signing treaties with him.

And I was like, whoa dude calm down. You're in a room full of third graders.

And then for like months afterward on the playground, we'd play Reagan-Gorbachev and spit in each other's faces. Those were the days. Sometimes I forget that you're me, Me from the Past.

Yeah, it's just really nice to talk to you and feel like you're lis -

You're boring. Cue the intro.

So the Cold War was a rivalry between the USSR and the USA that played out globally. We've tried to shy away from calling conflicts ideological or civilizational here on Crash Course, but in this case, the "clash of civilizations" model really does apply. Socialism, at least as Marx constructed it, wanted to take over the world, and many Soviets saw themselves in a conflict with bourgeois capitalism itself. And the Soviets saw American rebuilding efforts in Europe and Japan as the U.S. trying to expand its markets, which, by the way, is exactly what we were doing.

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So the U.S. feared that the USSR wanted to destroy democratic and capitalist institutions. And the Soviets feared that the US wanted to use its money and power to dominate Europe and eventually destroy the Soviet system. And both parties were right to be worried. It's not paranoia if they really are out to get you.

Now of course we've seen a lot of geopolitical struggles between major world powers here on Crash Course, but this time there was the special added bonus that war could lead to the destruction of the human species. That was new for world history, and it's worth remembering: It's still new. Here's the period of time we've discussed on Crash Course. And this is how long we've had the technological capability to exterminate ourselves. So that's worrisome.

Immediately after World War II, the Soviets created a sphere of influence in eastern Europe, dominating the countries where the Red Army had pushed back the Nazis, which is why Winston Churchill famously said in 1946 that an "Iron Curtain" had descended across Europe.

While the dates of the Cold War are usually given between 1945 and 1990, a number of historians will tell you that it actually started during World War II. Stalin's distrust of the U.S. and Britain kept growing as they refused to invade Europe and open up a second front against the Nazis. And some even say that the decision to drop the first Atomic Bombs on Japan was motivated in part by a desire to intimidate the Soviets. That sort of worked, but only insofar as it motivated the Soviets to develop atomic bombs of their own — they successfully tested their first one in 1949.

From the beginning, the U.S had the advantage because it had more money and power and could provide Europe protection (what with its army and one of a kind nuclear arsenal) while Europe rebuilt. The USSR had to rebuild itself, and also they had the significant disadvantage of being controlled by noted asshole Joseph Stalin. I will remind you, it's not cursing if he's wearing an ass for a hat. Oh, I guess it's time for the open letter.

An Open Letter to Joseph Stalin.

But first, let's see what's in the secret compartment today. Oh, it's silly putty. Silly putty: the thing that won the Cold War. This is exactly the kind of useless consumer good that would never have been produced in the Soviet Union. And it is because we had so much more consumer spending, on stuff like silly putty, that we won the Cold War. Go team!

Dear Joseph Stalin,

You really sucked. There was a great moment in your life, at your first wife's funeral, when you said, "I don't think I shall ever love again." And then later, you had that wife's whole family killed. Putting aside the fact that you're responsible for tens of millions of deaths, I don't like you because of the way that you treated your son, Yakov. I mean, you were really mean to him and then he shot himself and he didn't die and you said, "He can't even shoot straight." And then later, when he was captured during World War II, you had a chance to exchange prisoners for him, but you declined. And then he died in a prison camp. You were a terrible leader, a terrible person, and a terrible father.

Best wishes, John Green

Alright, let's go to the Thought Bubble.

Europe was the first battleground of the Cold War, especially Germany, which was divided into 2 parts with the former capital, Berlin, also divided into 2 parts. And yes, I know the western part was divided into smaller occupation zones, but I'm simplifying. In 1948, the Soviets tried to cut off West Berlin, by closing the main road that led into the city, but the Berlin airlift stopped them. And then in 1961, the Soviets tried again and this time they were much more successful building a wall around West Berlin, although it's worth noting that the thing was up for less than 30 years. I mean, Meatloaf's career has lasted longer than the Berlin Wall did.

The U.S. response to the Soviets was a policy called containment; it basically involved stopping the spread of communism by standing up to the Soviets wherever they seemed to want to expand. In Europe this meant spending a lot of money. First the Marshall Plan spent \$13 billion on re-building western Europe with grants and credits that Europeans would spend on American consumer goods and on construction. Capitalism's cheap food and plentiful stuff, it was hoped, would stop the spread of communism.



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The US also tried to slow the spread of communism by founding NATO and with CIA interventions in elections where communists had a chance, as in Italy. But despite all the great spy novels and shaken not stirred martinis, the Cold War never did heat up in Europe.

Probably the most important part of the Cold War that people just don't remember these days is the nuclear arms race. Both sides developed nuclear arsenals, the Soviets initially with the help of spies who stole American secrets. Eventually the nuclear arsenals were so big that the U.S. and USSR agreed on a strategy appropriately called MAD, which stood for "mutually assured destruction."

Thanks Thought Bubble.

And yes, nuclear weapons were, and are, capable of destroying humanity many times over. But only once or twice did we get close to nuclear war: during the 1962 Cuban Missile Crisis and then again in 1983, when we forgot to give the Russians the heads up that we were doing some war games, which made it look like we had launched a first strike. OUR BAD!

But even though mutually assured destruction prevented direct conflict, there was plenty of hot war in the Cold War. The Korean War saw lots of fighting between communists and capitalists, as did the Vietnam War. I mean, these days we remember "the domino effect" as silly paranoia, but after Korea and especially China became communist, Vietnam's movement toward communism seemed very much a threat to Japan, which the U.S. had helped re-make into a vibrant capitalist ally. So the US got bogged down in one of its longest wars while the Soviets assisted the North Vietnamese army in the Viet Cong.

But then we paid them back by supporting the anti-communist mujaheddin after the Soviets invaded Afghanistan in 1979. Of course, as we now know, nobody conquers Afghanistan ... unless you are the mongols. So after 10 disastrous years, the Soviets finally abandoned Afghanistan. Some of those mujahideen later became members of the Taliban, though, so it's difficult to say that anyone won that war.

But it wasn't just Asia: In Nicaragua, the US supported rebels to overthrow the leftist government; in El Salvador, the US bolstered authoritarian regimes that were threatened by left-wing guerrillas. The United States ended up supporting a lot of awful governments, like the one in Guatemala, which held onto power through the use of death squads. Frankly, all our attempts to stabilize governments in Latin America led to some very unstable Latin American governments, and quite a lot of violence.

And then there were the luke-warm conflicts, like The Suez Crisis where British and French paratroopers were sent in to try to stop Egypt from nationalizing the Suez canal. Or all the American covert operations to keep various countries from "falling" to communism. These included the famous CIA-engineered coup to overthrow Iran's democratically elected prime minister Mohammad Mosaddegh after his government attempted to nationalize Iran's oil industry. And the CIA helping Chile's General Augusto Pinochet overthrow democratically elected Marxist president Salvador Allende in 1973.

And lest we think the Americans were the only bad guys in this, the Soviets used force to crush popular uprisings in Hungary in 1956 and in Czechoslovakia in 1968.

So, you may have noticed that our discussion of the Cold War has branched out from Europe to include Asia, and the Middle East, and Latin America. And in fact, almost every part of the globe was involved in some way with the planet being divided into three "worlds." The first world was the U.S., Western Europe and any place that embraced capitalism and a more or less democratic form of government. The Second World was the Soviet Union and its satellites, mostly the Warsaw Pact nations, China and Cuba. The Third World was everyone else and we don't use this term anymore because it lumps together a hugely diverse range of countries.

We'll talk more about the specific economic and development challenges faced by the so-called "Third World countries," but the big one in terms of the Cold War, was that neither the U.S. nor the Soviets wanted any of these countries to remain neutral. Every nation was supposed to pick sides, either capitalist or communist, and while it seems like an easy choice now, in the 50s and 60s, it wasn't nearly so clear. I mean, for a little while, it seemed like the Soviets might come out ahead, at least in the Third World. For a while, capitalism, and especially the United States, seemed to lose some of its luster. The US propped up dictatorships, had a poor civil rights record, we sucked at women's gymnastics. Plus, the Soviets were the first to put a satellite, a man, and a dog into space. Plus, Marxists just seemed cooler, which is why you never see Milton Friedman t-shirts... until now available at DFTBA.com. I like that, Stan, but I'm more of a centrist. Can I get a Keynes shirt? Yes. That, now that's hot.

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But Soviet socialism did not finally prove to be a viable alternative to industrial capitalism. Over time, state-run economies just generally don't fare as well as private enterprise, and people like living in a world where they can have more stuff. More importantly, Soviet policies were just bad: collectivized agriculture stymied production and led to famine; suppression of dissent and traditional cultures made people angry; and no one likes suffering the humiliation of driving a Yugo.

But why the Cold War ended when it did is one of the most interesting questions of the 20th century. It probably wasn't Ronald Reagan bankrupting the Soviets, despite what some politicians believe. The USSR had more satellite states that it needed to spend more to prop up than the U.S. had to invest in its Allies. And the Soviet system could never keep up with economic growth in the West. But, probably the individual most responsible for the end of the Cold War was Mikhail Baryshnikov. No? Mikhail Gorbachev? Well, that's boring. I always thought the Soviets danced their way to freedom. No? It was Glasnost and Perestroika? Alright.

But Gorbachev's Perestroika and Glasnost opened up the Soviet political and economic systems with contested local elections, less restricted civil society groups, less censorship, more autonomy for the Soviet Republics, more non-state-run businesses and more autonomy for state-run farms. Glasnost or "openness" led to more information from the west and less censorship led to a flood of criticism as people realized how much poorer the second world was than the first.

And one by one, often quite suddenly, former communist states collapsed. In Germany, the Berlin Wall came down in 1989 and East and West Germany were reunited in 1990. In Poland, the Gdansk dockworker's union Solidarity turned into a mass political movement and won 99 of the 100 seats it was allowed to contest in the 1989 election. Hungary held multiparty elections in 1990. The same year, mass demonstrations led to elections in Czechoslovakia. In 1993, that country split up into Slovakia and the Czech Republic, the happiest and most mutually beneficial divorce since Cher left Sonny.

Of course sometimes the transition away from communism was violent and painful. In Romania, for instance, the communist dictator Ceaușescu held onto power until he was tried and put before a firing squad at the end of 1989. And it took until 1996 for a non-communist government to take power there. And in Yugoslavia, well, not so great. And in Russia, it's a little bit Putin-ey. Ah! Putin.

But just twenty years later, it's hard to believe that the world was once dominated by two super powers held in check mutually assured destruction. What's really amazing to me, though, is that until the late 1980s, it felt like the Cold War was gonna go on forever. Time seems to slow as it approaches us, & living in the post-Cold War nuclear age, we should remember that the past feels distant even when it's near, and that the future seems assured — even though it isn't.

### **Decolonization and Nationalism Triumphant: Crash Course World History #40**

Hi, I'm John Green; this is Crash Course World History and today we're going to talk about decolonization. The empires European states formed in the 19th century proved about as stable and long-lasting as Genghis Khan's leading to so many of the nation states we know and love today. Yes, I'm looking at you, Burundi. [singing] DID YOU EVER KNOW YOU'RE MY BURUNDI? YOU'RE –

STAN, DON'T CUT TO THE INTRO! I SING LIKE AN ANGEL!

So unless you're over 60-- and let's face it, Internet, you're not-- you've only ever known a world of nation states. But as we've seen from Egypt to Alexander the Great to China to Rome to the Mongols, who, for once, are not the exception here, to the Ottomans and the Americas, empire has long been the dominant way we've organized ourselves politically-- or at least the way that other people have organized us.

Mr. Green, Mr. Green! So to them Star Wars would've been, like, a completely different movie. Most of them would've been like, Go Empire! Crush those rebels!

Yeah, also they'd be like what is this screen that displays crisp moving images of events that are not currently occurring? Also, not to get off-topic, but you never learn what happens AFTER the rebel victory in Star Wars. And, as as we've learned from the French Revolution to the Arab Spring, revolution is often the easy part. I mean, you think destroying a Death Star is hard? Try negotiating a trade treaty with Gungans. Right, anyway.

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So, the late 20th century was not the first time that empires disintegrated. Rome comes to mind. Also the Persians. And of course the American Revolution ended one kind of European imperial experiment. But in all those cases, Empire struck back... heh heh, you see what I did there? I mean, Britain lost its 13 colonies, but later controlled half of Africa and all of India. And what makes the recent decolonization so special is that at least so far, no empires have emerged to replace the ones that fell.

And this was largely due to World War II because on some level, the Allies were fighting to stop Nazi imperialism. Hitler wanted to take over Central Europe, and Africa, and probably the Middle East-- and the Ally defeat of the Nazis discredited the whole idea of empire. So the English, French, and Americans couldn't very well say to the colonial troops who'd fought alongside them, "Thank you so much for helping us to thwart Germany's imperialistic ambitions. As a reward, please hand in your rifle and return to your state of subjugation." Plus, most of the big colonial powers-- especially France, Britain, and Japan-- had been significantly weakened by World War II, by which I mean that large swaths of them looked like this.

So, post-war decolonization happened all over the place: The British colony that had once been "India" became three independent nations. By the way, is this Gandhi or is this Ben Kingsley playing Gandhi? In Southeast Asia, French Indochina became Cambodia, Laos, and Vietnam. And the Dutch East Indies became Indonesia. But of course when we think about decolonization, we mostly think about Africa going from this to this.

So we're gonna oversimplify here, because we have to, but decolonization throughout Afro-Eurasia had some similar characteristics. Because it occurred in the context of the Cold War, many of these new nations had to choose between socialist and capitalist influences, which shaped their futures. While many of these new countries eventually adopted some form of democracy, the road there was often rocky. Also, decolonization often involved violence, usually the overthrow of colonial elites.

But we'll turn now to the most famous nonviolent-- or supposedly so, anyway-- decolonization: that of India. So the story begins, more or less, in 1885 with the founding of the Indian National Congress. Congress Party leaders and other nationalists in India were usually from the elite classes. Initially, they didn't even demand independence from Britain. But they were interested in creating a modern Indian nation rather than a return to some ancient pre-colonial form, possibly because India was-- and is--hugely diverse and really only unified into a single state when under imperial rule by one group or another, whether the Mauryans, the Guptas, the Mughals, or the British.

Okay, let's go to the Thought Bubble.

The best known Indian nationalist, Mohandas K. Gandhi, was a fascinating character. A British educated lawyer born to a wealthy family, he's known for making his own clothes, his long fasts, and his battles to alleviate poverty, improve the rights of women, and achieve a unified Indian independence from Britain. In terms of decolonization, he stands out for his use of nonviolence and his linking it to a somewhat mythologized view of Indian history. I mean, after all, there's plenty of violence in India's past and in its heroic epics, but Gandhi managed to hearken back to a past that used nonviolence to bring change. Gandhi and his compatriot Jawaharlal Nehru believed that a single India could continue to be ruled by Indian elites and somehow transcend the tension between the country's Hindu majority and its sizable Muslim minority.

In this they were less practical than their contemporary, Muhammad Ali Jinnah, the leader of the Muslim League who felt-- to quote historian Ainslie Embree-- "that the unified India of which the Congress spoke was an artificial one, created and maintained by British bayonets." Jinnah proved correct and in 1947 when the British left, their Indian colony was partitioned into the modern state of India and West and East Pakistan, the latter of which became Bangladesh in 1971.

While it's easy to congratulate both the British and the Indian governments on an orderly and nonviolent transfer of power, the reality of partition was neither orderly nor nonviolent. About 12 million people were displaced as Hindus in Pakistan moved to India and Muslims in India moved to Pakistan. As people left their homes, sometimes unwillingly, there was violence, and all told as many as half a million people were killed, more than died in the bloody Indonesian battle for independence. So while it's true that the massive protests that forced Britain to end its colonization of India were nonviolent, the emergence of the independent states involved really wasn't.

Thanks, Thought Bubble.

## Crash Course World History – Video Transcript

All this violence devastated Gandhi, whose lengthy and repeated hunger strikes to end violence had mixed results, and who was eventually assassinated by a Hindu nationalist who felt that Gandhi was too sympathetic to Muslims. Oh, it's time for the open letter?

An Open Letter to hunger strikers.

But first, let's see what's in the secret compartment today. A cupcake? Stan, this just seems cruel. These are from Meredith the Intern to celebrate Merebration, the holiday she invented to celebrate the anniversary of her singleness.

Dear hunger strikers,

Do you remember earlier when I said that Gandhi hearkened back to a mythologized Indian past? Well it turns out that hunger striking in India goes back all the way to, like, the 5th century BCE. Hunger strikes have been used around the world including British and American suffragettes, who hunger struck to get the vote. And in pre-Christian Ireland, when you felt wronged by someone, it was common practice to sit on their doorstep and hunger strike until your grievance was addressed. And sometimes it even works. I really admire you, hunger strikers. But I lack the courage of your convictions. Also, this is an amazing cupcake.

Best wishes, John Green

Since independence, India has largely been a success story, although we will talk about the complexity of India's emerging global capitalism next week.

For now, though, let's travel east to Indonesia, a huge nation of over 13,000 islands that has largely been ignored here on Crash Course World History due to our long-standing bias against islands. Like, we haven't even mentioned Greenland on this show. The Greenlanders, of course, haven't complained because they don't have the Internet.

So, the Dutch exploited their island colonies with the system of *cultuurstelsel*, in which all peasants had to set aside one fifth of their land to grow cash crops for export to the Netherlands. This accounted for 25% of the total Dutch national budget and it explains why they have all kinds of fancy buildings despite technically living underwater. They're like sea monkeys. This system was rather less popular in Indonesia, and the Dutch didn't offer much in exchange. They couldn't even defend their colony from the Japanese, who occupied it for most of World War II, during which time the Japanese furthered the cause of Indonesian nationalism by placing native Indonesians in more prominent positions of power, including Sukarno, who became Indonesia's first prime minister.

After the war, the Dutch-- with British help-- tried to hold onto their Indonesian colonies with so-called "police actions," which went on for more than four years before Indonesia finally won its independence in 1950. Over in the French colonies of Indochina, so called because they were neither Indian nor Chinese, things were even more violent. The end of colonization was disastrous in Cambodia, where the 17-year reign of Norodom Sihanouk gave way to the rise of the Khmer Rouge, which massacred a stunning 21% of Cambodia's population between 1975 and 1979.

In Vietnam, the French fought communist-led nationalists, especially Ho Chi Minh from almost the moment World War II ended until 1954, when the French were defeated. And then the Americans learned that there was a land war available in Asia, so they quickly took over from the French and communists did not fully control Vietnam until 1975. Despite still being ostensibly communist, Vietnam now manufactures all kinds of stuff that we like in America, especially sneakers.

More about that next week, too, but now to Egypt. You'll remember that Egypt bankrupted itself in the 19th century, trying to industrialize and ever since had been ruled by an Egyptian king who took his orders from the British. So while technically Egypt had been independent since 1922, it was very dependent independence. But, that changed in the 1950s, when the king was overthrown by the army. The army commander who led that coup was Gamal Abdul Nasser, who proved brilliant at playing the US and the USSR off each other to the benefit of Egypt. Nasser's was a largely secular nationalism, and he and his successors saw one of the other anti-imperialistic nationalist forces in Egypt, the Muslim Brotherhood, as a threat. So once in power, Nasser and the army banned the Muslim Brotherhood, forcing it underground, where it would disappear and never become an issue again. Wait, what's that? ...Really?

And finally let's turn to Central and Southern Africa. One of the most problematic legacies of colonialism was its geography. Colonial boundaries became redefined as the borders of new nation states, even where those boundaries were arbitrary or, in some cases, pernicious. The best known example is in Rwanda, where two very different tribes,

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the Hutu and the Tutsis were combined into one nation. But, more generally, the colonizers' focus on value extraction really hurt these new nations. Europeans claimed to bring civilization and economic development to their colonies, but this economic development focused solely on building infrastructure to get resources and export them.

Now whether European powers deliberately sabotaged development in Africa is a hot-button topic we're going to stay well away from, but this much is inarguably true: when the Europeans left, African nations did not have the institutions necessary to thrive in the post-war industrial world. They had very few schools, for instance, and even fewer universities. Like, when the Congo achieved independence from Belgium in 1960, there were sixteen college graduates in a country of fourteen million people.

Also, in many of these new countries, the traditional elites had been undermined by imperialism. Most Europeans didn't rule their African possessions directly but rather through the proxies of local rulers. And once the Europeans left, those local rulers, the upper classes, were seen as illegitimate collaborators. And this meant that a new group of rulers had to rise up to take their place, often with very little experience in governance. I mean, Zimbabwe's long-serving dictator Robert Mugabe was a high school teacher. Let that be a lesson to you. YOUR TEACHERS MAY HAVE DICTATORIAL AMBITIONS. But most strongmen have emerged, of course, from the military: Joseph Mobutu seized power in the Congo, which he held from 1965 until his death in 1997. Idi Amin was military dictator of Uganda from 1971 to 1979. Muammar Gaddafi ruled Libya from 1977 until 2011. The list goes on, but I don't want to give the wrong impression about Africa.

Because while the continent does have less freedom and lower levels of development than other regions in the world, many African nations show strong and consistent signs of growth despite the challenges of decolonization. Botswana for instance has gone from 70% literacy to 85% in the past 15 years and has seen steady GDP growth over 5%. Benin's economy has grown in each of the past 12 years, which is better than Europe or the US can say. In 2002, Kenya's life expectancy was 47; today it's 63. Ethiopia's per capita GDP has doubled over the past 10 years; and Mauritania has seen its infant mortality rate fall by more than 40%.

Now, this progress is spotty and fragile, but it's important to note that these nations have existed, on average, about 13 years less than my dad. Of course, past experience with the fall of empires hasn't given us cause for hope, but many citizens of these new nations are seeing real progress. That said, disaster might lurk around the corner. It's hard to say. I mean, now more than ever, we're trying to tell the story of humans... from inside the story of humans.

### **Globalization I - The Upside: Crash Course World History #41**

Hi, I'm John Green. This is Crash Course World History and today is the penultimate episode of Crash Course. We're gonna talk about globalization.

This was going to be the last episode, but I just can't quit you, World Historians. So, today we're going to talk about globalization, and in doing so, we're going to talk about why we study history at all.

Ooh ooh, Mr. Green!

Yes, Me from the Past?

We study history to get a good grade to go to a good college to get a good job—

--so you can make more money than you would otherwise make and be a slightly larger cog among the seven billion gears that turn the planet's economic engine, right?

And that's fine, but if that's why you really study history, then you need to understand all the ways that the t-shirt you're wearing is both the cause and result of your ambition. This t-shirt contains the global economy: its efficiency, its massive surplus, its hyperconnectedness, and its unsustainability. This t-shirt tells one story of globalization. So let's follow it.

So, globalization is a cultural phenomenon. It's reflected in contemporary artwork and population migration and linguistic changes, but we're going to focus, as we so often have during Crash Course, on trade.

So the world today, as symbolized by our international felt melange, experiences widespread global economic interdependence. Now, of course economic interdependence and the accompanying cultural borrowing are nothing

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new. You'll remember that we found trade documents from the Indus Valley civilization all the way in Mesopotamia.

But for a few reasons, the scale of this trade has increased dramatically:

1. Multinational corporations have global reach and increasing power.
2. Travel and shipping are cheap and safe. It took about two months to cross the Atlantic in 1800. Today it takes about five hours by plane, and less than a week by ship.
3. Governments have decreased tariffs and regulations on international trade, leading to what is sometimes called euphemistically "free trade." To which I say, if this trade is so free, how come BBC America is in the premium tier of my cable package?

To understand the role that governments play in international trade, let's look again at this t-shirt. This t-shirt, like most t-shirts made in the world, contains 100% American cotton. And that's not because the U.S. makes the best cotton or the most efficient cotton, it's because the U.S. government subsidizes cotton production. And that's what makes this cotton cheaper than cotton of similar quality from Brazil or India. But in the last 30 years, the US's share of cotton exports has gone down as Brazil, India, and Africa's cotton exports go up. And that trend will likely continue as the US moves away from its expensive cotton subsidies. In fact, these days it's already possible to find t-shirts with Brazilian, Indian, or Ugandan cotton, or a mixture of cottons from all around the world.

But because the American government doesn't subsidize industry in the way it does agricultural production, the actual spinning and weaving of the cotton takes place in lower wage countries: Mexico, Guatemala, Vietnam, China, India, China, China, sometimes even China. And then the finished shirts, called blanks, are usually sent to Europe or the United States for screen printing, and then sold.

You would think the most expensive part of this process is the part where we ship this across the Pacific Ocean, turn it into this, and then ship it back across the Pacific Ocean, but you'd be wrong. Wholesale t-shirt blanks can cost as little as \$3; the expense is in the printing, the retail side of things, and paying the designer at Thought Bubble who was tasked with the difficult job of creating a Mongol who is at once cute and terrifying.

So contemporary global trade is pretty anarchic and unregulated, at least by international institutions and national governments. Much of this has to do with academic economists, mostly in the U.S. and Europe who have argued with great success that governmental regulation diminishes prosperity by limiting growth. Now, some nations-- in Latin America, the Caribbean, and Africa-- haven't been particularly keen to pursue free trade but they've been bullied into it by larger economies with whom they desperately need to trade.

So in the past 30 years, we've seen all these emerging markets lowering their tariffs, getting rid of regulation, and privatizing formerly state run businesses. And they often do that to appease the International Monetary Fund, which offers low interest loans to developing world economies with the motto: Many Strings Attached.

Now, whether these decreased regulations have been a net positive for these developing world economies is a subject of much debate, and we will wade into it but not until next week.

First, we need to understand more about the nature of this trade. So you'll remember from the Industrial Revolution episode that industrial western powers produced most of the manufactured goods, which were then sold in international markets, but you'll also remember that domestic consumption was extremely important. I mean, almost all early Model T's were built by Americans, and bought by Americans.

But since the 1960s, and especially today, former non-industrialized parts of the world had been manufacturing consumer goods-- for domestic markets, yes, but primarily for foreign ones. This t-shirt, made in China and the Dominican Republic before being imported to Mexico and then to the United States, is a primary example of what I'm talking about, but so is the computer that you're watching me on. Your computer was probably manufactured in China, but with parts from all over the world, especially Taiwan, Japan and South Korea.

And this international manufacturing is always finding, like, new markets too. Like, Brazil, for instance, has a huge technology sector. They make iPads there, actually. Sorry, I'm trying to play Angry Birds. But, what all these countries have in common is that while there is a domestic market for things like iPads and t-shirts, the foreign markets are much, much bigger. Oh, it's time for the Open Letter?

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An open letter to Cookie Monster. But first, let's see what's in the secret compartment today. Oh, it's a cookie dough flavored Balance Bar. For people who love cookies AND pretending to be healthy.

Dear Cookie Monster,

Here's the thing, man. You don't have a stomach. That's why when you put a cookie in your mouth, it crumbles up and then it just falls out of your mouth. But here's what fascinates me, Cookie Monster. I believe you when you say you love cookies. It doesn't matter that you can't actually eat cookies because where you would have a stomach, you instead have someone's arm. And that, Cookie Monster, is what makes you a beautiful symbol for contemporary consumption. You just keep eating. Even though you can't eat. Cookie Monster, you are the best and the worst of us.

Best wishes, John Green

So, although die-hard Marxists might still resist this, by 2012 it's become pretty obvious that global capitalism has been good for a lot of people. It's certainly increased worldwide economic output. And while American autoworkers may suffer job loss, moving manufacturing jobs from high wage to lower wage countries allows a greater number of people to live better than they did when the First and Second Worlds monopolized manufacturing. And while I don't want to conflate correlation and causation, some 600 million people have emerged from poverty in the last 30 years, at least according to the World Bank's definition of poverty, which is living on less than \$1.25 a day.

Americans can argue about whether absurdly inexpensive clothes, shoes and televisions are worth the domestic economic and social dislocation, but for the Vietnamese worker stitching a pair of sneakers, that job represents an opportunity for a longer, healthier and more secure life than she would have had if those shoes were made in the U.S.A.

But, before we jump on the celebratory globalization bandwagon, let's acknowledge that this brave new world has some side effects. For instance, it maybe hasn't been so good for families, it definitely has not been good for the environment, and also there's a chance that globalization will spark, like, the end of the human species.

But, we're gonna talk about all that next week. For today, let's bring on the bandwagon and ride straight for the Thought Bubble.

So these days, people move more than they ever have. 21% of people living in Canada were born somewhere else, as was an astonishing 69% of Kuwait's current population.

Migration has become easier because:

1. Air travel is pretty cheap, especially if you only take a few plane trips in your life, and
2. It's relatively easy and inexpensive to stay in touch with relatives living far away thanks to Skype, mobile phones, and inexpensive calling cards. Also
3. Even with increased industrialization in the developing world, economic opportunities are often much better in wealthy countries. Remittances-- money sent home by people working abroad-- are now a huge driver of economic growth in the developing world. Like, in Tajikistan, for instance, remittances are 35% of the country's total gross domestic product.

With all these people moving around the world, it's not surprising that globalization also means cultural blending. When people move, they don't just give up their literary, culinary, artistic, and musical traditions. Globalized culture is a bit of a paradox, though, because some people see culture today as increasingly Americanized, right? Like, FRIENDS is currently broadcast in over 100 countries; you can find Diet Coke for sale deep in the jungles of Madagascar; the NBA is huge in China. There are fewer languages spoken today, and probably less cultural diversity.

But on the other hand, an individual's access to diverse cultural experience has never been greater. Bollywood movies, Swedish hip hop, Brazilian soap operas, highlights from Congolese football matches. These are all available to us. Culinary cultural fusion is all the rage; more novels are translated from languages than ever before, although few are actually read; and in the surest sign of cultural globalization, football, the world's game, has finally reached America, where broadcasts of the greatest collective enterprise humanity has ever known, Liverpool Football Club, got record ratings in 2012.

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Thanks, Thought Bubble.

Hey, one last request: Could you put me in a Liverpool jersey? On the pitch at Anfield? Raising the premier league trophy? WITH STEVEN GERRARD HUGGING ME? YES, JUST LIKE THAT. OH, THOUGHT BUBBLE I LOVE YOU SO MUCH.

Okay, so this all brings us to how globalization has changed us, and whether it's for the better. Assuming you make the minimum wage here in the United States, this t-shirt, purchased at your friendly neighborhood e-tailer [dftba.com](http://dftba.com), will cost you about three hours' worth of work-- and yes, that does include shipping. By the time it arrives at your door, the cotton within that t-shirt will have traveled by truck, train, ship, possibly even airplane if you opt for priority shipping. And it will probably have travelled further than Magellan did during his famous circumnavigation of the globe. You get all that for THREE HOURS of work; by contrast, a far less comfortable garment several hundred years ago would have cost you ten times as much work.

But these improvements have been accompanied by change so radical that we struggle to contextualize it. Like, the human population of our planet over time looks like this. Dang. Like, in 1800, there were a billion human beings on this planet. And that was more than had ever been seen before.

And we live more than twice as long on average as humans did just two centuries ago, largely due to improved health care for women in childbirth and their infants, but also thanks to antibiotics and the second agricultural revolution that began in the 1950s, the so-called "green revolution" that saw increased use of chemical fertilizers lead to dramatically higher crop yields.

Of course, these gains haven't been evenly distributed around the world, but chances are if you're watching this, you A. survived childbirth and B. feel reasonably confident that your children will as well. That's a new feeling for humans. And as a parent, I can assure you, it's a miracle, and one to be celebrated.

We study history so that we can understand these changes, and so that we can remember both what we've gained and lost in getting to where we are. Next week, our last week, we'll look at the many facets of globalization that aren't causes for celebration. But for today, let's just pause to consider how we got from here to here, how the relentless and unquenchable ambition of humans led to a world where the entire contents of the Library of Alexandria would fit on my iPhone along with recordings of everything Mozart ever composed. In such a world, it's easy to feel that we are big and powerful, maybe even invincible. It's easy to feel that... and also dangerous.

### **Globalization II - Good or Bad?: Crash Course World History #42**

Hi, I'm John Green and this is the final episode of *Crash Course: World History*, not because we've reached the end of history but because we've reached the particular middle where I happen to be living. Today we'll be considering whether globalization is a good thing, and along the way we'll try to do something that you may not be used to doing in history classes: imagining the future.

Mr. Green, Mr. Green! In the future, I'm gonna get to second base with Molly Bro—

No you won't, Me from the Past, but the fact that when asked to imagine THE future, you imagine YOUR future says a lot about the contemporary world. And listen, Me From the Past, while there's no question that your solipsistic individualism is bad both for you and for our species, the broader implications of individualism in general are a lot more complex.

Man, I'm gonna miss you, Intro.

So last week (ta-da) we discussed how global economic interdependence has led, on average, to longer, healthier, more prosperous lives for humans--not to mention an astonishing change in the overall human population. In the West, globalization has also led to the rise of a service economy. In the US and Europe, most people now work not in agriculture or manufacturing but in some kind of service sector: healthcare, retail, education, entertainment, information technology, Internet videos about world history, etc. And that switch has really changed our psychology, especially the psychology of upper classes living in the industrialized world.

I mean, to quote Fredric Jameson, "we are...so far removed from the realities of production and work that we inhabit a dream world of artificial stimuli and televised experience." Think of it this way: if you had to kill a chicken every time you visited KFC, you would probably eat fewer chickens. Another change of psychology: many historians-of-

<https://nerdfighteria.info/category/116>



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the-now note that globalization has also led to a celebration of individualism--particularly in the wake of the failures of the Marxist collectivist utopias.

The generation that lived through the Depression and World War II saw large-scale collectivist responses to both those crises. And they were responses that limited freedom. Like, the military draft, for instance, which limited your freedom, you know, not to be a soldier. Or the collectivization of health insurance seen in most of the post-war West, which limited your freedom to go bankrupt from health care costs. Or also government programs like social security, which limit your freedom not to pay for old people's retirement.

But since the 1960s, the ascendant idea of personal freedom minimally limited by government intervention has become very powerful. Even the Catholic church was part of this new search for individual freedom, as the Second Vatican Council relaxed church rules in ways that weakened central authority, made concessions to individual styles of worship, even said that people of different religions could go to heaven. What good is heaven if it's gonna be full of Protestants? It's just gonna be like Minnesota.

So here in the last episode of Crash Course World History, in the last thirty seconds, I have offended, uh, 5/6ths of the world's population in the form of non-Catholics and, uh, all Republicans, and probably some political moderates. Who are confused about what Obama's healthcare law will and will not do. Stan, maybe I should just make this episode just an extended rant where I reveal all of my political biases. And also my personal biases.

Look, you're never gonna meet a historian who doesn't have biases. But good historians try to acknowledge their biases and I am biased toward Canada and its awesome healthcare system. I can't lie. I'm very jealous of you guys.

But perhaps the greatest effect of the victory of individualism was on sex and the family. We haven't talked much about sex because my brother's teaching Biology, which is basically just sex, but sex is pretty important historically because it's how we keep happening. But, in the 20th century, greater variety and availability of contraception made it possible for people to experiment with multiple sexual partners and helped to uncouple sex from child bearing, which was awesome, but individualism also had a destabilizing effect on families. As the great Leo Tolstoy put it, all happy families are alike, but each unhappy family is unhappy in its own way. But when your individual fulfillment trumps all, you needn't live amid your uniquely unhappy family: You can just leave. So, divorce rates have skyrocketed in the past few decades, and not just in the US. By the turn of the 21st century, divorce rates in China reached nearly 25%, with 70% of those divorces initiated by women.

Technology has also driven families apart, as parents and children spend increasing time alone in front of their individual screens, sharing fewer experiences. That's individualism, too, but not of a kind that we usually celebrate. But probably the biggest consequence of globalization and the ensuing rise in human population has been humanity's effect on the environment. While populations have increased partly thanks to better yields from existing farmland, much more land has also been brought under cultivation in the past half-century. Often this meant cutting down trees in valuable rainforests-- the best known example of this is what's going on in the Amazon, but it happens worldwide. And we're losing land not just for food, but also to grow the global economy. Oh, it's time for the open letter?

An Open Letter to Flowers. But first, let's see what's in the secret compartment today. Oh, it's fake flowers. Thank you, Stan. One for behind each ear.

Dear Flowers,

You capture the best and the worst of the globalized economy. You're so pretty. Even the fake ones are pretty. But the real one are constantly dying. They've got to be harvested, and shipped, and cut very efficiently. And it's a global phenomenon. Like there are flowers in my corner market from Africa. These are from China, but because they are plastic, they could just be shipped in a shipping container. More people can afford to apologize by giving their romantic partners professionally cut and arranged roses than in any time in human history, but in that we have lost something, which is that the whole idea of flowers is that you had to go out into the field and, like, cut them and arrange them yourself to apologize. It's not supposed to be, "I'm sorry I forgot your birthday. Here's \$8 worth of work that was done in Kenya." It's supposed to be, "I'm sorry I forgot your birthday, so I went into the frakking forest and got you some frakking flowers."

Anyway, flowers,

Best wishes, John Green

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Aww, you guys got me flowers for my last episode of World History.

Okay, let's go to the Thought Bubble.

As worldwide production and consumption increases, we use more resources, especially water and fossil fuels. Globalization has made the average human richer, and rich people tend to use more of...everything...but especially energy. This has already resulted in climate change, which will likely accelerate.

The global economy isn't a zero-sum game. Like, I don't need to become more poor in order for someone else to become more rich. But growth, at least so far, has been dependent upon unsustainable use of the planet's resources. The planet can't sustain seven billion automobiles, for instance, or seven billion frequent flyers, although most of us who can afford to drive or fly feel entitled to do so.

You'll remember that when we talked about the Industrial Revolution, we discussed the virtuous cycle of more efficiency making things cheaper, which in turn made them easier to buy, which increased demand, which increased efficiency. But from the perspective of the planet, each turn in that cycle takes something: More land under cultivation, more carbon emissions, more resource extraction. That can't go on forever, but worryingly, our current models of economic growth don't allow for any other way.

Thanks, Thought Bubble.

And then there is our astonishingly robust health. Although much of the world has been ravaged by HIV/AIDS for the past three decades, there's been a relative lack of global pandemics since the 1918 flu. And that's particularly surprising given increased population density and more travel between population centers. China has seen 150 million people leave the countryside for cities in the last 20 years. This was Shanghai in 1990; and this is Shanghai in 2010. The population of Lagos was 41,000 in 1900; today, it's almost 8 million. Of course, people have been moving from country to city for a long time; remember Gilgamesh? But the pace of that change has dramatically accelerated.

Similarly, there's nothing new about international trade, but its pace has also increased dramatically: In 1960, trade accounted for 24% of the world's GDP; today, it's more than double that. Almost no human being alive today lives with stuff only manufactured in their home country, but a thousand years ago, only the richest of the rich could benefit from the Silk Road. Still, trade isn't new. And while it's tempting to say that the types of goods being traded--pharmaceuticals, computers, software, financial services--represent something wholly new, you could just as easily see this as part of the evolution of trade itself. At some point silk was seen as a new trade good. As tastes change and consumers become more affluent, the things that they want to buy change.

So is anything really different, or is it all just accelerated? Well, some historians argue that an economically interdependent world is much less likely to go to war. And that may be true, but increasing global, cultural, and economic integration hasn't led to an end to violence. I mean, we've seen large scale ethnic and nationalistic violence from Rwanda to the former Yugoslavia to the Democratic Republic of Congo to Afghanistan. Globalization has not rid the world of violence.

But there is an ideological shift in the age of globalization that does seem pretty new, and that's the turn to democracy. Now this isn't the limited democracy of the ancient Greeks, or the quirky republican system originally developed in the U.S.; there are almost as many kinds of democracies as there are nations experiencing democracy. The fact is, however, that democracy and political freedom, especially the freedom to participate in and influence the government, have been on the rise all over the world since the 1980s and especially since 1990. For instance, if you looked at the governments of most Latin American countries during most of the 20th centuries, you would usually find them ruled by military strongman. Now, with a couple of exceptions (Fidel, Hugo)... Stan, are they behind me right now? Because if they're behind me, I am in favor of collectivizing oil revenue and distributing it to the poor. If they're not behind me, that's a terrible idea. Right, but anyway, democracy is now flourishing in most of Latin America.

Probably the most famous democratic success story is South Africa, which jettisoned decades of Apartheid in the 1990s and elected former dissident Nelson Mandela as its first black president in 1994. It also adopted one of the most progressive constitutions in the world. But it's worth remembering that democracy and economic success don't always go hand in hand, as much as some Americans wish they would. Many new African democracies continue to struggle, the same is true in some Latin American countries, and China has shown that you don't need democracy in

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order to experience economic growth. But for a few countries, especially Brazil and India, the combination of democracy and economic liberalism has unleashed impressive growth that has lifted millions out of poverty.

So can we say that it's good, then? Can we celebrate globalization, in spite of its destabilizing effects on families and the environment? Well, here's where we have to imagine the future, because if some superbug shows up tomorrow and it travels through all these global trade routes and kills every living human, then globalization will have been very bad for human history: specifically, by ending it. If climate change continues to accelerate and displaces billions of people and causes widespread famines and flooding, then we will remember this period of human history as short-sighted, self-indulgent, and tremendously destructive. On the other hand, if we discover an asteroid hurtling toward earth and mobilize global industry and technology in such a way that we lose Bruce Willis but save the world, then globalization will be celebrated for millennia. I mean, assuming we have millennia and can convince Bruce Willis to go.

In short, to understand the present, we have to imagine the future. That's the thing about history: It depends on where you're standing. From where I'm standing, globalization has been a net positive, but then again, it's been a pretty good run for heterosexual males of European descent. Critics of globalization point out that billions haven't benefited much if at all from all this economic prosperity, and that the polarization of wealth is growing both within and across nations. And those criticisms are valid and they are troubling, but they aren't new. Disparities between those who have more and those who have less have existed pretty much from the moment agriculture enabled us to accumulate a surplus. At some times this inequality has been a big concern, as it was with Jesus and Muhammad, at other times not so much. Inequalities are as old as human history, and almost as old is the debate about them. One thing that is new, however, is our ability to learn about them, to discuss them, and hopefully to find solutions for them together as a global community that is better integrated and more connected than it has ever been before.

Because here's the other thing about history: You are making it. That old idea that history is the deeds of great men? That was wrong. Celebrated individuals do shape history, but so do the rest of us. And while it's true that many historical forces--malaria, meteors from space--aren't human, it's also true that every human is a historical force. You are changing the world every day. And it is our hope that by looking at the history that was made before us, we can see our own crucial decisions in a broader context. And I believe that context can help us make better choices--and better changes.