



Unit 9 Overview: Globalization 1880 to the Future

We are living in an era of intense globalization. But what does that mean? What are the benefits and challenges posed by globalization??



0:01

Ordered list of generations from oldest to youngest: Boomers, Gen X, Millennials, Zoomers, & Alpha; photos of children sitting in front of computers

Millennials are old. Not as old as Gen X and not nearly as old as Boomers, but way older than Zoomers or Gen Alpha. Millennials were also the first generation to grow up with the internet. And that made their lives different. Most importantly, it made their lives more global.

Definition of social generations; montage of images including: the evolution of cell phones, a group of teenagers wearing blue jeans, and the Beatles

Labels like Boomers and Millennials and Zoomers refer to something called social generations, groups of people who came of age reading, watching, and consuming the same culture and using the same technology. But until Millennials, those shared cultural cues were mostly confined to one country. There were some cultural values that went global, like blue jeans and The Beatles, during the youth of the Boomer generation. But overall, each country held distinct generational patterns.

0:51

Short clip depicting manual connection to the internet; clips of what one's music library and Facebook page looked like on early computers

Then came the internet. The internet was born on January 1st, 1983—right alongside Millennials. Suddenly, people could communicate instantaneously across the world. As technology improved, the internet spread and grew. Innovations in video, music and social media allow the millennial generation to go global for the first time, sharing common cultural experiences no matter their country of residence. The result was an era of intensive globalization.

01:33

Time lapse of a busy port city; photo of old cargo ships; animated world map depicting the growth of transcontinental connection

What is globalization? Globalization refers to how the world has become more connected economically, politically, socially and culturally over time. It's a process that's been going on for centuries. But it intensified during industrialization. Globalization slowed at times, like during the global conflicts of the 20th century. But in general, the trend has been towards an increasingly interconnected world. However, the last three or four decades of world history have been an era of unprecedented globalization. As our connections have become more frequent, more extensive and have produced bigger impacts.

Unit 9's Driving Question: How has intensive globalization affected societies in different places?

How has this era of intensive globalization affected people differently around the world? What are the benefits and dangers of intensive globalization?

02:28

Time lapse of packages on a conveyor belt; time lapse of the foot-traffic through a mall

The connections forged by intensive globalization have brought us lots of good things. Some are physical objects: Electronics, consumer goods and local food and drinks move all over the world for people to enjoy—often cheaper than we can make them at home. Industrialization has combined with globalization to give more people access to more stuff from more places, more cheaply than ever before.



02:57

Photos of a Bollywood actress, Nollywood film premiere, and a K-Pop group; animation depicting how the internet allows for the transfer of ideas across the globe

And then there's culture. Mexican Telenovelas, movies from Bollywood and Nollywood, K-Pop and Japanese Anime have joined Hollywood films and YouTube influencers as essential parts of the global cultural landscape. Cross-cultural exchange has always moved ideas as well as goods. And in this period of intensive globalization, the internet speeds up the transfer of ideas, research and scientific knowledge—all accessible at the click of a button, accelerating the pace of innovation.

03:33

Montage of photos depicting: run-down houses on the outskirts of a major city, a tent city, a large group of people gathered in protest, a cargo ship blocking a waterway, and a surgical mask and an N95

Yet as you will learn, globalization is not inherently good. In addition to its benefits, globalization has also produced inequality, exacerbated the economic exploitation of people in less wealthy regions and taken an enormous environmental toll through the production, transportation and shipping of goods and services around the world. Globalization also has the potential to erase local cultures and to raise tensions and conflict. When those conflicts erupt, or natural disasters intensify, our globally interconnected interdependent economies and systems of production and distribution can quickly become compromised. Finally, the ease with which people and goods can move across the oceans and continents has also made it easier for diseases to spread more rapidly than ever.

04:30

Time lapse of students milling about outside a college building; time lapse of the foot-traffic through a major Japanese city; clips of young people gathered in protest

We're living in an era of intensive globalization and it presents us with many challenges. But these challenges aren't insurmountable. Our globalized generations today can choose to leverage the opportunities of our interconnections to overcome the challenges we've created. Young people today are as likely to share a favorite food or TV show, or ownership of a product, or even a set of social values with someone their age in another country, as they are with someone in their own country. These connections might offer today's younger Global Generations a great deal of power and influence over how conversations and policies unfold.

05:11

Time lapse of the traffic through a major intersection; photo depicting two neighborhoods—one wealthy and one poor—next to each other, separated by a dirt road; animation of a spinning globe

The future is likely to be even more globalized. Your generation will define its direction. Will you embrace its opportunities or surrender to its challenges? Will we create a world of walls separating the wealthy "haves" from the "have-nots" who struggle to meet their basic needs? Will we continue exploiting the environment to produce and distribute the things we need? Or will your generation build a global future that sees us all knit together in a tapestry of prosperous sustainable healthy and connected communities?



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