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Welcome to the World History Project Origins Course

The WHP Origins course is a global history course aimed at tenth-grade students that provides a cohesive approach to learning and understanding the history of the world. In this course, you and your students will explore our long human history—beginning before there were people and ending in our present moment. This course will help students learn how to use stories about the past to orient themselves to their present moment and prepare for the future. We’re going to cover a lot of ground (and a lot of time), but this course is not a typical march-through-time history class that covers one thing after another. Rather, WHP uses a set of overarching inquiry problems and narrative frames, situated at a variety of scales, to organize and facilitate teaching and learning. As you begin your journey with WHP, remember: you’re not alone. An active community of teachers and scholars is with you for the ride through our big collective history—all 13.8 billion years of it.

In this guide, you will find descriptions of the three course frames that we use in WHP and how they have changed over time; an explanation of our periodization scheme; a detailed era breakdown; an overview of the practice progressions that will guide your students as they learn to think, read, and write like historians; and a pacing guide. This guide is geared specifically to the Origins course (Big Bang to present). For an overview of WHP’s overall approach, including our inquiry framework, philosophy, and objectives, check out the WHP Course Guide. In addition, if you think our 1750 course (1750 to the present) might be better for your classroom, check out the 1750 Course Overview.

Periodization Scheme

Students will use the three course frames and their related questions across seven eras of human history. Note that the periodization scheme used to organize the course does not always have clear beginning and ending dates for each era. Why? First, all periodization schemes are constructions made by historians to help organize and make sense of the continuous flow of the past. Historians, not the past, create historical periods or eras. Historical periods
are historians’ interpretations. Second, historical processes don’t start and stop on specific dates. Indeed, some processes, such as urbanization, have had very long arcs that continue through the present and will likely continue into the near future. WHP’s overlaps should facilitate a focus on historical processes in addition to historical events. We hope students will see the eras as approximations, adding *circa* or *about* to each starting and ending point.

- **Era 1:** Our Big History (13.82 billion years ago to the future)
- **Era 2:** Early Humans (250,000 years ago to 3000 BCE)
- **Era 3:** Cities, Societies, and Empires (6000 BCE to 700 CE)
- **Era 4:** Regional Webs (200 to 1500 CE)
- **Era 5:** The First Global Age (1200 to 1750 CE)
- **Era 6:** The Long Nineteenth Century and the Birth of the Modern World (1750 to 1914 CE)
- **Era 7:** The Great Convergence and Divergence (1880 CE to the future)

**Frame Descriptions**

In WHP, we ask you and your students to examine world history through different lenses, or frames. These frames are intended to help structure students’ experiences with course content. This approach highlights the idea that historical accounts are constructed based on particular perspectives. More importantly, these frames provide students with big-picture, historical “stories,” thus providing a cohesive backdrop against which students can construct their historical understanding.

As students move through the course, they will examine how each frame has changed over our long history.

**Networks**

*In what ways are we interconnected?*

We are all connected to other people, some of them very close friends and relatives without whom we would not survive childhood and without whom adulthood would be very difficult. But these connections go beyond the communities in which we live and the people we know directly. They become networks—webs of people to whom we are interconnected through the exchange of things and ideas. One way to tell the history of the world is to focus on how our connections to other people have changed over time. It is a story of how we became connected to more and more people across larger and larger parts of the Earth. Today, in many ways, we are all connected—all 7 billion of us.
Early human networks were very small. Foragers rarely interacted with members of other bands. As humans started farming and labor became more specialized, humanity became more interdependent. Groups and individuals began relying more on other people in other places to get the things they needed to survive. As cities and empires emerged around the ancient world, trade routes connected merchants across long-distance networks, and portable religions connected people across political borders. But, as you will see in Era 4, these sorts of networks were not permanent, and the more complex the network, the more catastrophic the collapse. By the fifteenth century, regional webs connected people across Afro-Eurasia and across the Americas. But after 1492, the Columbian Exchange would begin to knit together both hemispheres into a single network of global exchange. In Era 6, the “long nineteenth century,” several revolutions created new economic, political, and cultural networks as the Industrial Revolution increased our ability to travel and communicate across long distances. Today, digital networks and globalization have connected the world more than ever before. As humans seek to address the challenges of the future, our relationships to one another will be crucial to finding solutions.

Production and Distribution

How do we make and distribute the stuff we need and use?

One thing that humans share is the need and desire for stuff. Like all animals, we need food and drink to survive. Like a small subset of animals, such as octopi, some birds, and other apes, we make physical tools to interact with our environment. Alone among all species on Earth, humans have developed a culture that makes and consumes cultural products like art, music, and video. How we make, share, and use these things is one way to view human history, and this is the theme at the core of the production and distribution frame.

Humans have had many strategies for getting the stuff we need to live. We call these strategies production. Production has changed dramatically over time, becoming increasingly complex. For much of human history, we produced most of what we needed ourselves or in small family groups. But as we started to live in larger and larger groups, we learned to organize ourselves to make and harvest the stuff we need in larger quantities that could support cities and empires containing millions of people. Sometimes, this increasing production has been the result of great increases in productivity—the amount that any one person can make. At other times, people have acquired more of what they want through violence and force. With the development of money, taxation, commerce, investment, and colonialism also came new ways of acquiring more stuff. By the long nineteenth century, capitalism and the plantation system had reshaped global patterns of production and distribution, laying the groundwork for the Industrial Revolution, which would forever change how we make, move, and use stuff.

As our tools and organization have become more complex and our communities larger, we have had to create new methods of distributing the things we make. The processes of globalization in Era 7 have woven the world together into huge systems of production and distribution. Where once small families shared and consumed only what they made or foraged themselves, we now purchase or download things made far away, often in many stages and by many different people who may barely know each other, if they know each other at all. Some things are distributed through very formal systems, through massive corporations or by governments, while others are locally produced or available for distribution through less formal systems, such as via online or social networks.
Communities

How have we organized the communities in which we live?

Humans have always lived in groups. In the beginning, those groups were very small. Today, they are quite big, with some in the billions. Once, our sense of community was quite simple, with few rules and little need to consciously think about it. Now, many of us live in very complex communities with laws and rules, and most of us belong to several communities at once. The idea of community is different from the concept of the networks that we looked at earlier, although they may overlap. Unlike networks, which are defined through exchange, communities, by definition, share a sense of identity, of being “us” or “we.” Networks often stretch between, and connect communities to, each other.

The kinds of communities in which we have lived, the ways we have organized them, and how we’ve understood our membership in them, is constantly changing, but throughout our existence, being a member of a community—or several communities at the same time—has remained a central feature of human existence.

Communities are groups of humans tied to each other through both structures and ideas. The structures are sometimes spoken about as “laws” or “politics.” When most humans lived in forager bands and small villages, these rules were often unofficial and unwritten. But as humans banded together to form complex societies, these rules also had to become increasingly complex. During Era 3, the emergence of the state required formal systems of recording and enforcing rules that determined membership in communities, how decisions were made, who got to make them, and much more. The emergence of portable religions helped create larger and larger communities by defining shared beliefs and more rules of behavior. Complex political and religious communities enabled cooperation on even greater scales. As the world grew more interconnected, communities came into more frequent contact with each other, often violently. By the long nineteenth century, new ideas about individual and political sovereignty reimagined human communities yet again, creating the world of nation-states we still live in today. In the past century, international institutions have attempted to create a single global community, and the Internet has created digital communities.
Era Learning Objectives and Narratives

Era 1: Our Big History (13.82 billion years ago to the future)

Era 1 Problem: Why begin a course in human history before humans existed?

1. In what ways can using a “frame” help us develop a more meaningful understanding of history?
2. How might physical, geographic, and biological contexts impact human lives and history?
3. How do scales such as time and space help you make sense of your world?

Everything has a history, and these histories come in a myriad of shapes and sizes. Because of this, we often “frame” history within some time or some space, much like cropping a photograph to fit into a smaller picture frame or blowing it up to fit into a bigger frame. Moreover, like the pictures, the size and shape of the frame defines and constrains what we can see. Temporal and spatial frames—or scales—do just that for the stories we tell about the past.

Often, history courses limit themselves to a few temporal and spatial scales to tell the story of a group of people or a nation. In WHP, we will move between histories of various shapes and sizes, a practice we call **scale switching**. Spatially, we will move between the global, national, regional, local, and personal. Temporally, we will want to understand what happened in a single day, a year, or a millennium—and use different scales of time to see what changed and what did not.

The scales at which we view history result in varied narratives about our past. Throughout time, people have used rich and varied narratives to tell their history, or their culture’s history, or even the history of the world. The ability to tell and share narratives is a key element of what makes us human, yet because these stories are told from a certain perspective, we must be careful not to put all our trust in one narrative. The danger of a single narrative is that it offers just one perspective, one lens, for viewing our past. For this reason, along with scale switching, in WHP we will emphasize the importance of multiple narratives.

Our big question for this era—Why begin a course in human history before humans existed?—leads us to begin the course with the largest scale and narrative possible, the Big History story. We will look at how the Universe and the world we live in, as well as our understanding of it, have influenced the arc of human history.

**Era 1 Learning Objectives**

1. Understand and evaluate history as a discipline of study.
2. Examine how historians frame history by creating narratives of different scales of time and space.
3. Analyze the advantages, disadvantages, and challenges of creating historical narratives and using different temporal and spatial scales and perspectives.
4. Evaluate the impact that the Earth has had and continues to have on humans and how humans have impacted the Earth.
5. Analyze and evaluate concepts such as claim testing, contextualization, causation, sourcing, and historical comparison.
6. Employ a variety of frames, such as communities, networks, and production and distribution, to examine historical eras.
Era 2: Early Humans (250,000 years ago – 3000 BCE)

**Era 2 Problem: What caused some humans to shift from foraging to farming and what were the effects of this change?**

1. How did our ancestors migrate across much of the Earth and figure out how to survive in new regions?
2. In what ways were foraging cultures similar to each other despite differences in the environments in which they lived?
3. In what ways were farming cultures similar to each other despite differences in the environments in which they lived?
4. Which way of living do you think was more desirable, foraging or farming—and why?
5. What different interpretations and evidence are used to explain why farming developed?

The vast majority of human history is the story of tiny bands of people, each largely made up of members of one family, moving around small areas in search of wild foods they could forage or hunt. The better-known history of farmers, and that of cities, empires, and nation-states is just the most recent chapter of our long human story. It is a chapter that takes us from foragers to the Internet, and it was all made possible by changes in the way humans thought, produced food and goods, built communities, and interacted with other people between about 250,000 years ago and 3000 BCE.

In Era 2, we examine why it is that some humans became farmers, when our species had survived for so long as foragers, and we examine the consequences of those changes. From about 250,000 years ago, people anatomically identical to us walked the Earth. They were all foragers, and most humans would remain foragers for more than 245,000 of the years that followed. But a series of dramatic, although often quite gradual, transformations in this period prepared our species for some rapid changes in the last 5,000 years of human history.

**Era 2 Learning Objectives**

1. Analyze how humans are different from other animals and evaluate the roles that cognition and language play in understanding these differences.
2. Understand human migration patterns and evaluate how the Earth has shaped these patterns and how humans have impacted the Earth.
3. Apply historical thinking practices and reasoning skills such as claim testing, causation, comparison, continuity and change over time, and periodization to evaluate these historical events and processes.
4. Evaluate, create and support arguments using historical evidence for why many early human communities made the switch from foraging to farming.
5. Understand and evaluate the positive and negative aspects of different types of human communities and how foraging, pastoral, and farming communities interacted.
6. Analyze and challenge the historical narrative of how farming led to the formation of complex, organized societies.
Era 3: Cities, Societies, and Empires (6000 BCE to 700 CE)

Era 3 Problem: How did complex societies develop and how did they impact humans inside and outside these communities? What made life in cities and agrarian societies different from life in pastoral, nomadic communities, or Neolithic villages?

1. What made life in cities and agrarian societies different from life in pastoral communities, nomadic communities, or Neolithic villages?
2. How did life differ between various cities and agrarian societies?
3. Why did most complex societies develop differing social classes—aristocrats, merchants, artisans, peasants, and slaves—when these categories had never existed earlier?
4. How did the emergence of portable belief systems affect how people lived and support new types of networks among them?

In Era 2, we saw major developments in the ways people thought, where they lived, and how they produced their food. In Era 3, we will watch as these earlier developments lead to new ways to organize human communities and how new connections generate ever-expanding networks. Although it is again important to emphasize that foraging communities still existed in this era, there was undoubtedly a trend towards farming. It was within these agrarian communities that we begin to see villages and cities. Eventually, many of these villages and cities would consolidate under one government as states. Sometimes, these states grew into empires—large groups of communities arranged in hierarchies and ruled by one government.

As we will see throughout history, technology played a key role in the expansion of communities and networks. The domestication of the horse, new ship-building and navigation techniques, advanced road construction, canal building, and the use of the camel as transport in arid regions, are a few of the innovations that played key roles in making it easier for people, goods, ideas, and diseases to spread farther and faster than ever before. Trade networks such as the Silk Road connected communities across oceans and over vast areas of land. Two key impacts of these expanding networks were the growth of states and the spread of portable belief systems. States arranged, organized, and exerted control over society and trade in ways that were both beneficial and oppressive. They appeared as larger and more formalized types of communities than those that had preceded them, but they were not the only ways in which humans organized themselves into groups in this era. Portable belief systems also emerged that could connect people in different regions within the same religious community. While belief systems were not new, it was during this era that all of the world’s major religions appeared: Buddhism, Christianity, Hinduism, Judaism, Islam, and Zoroastrianism.

These trends toward larger networks and communities did not affect everyone equally. Many people still lived very local lives. The majority of people did not benefit from the increased wealth gained by rulers and elites. And while writing became an increasingly efficient tool, it was available mainly to the elite. So, as we look back at this era, we must always be aware of the stories that were not written.

Regardless, this era is notable in the way in which large states and empires and expansive trading systems developed, particularly in Afro-Eurasia. Larger and larger groups of people were living within increasingly complex systems that shared at least some commonalities, such as religion, language, or simply geography. Yet, the more complex something is, the more fragile it becomes. In the next era, we’ll examine the ways in which these various agrarian states and empires faced crises.

1 We’ve made a conscious decision at WHP to use the term societies instead of civilizations in order to ensure that the course is equitable and respectful of all types of communities. The word civilizations often implies that the area we’re studying is more highly evolved or better than other forms of communities, such as those composed of foragers and pastoralists, which is not the case. Societies such as Mesopotamia, Egypt and Nubia, the Indus Valley, China, and those of Central and South America are not superior to others, they are simply organized differently.
Era 3 Learning Objectives

1. Understand, evaluate, and analyze why certain human communities began to organize into more complex societies, states, and empires.
2. Analyze how trade networks expanded during this era.
3. Explain and interpret the spread of shared belief systems and how these beliefs shaped the formation of societies.
4. Understand and critique the common characteristics of societies such as social hierarchies, specialization of labor, farming, taxes, writing, and cities.
5. Evaluate human migration patterns during this era and explain how cultural interactions highlight societies' similarities and differences.
6. Use historical thinking practices and reasoning skills such as claim testing, causation, historical comparison, contextualization, sourcing, and continuity and change over time to evaluate these historical events and processes.

Era 4: Regional Webs (200 to 1500 CE)

Era 4 Problem: How do human systems restructure themselves after catastrophe? How did societal collapse affect the lives of people in different instances?

1. How did societal collapse affect the lives of people in different instances?
2. How and why did the interconnections among human societies grow and shrink at different times, and how did these changes affect both human lives and the environment?
3. In what ways can the label of the medieval “Dark Ages” be both useful and inaccurate?

This era covers a period (c. 200 to c. 1500 CE) in which a major transformation took place across the networks that included many of the largest population centers and states in the world, specifically in Afro-Eurasia. Toward the end of Era 3, we saw large states and empires and expansive trading systems developing in this region. As Era 4 begins, several of these states break up or decrease in power, and long-distance east-west trade in Eurasia seems to decline. To many observers, this transformation looks like a collapse, followed by a recovery; an “intermission” in the middle of the story before the Afro-Eurasian network could reemerge. To others, it looks more like a reorganization, a change in who was participating and how the system was formed. Certainly, whatever happened, it was something that defies description as “progress as normal.” We also take a comparative look at evidence of independent “collapses” elsewhere, including among the Maya city-states of Mesoamerica.

The era opens by looking at collapse in Rome and China. The reasons for collapse—and what historians mean by collapse—will be examined. Collapse is a blanket term that can describe a lot of different situations. It might mean the total destruction of a society and all of its institutions—the burning of cities, the decline of population, the loss of knowledge. It might, in some cases, be used to describe little more than a change of government or ruler. Regardless, wherever there was a collapse, there was a recovery. Exactly how long this took varied in different regions, and some scholars argue that some recoveries began almost immediately—hence the argument that maybe some collapses weren’t really so dramatic, and maybe recoveries were really just reorganizations. In this era, we examine how trade and religion often work together to rebuild systems and strengthen networks. In particular, Islam and the Indian Ocean trade network emerged as powerful players in the Afro-Eurasian system. In order to help students engage these issues within a global historical framework, we conclude this era by critically examining the common idea of a medieval “Dark Ages,” asking students to evaluate how accurate this description is for various regions and the world during the ninth through twelfth centuries CE.
Era 4 Learning Objectives

1. Evaluate and critique the historical narrative of the rise and fall of societies.
2. Understand and analyze why networks of interaction both increased and decreased during this era.
3. Evaluate how new innovations in technology and transportation affected trade networks and human communities.
4. Understand the formation and spread of Islam and how this belief system influenced communities and networks.
5. Use historical thinking practices and reasoning skills such as claim testing, causation, historical comparison, contextualization, sourcing, and continuity and change over time to evaluate these historical events and processes.
6. Critique the narrative of the “Dark Ages” by analyzing and using evidence from multiple sources to support historical thinking.

Era 5: The First Global Age (1200 to 1750 CE)

Era 5 Problem: How did the first ongoing connections between the hemispheres promote change both globally and regionally? To what extent can the Columbian Exchange be considered one of the most important turning points in history?

1. To what extent can the Columbian Exchange be considered one of the most important turning points in history?
2. What were the impacts of the Columbian Exchange for people living in different regions and social classes around the world? Why and how were the impacts similar and different?
3. In what ways did societies across the world develop both similarities and differences during this period of increasing global interconnectivity?
4. How did changes in the environment, demographic changes, and new forms of coerced labor affect some regions of the world more than others?

In 1491, no living people in Europe, Asia, or Africa knew that there were humans in the Americas, and no one in the Americas knew there were humans in Europe. There were no tomatoes in Italian food, corn in West African cuisine, or potatoes in Irish food, because tomatoes, corn, and potatoes existed only in the Americas. There were also no horses or cows in the Americas. Today, cassava is one of the leading crops in sub-Saharan Africa, but it was found only in the Americas until transatlantic trade began. Ecuador is now one of the world’s leading exporters of bananas, but bananas were exclusively an Afro-Eurasian crop until the beginning of what historian Alfred Crosby named the Columbian Exchange, a network of exchange that covered almost the entire world.

The Columbian Exchange marked a dramatic change in global history. Not only foods, but also people moved as a result of this exchange—and not always willingly. Most dramatically, millions of Africans and Europeans ended up in the Americas, a large proportion of them enslaved or otherwise unfree. And diseases moved as well. Afro-Eurasian diseases such as smallpox, malaria, and cholera, previously unknown in the Americas, would kill millions in the century that followed. This widespread exchange of crops, animals, and infectious disease dramatically reshaped not just human life but all life on Earth. As Crosby pointed out, the transfer by humans of plant and animal species into new environments may have “caused the extinction of more species in the last 400 years than the usual processes of evolution might kill off in a million.”

But the Columbian Exchange wasn’t entirely transformative. It is sometimes assumed that until 1492, when “Christopher Columbus sailed the ocean blue,” the Earth was divided into two separate worlds. However, it is a bit of an oversimplification to see our planet as two completely separate worlds before 1492. For one thing, the
people who lived in the Americas were descended—albeit distantly—from people who’d traveled from Asia into the Americas. Furthermore, Europeans had traveled by sea to the Americas centuries before. This narrative of world history also ignores the people of Australasia. But most importantly, as we show in this era, the operation of a “world system”—admittedly not including the Americas—predated 1492 in the shape of a twelfth- and thirteenth-century system that connected most of Eurasia and much of Africa. A similar, if smaller, connective system existed in parts of the Americas. In some ways, therefore, the Columbian Exchange connected and preserved features of existing world systems.

**Era 5 Learning Objectives**

1. Understand and evaluate the formation of regional and global networks of interaction.
2. Analyze how global interconnections impacted political systems, trade networks, and the biosphere/environment.
3. Evaluate the development of new hierarchies based upon social class and race during this era.
4. Understand and critique the role of capitalism on the Columbian Exchange and transatlantic slave trade.
5. Use historical thinking practices and reasoning skills such as contextualization, sourcing, and continuity and change over time to evaluate these historical events and processes.
6. Interpret primary source documents to understand and analyze multiple perspectives of the Black Death, Columbian Exchange, and the transatlantic slave trade.

**Era 6: The Long Nineteenth Century and the Birth of the Modern World (1750 to 1914 CE)**

**Era 6 Problem:** What were the engines of change that created our “modern” world?

1. What were the features of national and liberal revolutions in the Atlantic world and how widespread was their impact by 1914?
2. How did the energy shift to fossil fuels accelerate the creation of a “modern” world?
3. What was the short-term and longer-term impact of the Industrial Revolution and how did these differ for different groups and communities?
4. What demographic, economic, political, and intellectual factors help explain the long nineteenth centuries’ global movement to end legalized slavery and reform the way people worked?
5. This era is sometimes introduced as the birth of “modernity” and an era of “revolutions.” What made this era distinctive or different from previous eras? In what ways did the era continue trends or patterns that we saw in previous eras? What explains the changes and continuities in this era?

We sometimes refer to the time period covered in this era as an “age of revolutions” because it was a period of such great transformation. Funnily enough, the term revolution can mean going round and round but going nowhere. But during this era, revolution came to mean almost the opposite—“dramatic change that turns the world upside down.” We will talk about these revolutions in four groups in this era.

First, we will look at liberal political revolutions, examining the ways in which new ideas of human rights and individual sovereignty sparked movements for more fair and representative government. Then we will turn to the Industrial Revolution. This massive shift in how we produced and distributed goods altered societies in unprecedented ways. Third, we will look at modern imperialism as a revolutionary change, one that shifted balances of power and led to structural and societal shifts still very much felt today. Finally, we will focus on the economic revolutions of capitalism and communism.

Each of these changed the world in their own ways, and they all worked together to create the “modern” world from which our contemporary society emerged. In many history textbooks, these revolutions are spoken of as if they
changed everyone’s lives, everywhere, in the same way. But, in fact, we must admit that these revolutions, while widespread and dramatic, impacted people throughout the world in very different ways. So, in this era, we will examine just how far-reaching and universal these revolutions of the long nineteenth century really were.

**Era 6 Learning Objectives**

1. Analyze how the roles of sovereignty, individualism, and the fight for equality influenced political revolutions of this era.
2. Understand and evaluate the economic and technological changes that led to the Industrial Revolution and analyze how the Industrial Revolution created significant changes in human communities, networks, and production and distribution, as well as its impact on the environment.
3. Assess the role of industrialization and nationalism in the creation of new empires and the rise of the nation-state.
4. Evaluate why people’s perceptions of labor, women’s rights, and human rights changed during this era.
5. Critique the definition and narrative of modernity and analyze competing interpretations of modernity in this era.
6. Use historical thinking practices and reasoning skills such as claim testing, causation, historical comparison, contextualization, sourcing, and continuity and change over time to evaluate these historical events and processes.

**Era 7: The Great Convergence and Divergence (1880 CE to the future)**

**Era 7 Problem: What are the virtues and challenges of trying to tell one human history as opposed to many human histories?**

1. How important have population explosion, extensive urbanization, and migration been in shaping the world in which you live?
2. In what ways were the global conflicts, economic and demographic crises, and racialized actions against groups of people in the twentieth century a continuation of, or a break with, trends and movements of the previous two centuries?
3. Do you think the world has generally become more democratic or less democratic, and what do you think might happen in the future?
4. Globalization can be seen as a “flattening” of human experiences, yet also as something that is “lumpy” because of the way in which differences remain among communities and people. How were (and are) people living during this era similar and why? How were (and are) people living during this era different and why?
5. Over the past 250 years, we have seen increases in world population; the number of people living in cities; energy use; the world economy; the average standard of living; popular sovereignty and global transportation, communication, and interconnection. During this time, we have also seen an increase in the gap between the wealthy and impoverished as well as the deterioration of the environment. Given these patterns, what do you think will be the most important transformations in the near future?

In Era 7, we examine the pivotal events of the twentieth century that drive most narratives of modern history: the world wars, the Great Depression, the Cold War, and decolonization. We ask how these events relate to the increasingly global community in which we now find ourselves. Advanced transportation and communication networks connect us more than ever. Our species started as numerous small language networks and communities of 100 people or fewer. Today, transnational institutions like the United Nations and the World Bank attempt to tie humanity into a single network, a single international community with the opportunity to solve problems and explore new opportunities together.
But we also live in an era of great conflict. Much of the twentieth century seemed like one long, global conflict—the First World War, the Second World War, the Cold War, and decolonization—each accompanied by some of the most horrific atrocities in human history. Indeed, the very word, \textit{genocide}, is a twentieth-century invention to explain the mass murders of this last era. Horrific events like the Armenian Genocide and the Holocaust punctuate the incredible inequality of the last hundred years. Wealth and power have often accumulated in the hands of just a few, while many suffered. Large regions of the world—especially in Africa, southern Asia, and Latin America—have had incredibly high poverty rates while other regions flourished. Even within societies, inequality has meant that many people have lacked opportunities even within the richest nations.

Many conflicts of the twentieth century had their roots in the innovations of the long nineteenth century. Industrialization made war and murder possible on larger scales. Empires increased inequality and solidified differences among people. Capitalism and communism both frequently failed to provide for people in the societies in which they were utilized. And in some ways, today, technology threatens to make us more isolated from each other, rather than more connected. Ultimately, what we will examine in this era, and what we have been exploring throughout the course, are multiple narratives, leaving us to question the virtues and challenges of telling one human history as well as many human histories.

\textbf{Era 7 Learning Objectives}

1. Understand how political states changed during this era from the influence of empires to the rise of the nation-state.
2. Evaluate how nationalism influenced political revolutions and wars during this era along with the migration of peoples around the world.
3. Explain the creation of new political ideologies and why they emerged during this era and how these changes led to hostilities.
4. Understand how world wars led to increased international cooperation and tensions.
5. Analyze and critique the positive and negative impacts of globalization on human society and the environment.
6. Use historical thinking practices and reasoning skills such as claim testing, historical comparison, and continuity and change over time to evaluate these historical events and processes.

\textbf{Practice Progressions}

Please see the WHP Course Guide for more detailed information about the rationale behind the practice progressions. Here you will see the specific activity progressions found in the WHP Origins course. Please note that activities are still being updated based on feedback from pilot teachers, so this chart, as well as the activity descriptions below, are subject to change.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Era 1</th>
<th>Era 2</th>
<th>Era 3</th>
<th>Era 4</th>
<th>Era 5</th>
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<td><strong>No specific activity sequence—release of scaffolding determined by teacher in relation to Three Close Reads.</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Writing</strong></td>
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<td>1.2 EP Notebook</td>
<td>2.4 TBD</td>
<td>3.7 TBD</td>
<td>4.3 TBD</td>
<td>5.5 TBD</td>
<td>6.4 TBD</td>
<td>7.6 TBD</td>
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</table>
**Reading**

*For more detailed information on the WHP approach to reading, please refer to the WHP Course Guide.*

WHP seeks to improve students’ ability to analyze, evaluate, and use a range of primary and secondary sources. In addition, these sources include arguments about the past in a variety of formats and genres. Specifically, WHP activities regularly ask students to read sources deeply; to evaluate the roles that evidence, context, and underlying assumptions play in constructing an interpretation; and to evaluate the consequences or significance of one interpretation over another.

For students to develop the skills related to historical reading, the course provides extensive supports for what we call the Three Close Reads process. Students are introduced to close reading strategies in the Era 1 Overview article, and then continue to use the process throughout. While reading everything in the course three times might seem like overkill, it’s a very helpful tool for getting all the information from the articles. Students will get faster and faster with each reading, and somewhere in the middle of the course they will notice that the three reads take the same amount of time that one used to take. Students will eventually internalize this process; however, they should continue to use the Three Close Reads Worksheet as a tool to help them with more complicated readings.
Writing

The WHP course is writing intensive. Students are asked to respond in writing to a variety of prompts, including those related to contextualization, causation, historical comparison, continuity and change over time (CCOT), and a variety of document-based questions (DBQs) and long-essay questions (LEQs). Because history teachers are not necessarily trained as writing teachers but must help students develop their writing abilities, we have created a series of seven activities that focus specifically on developing these core writing skills, so that students are prepared to construct their own historical narratives in response to these varied historical prompts.

Writing Activity Progression

As with reading, there is a specific activity in each era that focuses on developing students’ writing skills. Although these are initially highly scaffolded, by the end of the course, students should be able to evaluate and edit their own writing using the WHP Writing Rubric. Note these activities are the second to last activity in each era, often preceding a writing assessment in the form of a DBQ or LEQ.

Note: This progression is forthcoming. It will be tightly tied to the DBQs and LEQs that are currently under development in the course. There will be a progression activity in all but the first era of the course, immediately preceding each DBQ or LEQ.

Claim Testing

Claim testing is an important analytical process for assessing the quality and veracity of claims. It helps students “see” and evaluate people’s assertions and gives shape to a useful critical thinking practice in the study of history. Since history is all about making assertions, it’s important that students learn the skill of testing claims early and use it frequently as part of evaluating historical accounts and making historical interpretations. Through use of this process, students will become familiar with the language of claim testing, which they should begin to use as part of accountable talk in the classroom.
Claim Testing Activity Progression

1. **Lesson 1.1: Claim Testing – Introduction**
   In this activity students are introduced to the four claim testers: intuition, authority, logic, and evidence. They are given a claim—“There is one true history”—and asked to organize supporting statements for it into the four claim-testing categories.

2. **Lesson 2.1: Claim Testing – Authority**
   Students dig into theories from two authorities in the field about where early humans originated. Students use their claim-testing skills to unpack authority and to help them decide whom they should believe and why.

3. **Lesson 3.1: Claim Testing – Evidence**
   As a class, students analyze the transcript from *Rethinking Civilization: Crash Course World History #201* to pick out claims and supporting evidence.

4. **Lesson 4.2: Claim Testing – The Muslim World**
   Students will apply what they know about authority, logic, intuition, and evidence to write supporting statements for claims about the Muslim world. They will analyze the quality of evidence put forth by their peers, find disconfirming evidence, and write thesis statements based on their conclusions. This is an activity that will be repeated in Eras 6 and 7 using different topics.

5. **Lesson 6.3: Claim Testing – Imperialism**
   Students write supporting statements for claims about imperialism. They will analyze the quality of evidence put forth by their peers, find disconfirming evidence, and use what they found to write a short paragraph about imperialism.

6. **Lesson 7.3: Claim Testing – Global Conflict**
   Students will again examine claims, this time related to global conflict, and write supporting evidence for those claims. As with the previous activities, they will evaluate the evidence put forth by their peers as well as find disconfirming evidence. They will end by drawing some conclusions about global conflict.

7. **Lesson 7.6: Claim Testing – Globalization**
   Students will again examine claims, this time related to globalization, and write supporting evidence for those claims. As with the previous activities, they will evaluate the evidence put forth by their peers as well as find disconfirming evidence. They will end by drawing some conclusions about globalization.

**Causation**

Causal reasoning can help students develop evidence-based explanations or arguments in response to a causal question that considers human actions, events, and larger structures or processes. Students are introduced to causation in Era 1 of the course using the fictitious story of Alphonse the Camel. Reasoning about cause and consequence is core to the work of a historian and therefore this practice is introduced early and repeated often. As students progress in the course, they will use their causal reasoning skills in most activities. It should not take long until the steps they follow to analyze cause and consequence are implicit, and they may not need the support of the Causation Tool. However, writing about causation may take more time, so make sure to provide the appropriate support to your students until they have mastered writing about cause and consequence.
Causation Activity Progression

1. **Lesson 1.3: Causation – Alphonse the Camel**
   Students learn about the fictitious Alphonse and Frank the Camel Killer. Students are first introduced to the concept of historical causation here and will determine if it was a straw that broke the camel’s back, or some other cause.

2. **Lesson 2.4: Causation – From Foraging to Complex Societies**
   Students will brainstorm the causes and consequences of the move from foraging to farming and complete a causal map. Creating a causal map allows students to see the connections between events over time.

3. **Lesson 3.3: Causation – Population Growth**
   In this activity, students are asked to think about both the causes and consequences of population growth, which will push them from thinking about causation as linear, toward an understanding of the complex relationship between cause and consequence.

4. **Lesson 4.1: Causation – Autopsy of an Empire**
   Students create an anatomy and autopsy of an empire they learned about in the previous era in order to determine the causes of the empire’s collapse. As students become more skilled at understanding causation, they will become better at evaluating why historians sometimes come to different conclusions about the same topic, including the cause of an empire’s collapse.

5. **Lesson 6.1: Causation – Recipe for a Revolution**
   In this activity, students will create a recipe that explains the causes for a particular political revolution. Since revolutions are often complicated, analyzing and categorizing the causes will allow students to expand their understanding of how causation helps to explain historical processes and how historians focus on particular causes to shape people’s understanding of these events.
Comparison

Comparison is a key process that historians use to help them better understand the past. WHP seeks to improve students’ ability to “do” historical comparison. WHP asks students to: describe similarities and differences between different historical developments or processes; explain relevant similarities and differences between specific historical developments and processes; and explain the relative historical significance of similarities and differences between different historical developments or processes.

While comparing and contrasting is something that students have likely engaged in prior to this course, in these activities they are introduced to a systematic way of conducting historical comparison. Ultimately, the goal is for students to be able to describe and explain the relevant similarities and differences between specific historical developments and processes, as well as explain the relative historical significance of similarities and differences between the topics of study. Don’t skip these activities because this seems like an easy skill to master—while students may be able to conduct historical comparisons quickly, writing comparison essays can be more of a challenge. Students are introduced to different structures for writing comparison essays so that they can write a well-crafted essay that carefully addresses historical comparison.

Comparison Activity Progression

1. **Lesson 1.3: Comparison – Life in the Neolithic and Today**
   Students imagine what their life would have been like in the Neolithic era and will compare that to their lives today. The analysis will include attending to each of the course frames.

2. **Lesson 2.2: Comparison – Archaeological Sites**
   Students compare artifacts from different archaeological sites from around the world. As part of this, they will also learn that historians rely on evidence from many disciplines in constructing historical accounts, including archaeology.

3. **Lesson 3.5: Comparison – Belief Systems**
   Students will read about four major religions and then fill out the Comparison Tool to see similarities and
differences between each. This compares different belief systems at the same general time in history.

4. **Lesson 4.3: Comparison – Women**
Using the articles “Christian Women in Medieval Europe” and “Women in Song China,” students first compare groups of women who were in different places at the same point in history. Then, they conduct a second comparison, this time comparing the women in Era 3 with those in Era 4.

5. **Lesson 6.2: Comparison – Egypt and Japan**
Students will compare industrialization in two regions of the world to understand how the Industrial Revolution impacted communities in very different ways.

6. **Lesson 7.4 – Comparison: Decolonizing Women**
Students compare women’s participation in decolonization movements in Africa using the accompanying article. Additional research may be necessary to delve deeper into women’s participation in these areas. *This activity can be skipped in the Origins course progression if there are time constraints or different content requirements.*

7. **Lesson 7.5 – Comparison: Rights Documents**
In this activity, students compare rights documents from around the world to analyze what makes national governments and their citizens both similar to and different from other nations.

**Contextualization**

A key component of historical inquiry is the ability to contextualize. Contextualization is a historical thinking skill that involves situating phenomena and actions by people in the context of time, space, and sociocultural setting. Context, in many ways, is complex and subtle, and involves other events, the climate of opinion, and the local and more distant political, economic, social, and cultural processes that surround the issue at hand. Contextualization is more than deciding when a historical event or process began and requires students to think about the various layers of information that help us understand an event. Essentially, historical contextualization requires students to avoid *present-ism*—the tendency to interpret past events through the lens of modern values and concepts.
Contextualization Activity Progression

1. **Lesson 1.2: Contextualization – Introduction**
   In this activity, students will be introduced to this historical thinking practice by using the associated tool to contextualize their own lives.

2. **Lesson 3.3: Contextualization – Agrarian Societies**
   Students conduct an analysis to determine what it was about certain places that encouraged sedentary life, and in turn enabled a group’s culture to turn to domestication of plants and animals.

3. **Lesson 4.2: Contextualization – Mansa Musa**
   What enabled Mansa Musa to travel when and where he traveled? The time period, geographic changes, and culture all play a role here, and students will work to explain the context that allowed these travels to take place.

4. **Lesson 5.1: Contextualization – Pastoral Empires: Mongols and Comanches**
   In this activity, students tackle the question, “How was it possible for the Mongol and Comanche leaders to control such vast territories with so many different cultures within them without the modern tools of governance?” Locating the empires in time and space as well as the cultures at the time is critical to thinking about this, as is considering the personalities and characteristics of leaders such as Chinggis Khan.

5. **Lesson 6.4: Contextualization – Child Labor**
   In this activity, students will contextualize child labor to understand why ideas about childhood began to change in the nineteenth century. Since the first hunting and gathering communities, children have been used for labor—that is until the late nineteenth century. Then industrialized societies such as England, Japan, France, Germany, and the United States removed children from the workforce. What is it about the context of the nineteenth century that caused these changes to occur in almost all industrializing countries? What might explain why agrarian societies did not see child labor as an issue at the same time industrial societies did?

**Continuity and Change Over Time (CCOT)**

WHP seeks to improve students’ capacity to evaluate historical continuity and change. Specifically, WHP lessons ask students to describe patterns of continuity and change over time; to periodize and explain patterns of continuity and change over time; to explain the relative historical significance of specific historical developments in relation to a larger pattern of continuity and change; to compare the past and the present to determine what has changed and what has remained stable; to evaluate the degree to which change was global, interregional, regional, or local; to assess different paces of change (slow, rapid); and to determine the direction or impact of change (degree to which change or continuity was progressive or regressive). Learning how to evaluate continuity and change over time helps students make sense of historical processes and the evolution of those processes.
CCOT Activity Progression

1. **Lesson 2.4: CCOT – Introduction**
   Students are first introduced to CCOT by evaluating how farms, one of the mainstays of societies since the development of agriculture, have changed and stayed the same over the course of history. Specifically, students will analyze the continuities and changes by examining images and descriptions of farms in Iowa from the 1700s to today.

2. **Lesson 3.6: CCOT – Empires**
   In this activity, students will use the skills introduced in the introduction activity to analyze a historical topic. At this point in the course students have read a lot about the formation of agrarian societies but now they’re going to use that information to analyze the changes and continuities that took place as agrarian societies expanded to become empires.

3. **Lesson 4.0: CCOT – Regional Webs**
   Students use the overview article and the CCOT Tool to look at CCOT between and across eras. Students list all the changes and all the continuities they can find in the organizer, then graph them.

4. **Lesson 5.0: CCOT – The First Global Age**
   Students use the overview article and the tool to look at CCOT between and across eras, and then compare their analyses.

5. **Lesson 5.4: CCOT – Africa and the Americas**
   Students will continue practicing their skills at analyzing information in order to compare how a historical process, in this case the impact of the Atlantic slave trade, changed over time.

6. **Lesson 6.4: CCOT – The Long Nineteenth Century**
   Students return to using the overview article and the tool to look at CCOT between and across eras, and then compare their analyses.
Lesson 7.1: CCOT – Era Comparisons

In this final activity in the CCOT spiral, students will put all of their CCOT practice to use by writing an essay that asks them to identify the most significant changes and continuities across multiple eras.

Sourcing

Sourcing—the act of understanding who wrote a document, where they wrote it, and why they wrote it, for the purposes of analysis or interpretation—is integral to the work of a historian. Without properly understanding an author’s purpose and perspective, it’s difficult to properly interpret a document. Therefore, students will learn how to discover how an author has framed an event, and how that then impacts their interpretation of it. The act of sourcing a historical event involves two of the essential practices that students have already been introduced to in this course: reading and claim testing. In order to adequately make sense of a historical account, students need to understand the author who is interpreting an event and then producing an account of that event.

Sourcing Activity Progression

1. **Lesson 1.1: Sourcing – Introduction**

   In this first activity on sourcing, students will dig into different accounts of a car crash, helping them to discover that all authors frame events in certain ways, which will have an impact on how we interpret those events.

2. **Lesson 3.7: Sourcing – “The Deeds of the Divine Augustus”**

   In this document, Augustus describes his accomplishments. Students will source the document using the Sourcing Tool and try to respond to the question, “To what extent can we trust an author who is celebrating their own accomplishments?”
3. **Lesson 4.3: Sourcing – “An Imperial Edict Restraining Officials from Evil”**
   In this document, the Emperor Hongwu describes acceptable and unacceptable behavior and talks about his own. As part of sourcing this document, students will ask themselves: How do rulers communicate with their subjects and officials to maintain order and control of their empire?

4. **Lesson 5.3: Sourcing – Spanish Conquest of the Aztec Empire**
   In this activity, students will extend their sourcing skills by reading a collection of primary source documents, all written from different perspectives, about the Spanish conquest of the Aztec Empire. Students will analyze the documents while thinking about: “What were the motivations of the Spanish conquerors? And what were the responses of the indigenous peoples to the Spanish conquest of the Aztec Empire?”

5. **Lesson 6.3: Sourcing – Differing Perspectives on Imperialism**
   Students will be combining their sourcing skills with their knowledge of comparison and contextualization as they read two primary sources that provide differing perspectives on imperialism and European justifications for colonialism. As students analyze the documents they’ll be thinking about the question, “To what extent were the moral justifications for European imperialism truly an attempt to aid other nations?”

**Course Planning and Pacing**

The WHP Origins course has a lot of content, likely more than any one teacher can get through in an entire year. Because different schools and districts have different needs, we wanted to cover a variety of subject-matter content, allowing teachers to make decisions that will best support their local context. In this section, we provide an overview of how much content each era contains. Note that to some degree, these are estimates based on our own experience and the experience of pilot teachers. Over time, as more teachers teach the course, we will gain a better understanding of how long everything takes and will further refine these estimates. We will provide a variety of more detailed and specific course plans, created by teachers working in different contexts, which will help you plan a course that is the best fit for your students.

Some overall notes:

- In the table below, we define a class as equal to 50 minutes.
- The student audience are on-level tenth graders in the United States, or 15 to 16 year olds around the world.
- We calculated these estimates based on the assumption that most articles will take about a half of a class period, with some overview articles taking longer. We encourage you to teach all overview articles.
- We assume that most videos will take about a half of a class period. We encourage you to teach all overview videos.
- Most progression activities will take an entire class period. We encourage you to teach all of these activities since they build in a spiraling progression.
- Opening activities should take a half class period or less. If the activity title doesn’t include “Opening,” it may take longer.
- Each era has an activity that we refer to as “big fun.” These activities will often take longer than one class period, typically two to three class periods depending on your class size and students’ abilities. These include simulations and longer projects.
- Each era, except the first, culminates with either a DBQ or LEQ. These can be taught in either one or two days, depending upon how you choose to administer them. Our pacing accounts for two days spent on writing assessments.
• This guide does not account for homework you may assign.
• We recommend you examine your local standards and do some picking and choosing according to what is required teaching in your area. It may make sense to use this table to first determine how many weeks you would like to spend on each era, and then make content selections based on the amount of time you have allotted per era.

<table>
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<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Our Big History</th>
<th>Early Humans</th>
<th>Cities, Societies, and Empires</th>
<th>Regional Webs</th>
<th>The First Global Age</th>
<th>The Long Nineteenth Century and the Birth of the Modern World</th>
<th>The Great Convergence and Divergence</th>
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