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## An Introduction to History

At times, a number of questions arise in our mind quite naturally. Who am I? How does this society or the world work? To understand all these complex issues, we first need to know about how our society has evolved, how people lived in the past, what they ate, what kind of clothes they wore, and how our past has shaped the present. But, how do we know about our past? By studying history, we can easily understand how the modern world has come into existence over long centuries of development.

### INFORMATION ABOUT THE PAST

#### Near Past

Suppose, we have to know about yesterday or the news of any day before yesterday. Then, we read a newspaper, listen to the radio or watch television.



#### Previous Months or Year

If we wish to gather information related to the last month or some previous months, then, we read magazines, annual reports or ask someone who remembers the incidents.

#### Distant Past

But, if we have to find out what happened decades or centuries ago, then, we study a history book or various sources of history.

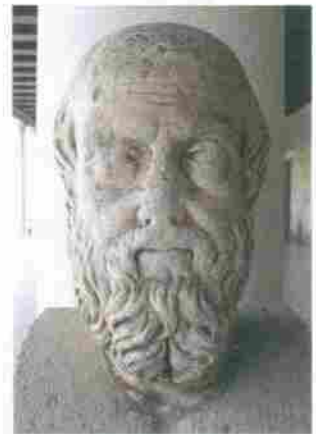


### WHAT IS HISTORY ?

The word, 'history' is derived from the Greek word, 'historia' which means 'know this.'

In simple terms, history is a study of the past. That is, it is the story of the people who lived in the past. In fact, **history is a record of people, places and events of the past arranged in a chronological order.**

It tells us the story of our ancestors—their lifestyles, occupations, customs, languages and cultures, religious beliefs, social and political systems, as well as their problems, aspirations and achievements. It is a systematic account of the origin and progress of the world.



Herodotus  
(484 BC – 425 BC)



#### Do You Know ?

Herodotus is called the father of history. He was a Greek historian who was the first person to collect the materials systematically, tested their accuracy and arranged them in a systematic manner.

#### Check Your Progress

How do we know about the past ?

## IMPORTANCE OF HISTORY

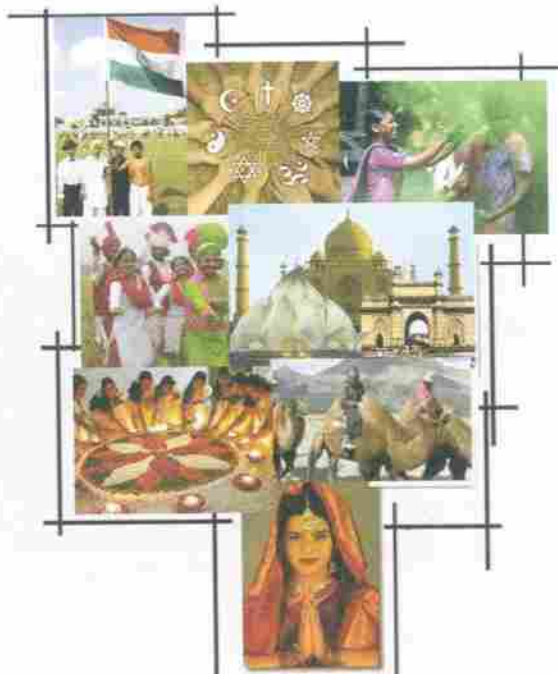
The study of history is very important to us for many reasons :

### To know Our Past

Most parts of social science other than history tell us about the world in the present. But, history helps us understand how this present has evolved and came into being. It tells us about the past of the present. It teaches us about the past which is important to understand the present. History is a systematic study of past events. Actually, it is a continuous story of one event leading to another. So, the present cannot be understood without understanding the past.

### To know about Human Culture and Civilization

With the help of history, we come to know about the art, architecture, literature, customs, religions, etc. of our ancestors. So, it is helpful in gaining the knowledge of continuous development of human culture and civilization.



Different Cultures and Civilization

### To Lead Life in a Better Way

History helps us learn from the past experiences and moulds our future in a better way. Through history, we come to know about our ancestors, their

struggle for existence, their problems and great achievements. It helps us a lot in understanding the present-day problems and seeking their solutions in a better way.

### To know about the Kings and Ordinary People

History enables us to know about the kings and statesmen as well as ordinary people of different times.



Ashoka, the Great



The Gupta King, Chandragupta-II



Silver Coins of Chandragupta-II Reign



Gold Coins of Chandragupta-II Reign

### To Develop Important Skills and Qualities

The study of history helps us to understand the basic nature of our society. With the help of various examples, it cautions people from social evils like slavery, racialism, casteism, illiteracy, selfishness, etc. and promotes the spirit of tolerance, co-existence, harmony and brotherhood.

### To know about the Evolution of Different Languages

History also enables us to know about the origin and evolution of different languages that we speak, read and write in today's world.

### An Adventure

History is an adventure. It is a journey across time and space. It takes us into another world and age in which people lived in a different way. Their food and clothes, settlements and buildings, arts and crafts, economy and society, beliefs and faiths, all these things were different. Thus, history opens the doors to travel into the different worlds.

## IMPORTANT WORDS

- **History** : A study of the past.
- **Specific Nature** : Different features that make something special.
- **Culture** : The customs and beliefs, art, the way of life and social organisations of a particular country and society.
- **Civilization** : It is an advanced stage or system of human social development.
- **Racialism** : The belief that each race or ethnic group has specific qualities and abilities that distinguish it as inferior or superior to another such group.
- **Slavery** : The state of a person who is legally owned by another person and is forced to work for them and cannot make their own decisions.

## IMPORTANT POINTS

- History is a record of people, places and events of the past, arranged in a chronological order.
- Most parts of social science other than history tell us about the world in the present. But, history tells us about the past of the present.
- History is a journey across time and space. It transports us into another world and another age in which people lived differently.
- History is not only about kings or great men, but also about the lives and activities of ordinary men, women and children.
- History enables us to develop important skills and qualities.
- History includes not only political events or developments, it includes everything that happens in society.



### I. Multiple Choice Questions (MCQs)

Choose the correct option from the following :

1. Our pasts shape our  
(a) present (b) past (c) problems (d) none of these
2. Which one of the following refers to a record of people, places and events of the past arranged in a chronological order?  
(a) Social Science (b) History (c) Slavery (d) Racism
3. Which one of the following features of history separates it from other parts of social science? **HOTS**  
(a) It tells us about the world in the present. (b) It tells us about the past of the present.  
(c) It is the study of human activities. (d) None of these
4. The study of history is helpful  
(a) in understanding our past (b) to know about different cultures and civilizations  
(c) to develop important skills and qualities (d) all of these
5. History is an adventure because **HOTS**  
(a) it involves various wars (b) it enables us to know about the origin of different languages  
(c) it is a journey across time and space (d) it is the study of high mountains

## II. Very Short Answer Type Questions

1. Define history.
2. How is history helpful in leading a life in a better way? **HOTS**
3. How is history an adventure?

## III. Short Answer Type Questions

1. How do we get information about the distant past?
2. What is the importance of history? Give any two points.
3. How is history different from other branches of social science? **HOTS**

## IV. Long Answer Type Questions

1. How do we collect information about the past?
2. Why do we study history? What is the specific nature of the discipline? **HOTS**

## V. State True or False

1. History helps us to understand the world in the present.
2. History helps us to understand how the present evolved.
3. History takes us into another world and age in which people lived in a different ways.
4. With the help of various examples, history promotes wars, slavery, racism, casteism, etc.

## MORE TO EXPLORE

### Picture Study

These pictures have various images that are the sources of information about the past.

List these sources in the three categories :

- (i) Sources of information about near past.
- (ii) Sources of information about previous month or year.
- (iii) Sources of information about the distant past.



### Web Link

For further information log on to the following link :

- <http://www.webindia123.com/history/source.html>