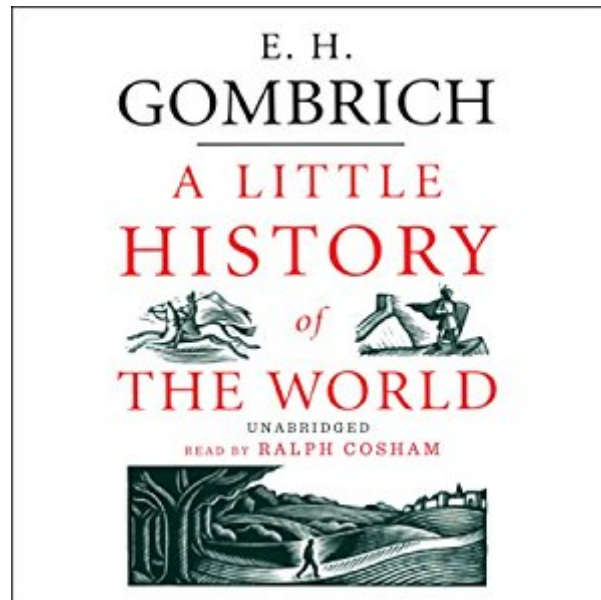


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# A Little History Of The World



## Synopsis

E. H. Gombrich's bestselling history of the world for young readers tells the story of mankind from the Stone Age to the atomic bomb, focusing not on small detail but on the sweep of human experience, the extent of human achievement, and the depth of its frailty. The product of a generous and humane sensibility, this timeless account makes intelligible the full span of human history. In forty concise chapters, Gombrich tells the story of man from the stone age to the atomic bomb. In between emerges a colorful picture of wars and conquests, grand works of art, and the spread and limitations of science. This is a text dominated not by dates and facts, but by the sweep of mankind's experience across the centuries, a guide to humanity's achievements and an acute witness to its frailties.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

In history, context is vital. Events seldom make sense when presented individually, and often, the only way to fully understand, comprehend and appreciate any given event in history is to know the chain of events that led to it. Learning about the Second World War is difficult without at least a basic knowledge of the First World War and how that was influenced by the Industrial revolution. Context is vital. Over the weekend, I picked up a book that I've long wanted to read, shown to me by a friend several years ago when it was first translated into English: *A Little History of the World*. First written and published in 1936 (written in six weeks - SIX), this book covers a staggering amount of history, starting from the very beginnings of human history and culture, from the prehistoric eras, and running up through to the dropping of the atomic bombs in 1945. Needless to say, in 284

pages, this is not a book rife with specific details, names and dates. Rather, this is an extremely broad look at how human history progressed. While there are plenty of details lacking, this book is not intended as a grand work of history. It's written simply, for a younger audience, to tell the tale of our existence - it helps to provide a broad context for our history to anyone who is mildly interested in the subject, and at this, the book succeeds wonderfully. As a student of history, I can appreciate the task at hand, and having read through the book in a day, I was astounded at just how much information is here. Almost every major era of human history is covered, and linked to the next - reading over the pages, we move from the Egyptian dynasties to ancient Babylon, to Greece, to Rome, to the Middle Ages and so on, up through to the present day.

I read a lot of books. Some would say that I read too many. Over the years, I've read some really great stuff. But this is one of the few books that I truly fell in love with. As I was reading it, I found myself saying, "I love this book!" over and over again. It's a quick read, divided into short chapters that can be read in a matter of minutes -- so even someone with a short attention span can read a chapter in a single sitting. And it is written in such an easy-to-read style that it can be understood and enjoyed by readers of any age. It was written with young readers in mind; but it is so wonderfully written that adults will love it just as much as kids will. The writing style is beautiful. I wish I could write that well. Everything is made so clear and easy to understand that it's a delight to read. It's hard to believe that this book was originally written in German and translated into English. I don't know who deserves the higher praise, E.H. Gombrich, who wrote the original German text, or Caroline Mustill, who translated it into perfect English prose. But what impresses me even more than the writing style is the content. This is simply the best history book that I've ever read. It provides an overview of all of world history from prehistoric times to the 20th century (it was originally published in 1936, and covered events up to the aftermath of World War I; but this new edition contains a final chapter that gives a brief overview of the events from World War I to roughly the end of the Cold War). And it does a masterful job of capturing the "big picture" of world history without getting bogged down in the sort of details that no one but historians really care about (as many history texts do).

I am not a great fan of history books and I have never completed one >200 pages. However, I finished this in 2 days. It is so superbly written, well organized and absolutely interesting with plentiful well selected pictures. Now is the first time of my 40+ life that I have basic knowledge how Central/Western Europe had evolved from the Roman Empire to WWI. In short, a great read. Highly

recommended!p.s. Below please find some of my favorite passages for your reference. It is a bad idea to try to prevent people from knowing their own history. If you want to do anything new you must first make sure you know what people have tried before. Pg92 After July comes August, Caesar Octavianus Augustus was Caesar's adoptive son. Having fought for a long time against a number of generals on land and at sea, he finally succeeded in becoming the sole ruler of the empire in 31BC, and so became the first to hold the title of Roman Emperor. Since one month had been named after Julius Caesar, Augustus was given one too. He had certainly earned it. He may not have been extraordinary like Caesar, but he was a fair and prudent man who controlled himself at all times and so had earned the right to control others. It is said that he never gave an order or made a decision in anger. Whenever he felt his temper rising, he slowly recited the alphabet in his head, and by the time he had reached the end he had calmed down. Pg102 Soon every German prince - even those who owned on more than a miserable patch of land - had his own gigantic castle in the style of Versailles, with all the gold and damask, the clipped hedges, the men in great wigs, the powdered ladies in voluminous gowns, the courtiers and flatterers.

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