

How Do You View History?

"It should be known that history is a discipline that has a great number of approaches." –*Ibn Khaldun*

Background: The way we think about history in general has a tremendous influence on how we record, understand, and in fact *create* history. The job of the historian is to seek truth and make sense of the past. However, over the centuries, different historians have developed different approaches to make sense of the vast amount of information. As history is inherently subjective, the way a historian views events can have a large effect on what he or she actually writes. As historians-in-training, your job is to argue which one of the major theories of history best matches your own views

The Theories of History:

1. Cyclical Theory

History repeats itself; there is no real "progress." This theory holds that history is a series of *patterns* that recur in different forms around the world. Civilizations rise and fall, often for similar reasons. Understanding history is about understanding patterns. For example, this is a traditional model for understanding the dynastic history of Central Asia.

Cyclical view of history stems from the histories of the Greeks. The Greeks believed that events recurred on a regular basis. In the 14th century, this theory was revived; however it differed slightly from the Greeks, as it was believed that the basis of history was the actions of people rather, than the whims of Gods. Again, Machiavelli suggested it could be viewed as a casebook of political strategy.

In Modern age, it is suggested that civilizations rise and fall, and that each new civilization rise to a greater level of achievement than the last.

2. Linear Theory.

History is about progress. The world is constantly *improving* and heading in an ultimate direction. There are no real repetitions in history, although they may appear to exist every once in a while. This theory is heavily based on the idea of cause and effect: "this

happened, and then that happened; that happened because this happened first."

This theory was first presented in the West, and it was suggested that history could be viewed as an unfolding of God's plan, a process that would end in the Final Judgment. Others saw history as more linear, and in a more secular way. Suggesting that four great ages of man occurred over time. Yet, others see it as a series of class struggles that inevitably ends in a worker's revolution.

3. Great Man Theory

Individual people and/or small groups of people, through the power of their character or intellect, determine the course of history. This view of history was popular in the 19th century. It is summarized by Thomas Carlyle's quote, "The history of the world is but the biography of great men."

This theory suggests that dominant personalities determine that course of history. Thus, according to this theory, rulers, warriors, and statesmen are the decisive forces in history and history is a record to their deeds.

4. Everyman

The world is shaped by the efforts of ordinary people, not small elite groups or individuals. This theory holds that social groups and everyday people (e.g. farmers, merchants, religious figures) shape history. To fully understand history, you must also understand the everyday lives of these groups. One of the most well-known books that presents this viewpoint is Howard Zinn's *A People's History of the United States*.

This theory regards history as a record of collective experience of the ordinary person.

5. Ideas

In this view the driving force of history is people's ideas. Thus, the conditions that make history are created or changed by ideas.

6. "Geographic Theory":

Geography is destiny. The natural environment is a major determinant of history, determining the potential and needs of groups of people. This theory is often associated with Jared Diamond's *Guns, Germs, and Steel*, which argues that certain

peoples are destined for greater success based on their geographic location and access to resources.

7. “Marxist Theory”:

History is the story of struggle between different social classes: powerful groups that control wealth and resources, and the powerless groups who struggle to survive. In other words, “it’s all about the money” – economics determines everything. People, leaders and nations act out of economic self-interest. As Karl Marx stated in his famous work, *The Communist Manifesto*, “The history of all hitherto existing society is the history of class struggles.”

8. The Great God Theory. The most primitive attempts to explain the origin and development of the world and man are the creation myths to be found among preliterate peoples. We are best acquainted with the one in *Genesis* which ascribes the making of heaven and earth with all its features and creatures to a Lord God who worked on a six-day schedule. These fanciful stories do not have any scientific validity.

The raw materials for genuine history-writing were first collected in the annals of the reigns and chronicles of kings in the river valley civilizations of the Near East, India and China. The first synthetic conception of history arose from the fusion of elements taken over from the old creation myths with a review of these records. This was the Great God, or theological version of history which asserted that divine beings directed human affairs together with the rest of the cosmos.

Just as the royal despots dominated the city states and their empires, so the will, passions, plans and needs of the gods were the ultimate causes of events. The king is the agent who maintains the world in being by means of an annual contest with the powers of chaos. This theological theory was elaborated by the Sumerians, Babylonians and Egyptians before it came down to the Greeks and Romans. It was expounded in the Israelite scriptures whence it was taken over and reshaped by the Christian and Mohammedan religions and their states.

Under the theocratic monarchies of the East the divine guidance of human affairs was wrapped up with the godlike nature of the priest-king. In Babylon, Egypt, the Alexandrian Empire and Rome the supreme ruling force of the universe and the forceful ruler of the realm were regarded as equally divine. The Great God and the Great Man were one and the same.

Use this site as well

<https://www.marxists.org/archive/novack/works/history/ch04.htm>

What is an infographic?

<https://www.slideshare.net/BernardMarr/what-is-an-infographic/26>

Show me some examples

<https://piktochart.com/>

Let's get started using the following guide

<http://www.schrockguide.net/infographics-as-an-assessment.html>

Infographic rubric

Assignment:

Name(s):

Category	4	3	2	1	Your score
Use of Class Time	Used time well. Focused on getting the project done without distracting others.	Used time well. Mostly focused on getting the project done without distracting others	Used some time well. Some focus on getting project done but occasionally distracted others.	Did not use class time to focus on the project OR often distracted others.	
Main Idea (weight x2)	The topic and messages of the infographic are clear and easily understood	Topic and main ideas are clear.	Topic is given but main ideas are unclear or lacking.	Topic and/or main ideas are absent or very unclear.	
Details	Details (including labels) support the main idea without distracting with clutter.	Detail is added to support each main idea with minimal clutter.	More is needed for understanding. Some are distracting.	Very little detail is provided for the main ideas and understanding is limited.	
Content - Accuracy (weight x2)	At least 4 accurate facts/concepts are displayed in the infographic	3 accurate facts are displayed.	2 accurate facts are displayed.	Fewer than 2 accurate facts are displayed.	
Graphics - Relevance	The graphics used represent information appropriately.	Most graphics represent the information appropriately.	All graphics relate to the topic but do not represent appropriately.	Graphics do not relate to the topic.	
Graphics - Visual	Color, shape, size, and arrangement of graphics contribute meaning to	Color, shape, size, and arrangement are eye catching and contribute	Color, shape, size, and arrangement are present but do not add to the information.	Color, shape, size, and arrangement are distracting or misleading.	

	the overall message.	some meaning.			
Design/layout	The design/layout is neat, clear, and visually appealing.	Is attractive in terms of design, layout and neatness.	Is acceptably attractive though it may be a bit messy.	Is distractingly messy, unattractive, or very poorly designed.	
Mechanics	Capitalization and punctuation are correct throughout.	There is 1 error in capitalization or punctuation.	There are 2 errors in capitalization or punctuation.	More than 2 errors in capitalization or punctuation.	
Grammar	There are no grammatical mistakes.	There is 1 grammatical mistake.	There are 2 grammatical mistakes.	There are more than 2 grammatical mistakes.	
Image and info Credits (0 or 1 pt)				Credit/citations provided for all images and research information.	
Total					/45

Task: Your group must research the theory of History that you have been assigned

1. Develop your research question(s)
2. Research your theory of History,
3. Use this site as well
4. <https://www.marxists.org/archive/novack/works/history/ch04.htm>
5. You are to collect all of your information and create an infographic to demonstrate your knowledge and understanding of your topic; theory of history.
6. What is an infographic? This is a slide show to give you an overview of an infographic
7. <https://www.slideshare.net/BernardMarr/what-is-an-infographic/26>
8. Show me some examples
9. <https://piktochart.com/>
10. Let's get started using the following guide. Definitely use this site as a way of learning all of the elements of an infographic. Go back and look at the criteria and make sure you are fulfilling the requirements of the assignment
11. <http://www.schrockguide.net/infographics-as-an-assessment.html>

12. Include a picture of your historian(s). (**sorry no her**)

Guideline questions but not complete

Who?	Who was involved in this? Picture	
What?	What were the main reasons for?	
Where?	Where did this theory take place?	
When?	When did this occur?	
Why?	Why is this important to history?	
So What?	Why does this matter?	

13. Identify as many historians as you can to your theory
14. Identify the major work or works in history that support the Historians theory
15. Go over criteria for completing your infographic.... You will post it so that the class can view it prior to our seminar.
16. Present your infographic to the class.

Seminar: Historian's corner

Students will discuss and challenge each other's theory of history as the most credible.

1. convince the class through. **HISTORIC EXAMPLES**, that PROVES your theory to be the most plausible, (believable) .
2. **Proof to be provided through examples of ;** world war, scientific revolution, communism etc.
3. Present the theory from the historian's perspective
4. Through your research your presentation must be so convincing that your classmates believe your theory is something specific enough to determine how history was made, or would be like.
5. Explain what history would be like if it followed this theory. **20 marks**
6. **During the seminar students are expected to exchange idea's, ask questions and be engaged. (10 marks)**

Also;

17. **Create a wordle the theory for and on the back explain the significance.**
18. Create an ad (visual/audio) and share with the class that best illustrates your theory and sells it **10 marks**
19. **Summary activity:** You will write a multi-paragraph outlining which theory you must agree with and why, as well as explaining why the other theories are not credible. **15 marks**

List of Historians

- Thomas Carlyle
 - Oswald Spengler
 - Arnold Toynbee
 - William E BDu Bois
 - H.G. Wells
 - G.W.F. Hegel
 - Karl Marx
 - Friedrich Nietzsche
 - Thucydides
 - Herodotus
 - St. Augustine
 - Patriarch
 - Machiavelli
 - Voltaire
- Sir Walter Scott
Leopold von Rank

Theories of History Evaluation Sheet

Group Members _____

Theory _____

Infographic rubric

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1. Create an ad (visual/audio) and share with the class that best illustrates your theory and sells it
10 marks
2. **Summary activity:** You will write a multi-paragraph outlining which theory you must agree with and why, as well as explaining why the other theories are not credible. **15 marks**
3. Create a wordle with explanation

1 2 3 4 5

4. **Seminar.**

Present the theory from the historian's perspective. In character of the historian that put the theory forward.

- in character yes sort of no
- presented from historian's perspective yes sort of no

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

* ASk

Comments

5. Provided examples throughout history that support your theory.

Examples of history 1 2 3 4 5
Provided support

6. Presentation in a convincing manner 1 2 3 4 5

* **How history would be if followed this theory** 1 2 3 4 5

Comments: