

Welcome to World History – Advanced Placement (WHAP)! WHAP is the study of history as movements, themes and trends, not just memorizing tables and facts, though there are key dates and “hard” facts that will be important to engage with and learn. This look at “Big History” has us examining 200,000 years of human pre-history (prehistoric times) and documented history in one academic year. “Big History” examines historical happenings through a diversity of academic disciplines such as Biology, Physics, Anthropology, Archeology, Comparative Theology, Philosophy, Sociology, Psychology, Architecture, Geography, Environmental Science *and did I mention* History, Political Science and Economics? We will use the mantra that, “*We will better understand what happened by investigating why things happened.*”

Keep in mind that this is a college-level course in three important ways. First, as an AP course designed by the College Board you are required to **read** college-level texts – this includes not only your textbook, but outside books and articles. We won’t have time for reading in class, and this means that outside of class you must be prepared to do outside reading and studying during the school year. Second, as a college-level course our class time will largely be based on **critical-thinking** and discussion. Finally, a college-level course requires that you are able to express your ideas clearly and professionally in **writing**. We will be practicing a lot of conventional essay writing in this class.

To help prepare us for the course I would like us to all have both a common understanding and a common language that we can share at the start of the year. So, you are being assigned to read one book over the summer: The Fleeting World. As you read the book you will have reflection questions, vocabulary terms, and big thought activities that **MUST** be completed and turned in the first week of school. There will also be an assessment of the main themes and vocabulary from the book when we return.

“THOSE WHO CAN'T REMEMBER THE PAST  
ARE CONDEMNED TO REPEAT IT.”  
- GEORGE SANTAYANA

Big History studies the history of everything, offering a way of making sense of our world and our role within it.

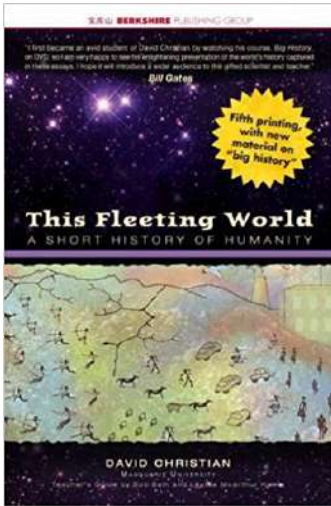
David Christian

[WWW.STOREMYPIC.COM](http://WWW.STOREMYPIC.COM)

“To know nothing of what happened before you were born, is to forever remain a child.” ~Cicero

Study the past  
if you would  
define the  
future.

Confucius



## ***The Fleeting World* by David Christian**

A great historian can make clear the connections between the first *Homo sapiens* and today's version of the species, and a great storyteller can make those connections come alive. David Christian is both. Christian takes us from the Big Bang to the earliest foraging era to the present epoch. A compact, easy-to-read overview of world history, ideal for providing the scope of “Big History” in just a few pages.

To see David Christian explain what “Big History” is you can watch [this](https://www.ted.com/talks/david_christian_big_history) Tedtalk.  
[https://www.ted.com/talks/david\\_christian\\_big\\_history](https://www.ted.com/talks/david_christian_big_history)

Get acquainted with the book. Read the back, look over the table of contents. As a college-level reader you will always want to read any *preface*, *prologue* or *introduction* that a book has, as it will give you a sense of what the overarching theory of the author is, along with their purpose and how they went about researching their subject.

*\*Please make every effort to find a copy of the book to use. Amazon and Barnes and Noble sell it.*

*If you have issues that will prevent you from purchasing/finding a copy of each book – please see/contact Mrs. Sand.\**

*The Fleeting World: A Short History of Humanity by David Christian*

*IBSM: 978-1-933782-04-1*

## **PACING GUIDES FOR SUMMER READING**

| Pacing  | This Fleeting World           |
|---|-------------------------------|
| Week 1 June 9 <sup>th</sup> – 15 <sup>th</sup>      | Prequal & Questions           |
| Week 2 June 16 <sup>th</sup> – 22 <sup>nd</sup>     | Beginnings & Questions        |
| Week 3 June 23 <sup>rd</sup> – 29 <sup>th</sup>     | Acceleration & Questions      |
| Week 4 June 30 <sup>th</sup> – July 6 <sup>th</sup> | Our World & Questions         |
| Week 5 July 7 <sup>th</sup> – 13 <sup>st</sup>      | <i>Make-up week if behind</i> |
| Week 6 July 14 <sup>th</sup> – 20 <sup>th</sup>     | Big Thought Activities        |
| Week 7 July 21 <sup>st</sup> – 27 <sup>th</sup>     | Big Thought Activities        |

## **This Fleeting World – Question Prompts & Resources**

### **(A) Prequel: Before the Beginning**

- (1) How did planets form, and what was Earth like in its first 500 million years of existence.
- (2) David Christian describes life as, “a new form of complexity.” How did oxygen and photosynthesis cause life to begin on Earth?
- (3) Eventually, multi-celled organisms emerged from water, to land, and eventually (about 7 million years ago) into human ancestors. What are some stages in the development to our species, *homo sapiens*?

### Words to Explore

*Spend time researching these online, make flashcards, get to know them!*

|           |                   |                |              |                    |
|-----------|-------------------|----------------|--------------|--------------------|
| Cosmology | The Big Bang      | Quarks         | Fusion       | Interstellar Space |
| DNA       | Natural Selection | Photosynthesis | Homo Sapiens | “Lucy” (Skeleton)  |

**(B) Beginnings: The Era of Foragers (250,000 – 8,000 BCE)**

- (1) What are some leading hypotheses about how our species emerged? How are humans different?
- (2) What was the relationship among human foragers and the environment/nature, and how was it different from our relationships to other humans today and to our environment?

Words to Explore*Spend time researching these online, make flashcards, get to know them!*

|             |            |           |               |
|-------------|------------|-----------|---------------|
| Paleolithic | Archeology | Animism   | Creation Myth |
| Indigenous  | Kinship    | Migration | Extinction    |

**(C) Acceleration: The Agrarian Era (8,000 – BCE – 1750 CE)**

- (1) Why can the Agrarian Era be considered a time of acceleration?
- (2) What changes to human life were caused by settled agricultural development?
- (3) Where did cities first emerge, and what was earliest urban life like?
- (4) What were some of the most influential faith systems that developed during this time?

Words to Explore*Spend time researching these online, make flashcards, get to know them!*

|             |                |                       |                 |
|-------------|----------------|-----------------------|-----------------|
| Agriculture | Overpopulation | Global Climate Change | Irrigation      |
| Epidemics   | Prehistory     | Imperial State        | Faith (Systems) |

**(D) Our World: The Modern Era (1750 – present)**

- (1) What are the major features and trends of the Modern Era?
- (2) What were the main causes of humanity's revolution from agrarian societies to modernity?
- (3) Why is the 20<sup>th</sup> century considered a century of crisis?

Words to Explore*Spend time researching these online, make flashcards, get to know them!*

|                       |             |                    |                   |
|-----------------------|-------------|--------------------|-------------------|
| Democratic Government | Nationalism | Commercial Society | The Enlightenment |
| Industrialization     | Consumerism | Capitalism         | Communism         |

**(E) You must complete all of these Big Thought Activities****Big Thoughts for Big History****Big Thought Activity #1**

Understanding history depends on asking good questions. This is a skill and art that we will develop throughout this year. To get us started, you will ask 4 good questions about this text. A good question is one that asks about the how or why, not just the who or what. Good questions will almost always lead to more questions than answers – so don't worry about what the answer will be for your question. You are not required to answer them, just ask! Pose 4 questions about the history described in this book. What do you want to know more about? What do you WONDER about? Please create one question for each main section of the book (Prequel, beginnings, Acceleration, and Our World).

Then create 2 multiple choice questions for each main section of the book and include the answers.

**Ultimately, you need 3 questions for the 4 sections of the book: 2 of the questions should be multiple choice style with answers AND the additional question is a deep, thought provoking, open ended question to prompt discussion.**

## Big Thought Activity #2

The secret to really understanding history is often to apply it to new information, or a different context. The objective for this activity is to have you think about the historical topics you just read about and apply them to your own lives.

After you have finished reading the book, find a current event that relates to something interesting in *This Fleeting World*. It might be a new archeological find, a scientific breakthrough or a social event. Consider looking at sources such as The New York Times, NPR or BBC, Science News, Science Magazine, Discover, National Geographic, or other reliable news sources.

Write one paragraph that identifies the page/section of the book that connects to the article and explain how the two are connected in your thinking. Be sure to bring a copy of your article or a link for our first week of class.

## Big Thought Activity #3

Choose and answer **any two** of the following questions.

1. How did development of and interaction between various societies impact trade, exchange of ideas, and distribution of resources throughout the history of humanity?
2. What trends/characteristics of humanity changed over time and which ones remained the same? (think of human ability to communicate, organize, create, destroy, etc)
3. What factors influenced the development and spread of technologies through time?
4. What factors influenced changes in demography (population growth/decline) through time?
5. Analyze human impact on environment through time. Provide specific examples.
6. Analyze changes and continuities (i.e. consistencies) in the way human societies are structured (think social classes).
7. What elements of human culture, in your opinion, caused the most profound changes within and between societies throughout history? (There are many complex definitions of “culture” and “human culture” that you might want to explore before answering this question.)
8. Provide at least three ideas/theories that caused the most influential changes in the world. (for this question, you can provide at least one important idea per era.)
9. How did political organization and functions of states change over time? (think of systems of government, expectations of ruled and rulers, responsibilities and loyalty of citizens, etc)

To serve as a guide please read the following sample response and use it as a model for your responses.

Question: *Analyze changes and continuities in gender relations throughout history.*

### Sample Response:

Throughout the entire history of humanity, males and females specialized in, or were expected to perform, gender-specific tasks. Relationship between males and females were most likely based on equality during the foraging era of human history. Later, with the emergence of organized societies, males became the dominant gender. In the modern era, female are still generally lagging behind in opportunities and rights in comparison to males though, nowadays, many societies are striving for more equitable gender relations. During the foraging era, females were most likely in charge of child rearing and food gathering. Though the tasks that each gender performed were different, gathering was a more reliable source of food compared to hunting. So, specialization in tasks did not result in gender hierarchy dominated by males (p.11). However, this gender hierarchy did emerge during the agrarian era. Possible explanations include: growing importance of large number of children to agricultural communities, increased specialization of tasks outside of household in more complex societies, as well as male

domination in “organization of violence” (p.40). In general, the modern era witnessed improvements in opportunities for women in professional and political spheres. More control over reproduction as well as opening of new jobs for women as a result of urbanization and commercialization allowed females to defy their traditional role as child bearers (p.64). However, these changes are not uniform throughout the world. “Worldwide in 1990 about eighty women were in secondary education ... for every hundred men, and only about sixty women were in paid employment for every hundred men” (p.86). So, true gender equality is still a goal and not an achievement.

\*Main ideas were expressed in the beginning of the answer (see underlined sentences above). Followed by supporting details provided by the book/text.