Very Short Introductions online

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Eighteenth-Century Britain: A Very Short Introduction
Paul Langford

Eighteenth-Century Britain: A Very Short Introduction spans the period from the aftermath of the Revolution of 1688 to Pitt the Younger's defeat in his attempts at parliamentary reform and considers the growing security and maturity of the British polity and the development of an industrial economy. Britain overcame challenges by foreign powers, and military setbacks to find itself in a strong imperial and mercantile position by 1789. Although the social problems of economic change and the failure to reform the political system remained issues, the rising middle class and the ruling aristocracy worked together to provide stability.

The First World War: A Very Short Introduction
Michael Howard

The First World War: A Very Short Introduction is a concise history of the ‘Great War’, focusing on why it happened, how it was fought, and why it had the consequences it did. It examines the state of Europe in 1914 and the outbreak of war; the onset of attrition and crisis; the role of the USA; the collapse of Russia; and the weakening and eventual surrender of the Central Powers. It also investigates the historical controversies surrounding the causes and conduct of war, and describes how peace was ultimately made and the potent legacy of resentment left to Germany.

The French Revolution: A Very Short Introduction
William Doyle

The French Revolution: A Very Short Introduction shows that we are still living with the consequences of the French Revolution and explores its legacy in the form of rationality in
public affairs, responsible government, decimalization, and the ideology of human rights. There are many familiar images of the French Revolution, garnered from Dickens, Baroness Orczy, and Tolstoy, and long-lasting legends such as ‘let them eat cake’ and the tricolour. How did the revolution happen? Why did the revolutionaries quarrel with the king, the church and the rest of Europe? Why did this produce Terror? The revolution destroyed the age-old cultural, institutional, and social structures in France and beyond. In what ways did the ambitions of the French Revolution fail?

The Mexican Revolution: A Very Short Introduction
Alan Knight
Print Publication Year: 2016 Published Online: Jan 2016
DOI: 10.1093/actrade/9780198745631.001.0001
Publisher: Oxford University Press

The Mexican Revolution defined the socio-political experience of 20th-century life in Mexico. Its subsequent legacy has provoked debate between those who interpret the ongoing myth of the Revolution and those who adopt the more middle-of-the-road reality of the regime after 1940. The Mexican Revolution: A Very Short Introduction addresses the causes of the upheaval, outlines the armed conflict between 1910 and 1920, explains how a durable regime was consolidated in the 1920s, and sums up the social reforms of the Revolution, culminating in the radical 1930s. The conflict is placed alongside other ‘great’ revolutions, and Mexico is compared with the Latin American countries that avoided violent upheaval.

The Napoleonic Wars: A Very Short Introduction
Mike Rapport
Print Publication Year: 2013 Published Online: Sep 2013
DOI: 10.1093/actrade/9780199590964.001.0001
Publisher: Oxford University Press

The Napoleonic Wars: A Very Short Introduction provides a brief outline of these conflicts, introducing the tactics, strategies, and weaponry of the time. What were the origins of the wars? In what ways and means were the wars fought? What are the political and social legacies of the wars today? The Napoleonic Wars have an important place in the history of Europe, leaving their mark on European and world societies in a variety of ways. In many European countries they provided the stimulus for radical social and political change — particularly in Spain, Germany, and Italy — and are frequently viewed in these countries as the starting point of their modern histories.

Nazi Germany: A Very Short Introduction
Jane Caplan
Print Publication Year: 2019 Published Online: Jul 2019
DOI: 10.1093/actrade/9780198706953.001.0001
Publisher: Oxford University Press
The Nazi regime dominated European history for twelve years between 1933 and 1945, and left a legacy that still echoes today. Nazi Germany: A Very Short Introduction provides a highly relevant reminder of the fragility of democratic institutions, and the ways in which a mass political movement, the exploitation of popular fears, and frail political opposition can lead to the imposition of dictatorship. After considering the emergence and popular appeal of the Nazi party, it examines the relationships between belief, consent, and terror in securing the regime, alongside the crucial role played by Hitler. Arguing that war and conquest were intrinsic to National Socialism, this VSI shows how genocide became its ultimate goal, and concludes with a discussion of the place of Nazi Germany in history and public memory.

Nineteenth-Century Britain: A Very Short Introduction
Christopher Harvie and Colin Matthew

Nineteenth-Century Britain: A Very Short Introduction is an account of remarkable economic and social change and an even more remarkable political stability. Britain in 1789 was overwhelmingly rural, agrarian, multilingual, and almost half Celtic. By 1914, when it faced its greatest test since the defeat of Napoleon, it was largely urban and English. This VSI shows the forces behind Britain's rise to its imperial zenith, and the continuing tensions within the nations and classes of the 'union state'. It also addresses the long and complex route to improved prosperity and political representation through reform and economic growth.

The Russian Revolution: A Very Short Introduction
S. A. Smith

The Russian Revolution: A Very Short Introduction provides an analytical narrative of the main events and developments in Soviet Russia between 1917 and 1936. What impact did the revolution have on society as a whole—on different classes, ethnic groups, the army, men and women, and youth? How was it that one structure of domination was replaced by another? Political developments during this tumultuous period sit firmly in the context of massive economic, social, and cultural change. Since the fall of Communism there has been much reflection on the significance of the Russian Revolution. Is there an alternative interpretation to the currently influential, liberal one, one that sees the revolution as rooted in the contradictions of a backward society that sought modernization and enlightenment and ended in political tyranny?
The Spanish Civil War: A Very Short Introduction

Helen Graham

The Spanish Civil War: Very Short Introduction offers an explanation of the war's origins and course, explores its impact on a personal and international scale, and provides an ethical reflection on the war. How has the war inspired some of the greatest writers of our time? In what ways does it continue to resonate today in Britain, continental Europe, and beyond? The war can be seen as an arena of social change where ideas about culture were forged or resisted, and in which both Spaniards and non-Spaniards participated alike. During the Second World War, these conflicts would stretch from Franco's regime, which envisaged itself as part of the Nazi new order, to Europe and beyond.