If you read the ‘business pages’ of a newspaper or if you listen to the financial news on the television or radio, you will often hear terms such as ‘liability’, ‘balance sheet’ or ‘earnings’. Accounting: A Very Short Introduction provides a guide to understanding and using accounting information. It examines the key concepts and the main types of accounting work, from bookkeeping and financial reporting to auditing and management accounting. It traces the development of accounting over the centuries; examines the building blocks of financial reports, such as assets and liabilities; and looks at how accounting differs between countries and the importance of international standards.

In 1776, Adam Smith (1723–90) wrote The Wealth of Nations, the foundational book that led to him being called the ‘father of economics’. However, Adam Smith was far more than an economist. Adam Smith is introduced through an overview of his writings and moral philosophy. Adam Smith: A Very Short Introduction offers a balanced and nuanced view of this seminal thinker, embedding his fierce defence of free trade, competition, and assault on special interests in contemporary European history, politics, and philosophy. It outlines Smith’s central ideas and how his intellectual and social environment influenced his thinking. It also discusses Smith’s influence on subsequent generations, and the ways in which he has been interpreted.

Advertising: A Very Short Introduction
Winston Fletcher

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date: 19 July 2020
Advertising: A Very Short Introduction dispels the myths surrounding the advertising industry. Advertising is a diverse entity, and campaigns work (or fail to work) in a plethora of ways. How does the advertising industry work? What part do all the key players (the advertisers, the media, and the agencies) play? Where does the public sit in the world of advertising? This VSI examines how advertisers determine whether they have been successful, how they know if the money they have spent has been wasted, and what the benefits of advertising are and what the future may hold for the industry.

African Politics: A Very Short Introduction
Ian Taylor

African Politics: A Very Short Introduction explores how politics is practised on the African continent, providing an overview of the different states and their systems. It considers the nature of the state in sub-Saharan Africa and why its state structures are generally weaker than elsewhere in the world. Exploring the historical and contemporary factors that account for Africa’s underdevelopment, it also analyses why some African countries suffer from high levels of political violence while others are spared. Unveiling the ways in which African state and society actually function beyond the formal institutional façade, this VSI discusses how external factors—both inherited and contemporary—act upon the continent.

Ageing: A Very Short Introduction
Nancy A. Pachana

Ageing: A Very Short Introduction discusses the lifelong dynamic changes in biological, psychological, and social functioning involved in ageing. Increased lifespans have created an urgent need to find ways to enhance our functioning and well-being in the later decades of life. This is reflected in relevant policies and action plans from the WHO and the UN. Looking to the future, this VSI considers advancements in provision for our ageing populations, including revolutionary models of nursing-home care. Understanding the process of ageing is not only important for individuals but also for societies and nations if the full potential of those entering later life is to be realized.

American Political Parties and Elections: A Very Short Introduction
L. Sandy Maisel
American Political Parties and Elections: A Very Short Introduction examines the electoral process in the United States and explains why it is widely misunderstood. Why is participation in elections so much lower in the United States than in other mature democracies? What role do the political parties play in the electoral process? And why do unregulated groups such as 527 advocacy organizations have as much, if not more, influence than candidates' campaign organizations? This VSI examines these and other issues to provide an insider's view of how the system actually works and why there remain only two main political parties, despite the fact that many citizens claim allegiance to neither and think badly of both.

American Politics: A Very Short Introduction
Richard M. Valelly
Print Publication Year: 2013 Published Online: Sep 2013
Publisher: Oxford University Press
DOI: 10.1093/actrade/9780195373851.001.0001
Item type: book

American Politics: A Very Short Introduction introduces the vital elements of American politics. Using an historical-institutional approach, it explains how the American political system is, and always has been, a work in progress — one unfolding within, and also constantly updating, an eighteenth-century constitutional framework. It explores the issue of parties and polarization and surveys the basic institutions: the Presidency, Congress, the judicial branch, the unelected bureaucracy of the independent agencies, and state and local governments. It also deals with political communication, public opinion, voting and the boundaries of the electorate, and the politics of government steering of the economy.

The American Presidency: A Very Short Introduction
Charles O. Jones
Print Publication Year: 2016 Published Online: Jul 2016
Publisher: Oxford University Press
DOI: 10.1093/actrade/9780190458201.001.0001
Item type: book

The Founding Fathers were dedicated to the project of creating an American government both functional and incapable of devolving into tyranny. To do this, they intentionally decentralized decision making among the legislative, executive, and judiciary branches. The American Presidency: A Very Short Introduction delves into the constitutional roots of the American presidency to show how presidents face the challenges of governing within a system of separation of powers. It reviews crucial themes, including democratization of presidential elections, transitioning into and organizing a presidency, challenges in leading the permanent government, making law and executing policy, and reforming and changing the institution, before considering future prospects for the US presidency.
Anarchism: A Very Short Introduction
Colin Ward

Print Publication Year: 2004 Published Online: Sep 2013
DOI: 10.1093/actrade/9780192804778.001.0001
Item type: book

Anarchism: A Very Short Introduction explores key anarchist thinkers from Kropotkin to Chomsky and considers anarchism from a variety of perspectives: theoretical, historical, and international. What exactly is anarchism and who are the anarchists? Can anarchy ever function effectively as a political force? Is it more ‘organized’ and ‘reasonable’ than is currently perceived? The word ‘anarchism’ tends to conjure up images of aggressive protest against government, and — recently — of angry demonstrations against bodies such as the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund. But is anarchism inevitably linked with violent disorder? Do anarchists adhere to a coherent ideology?

Aristocracy: A Very Short Introduction
William Doyle

Print Publication Year: 2010 Published Online: Sep 2013
DOI: 10.1093/actrade/9780199206780.001.0001
Item type: book

Aristocracy: A Very Short Introduction shows how ideas of aristocracy originated in ancient times, were transformed in the middle ages, and have only fallen apart over the last two centuries. The myths in which aristocracies have always sought to shroud themselves are stripped away, but the true sources of their enduring power are also revealed. Their outlook and behaviour affected the rest of society in innumerable and sometimes surprising ways, but perhaps most surprising was the way in which a centuries-old aristocratic hegemony has crumbled away over the last two hundred years. This VSI considers why this happened and what remains today.

Australia: A Very Short Introduction
Kenneth Morgan

Print Publication Year: 2012 Published Online: Sep 2013
DOI: 10.1093/actrade/9780199589937.001.0001
Item type: book

Australia: A Very Short Introduction provides a wide-ranging introduction to modern Australia, examining its history, geography, and culture since the beginning of the white settlement of New South Wales in 1788. Drawing attention to the distinctive features of Australian life, this VSI places contemporary developments in an historical perspective, highlighting the importance of Australia's indigenous culture and making connections between Australia and the wider world. Balancing the successful growth of Australian institutions and democratic traditions, the book considers the struggles that occurred in the making of modern Australia and Australia's political and cultural place in the 21st century.
Banks are of central importance for economic growth, the allocation of capital, competitiveness, and financial stability. Propelled by technological advances in financial analysis and financial deregulation, the banking industry’s investment played a key role in enhancing national economic growth in the early 21st century. Banking: A Very Short Introduction explores the world of banking, describing the role of central banks in national and global economies, and analysing the increasing supervision and regulation imposed on the banking industry in light of the recent global financial crisis. Looking to the future, it considers proposals for reform of the banking industry, and the prospects of a resolution of the closely-related banking and sovereign debt crises.

Behavioural Economics: A Very Short Introduction
Michelle Baddeley

Behavioural Economics: A Very Short Introduction introduces the field of behavioural economics, analysing the motivations behind economic decisions and showing the relevance of behavioural economics to our own lives and everyday economic and financial problems. It explores the reasons why we make irrational decisions; how we decide quickly; why we make mistakes in risky situations; our tendency to procrastination and short-termism; and how we are affected by social influences, personality, mood, and emotions. The implications of understanding the rationale for our own financial behaviour are huge. Behavioural economics could help policy-makers to understand the people behind their policies, enabling them to design more effective policies, while also improving their marketing.

The Body: A Very Short Introduction
Chris Shilling

The human body is thought of conventionally as a biological entity, with its longevity, morbidity, size, and even appearance determined by genetic factors immune to the influence of society or culture. Since the mid-1980s, however, there has been a rising awareness of how our bodies, and our perception of them, are influenced by the social, cultural, and material contexts in which humans live. Drawing on studies of sex and gender, education,
governance, the economy, and religion, The Body: A Very Short Introduction demonstrates how our physical being, or embodiment, allows us to affect our material and virtual world, while enabling governments to shape and direct our thoughts and actions.

Borders: A Very Short Introduction
Alexander C. Diener and Joshua Hagen

Borders: A Very Short Introduction challenges the perception of borders as passive lines on a map, revealing them instead to be integral forces in the economic, social, political, and environmental processes that shape our lives. The issue of borders includes considerations such as transnational communities, security threats from terrorist groups, migration regulation, rights of indigenous peoples, the legal status of the sea and outer space, environmental sustainability, and the emergence of neo-liberal economics. How have borders developed over time? What is their relevance today? Will we ever have a borderless world? Borders are likely to remain a hot topic across the social sciences and global headlines for years to come.

Branding: A Very Short Introduction
Robert Jones

Branding: A Very Short Introduction discusses the rising omnipresence of brands, and analyses how they work their magic. It considers the incredible potency of brands as a commercial, social, and cultural force, and looks at the many different kinds of brands that exist—from products, services, and artistic properties, to companies, charities, sports clubs, and political parties. Defining what we mean by the word ‘brand’, this VSI explores both the positive and negative aspects of brands. Finally, it considers the business of branding, and asks whether the idea of brands and branding is starting to decline, or whether it has a long future ahead.

The BRICS: A Very Short Introduction
Andrew F. Cooper

In the wake of the post-Cold War era, the aftermath of 9/11, the 2008 global financial crisis, and the emergence of the G20, few commentators expected a reshaping of the global system towards multipolarity, and away from the United States. And yet, the BRICS—
encompassing Brazil, Russia, India, China, and South Africa—has emerged as a challenge
to the international status quo. But what is its capacity as a transformative force? The
BRICS: A Very Short Introduction explores the emergence of the BRICS as a concept. It
provides a contemporary analysis of the BRICS’ practice and influence as a forum and a
lobby group in advancing a distinctive, but amorphous agenda among global politics.

British Politics: A Very Short Introduction
Tony Wright

British Politics: A Very Short Introduction explores the history of British politics, looking
at whether the present instability is an aberration, the result of long-standing fault lines, or
both. Current events are placed within a longer, larger perspective, focusing on Britain’s
constitution, its polarized political culture of debates and disagreements, the importance of
party politics, and the meaning of representative democracy now. Following the financial
crisis, a peacetime coalition government, and the fallout from the 2016 referendum,
Britain’s political future is uncertain. However, even after the momentous changes leading
up to and including the 2019 general election, it remains uncertain whether the character of
British politics will fundamentally change.

Capitalism: A Very Short Introduction
James Fulcher

The word ‘capitalism’ is heard and used frequently, but what is capitalism about, and what
does it mean? Capitalism: A Very Short Introduction discusses the history and development
of capitalism through several detailed case studies, ranging from the ‘tulipomania’ of 17th-
century Holland, the Great Depression of the 1930s, and the impact of the global financial
crisis that started in 2007–8. It looks at the different forms that capitalism takes in Britain,
Japan, Sweden, and the United States, and explores whether capitalism has escaped the
nation-state by going global. It asks whether there is an alternative to capitalism, discussing
socialism, communal and cooperative experiments, and the alternatives proposed by
environmentalists.

Global Catastrophes: A Very Short Introduction
Bill McGuire
Life on Earth will come to an end. It is just a matter of when. Global Catastrophes: A Very Short Introduction focuses on the many potential catastrophes facing our planet and our species in the future, and looks at both the probability of these events happening and our chances of survival. Coverage extends from discussion of the likely consequences of current global warming to the inevitable destruction of the earth in the far future, when it is enveloped by our giant, bloated Sun. In between, other ‘end of the world scenarios’ will be examined, including the New Ice Age, asteroid and comet impact, supervolcanoes, and mega-tsunamis.