Very Short Introductions online

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**Abolitionism**

**A Very Short Introduction**

Richard S. Newman

Print Publication Year: 2018 Published Online: Aug 2018  
Publisher: Oxford University Press  
DOI: 10.1093/actrade/9780190213220.001.0001

The abolitionist movement launched the global human rights struggle in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, redefining the meaning of equality throughout the Atlantic world. In the twenty-first century, it remains a touchstone of democratic activism—a timeless example of mobilizing against injustice. Abolitionism: A Very Short Introduction highlights the key people, institutions, themes, and events that shaped the antislavery struggle across the Atlantic world. Highlighting the activist exertions of abolitionists from the Caribbean and Great Britain to the United States and Iberian society, this short text shows that abolitionism was a potent social movement that ended the most profitable institution of the early modern era: racial slavery.

**African History: A Very Short Introduction**

John Parker and Richard Rathbone

Print Publication Year: 2007 Published Online: Sep 2013  
Publisher: Oxford University Press  
DOI: 10.1093/actrade/9780192802484.001.0001

African History: A Very Short Introduction looks at Africa's past and reflects on the changing ways it has been imagined and represented by examining the unity and diversity of African cultures, slavery, religion, colonial conquest, the diaspora, and the importance of history in understanding contemporary Africa. Africa has been known as ‘the cradle of mankind’, and its recoverable history stretches back to the Pharaohs. But the idea of study of ‘African history’ itself is new. Why is it still contested and controversial? Who invented the idea of ‘Africa’? How is African history pieced together, given such a lack of documentary evidence? How did Africa interact with the world 1,000 years ago?

**American Cultural History: A Very Short Introduction**

Eric Avila

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date: 19 September 2019
American Cultural History: A Very Short Introduction provides a chronological look at American culture—the values, attitudes, beliefs, and myths of a particular society and the objects through which they are organized—addressing literature, music, art, architecture, theater, film, television, and the Internet. In doing so, it emphasizes culture’s role in the shaping of national identity and how previous generations of Americans have imagined themselves, their nation, and their relationship to rest of the world. Across the lines of race, class, gender, sexuality, religion, ethnicity, generation, and geography, diverse Americans have forged a national culture with a global reach, inventing stories to underscore the problems and possibilities of an American way of life.

American Foreign Relations: A Very Short Introduction
Andrew Preston

For better or worse, be it militarily, politically, economically, technologically, or culturally, Americans have had a profound impact on the wider world beyond them. American Foreign Relations: A Very Short Introduction analyzes the key episodes, themes, and individuals in the history of American foreign relations. While discussing diplomacy and the periods of war that have shaped national and international history, it also addresses such topics as industrialization, globalization, imperialism, and immigration. Covering the American Revolution through the War on Terror, it examines the connections between domestic politics and foreign affairs, as well as the importance of ideals and values.

American History: A Very Short Introduction
Paul S. Boyer

American History: A Very Short Introduction spans the earliest migrations to the present looking at the United States's failures to live up to its oft-stated ideals. The establishment of the North American colonies had very different meanings for colonists, native peoples, and enslaved Africans. The late nineteenth century saw industrial expansion, appalling conditions, and an exploited labor force. The twentieth-century emergence of a suburban society of consumer abundance meant a better life for many, yet left behind crime-ridden inner cities and spawned a stultifying mass culture. While American popular culture has demonstrated global appeal, the projection of U.S. military power abroad has sometimes failed in its purpose and damaged the nation's international standing.
American Immigration: A Very Short Introduction
David A. Gerber
Print Publication Year: 2011 Published Online: Sep 2013
Publisher: Oxford University Press
DOI: 10.1093/actrade/9780195331783.001.0001
Item type: book

American Immigration: A Very Short Introduction examines the many legal efforts to curb immigration and to define who is and is not an American. It looks at immigration from the perspective of the migrant — farmers and industrial workers, mechanics and domestics, highly trained professionals and small-business owners — who willingly upped sticks for the promise of a better life. Americans have come from every corner of the globe, and have been brought together by a variety of historical processes — conquest, colonialism, the slave trade, territorial acquisition, and voluntary immigration. What is the relationship between race and ethnicity in the life of these groups and in the formation of American society?

American Naval History: A Very Short Introduction
Craig L. Symonds
Print Publication Year: 2018 Published Online: May 2018
Publisher: Oxford University Press
DOI: 10.1093/actrade/9780199394760.001.0001
Item type: book

American Naval History: A Very Short Introduction charts the history of the United States Navy from its birth during the American Revolution, through its emergence as a global power amid the world wars of the twentieth century, and to its current role as a superpower in the twenty-first century. It highlights iconic moments of great drama pivotal to the nation’s fortunes: John Paul Jones’ attacks on the British during the Revolution, the Barbary Wars, and the arduous conquest of Iwo Jima. It also illuminates the technological, institutional, and functional changes of the U.S. Navy and captures its evolving culture and the debates between policymakers about what role the institution should play in world affairs.

The American Revolution: A Very Short Introduction
Robert J. Allison
Print Publication Year: 2015 Published Online: Jul 2015
Publisher: Oxford University Press
DOI: 10.1093/actrade/9780190225063.001.0001
Item type: book

Between 1760 and 1800, the American people cast off British rule to create a new nation and a radically new form of government based on the idea that people have the right to govern themselves. The American Revolution: A Very Short Introduction provides a cohesive synthesis of the military, diplomatic, political, social, and intellectual aspects of the American Revolution, paying special attention to the Revolution’s causes and consequences. It recreates the tumultuous events that led to revolution, such as the Boston
Massacre and the Boston Tea Party, and highlights the major battles and commanders on both sides before exploring the aftermath of the Revolution and how the new republic developed.

**American Slavery: A Very Short Introduction**

Heather Andrea Williams

Print Publication Year: 2014 Published Online: Nov 2014  
Publisher: Oxford University Press  
DOI: 10.1093/actrade/9780199922680.001.0001  
Item type: book

American Slavery: A Very Short Introduction traces the development of American slavery, from the Portuguese capture of Africans in the 1400s until its abolition following the Civil War, and explores its effects on the American colonies and the United States of America. It examines legislation that differentiated American Indians and Africans from Europeans as the ideology of white supremacy flourished. These laws reflected the contradiction of America's moral and philosophical ideology that valorized freedom on one hand and justified the enslavement of a population deemed inferior on another. The tense and often violent relationships between the enslaved and the enslavers are explored, as well as those between abolitionists and pro-slavery advocates.

**The American West: A Very Short Introduction**

Stephen Aron

Print Publication Year: 2014 Published Online: Jan 2015  
Publisher: Oxford University Press  
DOI: 10.1093/actrade/9780199858934.001.0001  
Item type: book

The American West: A Very Short Introduction tracks “the West” from the building of the Cahokia Mounds around 900 ad, through early encounters with Europeans, to the Newlands Reclamation Act in 1902, and the post-World War II migration to California. It stretches the chronology, enlarges the geography, and varies the casting, providing a history of the American West that is longer, larger, and more complicated than popular culture has previously suggested. It is a history of how portions of North America became Wests, how parts of these became American, and how ultimately American Wests became the American West.

**American Women's History: A Very Short Introduction**

Susan Ware

Print Publication Year: 2015 Published Online: Mar 2015  
Publisher: Oxford University Press  
DOI: 10.1093/actrade/97801999328338.001.0001  
Item type: book

What does U.S. history look like with women at the center of the story? From Pocahantas to military women serving in the Iraq war, American Women's History: A Very Short Introduction chronicles the contributions, recognized and unrecognized, that women
have made to the American experience. It recognizes the diversity of American women's experiences defined by race, ethnicity, and class, but also geography, sexual orientation, age, and religion. At the core of the narrative is the recognition that gender—the changing historical and cultural constructions of roles assigned to the biological differences of the sexes—is central to understanding the history of American women's lives, and the history of the United States.

Ancient Assyria: A Very Short Introduction
Karen Radner

Assyria was one of the most influential kingdoms of the Ancient Near East. Ancient Assyria: A Very Short Introduction sketches the history of Assyria from city state to empire, from the early 2nd millennium bc to the end of the 7th century bc. Since the archaeological rediscovery of Assyria in the mid-19th century, its cities have been excavated extensively in present-day Iraq, Syria, Turkey, and Israel, with further sites in Iran, Lebanon, and Jordan providing important information. The Assyrian Empire was one of the most geographically vast, socially diverse, multicultural, and multi-ethnic states of the early first millennium bc. After a brief introduction the book explores the geography and the history of Ancient Assyria. It continues by examining the lives not only of some of its key rulers, but also the lives of some typical citizens, and slaves too, are selected. In this way the culture and diverse ways of life of those who lived in the empire are vividly brought to life.

The Ancient Near East: A Very Short Introduction
Amanda H. Podany

The Ancient Near East: A Very Short Introduction describes a momentous time in human history and explains why the ancient Near East is known as the ‘cradle of civilization’. Mesopotamia, Syria, and Anatolia were home to an extraordinarily rich and successful culture. Indeed, it was a time and place of earth-shaking changes for humankind: the beginnings of writing and law, kingship and bureaucracy, diplomacy and state-sponsored warfare, mathematics and literature. The three thousand years of this era — from around 3500 bce, with the founding of the first Mesopotamian cities, to the conquest of the Near East by the Persian king Cyrus the Great in 539 bce — represent a period of incredible innovation, from the invention of the wheel to early achievements in astronomy, law, and diplomacy.
Ancient Warfare: A Very Short Introduction
Harry Sidebottom

Print Publication Year: 2004 Published Online: Sep 2013
Publisher: Oxford University Press
DOI: 10.1093/actrade/9780192804709.001.0001
Item type: book

Ancient Warfare: A Very Short Introduction examines all aspects of ancient warfare, from philosophy and strategy to the technical skills needed to fight. How did wars shape classical society? How was the individual's identity constructed by war? Can a war be just? Why was siege warfare particularly bloody? What role did divine intervention play in the outcome of a battle? Greek and Roman warfare differed from other cultures and was unlike any other forms of warfare. The key difference is often held to be that the Greeks and Romans practised a ‘Western Way of War’, where the aim is an open, decisive battle, won by courage instilled in part by discipline. What is this ‘Western Way of War’?

The Anglo-Saxon Age: A Very Short Introduction
John Blair

Print Publication Year: 2000 Published Online: Sep 2013
Publisher: Oxford University Press
DOI: 10.1093/actrade/9780192854032.001.0001
Item type: book

The Anglo-Saxon Age: A Very Short Introduction covers the era from the emergence of the earliest English settlements around the year ad 450 to the Norman victory in 1066 providing a brief introduction to the political, social, religious, and cultural history of Anglo-Saxon Britain. The Anglo-Saxon age lasted for 600 years. This period encompassed an age that shaped England's landscape and culture in profound and long-lasting ways. Anglo-Saxon Britain was a fragmented, non-urban, warrior society: a multi-ethnic community. This gradually changed over time as the early medieval cultures united to give shape to the Britain that was to come.

Asian American History: A Very Short Introduction
Madeline Y. Hsu

Print Publication Year: 2017 Published Online: Dec 2016
Publisher: Oxford University Press
DOI: 10.1093/actrade/9780190219765.001.0001
Item type: book

Asians have migrated to North America for centuries, in search of opportunities and conveyed by increasingly dense, international circuits of trade, labor markets, and family networks. Asians joined a diverse array of immigrants arriving in capacities as diverse merchants, farmers, soldiers, missionaries, soldiers, artists, and students. They contributed significantly to the massive transformation of the United States into the wealthiest and most powerful nation in the world, particularly on the west coast and Hawaii. Asian American History: A Very Short Introduction highlights how Asian immigration has shaped the evolution of ideological and legal interpretations of America as a “nation of immigrants.”
The Aztecs: A Very Short Introduction
David Carrasco

The Aztecs: A Very Short Introduction employs the disciplines of history, religious studies, and anthropology as it illuminates the complexities of Aztec life. This VSI looks beyond Spanish accounts that have coloured much of the Western narrative to let Aztec voices speak. It also discusses the arrival of the Spaniards, contrasts Aztec mythical traditions about the origins of their city with actual urban life in Mesoamerica, outlines the rise of the Aztec empire, explores Aztec religion, and sheds light on Aztec art. The VSI concludes by looking at how the Aztecs have been portrayed in Western thought, art, film, and literature as well as in Latino culture and arts.

Babylonia: A Very Short Introduction
Trevor Bryce

Babylonia: A Very Short Introduction takes us on a journey of more than 2,000 years across the history and civilization of ancient Babylonia, from the emergence of its chief city, Babylon, as a village on the Euphrates in the 3rd millennium BC through phases of triumph, decline, and resurgence until its royal capital faded into obscurity in the Roman imperial era. Exploring key historical events as well as the day-to-day life of an ancient Babylonian—including the great Hammurabic, Kassite, and Nebuchadnezzar’s Neo-Babylonian empires as well as the periods of Persian and Macedonian rule under Alexander the Great—it provides a comprehensive guide to one of history’s most profound civilizations.

The British Constitution: A Very Short Introduction
Martin Loughlin

The British Constitution: A Very Short Introduction explores one of the most unusual constitutional arrangements in the world. It considers the scope and nature of the British constitution and the challenges that have been generated by this approach. This VSI examines the origins of the British constitution and the alterations made to it in response to the changing nature of its state — from England, to Britain, to the United Kingdom, to the impact of Britain's membership of the European Union. Lastly, it examines the future prospects of the British constitution in an ever-changing political environment.
The British Empire: A Very Short Introduction explores how the British Empire became so powerful and far-reaching. From the eighteenth century until the 1950s the British Empire was the biggest political entity in the world. What was the British Empire and what were its main constituent parts? How was the Empire ruled? What were its economic effects? What were the cultural implications of empire, in Britain and its colonies? These questions are answered in this VSI and the life of the people living under imperial rule is examined. The legacies of the Empire and how it should be viewed in world history are also explored.