Dear Students, Parents, and Teachers:

Welcome to the National History Bee Study Guide!

To make the Study Guide, we divided all of history into six chapters: American History to 1815, American History from 1815 to 1933, American History from 1933-Present, World History (everything but American) to 1492, World History from 1492 to 1933, and World History from 1933-Present.

Each chapter has four parts. The first explains why we’ve divided history the way we did—what makes 1492 or 1933 such an important year? Hopefully, these explanations introduce you to historical “turning points,” and provide some context for the concepts and facts offered in the other three parts of the chapter.

The second section of each chapter offers the “great themes” for that period of time. Reading about these themes should allow you to think of history not just as a set of facts to memorize, and will give you a greater understanding of historical progress and the truly BIG concepts that tie those facts together.

The third and fourth parts of each chapter offer lists of people, places, things, and events you need to know and should know, respectively. The “Need to Knows” are not necessarily more important than “Should Knows”—they just tend to come up in National History Bee questions more often.

So please enjoy the Study Guide. Keep an eye out for anything in bold in the first two parts of each chapter; study up as much as you can on the terms in the third and fourth parts. And remember—while this Study Guide should get you started, there is so much more to history than what’s in the next ten pages. A good History Bee competitor will know the Study Guide forward and backward; a great one will go above and beyond, reading books and scouring through encyclopedias.

Have fun with the Study Guide, and good luck!
American History to 1815

What’s so important about 1815?
The year 1815 marked the end of the War of 1812. While the U.S. had already gained its independence during the Revolution, the War of 1812 was the young country’s first great test, and showed that America would be able to sustain itself.

What are the great themes of American History up to 1815?
The beginnings of the United States were humble—our first immigrants tended to be religious minorities, debtors, or otherwise destined for only modest success in their home countries. Their problems didn’t end upon arrival—they faced the harsh realities of the land, and the 17th and 18th centuries also saw a great deal of conflict between settlers and Native Americans.

Though many European countries colonized America, by 1763, at the end of the French and Indian War, the British and their 13 colonies dominated the American landscape. Colonists under the rule of Britain and King George III began to rebel against “no taxation without representation.” Buoyed by the ideals of Thomas Jefferson’s Declaration of Independence, the Americans defeated the British to earn their freedom in the Revolutionary War.

Upon receiving their independence, the Americans sought to live under the very limited government outlined by the Articles of Confederation, but eventually turned to a somewhat stronger federal government outlined by 1787’s Constitution. Still, this Constitution was constrained by a Bill of Rights limiting the power of government.

Between 1787 and the War of 1812, the U.S. completed the Louisiana Purchase, doubling the size of the country. Increasing tensions with the British during this time led to the War of 1812, during which Britain invaded the U.S. and burned down the White House. But the Americans recovered, and the war was fought to a draw.

What You Need to Know (People, Places, Things, and Events)
- **Alexander Hamilton** was a Founder and the first Secretary of the Treasury. He established the First Bank of the U.S., helped write the Federalist Papers, espoused Federalist ideas, and was killed in a duel by Aaron Burr.
- **Benjamin Franklin** was a Founder who wrote Poor Richard’s Almanack, and worked on scientific projects concerning bifocals and electricity.
- **George Washington** was the first American president, and before that, led the Continental Army. He encouraged the US to stay out of foreign affairs and avoid the political party system.
- **John Marshall** was the fourth Chief Justice of the Supreme Court, serving from 1801 to 1835. He was a Federalist, and his court’s rulings tended to give more power to the federal government.
His ruling in *Marbury v. Madison* set the precedent for judicial review.

- **Thomas Jefferson** was the third U.S. president. He authored the Declaration of Independence, completed the Louisiana Purchase, sent Lewis and Clark west, supported separation of church and state, and founded the University of Virginia.

**What You Should Know**

- “Sinners in the Hands of an Angry God”
- Anne Hutchinson
- Articles of Confederation
- Bacon’s Rebellion
- Battle of Bunker Hill
- Battle of Saratoga
- Battle of Trenton
- Benedict Arnold
- Boston Massacre
- Boston Tea Party
- Election of 1800
- Eli Whitney
- Embargo Act
- Georgia
- Hartford Convention
- Horatio Gates
- Iroquois Confederacy
- John Adams
- John Trumbull
- King Philip’s War
- Lewis and Clark
- Louisiana Purchase
- *Marbury v. Madison*
- Maryland
- Massachusetts
- Mayflower
- Mississippi River
- Nathan Hale
- Patrick Henry
- Paul Revere
- Philip Freneau
- Puritans
- Quakers
- Sacagawea
- Salem Witch Trials
- Second Great Awakening
- Stamp Act
- Tobacco
- War of 1812
- Whiskey Rebellion
- XYZ Affair

**American History, 1815-1933**

**What’s so important about 1933?**
In the year 1933, Franklin D. Roosevelt became president of the United States. FDR’s **New Deal**, designed to fight the Great Depression, transformed the role of the U.S. federal government. His four terms as president also included our involvement in World War II, which took many American lives but also set the US on its path to superpower status.

**What are the great themes of American History from 1815 to 1933?**
America entered a period of prosperity and peace known as the **Era of Good Feelings** coming out of the War of 1812, but good feelings didn’t last long. The period between 1815 and the **Civil War** was dominated by controversy over slavery and, as the U.S. expanded to the West, whether new states would be free or have slaves. Other significant events between 1815 and the Civil War were the beginnings of the **women’s suffrage movement** and the **industrialization** of America, including the completion of the **transcontinental railroad**.
But the Civil War, which began when Abraham Lincoln took office in 1861 and lasted until 1865, divided the North and South over the issue of slavery. By the end of the Civil War, the North prevailed, slaves were emancipated and the South went into a period of Reconstruction. Reconstruction rebuilt the South, but its attempts to integrate African-Americans into Southern society failed—though nominally free, they would be the victims of segregation for another century.

After Reconstruction came two periods of American history directly related to each other: the Gilded Age and the Progressive Era. The Gilded Age reaped the benefits of industrialization and brought massive wealth to “captains of industry,” but it was a period of great inequality and great suffering for many. The Progressive Era was a reaction to the Gilded Age, and succeeded in providing better conditions for workers and finally, in 1920, giving women the right to vote.

As the Progressive Era came towards its end in the 1910s, the U.S. became involved in World War I. The U.S. was only active in World War I for one year, and fought with the victorious Allied Powers against the Central Powers. Following World War I, the U.S. saw a period of great economic success and cultural change known as the Roaring Twenties. The ‘20s came to an end with the stock market crash of 1929 and the crippling effects of the Great Depression.

It was with the Depression in mind that Americans went to the polls and elected FDR president in 1932.

What You Need to Know (People, Places, Things, and Events)

- Abraham Lincoln was the 16th President of the U.S. He was president during the Civil War, gave the Gettysburg Address, and issued the Emancipation Proclamation. He was the first Republican president.
- Clarence Darrow was a famous defense lawyer at the end of the 19th and beginning of the 20th centuries. He defended Illinois murderers Leopold and Loeb, and science teacher John Scopes in the famous “Scopes Monkey Trial.”
- William Jennings Bryan was a Democratic and Populist politician who lost the 1896 and 1900 presidential elections. He served as Wilson’s Secretary of State from 1913 to 1915, and gave the famous “Cross of Gold” speech in 1896.
- Andrew Jackson was a prominent American General and later served as President of the U.S. from 1829 to 1837. His administration saw the Nullification Crisis and the Trail of Tears and his Vice-President Martin Van Buren succeeded him.
American History, 1933-Present

What are the great themes of American History since 1933?
Mired in the Great Depression, the American people elected FDR president. His New Deal was a series of federal programs to stimulate the economy and advance the country. While it’s still unclear whether his New Deal was an economic success, there’s no doubt that America’s involvement in World War II, after the attack on Pearl Harbor, got its economy back on track.

Following World War II, in which the U.S. defeated the Axis powers—with many lives lost, though—the new threat was the Cold War. Until its end in 1991, the U.S. would try to “win” the war in two ways: one, by building up its nuclear arsenal; and two, by using often questionable means to contain communism and support capitalist states. The strategy of containment informed U.S. involvement in the Korean War in the 1950s, and the Vietnam War in the 1960s. The Vietnam War was greatly unpopular among the American people.

Besides the Vietnam War, the decade of the 1960s was notable for the anti-poverty set of programs known as The Great Society, which included Medicare and Medicaid. It was also known for the Civil Rights Movement, in which minorities and oppressed groups—most importantly African-Americans and women—fought for equality. The work of leaders such as Malcolm X and Martin Luther King, Jr. brought an end to segregation in the South and encouraged equality among blacks and whites.

The 1970s and 1980s were defined by the Watergate scandal, which forced President Nixon to resign, and the birth of the conservative movement, which was led by Ronald Reagan and defined as a backlash against the progressive values embodied by much of the 1960s.
What You Need to Know (People, Places, Things, and Events)

- **John F. Kennedy** was the first Catholic president. He was elected in 1960 and assassinated by Lee Harvey Oswald in 1963. He oversaw the Bay of Pigs invasion and the Cuban Missile Crisis, and fought for America’s space program.
- The **Korean War** was a 1950s war in which the U.S. sought to protect South Korea from falling under the influence of North Korea, China, and communism. The U.S. made a famous amphibious landing at Inchon, and the result of the war was the creation of a demilitarized zone between the two Koreas.
- **Richard Nixon** served as Vice-President under Dwight D. Eisenhower in the 1950s and lost the Election of 1960 to JFK after the first set of presidential debates to be televised. Nixon was elected president in the Election of 1968 after which he helped expand trade in China and was ultimately impeached for his part in the **Watergate Scandal**. He was pardoned of any wrongdoing by his successor, President **Gerald Ford**.
- **Ronald Reagan** was a conservative Republican president who urged Gorbachev to tear down the Berlin Wall, was in office during the Iran-Contra scandal, supported supply-side economics, and was shot by John Hinckley. Before he turned to politics, Reagan was a Hollywood actor.

What You Should Know

- Aaron Copland
- Agricultural Adjustment Act (AAA)
- Alger Hiss
- Battle of Midway
- Bill Clinton
- Barry Goldwater
- *Brown v. Board of Ed*
- Douglas MacArthur
- Dwight Eisenhower
- Election of 1948
- FDR
- Great Society
- Japanese internment
- Jimmy Carter
- John Nance Garner
- Joe McCarthy
- Martin Luther King, Jr.
- NAFTA
- New Deal
- Oklahoma City bombing
- *Roe v. Wade*
- School prayer
- *The Grapes of Wrath*
- US-Iran Relations
- Warren Court
- Watergate
World History to 1492

What’s so important about 1492?
As the rhyme goes, in 1492, Columbus sailed the ocean blue. But Christopher Columbus’s “discovery” of America did more than just lay the foundation for the settlement and expansion of the United States. It brought about the first real interaction between the Eastern Hemisphere, or Old World; and the Western Hemisphere, or New World.

The meeting of Old and New is why 1492 is truly a turning point, and that’s why we use that year to mark the end of the first period of World History.

What are the great themes of World History up to 1492?
The beginnings of modern civilization are thought to date to about 3000 BCE. The early modern civilizations—Sumerians and Babylonians in modern-day Iraq, and the Indus River Valley civilization in modern-day India—differed from their hunter-gatherer predecessors in the effective use of agriculture, writing systems, and the development around fertile river valleys.

Following the earliest civilizations were even more effective ones like Ancient Egypt in Northern Africa, and the various dynasties that would rule China, starting with the Shang Dynasty. Other civilizations sprung up across the Eastern Hemisphere and Central and South America, but the most impressive were in the Mediterranean. The Ancient Greeks made tremendous advances in philosophy and government, creating modern-day democracy. The heyday of the Greeks was followed by that of Ancient Rome, whose empire spanned most of the Eastern Hemisphere at its peak, and whose culture and customs are still relevant today.

The fall of Ancient Rome brought on the Dark Ages and Middle Ages, which saw the civilizations of the Mediterranean, Africa, and the East supplanted by the kingdoms of northern and western Europe. It was during this time that the powerful and long-lasting English and French monarchies, as well as the Holy Roman Empire, rose. In Asia, the Mongols—more of a roving militant band than a civilization—reigned supreme during the Middle Ages.

As modern civilizations and empires developed, so did today’s most popular religions. Both starting in India BCE, Hinduism and then Buddhism spread and attracted many followers. Of course, the beginning of the Common Era brought the birth of Jesus Christ and the rise of Christianity, which became entwined with power through the institution of the papacy. In the year 622, the prophet Muhammad founded Islam. Muslim kingdoms known as caliphates would rule the Middle East, North Africa, and Spain for centuries. Christians and Muslims came into frequent conflict, and around 1000, fought a series of holy wars known as the Crusades.

Soon after the Crusades, all of Europe underwent a Renaissance, a rebirth of art and music that would soon lead to dramatic progress in monarchies and religion. The cultural Renaissance went hand-in-hand with increased exploration, which set Columbus sailing in 1492.
What You Need To Know (People, Places, Things, and Events)

- **Alexander the Great** was a Macedonian king (Macedon was one of the states of Ancient Greece), who ruled the largest empire ever built at the time of his death. He defeated the Persians and scores of civilizations in the Mediterranean and Middle East.

- **Charlemagne** was a Frankish king who became the first Holy Roman Emperor in 800 CE. He greatly expanded the territory of his ancestors, grandfather Charles Martel and father Pepin the Short.

- **Ancient Rome** existed under three forms of government: the Kingdom, the Republic, and the Empire. It was founded by Romulus and Remus in 753 BCE, and was sacked by Visigoths in 410 CE.

- **The Magna Carta** was a charter signed by King John of England in 1215. The Magna Carta was one of the first documents to limit the powers of a monarch and protect individual rights.

What You Should Know

- Albigeensian Crusade
- Alfred the Great
- Ancient Greece
- Angkor Wat
- Attila the Hun
- Avignon
- Aztecs
- Babylon
- Battle of Bosworth Field
- Beowulf
- Byzantine Empire
- Cleopatra
- Constantine
- Constantinople
- Crusades
- Edward I (of England)
- El Cid
- Genghis Khan
- Henry II (of England)
- Henry IV (of England)
- Henry VII (of England)
- Hundred Years’ War
- Incans
- Indus River Valley
- Julius Caesar
- Justinian I
- Ming Dynasty
- Minoans
- Nero
- Olmecs
- Peasants’ Revolts
- Picts
- Plato
- Reconquista
- Richard I, “The Lionhearted”
- Thebes
- William the Conqueror
- Visigoths

World History, 1492-1933

What’s so important about 1933?
In 1933, **Adolf Hitler** became Chancellor of Germany. Hitler’s rise to power was a victory for fascism, and more importantly put the world on the path to World War II. 1933 is a turning point because its events brought on a war that truly changed the world.
What are the great themes of World History from 1492 to 1933?
If this period is marked by one theme, it’s the dominance of Europe. We left off with the Renaissance that brought Europe out of the Middle Ages and into modernity; now we can see the sweeping changes it brought to Europe and, by way of Europe, to the rest of the world.

One of the first great changes in the wake of the Renaissance was the Protestant Reformation, in which followers of the German monk Martin Luther broke off from the Catholic Church and became Protestant Christians. The Reformation led to the creation of new sects, cultures, and societies across Europe; it also sowed the seeds for Christian-against-Christian conflicts and wars that would dominate the 16th and 17th centuries.

But new ideas didn’t just cause religious strife. They encouraged exploration that was just starting with Columbus in 1492 and eventually led to European colonialism—first Spain and Portugal in the 16th and 17th centuries; and then France, England, Germany from the 17th century until after World War II, controlled large swaths of the developing world outside of Europe.

This period also saw the French Revolution of 1789, which was unique as an ideals-based overthrow of a monarchy. Influenced by writers from the intellectual movement called the Enlightenment, the French people unsuccessfully sought a democratic experiment, where the people, and not a king, ruled the state. Another revolution was the Industrial Revolution of the late 18th and 19th centuries, which pushed Europe even further ahead of the rest of the world.

However, the greatest conflict and change came early in the 20th century, as nearly all of Europe found itself mired in World War I, which had come about as a result of the increasing power and ideological differences of Europe’s states. Following World War I, Europe’s balance of power had changed—to the dismay of many Italians and Germans, which allowed Benito Mussolini and Hitler to become those countries’ leaders.

Outside of Europe, the strongest empires during this time were the Muslim Ottomans of Turkey and Mughals in India.

What You Need to Know (People, Places, Things, and Events)
- The Battle of Waterloo was Napoleon’s final defeat, at the hands of England’s Duke of Wellington. It took place in 1815, and ended the Napoleonic Wars.
- Benito Mussolini was the fascist leader of Italy from 1922 to 1943. He was called “Il Duce” and marched on Rome with his army, known as Black Shirts, in 1922.
- Catherine the Great (or Catherine II) was an “enlightened” Russian empress during the 18th century. She put down Pugachev’s Revolt, and succeeded her husband Peter III to the throne.
- Elizabeth I was the Queen of England from 1558 to 1603. She had her cousin, Mary Queen of Scots, executed, and defeated the Spanish Armada.
• Peter the Great (or Peter I) was an early 18th century Russian tsar who westernized Russia. He won the Great Northern War and built the city of St. Petersburg.
• The Thirty Years’ War was a religious war that lasted from 1618 to 1648. It started with the Defenestration of Prague and ended with the Peace of Westphalia. Famous generals include Wallenstein and the Swedish king Gustavus Adolphus.

What You Should Know
• Akbar the Great
• Austro-Prussian War
• Benjamin Disraeli
• Borgia Family
• Cardinal Richelieu
• Charles Darwin
• Congress of Vienna
• Crimean War
• English Civil War
• G.F. Handel
• Girolamo Savonarola
• Byzantine Empire
• Haitian Revolution
• Henry VIII
• Impressionism
• Julius II
• Karl Marx
• Kulturkampf
• League of Nations
• Lord Palmerston
• Louis Philippe
• Maximilien Robespierre
• Michelangelo
• Napoleon
• Napoleon III
• Otto von Bismarck
• Ottoman Empire
• Queen Victoria
• Robert Boyle
• Russian Revolution
• Scientific Revolution
• Seven Years War
• Simon Bolivar
• Suez Canal
• Vienna
• War of Austrian Succession
• War of the Triple Alliance
• Weimar Republic
• William Gladstone
• World War I

World History, 1933-Present

What are the great themes of World History since 1933?
This period begins with World War II, the deadliest war in human history. World War II pitted the fascist Axis powers against the Allies, and its battles took place across the globe. The defeat of fascism and the end of the war gave way to another conflict: the Cold War, which pitted communist, totalitarian regimes against capitalist ones. The Cold War lasted until 1991, and while its main foes were the communist USSR and capitalist United States, it involved most every country on the globe—as each fell into the influence of the USSR, the Americans, or tried to stay out of the conflict.

This period also saw the end of European and American imperialism. Gandhi led India out of British hands; African and Middle Eastern countries experienced their own freedom. The first years of independence have not been easy for many “Third World” countries, and there has been a great deal of conflict in the Middle East. This has arisen as a result of the problems between Israel and Palestine and other ethnic and religious conflict, and has been observed closely by the rest of the world because the Middle East is a large exporter of oil.
Finally, the dominance of Europe has disappeared along with its colonies. The US has been the great superpower of the late 20th and 21st century, but India and China have harnessed their large populations for tremendous economic growth, and are becoming true world powers.

What You Need to Know (People, Places, Things, and Events)

- **Adolf Hitler** was the Fuhrer of Germany during WWII. He wrote an autobiography called *Mein Kampf*, was married to Eva Braun, and was responsible for the Holocaust.

- **The Battle of Midway** is considered the decisive battle on the Pacific Front during World War II. The Allied Navy defeated the Japanese and greatly damaged their fleet.

- **Charles de Gaulle** was the leader of the Free French during WWII. He was the first president of France’s Fifth Republic, and signed the Evian Accords to grant independence to Algeria.

- **Francisco Franco** led Spain from 1939 to 1975. As the head of the fascist Falange Party, he defeated the Spanish Republic during the Spanish Civil War.

- **Margaret Thatcher** served as British Prime Minister from 1979 to 1990. She was a Conservative, Britain’s first female Prime Minister, and led Britain in the Falkland Islands War. She was known as the “Iron Lady.”

- **Mikhail Gorbachev** was the last leader of the Soviet Union. He introduced the policies of glasnost and perestroika to open the USSR to the West.

- **Nikita Khruschev** succeeded Joseph Stalin as Soviet premier. He was the USSR’s leader during the Cuban Missile Crisis, and for the *Sputnik* launch. He’s famous for the “Kitchen Debate” and banging his shoe on the table at the UN.

What You Should Know

- Australian Aborigines
- Berlin Wall
- Cuban Missile Crisis
- Emperor Akihito
- Gandhi Family
- Getulio Vargas
- *Guernica*
- Idi Amin
- Irish Republican Army
- Joseph Stalin
- Josip Tito
- Lech Walesa
- Leonid Brezhnev
- Mao Zedong
- Mobutu Sese Seko
- Cuban History
- Czechoslovakia
- Modern Greece
- Modern Haiti
- Modern Hungary
- Modern India
- Modern Iran
- Modern Japan
- Modern Mexico
- Modern Nigeria
- Modern Poland
- Modern Romania
- Muammar Qaddafi
- Nelson Mandela
- People’s Republic of China
- Potsdam Conference
- Persian Gulf War
- Prague Spring
- Spanish Civil War
- Tamil Tigers
- Velvet Revolution
- The White Album
- West Germany
- Winston Churchill
- Yalta Conference