SIMPLY HISTORY

1900 to Present

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To the Reader

Welcome to *Simply History: 1900 to Present.* This book reviews key people, places, and events from the beginning of the twentieth century to the early years of the twenty-first century.

Topic 1: A New Century and World War I introduces the changes that marked the end of the nineteenth century. These include important new inventions and scientific developments, and how the rise in imperialism and nationalism led to World War I. Finally, you will read about the end of the war and the creation of the League of Nations.

Topic 2: The World Between the Wars discusses the period between World War I and World War II including the worldwide economic depression, and how many nations became independent. We will review the rise of communism in China and Russia, the rise of dictators in Europe, and the growth of imperialism in Japan.

Topic 3: World War II addresses the events that led up to World War II. You will read about developments in Germany, Italy, and Japan during the 1930s, and how the League of Nations failed to prevent war. The course of the war in Europe, Africa, and Asia, and the changes that followed the war will be highlighted.

Topic 4: The World After World War II deals with events and developments around the world during the late 1940s and 1950s, such as the Iron Curtain and Common Market in Europe, the creation of the state of Israel, the rise of Arab nationalism, and the rise of independence in Africa and Southeast Asia.

Topic 5: The Americas presents the major events and issues in the United States, Canada, Mexico, Central America, the Caribbean, and South America from 1960 to 2004, including the Gulf War, the war in Afghanistan, and the Iraq War.

Topic 6: Europe and the Former Soviet Union introduces the social, political, and economic factors that affected this region from 1960 to early 2005. You will read about the reunification of Germany, the collapse of the Soviet Union, and the changes in many nations of Eastern Europe. You will also read about the breakup of Yugoslavia, the wars that followed, and the new nations that formed in the region.

Topic 7: The Middle East and Africa discusses the geographic, religious, and economic factors that affect life in this region. We will review the many types of government found here and the sources of unrest in the area. We will also discuss how oil has affected economies in much of the Middle East and about the contrast between rich and poor nations in Africa.

Topic 8: Asia and Australasia addresses the way nations in this region adjusted to independence after colonial rule. The tensions between India and Pakistan, the war in Vietnam, and governments in Cambodia and Burma will be covered. You will read about changes in communist China, in North Korea and South Korea, and in Indonesia, the Philippines, Australia, and New Zealand.

Chapter 1: The World Enters the Twentieth Century

Inventions Change the World

In the early years of the twentieth century, new inventions changed business and industry. They changed people's lives, too. Advances in science brought new understanding of the world we live in, and people gained new knowledge about human beings and human nature.

The first really big change was the use of electricity. The American Thomas Edison perfected the lightbulb in 1879. Then he found ways to transmit electric power through a system of lines. An Edison system lit up New York City in 1882. Edison developed the generator, which used electric power to run huge industrial machines. A factory could now be built anywhere, because it no longer needed waterpower. Cities became cleaner as electric trolleys replaced manure-producing horses.

Inventions helped people communicate much more easily, too. Alexander Graham Bell patented the telephone in 1876. (Bell was a Scotsman who lived in the United States.) U.S. President Rutherford B. Hayes had a telephone put in the White House in 1878. Networks of telephones spread across the country and around the world. By 1900, 1.5 million telephones were in the United States alone.

Guglielmo Marconi was a young Italian inventor. He developed a way to send messages using radio waves instead of wires. He sent a wireless telegraph or radio message across the Atlantic Ocean in 1901. In 1904, the vacuum tube was invented. Now radios could play music and human voices in people's homes. During the 1920s, radio broadcasts came into millions of homes worldwide, every day.

Transportation also became modern during this time. Different inventors in both Europe and the United States developed gasoline engines that powered the automobile. In Germany, Karl Benz and Gottlieb Daimler were auto pioneers. In France, Louis Renault was a pioneer. In America, Charles and Frank Duryea built one of the earliest automobiles in 1893. Henry Ford followed in 1896.

Ford had the biggest impact on the automobile industry. First, he designed a simple, reliable, and affordable car. It was called the Model T. (It came in one color only: black.) To make his cars, Ford created the assembly line. Car frames moved past workers as they put the cars together. Cars were made twice as quickly with assembly lines. As a result, almost anyone could afford to buy a Model T.

Another huge change in transportation began in 1903. The Americans Wilbur and Orville Wright made the first powered and sustained airplane flight that year. The airplane industry was born. Planes played a part in World War I. In the 1920s, they began carrying mail and then passengers.

These advances had an important impact on people's daily lives. Middle-class homes were now safely lit with electric lights. People played music on Edison's new invention, the phonograph. Edison added more enjoyment to people's lives when he improved motion picture technology in the 1890s. People around the world flocked to theaters to watch movies in the early 1900s. Movies became even better when sound was added to them in 1927. George Eastman brought photography to the world. He put his simple Kodak box camera on the market in 1888.

Breakthroughs in Science

During the 1800s, scientists made many discoveries. They learned that matter is made up of tiny particles called atoms. Soon, this idea became part of physics, which is the study of matter and energy. Then, in 1897, J. J. Thomson of England discovered the electron. An electron is an even tinier particle that is part of an atom. In 1898, Marie Curie and Pierre Curie of France studied radioactive elements. These elements change all the time by throwing off tiny particles.

Next, Ernest Rutherford of England found that the atom has a nucleus, or core. He also found more tiny particles within atoms. He called them protons. He studied atoms by splitting them apart with radioactive particles. This led to nuclear physics. Later, scientists learned more about the nuclear structure of atoms. They were able to create power and bombs by smashing atomic nuclei. By World War II, scientists had built the world's first atomic bomb.

Scientific discoveries did not stop there. Two other men moved physics in new directions. Max Planck of Germany showed that energy was released in definite units. He called each of these packages of energy a quantum. This was a very new concept. Another German, Albert Einstein, explained how a small mass can become a huge amount of energy. He also came up with the theory of relativity. This theory explains atomic events in terms of motion, space, and time. Other scientists used Einstein's ideas to learn more about atomic energy, which became very important later in the twentieth century.

New Knowledge About Human Beings

Scientists of the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries also studied living things. Charles Darwin developed his theory of evolution in the mid-1800s. This theory explained why living creatures changed over millions of years. A monk in Austria named Gregor Mendel wondered about this, too. He studied pea plants in the mid-1800s. Mendel learned a lot about how certain characteristics are passed on from a parent plant to its offspring.

Other scientists finally found out about Mendel's work around 1900. They found threadlike structures, called chromosomes, in plant and animal cells. Mendel had believed that these particles existed but had not been able to find them. These twentieth-century scientists also discovered that each chromosome contains many genes. They discovered that genes give a person (or other animal or plant) his or her own characteristics. Later in the twentieth century, scientists found out much more about chromosomes and genes.

Other scientists learned new things about human and animal behavior. Ivan Pavlov was a Russian biologist who studied dogs. He trained dogs to water at the mouth when he rang a bell. This is called a conditioned reflex. Pavlov had conditioned his dogs to respond in a certain way to a particular stimulus.

A new science called psychology developed in the late 1800s. Psychology is the study of the human mind. The American John Watson applied what Pavlov had learned to psychology. Watson called his system *behaviorism.* Behaviorism suggests that all human behavior is a response of the nervous system to stimuli from the world that a person lives in.

Sigmund Freud of Austria is probably the world's most famous psychologist. He developed a new idea about human behavior in the early 1900s. Freud studied the thought processes that go on without a person being aware of them. Freud called this type of study psychoanalysis. Not all of Freud's ideas are accepted today. But they had a huge impact on psychology.

The New Industrial World

It was no accident that so much new technology came out in the early twentieth century. Starting in the late 1800s, companies began setting up research centers. One of the first was in Germany. The German chemical industry wanted to find the best ways to use the latest science. Thomas Edison set up one of the first research labs in the United States. Alexander Graham Bell's telephone company soon did, too.

Science went to work for industry in these research laboratories. Companies paid scientists to work in the labs. In return, the company owned the rights to whatever a scientist might discover while at work.

The people who lived and worked in this new industrial world were much more connected to the outside world than earlier people had been. News from around the world arrived in a flash. Newspapers, radio, and telephone lines kept people informed daily.

Transportation systems also drew people together. Railroads then crisscrossed North America. In Russia, railroads carried people over great distances between Siberia and Moscow. As more and more people owned cars, networks of highways were built. Families could travel easily. Trucks could bring more goods to more places. Canals shortened shipping times. Trade between nations increased. Production was up, so manufacturers needed new markets in other nations. They also needed raw materials from other countries.

This modern industrial economy didn't grow at the same rate everywhere in the world. The countries of Western Europe, such as Great Britain and France and Germany, were very industrial. So was the United States. Southern, Central, and Eastern Europe were less developed. Much of their economy continued to be based on farming.

The same thing was true in much of Latin America, Africa, and Asia. Nations and colonies in these areas had little industry. Most of their people lived in rural areas and were poor farmers. Japan, however, had begun changing over to a modern economy in the 1880s. By 1910, it was a strong industrial country.

The lives of people in the industrial nations were quite different from those in rural nations. Western Europeans, for example, generally had more and better food, clothing, and shelter than their parents or grandparents had. They could usually change jobs if they wanted to. Rural peasants in countries such as India, however, remained tied to the land. They had few choices about how they could lead their lives. They often did not have enough food, clothing, or shelter.

The lives of women who lived in the industrial nations in the early 1900s changed in extra ways. Little by little, new jobs opened up for women after 1900. More women were able to work in medicine, the law, industry, and other areas. They were no longer as tied to the home as they once had been. They could buy ready-made clothes and other goods at department stores instead of staying home and making them. Prepared foods cut down on cooking chores. During World War I, women worked to keep war-related businesses running. They showed clearly that they were important and capable citizens. Women gained the right to vote in most western democracies during and after the war.

The industrial countries were wealthy and powerful and developed strong military forces. They wanted control of markets in which they sold their goods and where they bought raw materials. Tensions grew among these strong nations. Weaker and less powerful countries resented them. These problems eventually led to World War I.

APPENDIX

Names to Know

Abacha, Sani—a Nigerian leader, 1993 to 1998

Abbas, Mahmoud—the first prime minister of the Palestinians, beginning in 2003

Abdullah—the half-brother of King Fahd of Saudi Arabia

Abdullah, King—the king of Jordan, beginning in 1999

Adenauer, Konrad—Germany's leader from 1949 to 1963

Ahmadinejad, Mahmoud—the president of Iran, elected in 2005

al-Assad, Bashar—the leader of Syria, beginning in 2000

al-Assad, Hafez—the leader of Syria, 1971 to 2000

Alemán, Arnoldo—a Nicaraguan leader elected in 1996

al-Qaddafi, Muammar—the leader of Libya, who ruled from 1969 to 2011

al-Zarqawi, Abu Musab—a leader of al-Qaeda in Iraq

Alvarado, Juan Velasco—the leader of Peru, who helped the poor

Alvarez, Luis Echeverría—the president of Mexico from 1970 to 1976, who made popular changes

Aquino, Benigno—an opponent of the Marcos government in the Philippines, who was assassinated

Aquino, Benigno III—the president of the Philippines elected in 2010 and son of Benigno and Corazon Aquino

Aquino, Corazon—the president of the Philippines from 1986 to 1992 and widow of Benigno Aquino

Arafat, Yasser—the leader of the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) for many years until his death in 2004

Aristide, Jean-Bertrand—a Catholic priest elected president of Haiti in 1990; served in 1991, 1994 to 1996, and 2001 to 2004

Atatürk, Mustafa Kemal—the leader of the Turkish revolution; founder and first president of the Republic of Turkey (1923 to 1938)

GLOSSARY

Aborigines (a-buh-RI-juh-neez) natives of Australia

AIDS (AYDZ) Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome, an incurable and fatal disease of the immune system

alliance (uh-LY-unts) a formal agreement made between two or more nations to help one another in times of conflict or war

Allied Powers (A-lyd POW-urz) the alliance made between France, Russia, Great Britain, and Italy at the start of World War I

Allies (A-lyz) the alliance made by Great Britain, France, the Soviet Union, China, and the United States during World War II

ally (A-ly) a country that agrees to come to the aid of another country in times of conflict or war

al-Qaeda (AL-KY-duh) terrorist network linked to many attacks against the West, especially United States-linked targets

anarchist (A-nur-kist) a person who wants an end to all government

ANC (AY EN SEE) African National Congress

annexation (a-nek-SAY-shun) when one country joins another country or territory to itself

apartheid (uh-PAR-tayt) the South African policy of strict separation of races; lasted from 1948 to 1990

PRONUNCIATION KEY

CAPITAL LETTERS show the stressed syllables.

a	as in m**a**t	f	as in **f**it
ay	as in day, s**ay**	g	as in **g**o
ch	as in **ch**ew	i	as in s**i**t
e	as in b**e**d	j	as in **j**ob, **g**em
ee	as in **e**ven, **ea**sy, n**ee**d	k	as in **c**ool, **k**ey

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