



**Announcing Completion of Phase II
World History for Us All
An Innovative World History Curriculum for American Schools**

**A Collaboration between San Diego State University and
UCLA's National Center for History in the Schools**

<http://worldhistoryforusall.sdsu.edu>

At a time when student proficiency in reading and math dominates public debate over education, how important is world history in the middle and high school classroom? A national team of teachers, historians, and web specialists thinks it is so important they have been developing a comprehensive electronic-based model curriculum for world history that any teacher or school in America may use without subscription or fee. Called *World History for Us All*, the project is a collaboration of faculty at San Diego State University and UCLA's National Center for History in the Schools.

The *World History for Us All* web site offers educators and students not only a treasury of teaching materials and resources but also a coherent conceptual framework for thinking about the human story from early times to the present. This innovative program is premised on the idea that humankind as a whole has a history to be explored and that classroom world history suitable for the twenty-first century must pay attention to large-scale changes and cross-cultural linkages, not just to the achievements and contributions of different civilizations.

World History for Us All draws heavily on the burgeoning academic research of the past several years that focuses on history from cross-cultural, comparative, and transnational perspectives. It is also inspired by cognitive research in the U.S. and Great Britain which shows that students achieve greater competence in history when they are guided to relate particular facts and stories to bigger historical trends and patterns.

Therefore, the *World History for Us All* project team has organized the model curriculum to connect concrete instructional materials rich in class activities and primary source documents to an overarching framework of guiding historical concepts, objectives, and themes. For example, rather than conceiving of separate, compartmentalized civilizations as the main subjects of study, the curriculum has a unified chronology, organizing the human past into nine Big Eras, each of them encompassing changes around the globe.

The *World History for Us All* Project, whose director is Ross E. Dunn, a historian at SDSU, is one creative response to the growing perception that young Americans need to be better equipped make sense of the complex world around them in the light of history, both recent and remote. School world history ought to prepare citizens to critically interpret world events, understand the origins of the global economy, appreciate the world's cultural riches, or travel and work abroad.

Many states require that students take courses in world history. But even among those that do, the official state competency standards for what middle and high schoolers should know about the human past range from richly detailed prescriptions to brief lists of vague generalizations. Earlier this year the Thomas

B. Fordham Foundation published a report on state world history standards. It gave eight states grades of “A” for their guidelines, but thirty-three states received “Ds” or “Fs”. Many states not only have nebulous world history standards but also fail to give teachers much help on the daunting challenges of making the subject intelligible and engaging.

Most states that have detailed content standards, as well as the leading world history textbooks, encourage study of civilizations and regions, including Europe, as separate, compartmentalized units. Teachers may therefore have a hard time convincing students that world history is anything other than a tangle of cultural contributions and achievements—one damn civilization after another. By contrast, *World History for Us All* is organized to help teachers and students put the histories of civilizations in the context of larger interregional or global developments.

The model curriculum offers a wealth of instructional materials on commonly taught subjects such as ancient Greek society or eighteenth-century political revolutions. But it also encourages teachers to introduce large-scale historical developments that have cut across cultural boundaries. Topics that take a “bird’s eye view” of the past include the question of how humans initially peopled the earth, how merchants in the Middle Ages created a web of trade that ran from Japan to Ireland, and how humans have drastically altered the earth’s natural environment in the past century.

Initiated in 2001 under a grant from the National Endowment for the Humanities, the *World History for Us All* project has involved a creative

collaboration between K-12 teachers and university historians from eleven states and the District of Columbia. Recently, the project announced completion of its second major phase by posting on the site all major instructional elements for world history up to 1500 A. D. The next phase, to be completed by late 2007, will make available all key materials pertaining to modern global history. Because its medium is electronic, however, the project will continue to enrich the curriculum with additional teaching units and resources in the coming years. *World History for Us All* may be explored at <http://worldhistoryforusall.sdsu.edu>.

Since 2003, the project has also received funding from the Ahmanson Foundation, the Longview Foundation, the Council of Chief State School Officers, and the San Diego State University President's Leadership Fund. It receives continuing support from the National Center for History in the Schools, located in the History Department at UCLA.

In the past several years the U.S Congress has provided hundreds of millions of dollars to support teacher development in American history. There is no doubt that world history teachers need comparable help, not only to enhance their knowledge, but also to investigate with their students how the world, not just one culture or another, got to be the way it is today. As one teacher in California wrote about *World History for Us All*, "The globalization of world history is the wave of the future. However, teachers will not 'buy in' until there are tangible, user-friendly resources like this."

World History for Us All Project Update Completion of Phase II

The Department of History at San Diego State University and the National Center for History in the Schools at the University of California, Los Angeles, announce the completion of the second major phase of *World History for Us All*, a web-based model curriculum for world history in middle and high schools. Educators and the public may access *World History for Us All* at <http://worldhistoryforusall.sdsu.edu>.

World History for Us All offers an innovative model for conceptually integrated study of the human past from remote times to the present. The project is an ongoing multiyear collaboration among middle and high school teachers, university historians, and specialists in web site design and technology. A core team of nearly thirty educators from eleven states and the District of Columbia has guided development of the site during the past five years.

Though the project remains in development, history and social studies educators are already using it profitably in their classrooms. We encourage teachers to explore the site and try it out with students. *World History for Us All* is an entirely free-access curriculum. No subscriptions or fees are required.

The World History for Us All Model Curriculum

As a field of teaching and learning, world history ideally embraces all humanity. To make the global past intelligible, teachers must define concrete subject matter, questions, time periods, and themes, then investigate them in systematic ways. Too often, teachers find themselves moving from one topic, country, and civilization to another arbitrarily and to the neglect of larger patterns of historical meaning. *World History for Us All* connects subject matter anchored in specific times and places to a conceptual frame of guiding ideas and organizational tools.

This framework includes

- Learning objectives
- Rationales for study
- Principles of selection
- Conceptual overviews and background essays
- A world-scale periodization
- A guide to critical skills development
- A glossary
- A set of themes and essential questions

The model curriculum's superstructure of historical concepts and organizational tools is then integrated with a rich selection of teaching units, including lesson plans, activities,

handouts, assessments, and resources. All units and lessons on the web site will be available in PDF format for easy classroom use.

World History for Us All:

presents the human past as a single, integrated story rather than as multiple, unconnected stories of different civilizations and countries.

helps students relate the histories of particular civilizations and regions to world history as a whole.

helps teachers cover subject matter specified by district, state, and national standards within a conceptually coherent framework of ideas.

offers a treasury of teaching units and lesson plans.

guides teachers in addressing history without excluding major peoples, regions, or time periods.

helps students understand the past by linking specific subject matter to larger historical concepts.

is founded on up-to-date research in world and comparative history.

includes correlations to state and national standards.

is applicable to either middle or high school classes and to either one-year or multiple-year programs in world history, culture, and geography.

The World History for Us All Approach

In developing world history courses, educators typically draw on a wide variety of resources. At one level are the general guidelines put forward by education agencies and public interest groups. These include content standards, curriculum frameworks, and core knowledge guidelines. On another level, teachers have a wealth of print, visual, and institutional resources to help in developing specific units and lessons. *World History for Us All* integrates these two levels of resources by providing a specific, detailed intellectual and organizational plan for teaching and learning about the human past.

World History for Us All is founded on the rapidly growing body of scholarly literature in the field of world and comparative history. This research employs innovative methods of analysis and interpretation to enrich our understanding of cross-cultural and global patterns. *World History for Us All* engages with the most up-to-date world history scholarship, and several of the project participants have contributed to this scholarship.

The model curriculum also draws on recent educational research on how children learn, interpret, and understand history. This work has shown that students remember and understand the past more effectively when they make cognitive links between specific subject matter and larger patterns of historical significance.

World History for Us All is a resource for all middle and high school classrooms. It draws substantially on the organization and content of the *National Standards for History, Basic Edition* (National Center for History in the Schools, 1996). Its approach is also compatible with the Advanced Placement World History program.

World History for Us All organizes the global past in nine major Big Eras:

Big Era One: Humans in the Universe

13,000,000,000 - 200,000 Years Ago

Big Era Two: Human Beings Almost Everywhere

200,000 - 10,000 Years Ago

Big Era Three: Farming and the Emergence of Complex Societies

10,000 - 1000 BCE

Big Era Four: Expanding Networks of Exchange and Encounter

1200 BCE - 500 CE

Big Era Five: Patterns of Interregional Unity

300 - 1500 CE

Big Era Six: The Great Global Convergence

1400 - 1800 CE

Big Era Seven: Industrialization and Its Consequences

1750 - 1914 CE

Big Era Eight: A Half Century of Crisis

1900 - 1950 CE

Big Era Nine: Paradoxes of Global Acceleration

1945 - present CE

World History for Us All also incorporates an innovative approach to instructional materials. The teaching units, which currently number more than thirty on the web site, are organized in three categories according to the “scale” in time and geographical space of the subject matter to be explored. This approach to selecting classroom activities and assignments is designed to guide teachers and students in study of the past on a variety of scales, from broad, global changes to developments that occurred within regions, civilizations, or nations.

This special approach also encourages teachers and students to keep an eye on large-scale developments in the human past even as they undertake in-depth study of particular topics. In this way the curriculum emphasizes underlying coherent patterns in history.

Teachers may choose topics that introduce students to very large-scale developments, such as the creation of a truly global economy after 1492 or long-term environmental change. Or, instructors may devote class days to more detailed study of changes within an era or region, for example, the Black Death in Europe and the Middle East or the causes and consequences of World War I. Teachers may tailor unit choices and class time to their pedagogical strengths and interests and to mandated state or local content standards.

Here are the three basic categories for organizing teaching units:

Panorama Teaching Units



These units address very large-scale developments in world history. They provide a model for teaching an entire era of world history in a few lessons. In this way, students may learn about large patterns of change in an era. Each Panorama unit includes a PowerPoint Overview Presentation.

Landscape Teaching Units



Each Big Era offers from two to seven Landscape units. These focus on relatively large-scale developments in world history, though not as broad in time scale subject matter as the Panorama units. All Landscape units have transregional, cross-cultural, or comparative elements.

Closeup Teaching Units



These units address topics in world history that are relatively more restricted in time, space, and subject matter than either Panorama or Landscape units. Teachers may choose among them to probe more deeply into specific aspects of world history. Development of Closeup units will begin in fall 2006, and they will be progressively added to the curriculum.

World History for Us All Phased Development

Owing to the busy classroom schedules of middle and high school teachers, much of the development of *World History for Us All* has taken place during the summer. As funding becomes available, the project intends to engage a larger staff and to recruit more young, veteran, and retired teachers to contribute teaching materials.

Phase I 2001-2003

- Development of the guiding principles, conceptual structure, and objectives of the model curriculum

- Development of web design, logic, and navigation

- Initial development of Panorama units, Landscape units, and PowerPoint Overview Presentations for Big Eras One - Five, that is, periods of world history up to 1500 CE.

Phase II 2003-2006

- Refinement of web design and technical features

- Completion of all Panorama and Landscape units for Big Eras One - Five

Assignment and draft writing of all Panorama and Landscape units, as well as PowerPoint presentations, for Big Eras Six - Nine

Assignment and draft writing of Getting Started and Past and Future sections of the web site

Dissemination and critical discussion of the model curriculum at professional meetings and workshops. Solicitation of critical evaluations from classroom teachers.

Phase III 2006-2008

Completion of Panorama and Landscape units for Big Eras Six – Nine (by early 2007)

Placement of 15 Closeup Teaching Units adapted from world history units published by the National Center for History in the Schools.

Completion of 4 Closeup units funded by the Council of Chief State School Officers. These units have a special feature that provides teachers with a model for aligning world-historical subject matter with national or state content standards.

Completion of at least 34 additional Closeup units

Systematic dissemination of *World History for Us All* through professional publications, conferences, institutes, and the Internet

Development and placement of comprehensive search engine for the web site

Refinement of evaluation instruments of *World History for Us All* as both a curriculum and web site in terms of teacher satisfaction, student understanding, student attitudes toward the study of history, and impact on history education in the United States.

Establishment of an on-going program to introduce middle and high school teachers, including prospective teachers, to strategies for using *World History for Us All* in classrooms.

Establishment of a series of pilot projects to implement and evaluate all or part of the model curriculum in selected middle/high schools in California and other states.

Teacher Testimonials

History and social studies teachers in many states have been exploring and using *World History for Us All*. Here are some of their comments:

Your web site, World History For Us All, is tremendous. Currently, I am teaching U.S. History on the Navajo Reservation in Arizona. I will be teaching World History next year at a High School in Illinois. I am eager to incorporate a lot of your material and lessons into my classroom.

Robert G.
Illinois

I found the WHFUA website that you helped create and I was astounded by how user friendly and informational it was. . . . What an invaluable website you offer! I am amazed, impressed, thrilled, and pleased to find such a comprehensive site dedicated to teaching World History!

Jon K.
Seattle, Washington

I am a ninth grade social studies teacher in upstate NY. I admire the collective efforts to put together such substantive materials for teacher use. Hats off to all of you. Your project provides an excellent model for revamping biased perspectives on global history.

Kerry F.
Niskayuna, New York

I have wrestled and experimented throughout my world history career trying to do what you and your colleagues are doing. . . . I have now taught in my present school for two years and think my two other colleagues are finally open to a truly world approach. So I have volunteered to research your project. I would be eager to use whatever you could make available.

Anne H.
Osprey, Florida

I am an Australian based home-school tutor of a gifted, learning-disabled 9 year old boy, who has a love of history and geography. Your site was like a dream true! I have been surfing the net for a long time trying to find something similar to this. There have always been sites with "bits and pieces" of history, or links to this and that, but I have been unable to get a site which details world history so well. Congratulations.

Jackie B.
Sunshine Coast, Queensland, Australia

I love your website and I love the teaching units and ideas that have been developed for it.

Casey P.
Dallas, Texas

What a fantastic project! I came across World History for All, and it has changed the way I have taught AP World History.

Trang T.
Elk Grove, CA

The Project Team

The project director is Ross E. Dunn, Prof. of History, San Diego State University and Director of World History Projects at the National Center for History in the Schools. The Associate Directors are Edmund Burke, III, Prof. of History, University of California, Santa Cruz, and David Christian, Prof. of History, San Diego State University.

The project staff is Robert Prom, Ingrid De Haas Escajadillo, and Marian McKenna Olivas. Robert Bain, Associate Prof. in the Educational Studies Program, University of Michigan, is a special consultant to the project.

A team of 30 young, veteran, and retired history teachers participate in the project as writers and consultants. These teacher/scholars come from eleven states and the District of Columbia. One curriculum writer teachers in an international school in India, and another is a graduate student in history at the University of Aberdeen in Scotland. Current team members are:

Esther Adams	Walter Johnson High School, Bethesda MD
Simone Arias	Point Loma High School, San Diego, CA
Avi Black	Coordinator History/Social Science Alameda County Office of Education, Oakland, CA
Mary Bickley	St. Kieran School, El Cajon, CA
William Bowles	Patrick Henry High School, San Diego, CA
Bill Bravman	Maret School, Washington, DC
Anne Chapman	Western Reserve Academy, Hudson, OH (retired)
Sharon Cohen	Springbrook High School Silver Spring, MD
Susan Douglass	Council on Islamic Education, Falls Church, VA
Felicia Eppley	Lamar High School, Houston, TX (retired)
Bill Foreman	Hayward High School, Hayward, CA
James Geddes	Woodstock School, Mussoorie, India
Taylor Hollander	Orchard House School, Richmond, VA
Don Johnson	Asian Studies Program, New York University, NY (retired)
Jean Johnson	Friends Seminary, New York, NY (retired)
Deborah Smith Johnston	Lexington High School, Lexington, MA
Ian Kelly	University of Aberdeen, Scotland
Brook Mangin	Mountain View High School, Mountain View, CA
Lauren McArthur	School of Education, University of Michigan, Ann Arbor, MI
Ernest O'Roark	Dr. M.L.K, Jr. Middle School, Germantown, MD
Andrew Pass	Educational Consultant, West Bloomfield, MI
Ellen Leader Pike	Lancaster Country Day School, Lancaster PA
Mary Price	Libertyville High School, Libertyville, IL
Neal Schultz	New Rochelle High School, New Rochelle, NY
Irene Segade	Scripps Ranch High School, San Diego, CA
Lori Shaller	Martha's Vineyard Public Charter School, Tisbury, MA
Tammy Schreiner	School of Education, University of Michigan, Ann Arbor, MI
Elisabeth Sperling	Horace Mann High School, Riverdale, NY
David Vigilante	Associate Director, National Center for History in the School, UCLA, Los Angeles, CA
Eileen Wood	Dr. M.L.K. Middle School, Germantown, MD

World History for Us All is a collaboration of SDSU and the National Center for History in the Schools (UCLA), Gary B. Nash, Director. The project is administered by the San Diego State University Research Foundation.

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San Diego State University College of Arts and Letters

World History for Us All is a continuing project whose instructional resources will continue to grow in the coming years. Teachers interested in contributing instructional materials to the project, as well as schools and school districts interested in piloting all or part of *World History for Us All* are invited to email the Project Director: Ross E. Dunn, History Department, San Diego State University, dunn@mail.sdsu.edu.

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