



Quick Write

What do you think you might be doing four years after finishing high school? Describe the cultures you might interact with and how they differ from yours.



Learn About

- how global cultures and interactions impact relationships between different cultural groups
- the significance of global economics, trade, and markets
- how the effects of global growth raises environmental concerns over natural resources
- how ethics, religion, poverty, wealth, and views of human rights influence people
- how changes in technology and education influence the competition for jobs

What will you be doing two years after you finish high school? Four years? Six years? The chances are you'll be living and working with people of varying ethnic, cultural, religious, and personal backgrounds. Events in other countries will almost surely have a direct effect on your life.

Two years after graduation, you could be a college student preparing to go overseas for a semester abroad. Or your co-worker could well be an immigrant or foreign exchange student. You might be a member of the military stationed in Europe, Asia, or the Middle East, or working overseas in construction.

Four years after graduation, you might be finishing college and entering a job market where you'll need to understand other cultures and ethnic groups. Maybe you'll be a restaurant or hotel manager working with employees whose first language isn't English. Perhaps you'll be a teacher in a school district with a large immigrant population. Maybe you'll work as a State Department employee in an embassy, dealing with diverse people both in the office and elsewhere in the host country. Or you could be an apprentice plumber polishing your skills alongside immigrant co-workers.

Six years after graduation, you might be a graduate student studying other countries or working on your degree at a foreign university. Perhaps you'll be working for the United Nations or a humanitarian relief organization or a religious

group bringing medical assistance or food aid to a disaster area. Maybe you'll be an engineer for NASA collaborating with scientists from other nations. Or you might be working in a manufacturing plant that receives parts from overseas, exports products overseas, or is owned by an overseas corporation. Whether you're on the shop floor or in management, the ups and downs in foreign markets will directly affect your job.

Whatever you're doing after high school, you'll find you need to be aware of the rest of the world. Advances in transportation and communications have brought the world's peoples closer than ever. Your car may be built in the United States using parts made overseas. The fuel it runs on may come from Indonesia, Kuwait, or Nigeria. Your clothes, your food, your electronics may all be manufactured in other countries. The customers who buy the crops you grow, the steel you make, or the equipment you design may live outside the United States. As part of your job, you may talk each day with colleagues or customers in overseas offices.

The purpose of this course is to give you some basics about the history, culture, religions, and thinking of people in other countries. What you learn here will help you begin to understand why they think and act they ways they do, and how they differ from what you are used to in the United States. Wherever your future takes you, this book will help you get started.

Vocabulary



- culture
- economics
- feudalism
- mercantilism
- capitalism
- communism
- trade
- protectionism
- theory of comparative advantage
- self-determination
- outsourcing

Global Cultures, Interactions, and Relationships

You may first be aware of other cultures by contrast with your own. When you eat out, you may discover food that is much spicier—or much blander—than what you eat at home. Other peoples may enjoy different kinds of music. Different groups may dress in ways that are strange to you. But they may not be trying to stand out. They're just doing what seems normal to them.

What Culture Is and How It Affects Behavior

The *Encyclopedia Britannica* defines **culture** as including language, ideas, beliefs, customs, codes, institutions, tools, techniques, works of art, rituals, and ceremonies, among other elements. This is passed on to future generations. It binds people together but also separates them into different communities. In today's world, it's more important than ever for people to understand both similarities and differences.

Values, Norms, Customs, and Rituals

Scholars are divided as to whether to focus on the inward or the outward aspects of culture. Values, including religious beliefs, and norms are fundamental to a culture. No one would argue with that. But the physical objects people create can be easier for scientists to study once the people themselves are gone. It's easier to dig around for old pottery than it is to dig into the minds of ancient peoples.



The Erechtheion, built in the fifth century BC on the Acropolis in Athens, Greece, is one of the ancient world's finest architectural works, particularly with its famed draped maidens used in place of pillars.

Photo by Melanie Stetson Freeman / © 2007 The Christian Science Monitor

While values are fundamental to any culture, the physical objects that people create can be easier for scientists to study once the people are gone.



Dressed in colorful clothes, young Pashtun girls in Pakistan wait while their relatives do the laundry.

Photo by Robert Harbison / © 2001 The Christian Science Monitor

People's dress reflects the climate of the place they live. It also expresses wealth, their sense of modesty, their station in life, and the work they do.

Customs and rituals are other important aspects of culture. Which holidays are celebrated, and how, in a given culture? Which milestones of life are recognized with ceremonies—coming of age, graduation from school, retirement from a job?

Dress, Symbols, Food, and Festivals

People's dress reflects the climate of the place they live. But it also expresses individuals' wealth, their sense of modesty, their station in life, and the work they do. For example: From New York to Frankfurt, Germany, to Sydney, Australia, business people tend to wear dark suits. This has nothing to do with climate and everything to do with looking serious.

The symbols people honor, anything from a Christian cross on a necklace to a tattoo on an arm, are yet another part of culture.

Food is a powerful aspect of culture. Recipes and food traditions are passed down from one generation to the next. Immigrants in a new society feel "at home" when they eat familiar foods. Have you ever visited a restaurant or cultural festival to get "a taste" of an unfamiliar culture?

Styles, Roles, and Routines

Different cultures have different styles. Some emphasize long hours of hard work; others, “living well.” Many Europeans, for example, value “holiday” much more than do other parts of the world. Americans take vacations, but not nearly with the fervor of Europeans. The physical places people live affect their culture, too. Compare suburbanites who drive everywhere with city-dwellers who walk.

Different cultures assign different roles to people. What is the role of women in a society? Are they included in public life—in the workplace, in government—

or at home tending to the children? When do children join the adult world of work? What roles do older people fill? Are they treated with respect for their experience and wisdom—or seen as blocking the progress of younger people?

Cultures vary in their sense of time. Does “10 o’clock” mean 10:00, or in reality, more like a quarter past? What is the rhythm of the workday, of the week? When do people eat meals?

fastFACT

Scholars make a distinction between a *culture* and a *civilization*. They generally see a civilization as more advanced. Over time, a culture may develop into a civilization. But no clear line divides a civilization from a culture. And “civilization” can be a loaded term. It refers to the complexity of a society, not its quality of life or values.

Nine Influential Cultures From the Past and Present

Here are thumbnail sketches of several influential world cultures. Each has made an important contribution to the larger global culture.

Chinese

Experts divide the history of imperial China into an early period from the Qin Dynasty (221–207 BC) through the Tang Dynasty (AD 618–907), and a later period from the Song Dynasty (AD 960–1279) through the Qing Dynasty (AD 1644–1911). On the whole this period was remarkably stable. The Chinese system of governing included the concept of a meritocracy. That is, the system was open to bright newcomers who could succeed on their own merits.

China was a highly literate society, despite its complicated writing system. The Chinese excelled in technology, too. Their inventions, such as paper and porcelain (often referred to even today as “China”), have enriched the world.

Mughal Indian

The first of the Mughal emperors was Babur, a descendant of Genghis Kahn and Tamerlane. He conquered northern India in AD 1526. The reigns of his descendants, from the mid-sixteenth to the mid-seventeenth century, saw the development of a new style of art and architecture. As the Mughals pushed southward and gained control of the Deccan, the states of Central India, their wealth grew dramatically. One of the most famous Mughals was Shah Jahan, who built the Taj Mahal.



A woman walks on mosaic inlay at the base of the Taj Mahal, in Agra, India.
Photo by Robert Harbison / © 2002 The Christian Science Monitor

Mughal emperor Shah Jahan raised the monument in the seventeenth century to immortalize his love for his favorite wife. The Mughal era saw the development of a new style of art and architecture.

Mesopotamian

Mesopotamia comes from Greek and means “between the rivers.” It refers to the fertile valleys of the Tigris and Euphrates Rivers in what is today Iraq, Kuwait, and Saudi Arabia. Around 3000 BC a people called the Sumerians arose. They set up city-states governed by some sort of monarch, and established a writing system. They wrote with styluses (sharp, pointed instruments used for writing) on tablets of clay that would dry and keep indefinitely. They eventually fell to the Akkadians, who absorbed much of their culture. The *Epic of Gilgamesh*, a Sumerian-Akkadian poem, is one of the oldest known fictional works.

Egyptian

A little before 3000 BC several independent city-states merged into a single country, the ancient Egypt of the Pharaohs. Their great civilization in the Nile Valley lasted more than 3,000 years. Taking advantage of the river’s annual floods, they practiced grain farming, which was the basis of Egypt’s wealth. Egyptians wrote on papyrus and kept elaborate records. They may be best known for the pyramids they built. They are still standing today, and they attest to the Egyptians’ skill as builders and managers.

Greek

The Greek ideal of democracy, “rule by the people,” emerged in Athens around 500 BC. After driving back a Persian invasion in 480–479 BC, Greece had a golden age of drama, philosophy, literature, art, and architecture. Its effects are still evident in Western culture today. At its height under Alexander the Great, the Greek Empire stretched briefly from the western Mediterranean to India and created enormous wealth.

Roman

Tradition says Romulus, Rome’s first king, founded the city in 753 BC. In 509 BC Rome became a republic ruled by the Senate (elders) and the Roman people. During its 450 years as a republic, Rome conquered the rest of Italy, then expanded into what are now France, Spain, most of Britain, Turkey, North Africa, and Greece.

The Roman Empire began with Augustus in 27 BC. Emperor Constantine moved the capital to Constantinople (present-day Istanbul) in AD 330. The western branch of the empire lasted for five centuries. The eastern branch endured until 1453 when Constantinople fell to the Turks.

Arabian

Within a very short period after the birth of Islam in the seventh century, the Arabs built a vast empire that stretched from Spain and Portugal (Andalusia) in the west all the way to the Indian subcontinent in the east. Covering almost half of the old known world, the Arab empire was one-and-a-half times the size of the Roman Empire at its peak.

The period through about the thirteenth century was a golden age of Arab civilization. The Arabs excelled in medicine, astronomy, and mathematics. They brought to the West so-called Arabic numerals, much easier to work with than Roman numerals. They introduced algebra and the concept of zero. Arab scholars also kept alive the classical learning of ancient Greece and Rome during Europe’s Dark Ages.



Egypt’s Sultan Hassan Mosque in Cairo stands as one sign of Islam’s spread since the religion’s birth in the seventh century.

Photo by Robert Harbison / © 1991 The Christian Science Monitor

The Arab empire grew to one-and-a-half times the size of the Roman Empire at its peak.

Native American

The Paleoindian tradition of North America goes back about 10,000 years to what is today New Mexico. These people were big-game hunters. They were followed by the hunters of the Archaic period, from 8000 to 1000 BC. They also exploited new plant and animal resources and developed specialized tools.

When the first Europeans arrived in the New World in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, there may have been as many as 12 million native inhabitants. But colonization brought disease, warfare, and eventually the near extinction of the bison on which so many native peoples depended.

Latin America was home to three great civilizations: the Aztec, the Maya, and the Inca. The Aztecs settled in the Valley of Mexico and founded their capital, Tenochtitlan, in 1345. By the beginning of the sixteenth century it was one of the largest cities in the world. The Aztecs controlled a huge empire and long-distance trading networks. They had a complex religion and tracked the dates for specific ceremonies on a detailed calendar. They practiced sculpture and other arts as well. When the Spanish explorer Hernán Cortés arrived in 1519, however, he overthrew the Aztec leader Montezuma rather easily.

One of the most advanced civilizations in the Americas before the Spanish arrived was the Maya (AD 300–900). It reached from southeastern Mexico across modern-day Guatemala, Belize, and the western parts of Honduras and El Salvador. The Maya lived in about 60 separate kingdoms. Like the ancient Egyptians, the Maya built pyramids. Maya cities usually had a dramatic stepped pyramid topped by a temple sanctuary at its center. The Maya produced impressive artworks. They developed a sophisticated writing system and used an elaborate calendar system called the Long Count.



The Inca citadel of Machu Picchu sits atop the Peruvian Sierra—or Andes Mountains—which separates the rain forest to the east from the Pacific coast to the west.

Photo by Alfredo Sosa / © 2002 The Christian Science Monitor

At its height, the Inca empire controlled all of western South America between Ecuador and Chile.

The Inca were the largest pre-Hispanic society of South America. At its height, the Inca empire controlled all of western South America between Ecuador and Chile. Estimates for the total population under Incan control range between 6 million and 9 million. The Inca were great road builders and their capital was at Cusco, Peru.

Western European

Of all civilizations, Western Europe's has most directly influenced the development of the United States. The explorers of the New World flew the flags of Western Europe—England, France, Spain, and Portugal. In Britain's North American colonies, the Industrial Revolution begun in England and Scotland continued to play out. So did the political evolutions resulting from the Enlightenment, and the Protestant Reformation and the Renaissance before that.

How Cultural Factors Affect Relationships Between People

At a personal level, it's easy to understand how shared culture affects relationships between people. In a family whose culture values education, for instance, everyone knows to keep the house quiet in the evenings so the teens can study for exams.

But cultural understanding, or lack of it, can be a big factor on a larger scale as well. One of the cultural misunderstandings between the European explorers and the native peoples they encountered in the new worlds of North America and Australia had to do with land ownership. Europeans had a concept of individuals or governments (“the crown”) owning the land. The native peoples had concepts of common ownership or stewardship.

Global Economics, Trade, and Markets

People are connected by more than just cultural relationships. They're connected by money relationships, too—and by the goods and services they buy and sell.

What Economics Is and How It Affects Behavior

Economics is a social science, *the study of the production and distribution of goods and services, and their management*. Adam Smith (1723–1790), one of the founding fathers of modern economics, saw four stages of economic development:

- Hunting: At this stage, groups of people survive by hunting wild animals
- Pastoral: At this stage, people tend flocks of domesticated animals—sheep, goats, cattle, and pigs
- Agricultural: People at this stage grow crops regularly
- Industrial: Western Europe began to move into this stage in the eighteenth century. Work is based in factories rather than the home (“cottage industry”) and uses machines rather than hand tools.



A vendor sells watermelons at a market in Ho Chi Minh City in Vietnam.

Photo by Melanie Stetson Freeman /
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People are connected not just by cultural relationships, but also by money relationships—and by the goods and services they buy and sell.

Major Economic Systems

Four major economic systems have been important from the Middle Ages onward.

Feudalism

Feudalism was the political, economic, and social system that prevailed in medieval Europe and relied on a relationship among lords, vassals, and serfs. It was a layered system. Serfs were at the bottom, “bound” to the land they worked. An overlord was at the top. In between were layers of vassals. They benefited from the crops grown on the land, through the work of their serfs. They rendered services to the lords above them. People knew their place but had no great incentive for individual initiative or innovation.

Mercantilism

As feudalism declined, mercantilism took its place. **Mercantilism** is the doctrine that the government of a nation can strengthen its economic interests by protecting its home industries, increasing foreign trade, and ensuring that the nation exports more than it imports. The European colonizers of the New World were mercantilists. These governments put tariffs—a kind of tax—on imported goods. This tended to shut foreign goods out of the market.



The Great Wall of China, constructed in northern China in the third century BC to guard against hostile forces, is one of the world's best-known monuments.

Photo by Peter Ford / © 2006 The Christian Science Monitor

Today, Communist China is the world's most populous nation and has turned into one of the most aggressive capitalist societies on earth.

Mercantilist governments also often set up trade monopolies. Before the Revolutionary War, for instance, the American colonies were allowed to trade only with Britain. American exports to continental Europe had to pass through British ports and be taxed there first. Governments such as those of Britain, France, and Spain saw trade as a win-lose game, and they kept score in bullion—bars of gold or silver. A nation would “win” by exporting more than it imported, and piling up the bullion to prove it.

Capitalism

The next system to develop was capitalism. **Capitalism** is an economic system in which the means of production are privately owned. A fruit orchard, a textile factory, and a printing press are all examples of “means of production.” They may be owned by a single individual, or a family or other group of investors. Mercantilism focused on increasing a nation's wealth—the better to raise tax money to support the government. But capitalism is all about individuals and their freedom to pursue their dreams of making money. Capitalism is the system on which the United States economy is based.

Communism

Communism came after capitalism, but has been widely discredited as an economic system. **Communism** is an economic system in which property belongs to everyone and work is organized for the benefit of everyone. During much of the twentieth century, many countries, notably in Eastern Europe and Central Asia, lived for some decades under a form of communism. The state planned and controlled the economy and a single party held power.

The world's most populous nation, China, is still governed by the Chinese Communist Party. But an ongoing “reform” launched in the late 1970s has turned the country into one of the most aggressive capitalist societies on earth.

Trade, Protectionism, and Comparative Advantage

In today's global economy, countries are linked more tightly than ever before. But many of the issues are the same as they have always been.

Trade

Trade, or commerce, is *the buying and selling of goods and services*. In contexts like this book, trade often means trade between different countries. Some trade is barter—a direct exchange of goods or services—but most traders use money.

From earliest times, people in one primitive settlement wanted to know what others had worth exchange in neighboring settlements. Trade allows people in different places to sell what they're good at making and buy what they can't make themselves. For example, if coastal fishermen trade with inland wheat-growers, both fishers and farmers have fish and bread.

Protectionism

Trade can make people nervous. They may like to buy better or cheaper goods from outsiders, but not if those outsiders' goods undercut their own place in the market. “I really like my imported car,” someone may think. “But if too many other people buy cars like mine, won't the car factory in my town have to close?”

When concern about the local car factory reaches a certain level, people may urge government to intervene.

Protectionism is *the policy or practice of restricting imports to protect home industries*. Governments may do this by imposing special taxes, known as tariffs or duties, on imported goods. Sometimes they impose quotas: for example, a limit on the number of foreign cars that may be brought in.

Sometimes protectionism is supposed to be only temporary. Its aim may be to preserve jobs, or perhaps an entire industry that has strategic significance.

The Theory of Comparative Advantage

As you learn more about economics, you will learn a lot about specialization and efficiency. The **theory of comparative advantage** *holds that countries should specialize in the goods and services where they have a relative edge*. This may be in lower labor costs, or better technology, or both. The theory predicts that countries following this principle will prosper from free trade, even trade with lower-wage countries.

David Ricardo and His Provocative Theory

Most people understand right away why a country that can make good watches more cheaply than anyone else, for instance, should strive to be the world's watchmaker. What the British economist David Ricardo (1772–1823) showed, though, was that two countries benefit from trade even if one country undercuts the other on wages. He looked at the trade between England and Portugal in cloth and wine. Portuguese wages were lower for both goods. But England had a *comparative advantage* in cloth. So it made sense for England to trade its cloth for wine from Portugal. It is cheaper for Portugal to buy cloth from England in exchange for surplus wine. Under the theory of comparative advantage, both sides win.

How World Trade Agreements Affect the Growth of Free Trade

History has shown how moving away from the mercantilist view, which sees trade as a win-lose game, has led to more global prosperity.

European Colonialism and the Quest for Markets

The European push to colonize the New World was motivated in part by the desire to develop new markets. Perhaps the best example of this was the British Empire. It imported raw materials from its colonies and turned them into finished goods. The colonies, under Britain's restrictive trade laws, were not only valuable sources of raw materials but also captive markets for finished goods. For example, American colonists were allowed to buy tea only from the British.

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The World Trade Organization (WTO) is the only global organization dealing with the rules of trade between nations. At its heart are agreements signed by most of the world's trading nations and ratified in their legislatures.

World Trade Agreements, the Growth of Free Trade, and the Reaction

Particularly since World War II, economists and political leaders alike have understood the importance of trade both in helping develop poor nations and in continuing the growth of developed countries.

Free trade was a big help in rebuilding Europe after World War II. France, western Germany, and other neighboring countries were grouped into a trade organization known as the European Coal and Steel Community. It led eventually to the European Union.

Other trade blocs have developed as well in other parts of the world—such as the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA), to which the United States, Canada, and Mexico are parties.

But free trade has not been without controversy. Most people enjoy the lower prices for the imported goods they buy at “big box” retailers. But many worry about jobs lost when American factories close. The early years of the twenty-first century have seen some backlash against free trade. NAFTA was ratified during Democratic President Bill Clinton’s administration. But many in Congress have since become critics of the agreement.

Environmental Concerns, Natural Resources, and Global Growth

The world’s economic growth has had significant side effects. In recent decades hundreds of millions of people have been lifted out of dire poverty into a form of middle-class prosperity, notably in China and India. But accompanying this prosperity have been air and water pollution, deforestation, and soil depletion.

The Growth of Environmental Consciousness

The modern environmental movement began in the 1960s. One milestone was the publication in 1962 of *The Silent Spring* by Rachel Carson. She wrote of how pesticides and other chemicals were contaminating the natural world. They were killing not only insect pests, but “good” insects, too, the ones that birds eat. With not as much bird food, there were fewer birds and less birdsong. That was the “silent spring” of her title. And she showed how this chemical pollution mattered to people as well as birds.

Her book got people’s attention. In the following decade, a striking number of concrete steps were taken: the Environmental Protection Agency was established, landmark legislation was passed to control air and water pollution, and, at a popular level, the annual celebration of Earth Day began.



The ancient Egyptians erected the Great Pyramids and the Sphinx in Giza as far back as the third millennium BC.
Photo by Robert Harbison / © 1991 The Christian Science Monitor

Pollution, along with wind-blown sand and other forces, is slowly eating away these stately monuments.

The Impact of Economic Development on the Environment

Rachel Carson was a significant figure in the environmental movement. But she was hardly the first to notice the damage human activity, especially economic activity, can inflict on the natural world. As far back as 1306 King Edward III of England, concerned about foul-smelling fumes, banned the burning of “sea coal” in craftsmen’s furnaces. In 1952 a five-day temperature inversion trapped deadly aerosols in the atmosphere over London. Estimates say about 4,000 people died of bronchitis, pneumonia, and other diseases.

But as new threats have developed, people and governments have taken action to correct them, often with dramatic improvements. And legislation mandating corrective action has helped create new industries in the field of environmental cleanup.

Among issues that have surfaced more recently are ozone depletion and global warming.

Ozone-Depleting Emissions

During the 1980s scientists and governments became concerned about industrial chemicals known as chlorofluorocarbons (CFCs). They found that CFCs damage the atmosphere’s ozone layer. Ozone is a form of oxygen that protects Earth from the sun’s ultraviolet radiation. Scientists concluded that CFCs should be phased out altogether. This led to the Montreal Protocol of 1987. If adhered to, it is expected to allow the ozone layer to recover by the year 2050.



An oil tanker unloads its cargo into underwater pipes a mile off California’s coast.
Photo by Robert Harbison / © 2003 The Christian Science Monitor

One could write a whole modern history of the world from the perspective of what countries will do to secure oil supplies.

Global Warming

As global economic development has continued, the amount of so-called greenhouse gases in the atmosphere has increased—carbon dioxide, methane, and others. These gases, byproducts of industrial activity and farming, trap the sun's heat in Earth's atmosphere. They are thought to be leading to slight but significant increases in temperatures. Global warming was extremely controversial for many years. Skeptics suggested that observed changes in temperatures were within the range of normal variation over the long term. But more recently, consensus has solidified around the view that climate change is a real problem. It needs the full attention of the international community.

The Struggle Over Access to Resources

Human economic activity doesn't lead just to pollution. Lack of access to resources often leads to tensions and even war. Ideally, countries can get what they need to develop their economies through peaceful trade. But it doesn't always work out that way. One could write a whole modern history of the world from the perspective of what countries will do to secure oil supplies.

Japan's military aggression during World War II was prompted in part by its need for oil to fuel its industrialization and modernization. And throughout the twentieth century, leaders of the energy-hungry West maintained close relationships with Middle Eastern leaders whose governments were not democracies but who controlled oil resources.

Ethics, Religion, Poverty, Wealth, and Human Rights

Relationships between people as well as between countries are affected by different systems of ethics and religion. Some people have one set of rules for dealing with those in their own community versus another set for outsiders. People's wealth, or lack of it, is also a factor in their relationships. Some people have so much money they don't ever have to think about it. Other people hardly ever think of anything else. And how does someone think of strangers, outsiders, those who are "the other"? That question is essentially one of human rights.

How Worldviews Affect Attitudes

For a concrete example, picture this: A young woman dressed in jeans and a T-shirt hops into her car and drives off to work. Does that mental image give you any trouble? No? But can you imagine what might happen if she were in Saudi Arabia—where a woman isn't allowed to drive and must cover her entire body and her face? Or if she lived in an Orthodox Jewish community, and it were the Sabbath? Many such Jews walk everywhere on the Sabbath. Or if she were a member of an Amish community, which traditionally does not own cars?



A Jewish man prays at the Western Wall in Old City Jerusalem.

*Photo by Robert Harbison /
© 1991 The Christian Science Monitor*

Orthodox Jews generally walk everywhere rather than drive on the Sabbath.

You can see how a simple set of actions can evoke different responses from people with differing systems of ethics and religion, levels of wealth, and views of human rights.

Efforts to Advance Development in Poorer Regions

“Foreign aid” is the general term for government efforts to help the poor in other countries. It’s most effective when it goes to people “on the ground” rather than to governments, which may be corrupt. Many private aid organizations bypass governments altogether by working directly with the individuals they want to help. Such efforts seek to harness the entrepreneurial potential of people in poor countries, who often can start their own businesses if they get a loan as small as \$100. Such loans are known as “microlending.” The small businesses they fund are called “microenterprises.”

The Growth of the Human Rights Movement

The human rights protections enjoyed by Americans trace back to Runnymede, in England. There, in 1215, a group of nobles forced King John to sign Magna Carta. This document limited royal powers and gave freemen some guarantees of what we now call due process of law.

Five centuries later came the Age of Enlightenment, a period in European history that celebrated reason and “the rights of man.” Rights and liberties belong naturally to the people, in the Enlightenment view. They do not flow from the king or the state.

The American Revolution, with its Declaration of Independence, and the United States Constitution that followed, were part of this broader movement. So was the international effort to end African slavery, led by Quakers and other moral leaders. The Founding Fathers dodged the issue of slavery in the Constitution, which acknowledged it only obliquely in the form in which the states first ratified the document.

But the British Parliament ended the Atlantic slave trade in 1807. The US Congress banned the slave trade under legislation taking effect the following year. Slavery itself did not end until the Civil War.

The end of slavery in North America in 1865 was a forward step for individual rights. Another development was recognition of the rights of groups of people. After World War I, President Woodrow Wilson was a tireless advocate for **self-determination**—*the principle that the people of a particular territory should decide how it is to be governed*. At that time many people still lived in places governed from distant imperial capitals. But the war led to the breaking up of the Austro-Hungarian, German, and Ottoman (Turkish) empires. This resulted in the creation of many new independent states.



Scotland's Glasgow Cathedral, built in stages over a couple hundred years, exemplifies Gothic architecture and is still used today for Christian services.

Photo by Melanie Stetson Freeman / © 2003 The Christian Science Monitor

About the time the church's central hall, or nave, was completed in the early thirteenth century, a group of nobles forced English King John to sign Magna Carta. This document limited royal powers and gave freemen some guarantees of what we now call due process of law.



Buddhist monks take a stroll in Kampot, Cambodia.

Photo by Melanie Stetson Freeman / © 1997 The Christian Science Monitor

After World War II, the United Nations adopted the Universal Declaration of Human Rights to launch the modern human rights movement. It works to protect religious and other freedoms around the world.

After World War II, another important development was the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. This was the founding document of the modern human rights movement. Adopted by the newly formed United Nations, it was meant to embody cultural and faith traditions of the whole world, not just those of the Judeo-Christian West.

Technology, Education, and the Competition for Jobs

The ongoing technological revolution and the spread of mass higher education in much of the world have led to prosperity that earlier generations could not have imagined. Entire countries have graduated from “developing” to “developed.” But this has left many businesses and individuals in North America and Europe on the defensive, as they have been forced to compete as never before for jobs and customers.

The Technology Advantage of Western Cultures

From their first encounters with native Americans, European explorers had a technological advantage with their tools and firearms. Only in the twentieth century, with the rise of Japan and the “Asian tigers” as centers of high-tech manufacturing, did the West’s advantage shrink. And it still has not disappeared. For instance, much of India, for all its recent progress in technology, still lacks the basic sanitation introduced in the West a century and a half ago.

The Effects of Education on Culture and Development

For much of history, literacy was a rare privilege. Today a country's literacy rate is a good index of its overall success. Much US foreign aid goes to education, especially to teaching women and girls to read and write. Literacy gives women access to information that puts them in control of their own lives—notably their childbearing. That helps control overpopulation, improve health, build civil society, and create economic growth.

A Comparison of Literacy Rates for Men and Women

Country	Men	Women
Britain	99 percent	99 percent
China	95 percent	87 percent
Germany	99 percent	99 percent
India	73 percent	48 percent
United States	99 percent	99 percent
Afghanistan	43 percent	13 percent
Bangladesh	54 percent	32 percent
Guinea	43 percent	18 percent
Haiti	55 percent	51 percent
Somalia	48 percent	26 percent



Second-graders in Kabul, Afghanistan, must meet for their math class in a hallway because their school has more students than it can hold: 4,500 students, of which 3,000 are girls.

Photo by Melanie Stetson Freeman / © 2003 The Christian Science Monitor

Literacy gives women access to information that puts them in control of their own lives.

How Outsourcing Impacts Development

While the West supports teaching women in underdeveloped nations to read to give them greater choices in their lives, outsourcing work to these poorer countries at the possible expense of jobs at home is a touchy subject. **Outsourcing** is the procurement of goods and services from an outside supplier. A computer company, for instance, may outsource its customer support to a call center in India. Sometimes higher-level jobs are outsourced as well. Many critics worry about the loss of American jobs, but advocates say outsourcing is good for employers, gives foreigners opportunity, and enables them to buy American exports.



Workers assemble engines at a Hyundai factory in India.
Photo by Mark Sappenfield / © 2006 The Christian Science Monitor

US companies must compete for their share of world markets to grow and provide new jobs for American workers.

Outsourcing is only one of the issues in the interconnected global economy. As you read through this book, you'll get a better understanding of other countries, their pasts, and what their futures are likely to look like.

Such an understanding is more important than ever before to your security and economic well-being. You live in a global age—an age in which market conditions in China or Brazil affect the price of oil in the United States. An outbreak of disease in a remote location can quickly spread around the world if authorities don't act to control it. The US homeland is no longer automatically secure from attack by small groups of terrorists just because they live halfway around the world. US companies must compete for their share of world markets to grow and provide new jobs for American workers.

By understanding the world's different cultures, religions, and economic systems, you will be better able to make sense of what is happening around the planet and how it affects you and your loved ones. You'll be a more informed citizen and voter, better equipped to influence politicians and government officials. You'll be a more valuable employee for companies that have overseas clients. This course aims to get you started in developing that understanding.



Introduction Review

Using complete sentences, answer the following questions on a sheet of paper.

1. What advantage do physical objects have as a source of cultural information?
2. What was the basis of Egyptian wealth?
3. How long did the western branch of the Roman Empire last?
How long did the eastern branch endure?
4. What were Adam Smith's four stages of economic development?
5. What is the theory of comparative advantage?
6. What is NAFTA?
7. Why did Rachel Carson call her book *The Silent Spring*?
8. What do greenhouse gases do?
9. What guarantees did Magna Carta give freemen?
10. What is the Universal Declaration of Human Rights?
11. In which century did the West's technological advantage shrink?
12. How does literacy improve women's lives?

Applying Your Learning

13. Should companies be allowed to outsource jobs, or should government restrict this practice? Explain why.