

National Geographic Visual History of the World

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The world history book to define all others, this visual encyclopedia of world events is a classic in the making—and a favorite of history buffs everywhere. No other volume offers such a comprehensive and richly illustrated chronicle, from the construction of the Pyramids to the overthrow of the Taliban.

Readers see how momentous happenings, personalities, catastrophes, discoveries, and inventions unfold in a visually stimulating layout. Four eight-page gatefolds bring to life major events of world history and thousands of paintings, photographs and illustrations depict subjects ranging from the Roman Empire to the Reformation, World War II, to the war in Afghanistan. A timeline at the bottom of every page highlights the most important events, names, and dates of the era, and color-coded cross-referencing helps point readers to other applicable sections. Ideal for people who prefer to flip through books at random, this highly accessible resource contains sidebars on the great religions, influential ideologies, and other topics, as well as biographies of world leaders and notable personalities in the arts and humanities.

National Geographic Visual History of the World is an indispensable, impressive, and extravagantly illustrated reference of social, cultural, and military history in one volume. It is a must-have for all families, armchair historians, and serious scholars alike.

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Douglas Brinkley is the director of the Eisenhower Center for American Studies and a professor of history at the University of New Orleans. He is a bestselling author who has written *The American Heritage History of the United States*, as well as books on Jimmy Carter, James Forrestal, and FDR. This hefty volume covers history from around 4000 B.C.E. to the contemporary era. Each of the eight chapters—"Prehistory," "First Empires," "The Ancient World," "The Middle Ages," "The Early Modern Period," "The Modern Era," "The World Wars and The Interwar Period" and "The Contemporary Period"—is divided into topical sections and one-page subsections. Each section has a brief introduction, and each subsection is introduced by a one-sentence description. A time line found at the bottom of every page pinpoints key events, names, and dates corresponding to the page's content. Embellishing every page are anywhere from 5 to 10 illustrations, mostly in color, and though they are small, the illustrations are clear and well chosen and do a good job of bringing history to life. Numbers are used to key the images to the text. Other features include sidebars containing quotations, brief biographies, or interesting facts. Five two-page "Key Ideas" sections cover topics such as Christianity and Islam, and four "In Focus" foldouts offer chronological summaries of the Roman Empire, the Reformation, the French Revolution, and World War II.

Other recent single-volume world histories for the high-school level and up include *Facts*

On File's Encyclopedia of World History (2000) and the sixth edition of Houghton's standard Encyclopedia of World History (2001). Each offers something different; the copiously illustrated Facts On File volume is arranged alphabetically, while the Houghton volume is arranged by broad time period, with divisions for regions, countries, and cultures. The National Geographic volume is more current, and this, along with content that is well organized, balanced, and attractively presented, makes it an exceptional value for school and public libraries. Carol Sue Harless

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