Western Hemisphere

THE UNITED STATES

The following is an abbreviated chronology of the history of the United States (U.S.). Each section is followed by a list of significant people, places and events, but it is important to note that you cannot stop here. Study all presidents, presidential elections and critical politicians and Supreme Court justices. Research people by decade or era to unearth other important authors, philosophers, poets, artists, musicians, entertainers, athletes, scientists, criminals, state admissions, Constitutional Amendments and more that are not included specifically in these lists. History is a broad subject, and at the higher rungs of this contest, knowledge of trivia, pop culture and geography can enable contestants to answer questions at an early stage. Find your areas of interest and "rabbit" through the Internet and books, exploring what piques your interest. Please note that there will be questions on terms not included in this study guide and, conversely, some terms mentioned here may not be used in tests. Use this list as a starting point and work from there.

EARLY AMERICA

In prehistoric times, people from Asia migrated across a land bridge that crossed the Bering Strait to the northwest corner of North America to Asia. These original immigrants, now known as Native Americans, moved down through the North American continent to Mexico and South America. By the 11th century, Vikings had arrived in the Western Hemisphere, and in the late 15th century European explorers began trips to the New World. Slowly, Native American groups were decimated by disease and armed conflict or displaced. Many were pushed westward from their homelands.
The British began to explore and settle the New World. Roanoke, one of their first settlements, mysteriously vanished. Jamestown was the first successful British colony. As other European countries scrambled to gain a toehold in the New World, new colonies were begun. Many of these new settlers were fleeing religious persecution. Over time, relations between colonies and their European "mother" countries were strained. This ultimately led to the French and Indian War and, later, to the Revolutionary War. At the onset of this conflict, the colonies banded together to form a Continental Congress and drafted a Declaration of Independence in 1776. They adopted the Articles of Confederation and later replaced these with the U.S. Constitution, combining the original 13 colonies into the United States.

EXPANSION WESTWARD

Settlers moved westward and, through the Louisiana Purchase, the U.S. acquired a huge amount of territory from France in 1803. The British opposed American expansion in the Northwest and Florida, culminating in the War of 1812. After this conflict, Florida was purchased from Spain. Slavery, a part of life in the New World almost from the beginning, became an issue that divided the agricultural Southerners and the increasingly industry oriented Northerners. This continued to be problematic as the country expanded and added new territories. Westward migration populated territories all the way to the Pacific Coast, and railroads were constructed. Contention with Native American tribes continued as they were pushed from their homelands and, ultimately, forcibly moved to reservations.
Conflict between the industrialized North and agricultural South led to the Civil War. Slavery was a critical issue during the election of 1860. Abraham Lincoln was elected, giving control of the government to Republicans of the North. Many Southern states chose to secede from the Union and form the Confederate States of America. This conflict between the Union forces of the North and the Confederate forces of the South resulted in a Civil War that lasted from 1861 to 1865. The Emancipation Proclamation was issued by Lincoln in 1863, and the 13th Amendment later officially abolished slavery in the U.S. Slaves, now freedmen, became tenant farmers or relocated, struggling to find their position in the political climate. The Confederacy surrendered and the Reconstruction period followed. During this time, the North dictated how the South could operate. Much of the South was left impoverished, and Carpetbaggers and Scalawags preyed on Southerners. The 14th Amendment extended equal protection to all people born or naturalized in the U.S., and the 15th Amendment enfranchised all male citizens, but not women. Enforcement of these amendments was gradual. Native American men who had not yet been given citizenship continued to be excluded from voting.
INDUSTRIAL REVOLUTION & PROGRESSIVE ERA

More European immigrants flooded into the new country due to their depressed economy. The U.S. entered a prosperous period around 1900, and movement from an agricultural to an industrial and service oriented nation continued. The Industrial Revolution began in Britain and later spilled into the U.S. American Industry expanded rapidly due to advances in technology, such as production lines, cotton gins, automobiles, airplanes and other innovations. Expansion continued in the West, and Native American uprisings were forcibly put down. Due to the growth of railroads and automobiles, people were no longer restricted to living near their work place. This brought increased mobility and the growth of suburban communities. Government continued growing during the Progressive Era, and the government and big businesses clashed. The Sherman Antitrust Act gave the government power to regulate big business in order to prevent large monopolies. Both Prohibition and the Women's Suffrage Movement began during this era. Segregation was approved by Plessy v. Ferguson, a Supreme Court case. The Monroe Doctrine had protected the continent from European expansion, and in the early 1900s, Roosevelt expanded this protection to the entire Western Hemisphere with the Roosevelt Corollary. This led to the U.S. support of Panamanian independence from Colombia, and enabled the construction of the Panama Canal.

"Whether you think you can or you think you can't -- you're right." Henry Ford

WORLD WAR I (WWI)

This war began in Europe and pitted the Allies, which included Britain, France and Russia, against the Central Powers, or Austria-Hungary, Germany and the Ottoman Empire. The sinking of the RMS Lusitania infuriated U.S. citizens and the government, and the U.S. was finally drawn into the conflict by the interception of the Zimmermann Telegram. At the conclusion of the war, the Spanish flu was spread by movement of troops, and the pandemic infected 20% of the global population. The Treaty of Versailles set the terms for the end of the war and established the League of Nations, which the U.S. failed to join in spite of President Woodrow Wilson and his Fourteen Point Plan. The terms of this treaty were contentious and left the world open to enter a second war two decades later.
THE ROARING TWENTIES

Just before 1920, the 18th Amendment was passed and Prohibition began. Bootlegging and secret, illegal alcohol stills flourished, and private clubs, or speakeasies, sold alcohol, which was against the law. Prohibition was unsuccessful and repealed by the 21st Amendment. In 1920, the women’s suffrage movement culminated in the passage of the 19th Amendment which gave women the right to vote. Economic prosperity enabled the growth of leisure activities, including sporting events and innovation in literature and music in the form of jazz and blues. The period’s booming economic growth proved unsustainable and the decade ended on the eve of the Great Depression.

THE GREAT DEPRESSION

The Stock Market Crash of 1929, or Black Tuesday, marked the beginning of the Great Depression. When fear hit the populace, people began pulling their assets from banks, which in turn caused bank failures. This period saw massive unemployment in cities and was compounded by the Dust Bowl in the Midwest and Southwest that crippled agriculture. Franklin D. Roosevelt (FDR) was elected president in 1932 and worked to pull the country from the Depression. He combatted economic instability by enacting the New Deal and creating jobs that improved public works, like the Tennessee Valley Authority and the Hoover Dam. Many federal acts were instituted that aided farmers and paid subsidies to protect farmers in bad times.

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WORLD WAR II (WWII)

This war originated in Europe and pitted the Axis against the Allies. The Axis was centered in Germany and led by the Nazis and their führer, Adolf Hitler. It also included Japan under Emperor Shōwa, or Hirohito, and Italy under Benito Mussolini. The Allies included the British Commonwealth, France, Poland and later the U.S. German blitzkrieg warfare was initially successful. Germany perpetrated a large-scale genocide of Jews and minorities called the Holocaust. The Japanese bombed the U.S. fleet in Pearl Harbor, Hawaii. As a result, President Roosevelt asked Congress to declare war on Japan in a speech proclaiming December 7, 1941, "a date which will live in infamy."

Unlike the previous world war, much of the fighting was between airplanes with ace pilots. The beginning of the end of the war in Europe was a massive amphibious invasion on the beaches of Normandy in France called Operation Overlord and referred to as D-Day. Shortly after, Italy surrendered. The Germans surrendered in 1945. Later in the year, the U.S. dropped atomic bombs on Hiroshima and Nagasaki, Japan, and this ended the war in the Pacific.

POST-WORLD WAR II

Negotiations at the end of the war redrew many European borders and broke Germany into two parts. Berlin was split into East Berlin, controlled by the Soviet Union (USSR), and West Berlin, controlled by Britain and the U.S. These two were split by the Berlin Wall until 1990. After WWII the Cold War, a period of tension between communist and democratic governments, ensued. Wartime industrialization had helped pull the U.S. from the Depression. Women had taken on jobs originally held by men and were displaced as men returned from the war. This displacement would prove to be a factor contributing to the ignition of the Women’s Rights Movement. African American rights also came to the forefront of political issues, and Plessy v. Ferguson was overturned by the decision in the Brown v. Board of Education, which declared segregation illegal. Civil unrest followed as the government began to enforce the integration of public schools and buildings. The USSR put missiles in Cuba aimed at the U.S. in 1962. Under President John F. Kennedy (JFK), the U.S. blockaded Cuba and threatened invasion. This Cuban Missile Crisis was finally defused when the U.S. agreed to remove missiles from Turkey and the Soviets agreed to remove their Cuban missiles. The Vietnam War lingered from 1965 to 1973 in Southeast Asia between the communists in North Vietnam and the democratic government of South Vietnam. The U.S. backed the North and the U.S. fought for the South in what was to become a very unpopular war. The U.S. eventually withdrew, and the North Vietnamese overtook the peninsula. The Space Race began during this period, and the Apollo 11 mission put the first men on the moon.
CURRENT PERIOD*

The computer industry advanced rapidly during this period, aptly dubbed the 'Computer Age.' Before this time, computers were primarily used only by large corporations and the military. The addition of user-friendly features caused the demand for computers to rise until computers finally became common household items. The IBM Corporation grew enormously in large business installations and later entered the personal laptop area. In 1976, Apple Inc. began developing small computers for individuals, growing to a range of products based on computer technology that now includes phones, watches, tablets and more. This technology has pushed society to become increasingly global and enabled the U.S. to take on the role of an international mediator. During this era, the U.S. has been very involved in Middle Eastern affairs. This includes Operation Desert Shield, Operation Desert Storm, and the Persian Gulf War. Later, a terrorist group called Al-Qaeda hijacked and crashed planes into both World Trade Center towers and the Pentagon. As a result of this, President George W. Bush declared a War on Terror. A part of this movement was the Iraq War of 2003 in which the U.S. invaded Iraq and deposed Hussein. This current period is less "history" and more "current events" for today's students. The timbre of the times primarily addresses social issues, relations with other countries, environmental issues, technology and other large areas.

Terms shown are for research purposes and not guaranteed to be on any official test. Note: We will not ask about anything that happened after the September 11th attacks; that is our cut-off between "current events" and "recent history."

HISTORY IN A 'NUTSHELL' - GET MORE TERMS IN A TIMELINE!

The History Essentials book presents a plethora of historical milestones and names in a thoughtfully arranged timeline format. Jam-packed with events and people who have changed the course of history, The History Essentials 'fills in the gaps' with facts that may have escaped your studies or memory—until now. While reading, take time for many, fun, 'rabbit trail' adventures by researching unfamiliar terms along the way. Look up words in bold or entire periods or cultures, and concentrate on topics that pique your interest. Then, delve deeper and keep going as your fascination with history expands. In doing so, you will begin to round out your knowledge of history without losing your place, because you can always return to the timeline and pick up where you left off.

History Essentials can help shape, plan, and organize study goals for history contests, including the National History Bee. Involvement in the National History Bee on any level is a fantastic achievement, and Hexco Academic is proud to support this contest.'

*Disclaimer: The contest content of the History Bee or any other contest is not limited to the events in this book or the Official Study Guide. There is no guarantee that this material will appear in the National History Bee or other competitions. A portion of the proceeds from the sale of this book go to the National History Bee.
ANCIENT immigrants crossed the Bering land bridge and populated what is now Canada and the United States, then trickled down through the North American continent and to Central and South America. These peoples flourished until the arrival of European settlers. Europeans brought guns, germs and steel, decimating these original settlers, and colonized the continents. European influence significantly impacted the continent, permanently altering its ethnic makeup, customs and language, and it would be centuries before these regions began to shake off the reins of colonialism.

CANADA
Norsemen under Leif Eriksson established the first European settlement on the North American continent, L’Anse aux Meadows. Quebec City, the first European settlement since Eriksson, was established by French explorer Samuel de Champlain in 1608. The French were entrenched in fur trading across this region, and this caused a rivalry with the British. The British controlled the Maritime provinces, and the French colonists, known as Acadians, were expelled in the mid-18th century. Many of these people migrated south to what is now Louisiana. Today, Canada remains a self-governed dominion of Britain, although the province of Quebec maintains much of its French character.

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MEXICO, CENTRAL & SOUTH AMERICA

Organized and advanced ancient civilizations populated Pre-Columbian Mesoamerica, including the Olmec, Zapotec, Maya, Inca and Aztec. The Aztec, Inca and other peoples were annihilated by the arrival of Spanish conquistadors. Over time, the Spanish and Portuguese intermixed with the native people, altering the region's language and culture. During the late 18th and early 19th centuries, Central and South America revolted against European rule, and each of these countries eventually gained independence. Many of the countries in these regions have been ruled by a succession of dictators, and difficult conditions are worsened by the burgeoning drug trade.

Mexico, Central & South America*

Norte-Chico civilization
San Lorenzo & La Venta
Nazca
El Niño
Tikal & Chichen Itza
Toltec
Tenochtitlan
Nahuatl
quipu
Machu Picchu
Treaty of Tordesillas
Taino
Hispaniola
slave trade
Bartolomé de las Casas
mestizo
Moctezuma II
Hernán Cortés
Francisco Pizarro
Atahualpa
Quechua
Túpac Amaru II
Haitian Revolution
Simón Bolívar
Mexican Independence War
Monroe Doctrine
caudillos
Mexican-American War
Santa Anna
Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo
Dom Pedro II
Spanish-American War
Panama Canal
Guantanamo Bay
Mexican Revolution
Pancho Villa
Hiram Bingham
Christ the Redeemer statue
Juan & Eva Perón
Cuban Revolution
Fulgencio Batista
Fidel Castro
Che Guevara
Falkland War
Dirty War
Augusto Pinochet
drug cartels

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EARLY CIVILIZATIONS

The original inhabitants of this region are believed to have migrated from Asia or Africa during ancient times. During the Bronze and Iron Ages, advances in tools and weaponry altered the way people lived. Agricultural communities developed. Great empires were begun, such as those of Greece and Rome in southern Europe. In northern Europe, the Germanic, Slavic, Gothic and Celtic peoples migrated south and west. These cultures clashed, then intermixed with the Romans. Christianity was born in the Middle East and spread through Europe by the Roman Empire. Early European civilizations are remembered for their academics, laws and arts, which served as the basis of Western civilization.

MIDDLE AGES

The Western Roman Empire collapsed in 476 CE and Europe fell into the Dark Ages, a period of intellectual and economic decline. Around 1000, Europe entered the Middle Ages. During this period, the feudalistic manor system emerged and the Catholic Church dominated European society, providing a small measure of stability. Agriculture became important, trade increased and the Crusades began. Medieval civilization apexed during the 13th century. Intellectual movements like Scholasticism and the breakup of feudal structures paved the way for an era of cultural rebirth, the Renaissance.
RENAISSANCE & REFORMATION

The Renaissance marked the emergence of Europe from the Middle Ages and its deteriorated culture and economy. Italian trade developed and people acquired the wealth and time to pursue and sponsor interests outside of subsistence, such as the arts and philosophy. Classical antiquity experienced a revival that was accentuated by Constantinople's fall in 1453. Numerous scholars fled to Italy, bringing books, manuscripts and traditional Greek scholarship. The Renaissance spread from its Italian epicenter to the rest of Europe, initiating the Northern and English Renaissances. This period paved the way for the Reformation, a reaction against Catholicism and shift to Protestantism which, in turn, prompted the Catholic Counter-Reformation.

AGE OF DISCOVERY

This era overlapped the Renaissance and was characterized by change. Countries with fixed borders emerged and vied for power. Navigation techniques improved and global exploration began in earnest. Explorers were funded by monarchs and governments that sought foreign riches and new territory. Colonies were established, many of which were populated by Europeans facing religious persecution or hard times at home. Monarchs ruled absolutely, and discontent with the ruling class manifested. During the Baroque period, drama, architecture, art and music flourished. Philosophy and science entered a new age.

Henry the Navigator
Ferdinand & Isabella
Spanish Inquisition
Tomás de Torquemada
Treaty of Tordesillas
Bartolomeu Dias
Cape of Good Hope
Vasco da Gama
Pedro Álvares Cabral
Christopher Columbus
Amerigo Vespucci
Mary I
Elizabeth I
Spanish Armada
William Shakespeare
Gregorian calendar
Huguenots
Thirty Years’ War
Cardinal Richelieu
English Civil Wars
House of Stuart
British East India Company
Dutch East India Company
Gunpowder Plot
Oliver Cromwell
Galileo Galilei
Johannes Kepler
Rembrandt
Isaac Newton
Thomas Hobbes
Glorious Revolution
John Locke
Louis XIV
War of Spanish Succession
House of Hanover
War of Austrian Succession
G. F. Handel
Johann Sebastian Bach
Montesquieu
Voltaire
Jean-Jacques Rousseau
Maria Theresa

Above: St. Peter’s Cathedral

Above: (section of) Michaelangelo’s Sistine Chapel
REVOLUTIONS, SCIENTIFIC, INDUSTRIAL AND CIVIL

This was an era of scientific and industrial innovation. New inventions and systems enabled factories to hasten production. New technology and improved tools revolutionized agriculture. Civil discontent and other factors toppled and weakened some European monarchies. Contemporary philosophers and scientists revolutionized thought, and numerous art and music movements began.

WORLD WAR I (WWI)

Tension in Europe was high and the assassination of Franz Ferdinand, heir to the Austrian throne, proved to be the catalyst that spun the globe into war. All of the world's great powers were drawn into the conflict. The Allied Powers, including Britain, France, Russia, the United States and many more, opposed the Central Powers, Germany, Austria-Hungary and the Ottoman Empire. New technology made this one of the deadliest conflicts in history; this increased capacity for destruction was compounded by trench warfare, which created a stalemate and extended the war. At the war's end, the Treaty of Versailles redrew the borders of many European countries and established the League of Nations. The punishment dealt to the belligerent nations who had "lost" fostered a sense of futility and discontent that set the stage for World War II.
WORLD WAR II*

This war followed on the heels of WWI, coming only 20 years later. War was initiated in 1939, when Adolf Hitler, führer of Germany, made the decision to invade Poland. Hitler planned to advance through Europe, taking territory for Germany and creating an Aryan race. The primary Allies in this conflict were Britain, France, Russia and, later, the U.S. The Axis Powers were Germany, Italy and Japan. The Allies were victorious, and belligerent nations were divided and occupied. The League of Nations had proven powerless to prevent or mediate global conflict and was replaced by the United Nations after this war.

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MODERN PERIOD*

Following WWII, communism flourished in the USSR and satellite nations under its influence, while democracy thrived in Western Europe and the U.S. This led to the Cold War. Conflicts that stemmed from the Cold War included the Korean War, Vietnam War and Cuban Missile Crisis. This tension was also evident in the Space Race, as the U.S. and USSR contended in an attempt to dominate the cosmos. After WWII, European nations struggled to rebuild and lost economic dominance. The European Union (EU) was established to challenge the United States’ economic dominance.
This continent is believed to have broken away from Africa during ancient tectonic plate shifts. Much later, people migrated from Africa to Asia and from Asia to Australia and other areas of the South Pacific. Many communities developed simultaneously throughout this area, and its two primary regions are the Middle East and the Orient.

ANCIENT MIDDLE EAST

The settlement of Jericho on the West Bank of the Jordan River has been dated to around 9,000 BCE, making it one of the first cities established on Earth. The land between the Tigris and Euphrates Rivers is called the Cradle of Civilization, because it was home to some of the first large civilizations, including Sumer and Babylon. Sumerian stands as the world’s oldest written language, and the Epic of Gilgamesh was originally written in this language. The three Abrahamic religions, Judaism, Christianity and Islam, began in this area. The first coded laws were ascribed to Hammurabi of Babylon and algebra and astronomy also originated in the Middle East. Great empires grew in this area, including the Assyrian, Persian, Byzantine and Ottoman Empires. The Ottomans rose to power when the Byzantine Empire declined, and were only broken up at the end of WWI.

MIDDLE EAST COLONIZATION & MODERN ERA

Colonialism changed the complexion of this region. The British and Portuguese established outposts and marked territories with no regard for traditional, nomadic migrations or economic and political climates. The development of the oil industry initiated conflict in this area. Tribal tensions and religious differences have inflamed these conflicts. World powers have attempted to contain the infighting to guarantee that trade for oil with these countries can be continued, resulting in the Iraq-Iran War and Gulf Wars.
**FAR EAST IN ANCIENT TIMES**

One of the earliest examples of *Homo erectus* was the Chinese fossil known as Peking Man. It dates to around 750,000 years ago. Through the ages, Chinese communities based on agriculture were built along coastal areas and the Yangtze and Yellow River valleys. Other communities spread along the Malay Peninsula. Eastern Asia is home to some of the oldest civilizations in the world, including the Indus Valley and ancient China. The Indus Valley civilization was followed by the Vedic period, in which Hinduism was established along with its tenets of religion and its caste system. The philosophical teachings of Gautama Buddha, a wise man of northern India, paved the way for Buddhism. Various parts of the country were ruled by empires, such as the Gupta and Mughal Empires. Other religions developed in Eastern Asia. Ancient philosophers of this era, such as Confucius and Laozi, had a profound and long lasting influence on Asian society. Rulers of Eastern Asian countries were dynastic. The Silk Road, a trade route between the Far East and Europe, officially opened in 130 BCE and spread goods alongside religion and bubonic plague.

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**FAR EAST COLONIZATION & MODERN ERA**

When Europeans developed sea routes to the Far East, they began to trade, explore and colonize. Western influence was not welcomed throughout the Far East, and conflicts arose. In recent years, China and India have become industrial powerhouses and world superpowers. Colonization did not have the same negative impact on the economy of Asia as it did in South and Central America and Africa.

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Fossils and other archaeological finds indicate that Africa is the origin of the first humans. The northern half of this continent was comprised partly of agricultural peoples and partly of coastal peoples who traded with Europe and the Middle East. The southern half remained a tribal society based on hunting and gathering. Africa became the subject of rampant European imperialism during the 19th and 20th centuries. After WWII, Europe was weakened and began to lose its hold on colonies in Africa.

**ANCIENT AFRICA**

Early civilizations encircled the Sahara Desert. The strongest of these were the Carthaginian Empire, the Egyptian Kingdom, the Mali Empire and the Ashanti Empire. Peoples of the northern part of Africa produced histories recorded in hieroglyphics and the first verified alphabet, the Phoenician alphabet, which was derived from hieroglyphics. The remainder of Africa has little written history. The Nile River was critical to the development of early civilizations. Conflicts with the Romans ultimately brought on the fall of Carthage and Egypt. In the 7th century, Islam spread over much of Northern Africa.

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**Ancient Africa**

- papyrus
- Menes
- Three Kingdoms of Egypt
- Great Pyramid of Giza
- Great Sphinx
- Amenhotep
- Nefertiti
- Tutankhamun
- Ramses II
- Kingdom of Kush
- Black Pharaohs
- Bantu
- Zulu
- Ptolemaic dynasty
- Library of Alexandria
- Punic Wars & Hannibal
- Cleopatra
- Battle of Actium
- Menelik I
- Diocletian Persecution
- Byzantium Empire decline
- Rosetta Stone

**Terms shown are for research purposes and not guaranteed to be on any official test.**

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Ghana Kingdom
Great Zimbabwe
Timbuktu
Morocco
Mansa Musa
Ibn Battuta & Rihla
Songhai Empire

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Top right: Great Sphinx and pyramid; Bottom: hieroglyphics; African elephant

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Europeans began exploring and encroaching on Africa in the 15th century. Though slavery had been a longstanding tenet of African culture, the Europeans initiated a massive trade of captured Africans. The transatlantic slave trade boomed until importation of slaves was outlawed. Africa became the subject of rampant European imperialism with the Scramble for Africa during the 19th and 20th centuries. Europeans had a longstanding impact on the political structure. Though countries later gained independence, much of the continent had been stripped of its bountiful natural resources and was set on the path to remaining part of the Third World.

Cape of Good Hope
Anglo-Zulu War
Shaka Zulu
Sierra Leone & Liberia
Voortrekker & Boers
Boer Wars
Victoria Falls
Henry Morgan Stanley
Suez Canal
Rudyard Kipling
White Man’s Burden
Leopold II & the Congo
South African War
Afrikaans
Louis Leakey
apartheid
Nelson Mandela
Olduvai Gorge
Jane Goodall

Dian Fossey
Rivonia Trial
Soweto Uprising
F.W. de Klerk
Muammar Gaddafi
Mau Mau Uprising
ivory & bushmeat
blood diamonds
Kimberley Process
Haile Selassie
Rwandan massacre
Hutu & Tutsi
African Union

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Top left to bottom: Victoria Falls, Nelson Mandela, Suez Canal.