

## 1.6 Why Do We Study History

### #1 To Learn From Our Mistakes

“Those who cannot remember the past are condemned to repeat it.” -George Satayana

The most commonly given reason is to learn from our mistakes, but far from the only one. Another philosopher, George Hegel, said

“We learn from history that we DO NOT learn from history”

**How does the Satayana and Hegel quotes relate to one another?**

They both talk about our difficulty of learning from the mistakes of history.

### #2 Just Because it's From the Past, Doesn't Mean It Can't Teach Us in the Present

The well known children's author, C.S. Lewis was also one of the top Old English literature professors ever. What he saw in both literature and history in the past were truths and insights that we could use in the present. He called it “Chronological Snobbery” whenever we dismiss beliefs or ideas from the past for the sole reason that it is old, not new. It is not saying that all old ideas are good because they are old, it is just saying they cannot be bad just because they are old. If we say we can't believe or trust an idea from the past because it won't work in our modern times, if that is the main reason, we are being proud, arrogant, a snob, because we are saying that we live in the present and the past has nothing to teach us.

**“Democracy had a good run from the Ancient Greeks until today. It worked until the fake news that can be spread through social media . Democracy had its day, and it's time to replace it.”**

**How is this quote an example of Chronological Snobbery?**

Lying has always existed no matter how it is done, so the only reason why you want to get rid of Democracy is because it is old.

### #3 It helps us analyze information

History helps us to see multiple sides of the same issue, it allows us to see why things are like they are today, and helps us see how similar situations were dealt with in the past and what the outcome was.

**You are looking to get a job in marketing (convincing people to buy a your product over another). Every other person going for the job was a marketing major in college, but you have a history degree. How would you convince the interviewer you are perfect for the job as a history major?**

In history classes, you look at trends of why things happened and try to use the past to determine where things are going today. You also spend a lot of time researching to find those answers. These skills are valuable in trying to convince someone to buy a product.

#### **#4 Gain Understanding of Others in a Shrinking World**

For most of human history, people were born and died within a small area. Who you knew looked like you, believed like you. Today not only are people from all the habitable continents know in the U.S., but someday you may find a job in another country, on another continent as well. Studying history allows us to better understand the perspective of people of different cultures & beliefs by studying how their ancestors past effected them.

**What innovations/technology/inventions have helped our world “shrink”?**

Air Travel, the Internet, Satellites, 24/7 News,

#### **#5 So We Can Think For Ourselves**

In George Orwell’s book 1984, he shows that history can be manipulated to control us. “Who controls the past controls the future. Who controls the present controls the past.”

**How can changing your view of the American Revolution (for example, George Washington, Thomas Jefferson, were only seeking to control the colonists and get rich), change your present?**

If the Founders started this country for bad reasons, you would question the Constitution as well.

**#6 & 7 (After Watching the Video, Other Than “It’s Fun!” What Were 2 Other Reasons Given to Why We Study History Not Mentioned Here)**

Answer Will Vary