**Doing World History**

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# Purpose

History may be defined as research into how cultures develop through time.

World history

* is more general than traditional history and emphasizes trends that go beyond cultural boundaries.
* stresses the interaction between societies.
* compares different patterns of development around the world.
* tends to be more superficial and general than local or national histories.
* often finds natural or human movements that affect many cultures, such as climatic developments, diseases, natural disasters or human movements like invasions and migrations. They could include dealing with new technologies and life styles.

To simplify and limit these nearly infinite possibilities, we will use five methods, which capture the essence of the world history approaches.

# Methods

* Big Picture a time line of the most important events of those under study, accompanied by a written explanation of their ultimate significance
* Diffusion the spread of natural elements, people, artifacts, ideas or other cultural creations from one civilization to others
* Syncretism mixing of elements from two or more cultures that result in something new
* Comparison the pointing out of similarities and differences between two civilizations in terms of their histories, institutions, cultural accomplishments and economies
* Common Phenomena natural or historical events and developments that two or more societies share. Examples could be climate, disease, natural disasters or invasions, shared technologies or other human developments. Basically, “What is shared?”

# Poster Guidelines

* 1. Read over the chapter. Select one of the “Doing World History” methods from above.
  2. In your own words write a Doing World History question on a poster within one of the methods above. This question should be high level, see Costa’s Levels of Questioning and MUST relate to the current chapter being read.
  3. If you chose Big Picture, do you offer a time line and an explanation of the ultimate significance of the selected events? Do you have too many dates and events to remember? Do the chosen events adequately reflect the most important points of the chapter?
  4. If you chose Diffusion, is the idea of something spreading explicitly stated in your question? Is this spreading process important to the themes of the chapter?
  5. If you chose Syncretism, is the idea of mixing cultural elements clearly stated in your question? Can you discern from your notes who borrowed from whom and with what results? Is the syncretism you mention important in understanding the events discussed in the chapter?
  6. If you chose Comparison, did you point out similarities and differences between the cultures you discuss? Did you offer significant comparisons, or are they merely superficial and obvious?
  7. If you chose Common Phenomena, are the items mentioned really shared by the two or more civilizations you discuss? In other words, be careful to point out what is shared.
  8. Did you go beyond merely repeating or rephrasing what is in the book? Remember, Doing World History means thinking and writing about the past.
  9. Finally, create a visual representation of that question that completely demonstrates ALL aspects of the question you are asking.