

(Please make a copy of this document for your assignment. Do not work on this original. Thank you)

**Level 1 History
Summer Assignment**

Welcome to Level 1 History at the Founders Academy! Before we begin a year full of historical investigation, problem solving, and critical thinking we need to understand *why* we even have a class dedicated to history, and why history is the cornerstone subject of the Founders Academy.

Assignment: Before school starts in September, please read the attached article and then respond to the question below in *one paragraph*. Your responses should be an example of your **best writing** and will be collected (and graded) during the first week of classes.

Response Prompt: “Why is it important to study history?”

Please email Miss Brown (m.brown@tfanh.org) with any questions! Enjoy your summer!

Why 21st-Century Students Should Study History

Apr 19, 2017 at 12:00 am ET By Alyssa Walker

The future has a past. All this talk of the future and what it holds should make us realize this one thing. Why would we turn our backs on it? We shouldn't—and we'll tell you why.

Learning about what happened in the past and why gives us insight into what can happen in the future. How? It can help us predict outcomes on current events, define our identities, give us a better understanding of different cultures, understand change, combat ignorance, open doors, and inform our work experiences. Let's take a closer look at the importance of studying history.

1. Understand Current Events

To figure out where we are going, we need to know where we came from. History is a “story about the past.” To understand what the future can look like, we need to look at stories from the past and understand their contexts. Case in point: the world's current geopolitical divides didn't happen overnight. They happened over time, through a series of large and small events. To understand how they happened, we need to look at all the historical events that shaped the world's divisions, so that we can attempt to shape positive outcomes. Historians determine how to tell the stories of the past to inform decisions of the future.



2. Define Identity

You are who you are—and history plays a role in that. How do families form? What shapes the community in which you live? Historical events can shape genealogy, the movement of families and large groups of people from one place to the other, the formation of communities, the formation of institutions, and even the formation of countries. Your family history partially defines who you are—what you value, why, and where you come from shape your interactions with the world.



3. Understand Different Cultures

Why is it important to understand other cultures? Empathy. The ability to see the world from a different perspective. Despite cultural differences, all people want essentially the same things you do. Yes—we know there are exceptions. Ignorance breeds fear and violence (see #5). Ignorance of how other cultures see the world breeds fear of other cultures. Understanding other cultures in historical context gives us the tools to understand how other cultures function—and how to break down barriers.



4. Understand Change

The butterfly effect. The domino effect. Call it what you will. Seemingly small events catalyze big ones—and there's always a pattern, especially if you examine history. What kinds of events precipitate war? What kind of events precipitate peace? Periods of innovation follow dry spells. Why? By looking at history, you can begin to understand how change happens in the world. Consider the First World War. Over 37 million people lost their lives because Archduke Ferdinand was assassinated. That's what started the conflict—but history shows us that even before Gavrilo Princip pulled the trigger, the world was in a tailspin over rapid, global imperialism. How does change happen? Pick one major historical event—and look at the events that precipitated it, big and small.



5. Combat Ignorance

Why is ignorance dangerous? See #3. If we don't know who we are (see #2), where we came from, how we got here, and where we're going, we have no hope for correcting prior, devastating mistakes. As George Santayana said, "Those who cannot remember the past are condemned to repeat it." By studying history, we can try not to repeat the same mistakes.

6. Inform Work Experiences

Did you know that the [five-day work week is a modern invention](#)? Or that collective, [secular holidays only emerged out of the English Reformation](#)? The world of work has a historical context, and so too is history a way to work. If history is your thing, you can become a professional historian. If it's not, you can use history in your workplace. Having a broad historical context for your chosen field can help you get a job—your demonstration of curiosity, research skills, and flexibility and adaptability all relate to your study of history and can only make you a better, brighter candidate in the world of work.



7. Open Doors

History can open doors to possibility. How? By inspiring us to be better people. Learn about one historical event—and questions will pop up. Dig deeper learn more. Learning more about the world around you, its people, its resources, and its history can only lead to a more informed life. And a more informed life leads to inspiration—and hopefully the desire to do good. Pick one thing you enjoy—and delve deep into its history. You might shock yourself and learn about things you had no idea even existed.

Broaden your perspective—and broaden your horizons—by studying history. You won't be any worse for wear. The world needs informed, thoughtful people like you who have a sense of who they are, where they're from, and where they're going. Delve into the past. You won't regret it.