

Why history is important?

[Profession](#), [Teacher](#)



It is true History was one of the classes that has been taught almost every year from elementary school and throughout all high school. The fact that history was one of the main courses during my education doesn't really imply that I know a lot about it. My memories of what we were taught during these years are in fact vague, not to say that I don't really remember anything from what our professors taught us. My clearest memory is the history teacher at my elementary school and his strange idea of teaching history. He told us that we don't even need the book that was in the curriculum. He used to come to class with a notebook full of his notes taken by various books of history. He dictated, we had to write, word by word. And word by word we had to memorize it for our exams. If we forgot something we lost points, if we put it in our own words it didn't count as right. What he read from his notes was the only accepted answer. I didn't understand then and I didn't really put much thought on it until now that I am writing about it, but the fact that we never really had to understand anything or relate events in any way is not much of an education on history. We memorized it for the exam and forgot about it the next day. He never really bothered to explain anything; all that was important to him were the good grades we got and his ranking as one of the most successful teachers. No one questioned his methods, but I even hold him responsible for my disastrous handwriting. Trying to keep up with him dictating at a speed of light I didn't have much time to think about what it was that that I was writing let alone my penmanship. As for my high school history class, all that I remember is the professor and the fact that I always got an A. So, having an A and not knowing much about the course surely doesn't imply that it was any more

different from the methods used in my elementary school. However, I don't want to put all the blame on the professors. I happened to meet people who went through the same education methods but left me spellbound by their knowledge on history. They liked history and liked to read about it and not just the books on the curriculum; they wanted to get information on the past. So, even though I like to read, and I read a lot, my knowledge on history is constrained on the history based fictional books mostly and some biographies of famous figures. Those were the only books that made the boring classroom history, into an interesting story, some stories I must say were breathtaking to me. "The Winter Palace" a book by Eva Stachniak and "Catherine the Great" by Robert Massie, are two of the books I would read over and over again. They both revolve around the life of the charismatic Empress of Russia- Catherine, one as a novel and the other as a biography. There are also a lot of other books I like that are based on historical facts, that also gave me a general knowledge on the evolution of events, but I can't say I am one of the people who know much about history much less deserve an A. So, I assume that partly, or maybe even mostly it is my fault and my "not so obvious" laziness that characterizes me from time to time that didn't allow me to have a decent knowledge on history. As to why it is or is not important to study history I often say I should only focus on the future; holding on to the past won't really get me anywhere. If I keep looking back, how am I supposed to walk forward? Yet, this doesn't always hold true. Sometimes, you need to take a look at your past mistakes in order for you to do good in the present and to make sure the same mistakes don't happen in the future. Or you need to take a look back just so you know what made you

the person you are today. The same philosophy may apply to history. History as a study of the past, gives us an insight on how societies are formed, how they behave and how much has changed during the centuries? What were the important events that shaped today's societies? What innovations made human life easier and better? And if they are told in an interesting way, I must admit History is beautiful.