

# How to make history education in school more fascinating and effective

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Its 3rd period, the longest period of the day.

Mrs. Scrrrom, the history teacher who seems “ a billion years old” gets up, giving a long lecture about women’s rights that should have excited you. Instead, you can only last 30 seconds before her monotone voice penetrates you, and you fall into a daze. For homework, you take notes from a boring old textbook that puts you to sleep before you ever read a word. Sounds familiar? Many students in the United States admit strongly disliking history at school, though much of our world’s history should enchant and excite students instead of boring them.

.. And the effect is clear. History is lowest performing subject in Unites States standardizing tests, with less than 25% of students reaching the proficient level, according to Alvin L. Smith, a history professor. Despite millions of dollars poured in to the education program the last five years, this number has not changed since the 2010.

According to a 2014 survey in a PBS article, only 25% of students did group work in history class, approx. 20% of students participated in basic debates and discussions and less than 10% had opportunities to expressive an opinion in writing. It is this same classes with such little critical thinking that is so disliked by students and so ineffective at preparing them for standardized testing. It is clear that we need reform how history is taught in public school. First of all, how is history taught at school? Often done through lectures and excessive notes, history is taught all in rote facts. Which person did what, in what date, where (etc.

) . Despite the main reason for history is to teach students how their world came to be and to learn from previous mistakes, dates and names are the primary concepts taught at school. According to Katie Lambert, the host of “stuff you missed in history class”, most history textbooks, filled with dates and facts, also contributes to the horrific experience. Even considerably exciting themes such as the roman empire are taught so monotone and flat, that even open-minded students dislike it. History is purely a list facts to be memorized before the test, and to exit the brain after, until it forced back in during the cramming before the final exam.

After that, it leaves the human mind forever. Yet, teachers, who are surely aware of the students attitude towards their class, do nothing. Which brings us to the next question. Why? Why is history taught the way it is? In my personal experience, there seems to be two facts poking out. First of all, schools hate controversy, and teach history with a goal to avoid controversial subjects at all costs, therefore teaching the facts in route to avoid debates.

As I recall all those notes I took and class, I also remember politely asking my teacher whether the United States ever regrets that decision or whether they should have started that war or taken that land. The most interesting answer I ever got was “ Yes, it was necessary” , surely not an answer good enough to cover a speck of these topics, many of them very controversial . This leads to the next reason. “ History books are written by the winners , a famous quote also applies to the U. S. U.

U.S. history has often been glorified to put the United States in a rather good light, and as a result, does not explore other options and effects of the decisions the U. S. made. In my own experience, in the last six years of history in class, I have never had the opportunity to debate on whether a United States policy was the right thing to do. With the exception of slavery, none of my teachers or textbooks ever implied that it is possible that the United States should not have made a certain decision.

These two reasons are certainly plausible. However, there may even be a simpler reason. It would be so much easier for teachers to read off of a textbook, making students take notes, and giving them scantron tests on all those dates, than to make history....

fun. History simulations, class debates, and skits are much more difficult to prepare than simple notes. Maybe history is the way it is because that's just the easiest way. But by doing this, teachers are also pushing students away from history for the rest of their lives..

. as long as they don't get a competent history teacher before college. Lastly, what can we do to make history more interesting? According to David Cutler, a journalist in *The Atlantic*, a teacher, tying past historical events to contemporary issues through debates and discussions, has been proven to change students' views on history. After all, one of students' biggest complaints with the subject is "that it has nothing to do with me!" Another good way to teach history is to focus on the "why?" rather than the "what." Since the dreaded names and dates are one of the biggest components to modern history education, the reasons and explanation behind these events are often

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pushed aside. However, these reasons are often the more important part of history, since it connects with modern life.

Of course, some parts of history has to be memorized. Important events and names need to be remembered but they don't have to be done through long lectures and notes. According to Paul Americh, skits and interactive projects can be a more engaging way to get facts in your head. Lastly, personalized history simulation, such as creating your own ideal government, can help students put themselves in other people's shoes, while still learning. Lastly, teaching history as a fascination, intricate world.

In my own experience, I've read so many fascinating books and watched tv shows that have gotten me very interested in the story. The difference? The books and stories present the history as an interesting story rather than a list of facts to be memorized. And I find that this method actually lets me memorize the facts weaved in through the story. Clearly, the evidence is overwhelming that our history curriculum needs reform. But the best part is that there is plenty of evidence and research showing that history can be fun, with a bit of effort on the teacher's part, as well as the students'. Lets hope that one day, history will be an exciting class filled with revolutions and wars, art and culture.

A class that students look forward to every day.