

# "untouchables" by thomas I. friedman

[Economics](#), [Globalization](#)



In "Untouchables", an excerpt from the book "The World is Flat: A Brief History of the Twenty-First Century" by Thomas L. Friedman, discusses how the world is globalizing into three types of skills which allow the countries, companies, and individuals to survive in today's middle class era as compared to the last fifty years. By doing this, Friedman introduces that the Earth over time is actually becoming flatter and not round due to the advancements in technology and the outsourcing of jobs. Friedman stresses, "The key to thrive in today's globalization, " you must find the key factor in a flat world to make you "untouchable," which forces the individuals to reinvent themselves and change their ways. This factor relates to the individuals excelling at their jobs. They need to stand out competitively with fellow American's along with many other countries who will work for less in today's workforce. According to Vivek Paul, the President of Wipro (which is a global technology company) "globalization began in the industries and has now evolved within individuals at those industries." Paul goes on to state "I am working with someone in India... buying from someone in China...and selling to someone in England." Within many global industries, people have to contribute their skills in such a way that they set themselves apart from their competition. One key element to stay competitive in their scope of work is self motivation. If the individual cannot stay self motivated and passionate in their work, they will be replaced eventually with someone who becomes more engaged in that job. Also you must be able to work outside the box and create unique skills that will set you apart from fellow American's and people in countries such as India or China. In "The New Middle" Friedman discusses how many companies are not making minor

changes to their cooperation but major changes so they can be competitive in today's " flat world" globalization. Friedman goes on about how important it is for the individual to concentrate on adapting to the workforce and strengthening your skills to be able to succeed. Friedman stated " the key to being untouchable, are people whose jobs cannot be outsourced, digitized, or automated. " In order for this to work for the American workforce, Friedman believes that people will fall into three major categories if they want to be " untouchable. " The first category Friedman talks about is " special or specialized" people who are extremely skilled in their profession and have absolutely no way of being replaced or outsourced in any type of matter. With that type of status, these " untouchables" can ask and receive almost any type of wage within reason. Friedman lists examples such as Professional Athletes (Michael Jordan), Professional Artists and Musicians (Madonna and Elton John), your brain surgeon, authors (J. K. Rowling) and the top cancer researcher at the National Institute of Health. The second category Friedman talks about is people who are " localized or anchored. " These people come from all types of jobs ranging from low to high end jobs. They are considered " untouchable" because for them to be successful in their job, they must rely on resources in their area and local information from customers and clients. Due to their daily contact within their communities, these types of jobs will not be outsourced because companies cannot function correctly without the individual's daily use of their local knowledge and local resources. Friedman lists several examples of jobs that fall into this category, such as waitresses, repairmen, electricians and divorce lawyers. The third and broadest category Friedman talks about is the " old middle. "

He lists jobs such as assembly line work and data entry as jobs affected in this category. Here Friedman expresses how the majority of the middle class people from the " old" era are being " flattened". Most of these jobs that were once secure and much sought after due to their safety structure within the workforce are now becoming interchangeable due to new technologies and advances in the workforce. Friedman argues that this category is especially threatened due to their incapability to improvise adapt and overcome the rapid change within today's generation. Friedman goes on that say that up until recent years, this " old" era was considered the backbone to our economy. Nevertheless, within today's flatter world where globalization is in high demand, these three categories Friedman talks about " special or specialized, " " localized" and " anchored, " and " old middle" represent where American is at today, not fifty years ago. In today's era, every single job with the potential to be automated, digitized or outsourced eventually will be. People must learn to accept these changes and move forward so they don't become stagnate and mediocre. If not, their job will be replaced with technology or outsourced overseas and they won't be able to move forward in today's modern technological society. Just as Friedman stated, " Today's world there is no such thing as an American Job...it's just a job and that job will go to the best, smartest, most productive, or cheapest worker- wherever he or she resides. " Works Cited Behrens, Laurence, and Rosen, Leonard J. Writing and Reading Across the Curriculum, 11th Edition. Longman: Boston, 2011. Print