

III. Connecting Ancient History and the World We Live In

A. You Are Here!

1. We study the ancient past because of “where” and “when” we are.
2. The United States of America is a republic that most people think of as a democracy (See Section IV below for definitions). None of this was invented by Americans. It was learned from the ancients!

B. The Anchor Facts of Ancient History

1. Living in America and in an *America-centric world* means that we should study ancient history to learn more about how America became a republic after its birth on the **4th of July, 1776**. This is the first “anchor fact” of ancient history (a fact that connects us here in the present to the past).
2. The next most important fact that connects us to the ancient past is the discovery of America by Columbus in **1492**. Without this discovery, no Europeans would have come to America, or been in America in 1776 to create a new country. There was no ancient history in the Americas, because the primitive natives knew nothing of it. Only Europeans did.
3. The Europeans connects us to the ancient world because they destroyed it and took over! They caused the fall of the Roman Empire in **476 AD**, which led to *the Dark Ages*, and, after that *the Renaissance* (rebirth) of Greek & Roman ideas, the rise of the modern world we live in.
4. Our connection to the ancient past importantly involves the religion of Christianity. The very calendar that we use to mark events today and in ancient times revolves around the birth of Jesus Christ. Events that happened before he was born are marked “BC” on the calendar, which means “Before Christ.” Events that come after are marked “AD,” which means “Anno Domini” (a Latin expression that means “in the year of our Lord”). Jesus was born **c.4 BC**.
5. Using the Christian calendar is what allows us to understand what it means to say that the Founding Fathers of the United States created a republic after the example of the first republic, the Roman Republic of **c.509 BC**. They were also interested in the democracy of ancient Athens (in Greece) from **c.508 BC**.
6. Our final connection to the ancient world is the event that marks where ancient history begins. This tells us how big or long ancient history is. Ancient history begins **c.3000 BC** in ancient Egypt. In that year, an Egyptian “pharaoh” (king) unified the two halves of Egypt, upper and lower Egypt together for the first time. We know this because the Egyptians kept records using their special form of writing, and those records allow us to be connected to this event even though it happened over 5000 years ago!