

EUROPEAN HISTORY: WHY AND HOW

I. Why European History Matters

A. What is history?

1. The normal view of history is that it is “the study of the past.” That’s why most people don’t care about it. *We don’t live in the past!*
2. In *History At Our House* we study the past *in order to understand the world we live in.* History shows us how the world came to be the way that it *is*.

B. What about Europe?

1. If we want to study the past in order to understand the world we live in, what parts of it should we study?
2. Most Americans would expect to focus on *American* history, but we are also “interconnected” with the rest of the world (“Interconnected” means connected in many ways.)
3. Many Americans drive cars from Japan, Korea, and Germany. We eat bananas from Costa Rica and drink coffee from Africa. We often eat out in Mexican, Greek, or Italian restaurants. Most of the things we buy at Walmart are “Made in China.” Our extended families are almost certainly spread among multiple countries. We communicate with each other globally using cell phones and the Internet. We can travel to any part of the world in a day. America is also the “world police power” fighting terrorism around the world. To understand such a complicated world, we need more than American history.
4. But what part does Europe play in it? Why is it important *today*?
 - a) European languages are spoken throughout the Americas and the world—especially English, French, Spanish, and Portuguese, because of the “Age of Discovery.”
 - b) European ideas of government have also been used in every government in the world. (India is a democracy because of European influence. China is communist because of European influence, etc.)
 - c) Europeans have invented a new form of government called “*supranationalism*,” which will play an important role in shaping our future.