


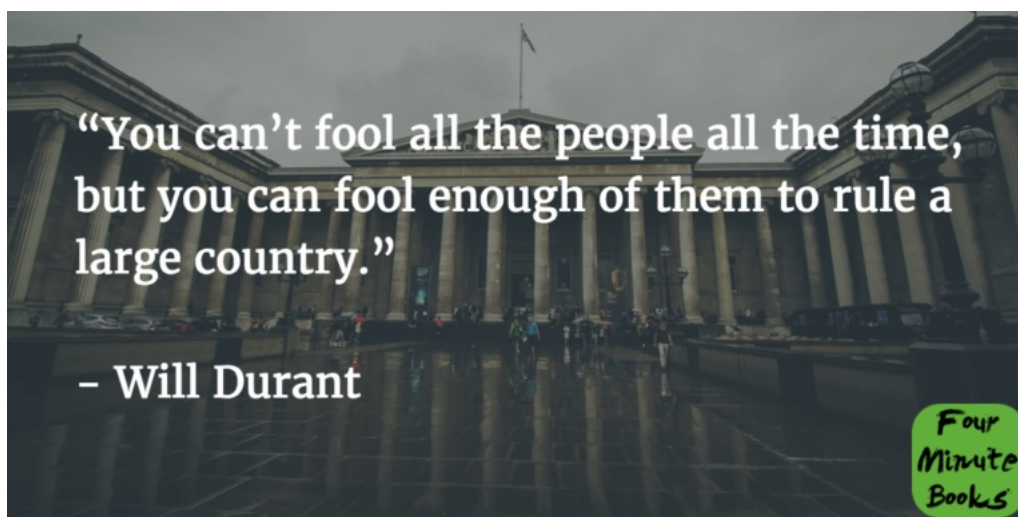
The Lessons Of History Summary

 fourminutebooks.com/the-lessons-of-history-summary

1-Sentence-Summary: *The Lessons Of History describes recurring themes and trends throughout 5,000 years of human history, viewed through the lenses of 12 different fields, aimed at explaining the present, the future, human nature and the inner workings of states.*

Read in: 4 minutes

Favorite quote from the author:



I've always wondered why *The Lessons Of History* is on top of Tai Lopez's book list. Now I know why this must be one of the must underrated books of all time. It baffles me to see that a book like this has just over 250 reviews on Amazon, while a book full of Kim Kardashian's selfie pictures has over 1,000.

Will Durant was one of the most celebrated historians in American history, having published dozens of books on a great variety of historic topics in his lifetime, some of them together with his wife Ariel.

His most notable work is *The Story of Civilization*, an eleven volume series covering the history of mankind all the way from the Persian empire until Napoleon's exile to St. Helena. In this book, the couple reflects on the lessons they've learned from examining all of human history, viewed from various perspectives, like geography, war, biology, economics, religion, morals and the human character.

There's a lot to be learned from 5,000 years of history, but these 3 lessons have struck me in particular:

1. Humans are unequal by nature, fighting that would mean giving up freedom.
2. The evolution of humans was a social one, not a biological one.
3. War is a more natural state than peace.

Are you ready to add the lessons of history to your skill set for maneuvering the world? Let's learn from one of the greatest minds of our time!

Lesson 1: Equality comes at the cost of freedom, because humans are unequal by nature.

Competition is something that's hardwired into our genes. Hunting, fighting, even killing was once the key to our survival, so it made sense for our genes to program us for it. Social cooperation only developed because it at some point became an even bigger advantage for surviving, and to this day, humans tend to only cooperate because it gives them a competitive edge, whether that's in units of families, communities, companies or nations.

Just yesterday we learned that trying to bend humans into averages is useless, because it's precisely when we embrace our uniqueness and individuality that we thrive.

Based on genetics alone, we are all fundamentally different from the moment we're born, and just like we can't become an exact copy of another person, no matter how much we train our bodies and brains, it does us no good to push equalities within societies to an extreme.

The more complex communities get, the more specialization they require, so **the only way to keep up equality is to restrict human freedom**. That's why socialist systems rarely work, because only when you allow power, wealth and influence to be distributed unequally do you create enough freedom for an economy or nation to flourish and progress.

Lesson 2: Human evolution has been social, not biological, until this point.

Can you imagine living in the Middle Ages? You probably only have a very vague idea of what that'd be like, right? However, Will Durant says human nature hasn't changed all that much. Come to think of it, most of our evolution has been social, not biological.

We still have the same basic desires to sleep, eat and reproduce, and if you took someone out of Ancient Greece and placed them in 2016, they could still survive just fine. The huge difference in their behavior would only be a cultural one.

What has changed tremendously in the past 5,000 years are economics, politics, technology and morals, but since all these things aren't directly linked to our biology, **you could bring a baby from Ancient Rome to 2016 and it'd grow up like a normal person**.

These cultural changes are a result of trial and error. Since the dawn of mankind, people have put forward ideas in various forms, some of which have sunk into the hearts of millions of people (like Christian religion or Facebook), while others have been discarded (like Napoleon's vision of a French empire or the Nazi regime).

However, we're on the verge of upgrading our biology for the first time ever, as we might soon fuse with machines that greatly extend our biological powers.

Lesson 3: War is the natural state of the world, so it's unlikely we'll ever see world peace.

Since competition is such an integral part of humans, it naturally follows that war is also a common state of mankind. This is something that's not obvious, and you might not want to hear it, but it's true. Throughout history, earth has been free of war of any kind less than 10% of the time.

States are nothing but aggregates of individuals, which means they also behave like people. However, while nowadays food, land and shelter are taken care of for most individuals by their country, the need for interpersonal battles has gone down a lot. **States also have these needs for survival, but none of the superior protection.** So when a state runs out of oil, land or food, it's natural next move is to go to war with another state to battle for these resources.

The only reason states unite is to fight off even bigger threats, which rarely happens. It's not war that's weird, peace is what's unnatural and that's why it's so hard to keep. **This also makes world peace unlikely, because all countries of the world would have to unite against a common enemy for this to happen.** Unless aliens try to invade earth and we get some version of Independence Day, we'll have to accept that there'll always some fighting in the world.

The Lessons Of History Review

Every time I find a great book about history, biology, or any other school subject, that perfectly explains many things that should be part of general education, I get a little mad. Why didn't we learn *this* in school? Better late than never though. *The Lessons Of History* is an absolute must-read.

[Read full summary on Blinkist >>](#)

[Free Preview >>](#)

[Learn more about the author >>](#)

What else can you learn from the blinks?

- Why geography used to be the biggest influence on civilization
- How to clearly see that differentiating between races is stupid
- The three changes our moral code underwent throughout history
- Why the Catholic church still has its place
- When a redistribution of wealth most occur, according to history
- The only way socialism can work

- Why democracy is the best form of government and what its problems are
- How civilizations decay
- Why there will always be progress throughout history

Who would I recommend The Lessons Of History summary to?

The 16 year old student, who's bored out of her mind in history class, the 42 year old sci-fi nerd, who loves movies like Terminator and I Robot, and anyone who dreams of world peace.