



Why Study History?

Sitting in history class, you may have wondered why you were made to study the past. Then, as you became older, history became more relevant. Teachers told us we study the past so that we will not repeat the same mistakes or so that we can know our history. Those are true statements, but they fail to explain the whole value of studying history.

The study of history includes all occupations from archaeology to tourism. History develops important skills in leadership and task-solving. Employers look to their employees for skills in communication, problem solving, initiative, analyzing data, attention to details, planning, organization and the ability to work as a team. All of these skills are taught in the study of history.

Have you ever wondered who came up with the safe way to eat lobster? Was there a researcher sitting on a rock watching people eating lobster and taking notes to write a paper on the best way to prepare lobster that wouldn't end one's life? Or was it, more likely, passed to others by word of mouth in the same way Homer passed on the story of Troy to the world in the spoken word, called oral history today?

As society became more developed, the written word became the standard of communicating the past to later generations. Archaeologists, anthologists and historians all used the written words of the past to come to a better understanding of the past.

The research skills learned in the study of history provide an understanding of how to work for a common goal. Here is a list of some of the occupations that the study of history makes one more accomplished in: analyst, archivist, conservator, curator, geographer, lawyer, librarian, logistician, journalist, paralegal, researcher and teacher.

History is more than connecting the past to the present. It is the development of critical skills in life today. When we forget that history is part of the present and not just the past, it is diminished in value. It is the connections and not the names, dates and events to be remembered.

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