

7th Grade/World History Topic Brainstorm

Note: Please make sure that there are enough accessible sources for students to use beyond a textbook. Think about translated documents, lexile level, and availability.

Fall of Rome & Byzantine Empire

Revolution – Roman Split

In 285 CE, Emperor Diocletian split the Roman Empire into Eastern and Western halves, forever changing political power in Europe.

Reaction – Constantinople Sieges

How did the Byzantine Empire respond to external threats after Rome's collapse?

Between the 7th and 11th centuries, the Byzantine Empire defended Constantinople against repeated Islamic sieges.

Reform – Justinian's Code

How did Justinian's Code preserve Roman traditions while reforming laws for new times?

In the 6th century CE, Emperor Justinian codified Roman laws into a unified legal system.

Islamic World

Revolution – Hijra

Why was the Hijra a revolutionary moment in the history of Islam?

In 622 CE, Muhammad and his followers migrated to Medina, forming the first Muslim community.

Reaction – Crusades

How did the Crusades reflect Europe's reaction to Islamic power?

From 1095 to the 1200s, Christian knights fought to reclaim Jerusalem.

Reform – House of Wisdom

How did Islamic scholars reform knowledge and learning for future civilizations?

In the 9th century, Baghdad scholars preserved and translated Greek and Roman texts.

Sub-Saharan Africa

Revolution – Mansa Musa

How did Mansa Musa's pilgrimage revolutionize Mali's global reputation?

In 1324, Mansa Musa's journey to Mecca displayed Mali's immense wealth.

Reaction – Songhai Rise

Why did Songhai rise as Mali's power declined?

In the 1400s, the Songhai Empire replaced Mali as the leading West African kingdom.

7th Grade/World History Topic Brainstorm

Reform – Timbuktu Schools

How did Timbuktu's universities reform education in West Africa?

By the 15th century, Timbuktu was a center of Islamic learning.

China

Revolution – Gunpowder

How did gunpowder change warfare in China and beyond?

Invented in 9th-century China, gunpowder transformed military technology.

Reaction – Mongol Rule

How did Chinese society react to and adapt under Mongol rule?

In the 1200s, the Yuan dynasty ruled China after Mongol conquests.

Reform – Civil Exams

Why did the Tang and Song dynasties reform the civil service system?

Tang and Song reforms emphasized Confucian learning to build a merit-based bureaucracy.

Japan

Revolution – Shogunate

How did the rise of shoguns revolutionize Japanese politics?

Beginning in 1192 CE, shoguns became Japan's real rulers.

Reaction – Bushido

Why did the samurai develop the code of bushido?

Samurai created bushido as a moral code during feudal conflicts.

Reform – Sakoku

How did Tokugawa reforms isolate Japan, and why did they enforce this policy?

In the 1600s, Tokugawa shoguns cut Japan off from most foreign contact.

Medieval Europe

Revolution – Norman Conquest

How did the Norman invasion revolutionize English culture and government?

In 1066, William the Conqueror took control of England.

Reaction – Peasant Revolts

Why did the Black Death spark revolts among peasants?

In the 14th century, peasants rose up demanding fairer treatment.

Reform – Magna Carta

How did the Magna Carta reform the relationship between monarchs and nobles?

In 1215, King John was forced to limit royal authority.

7th Grade/World History Topic Brainstorm

The Renaissance

Revolution – Printing Press

How did the printing press revolutionize the spread of knowledge?

Around 1450, Gutenberg's press made books more accessible.

Reaction – Inquisition

Why did the Catholic Church react strongly against new ideas?

Church authorities investigated and punished heresy during the 15th–16th centuries.

Reform – Perspective Art

How did Renaissance artists reform art through new techniques?

Artists like Leonardo and Michelangelo introduced realism and perspective.

The Reformation

Revolution – 95 Theses

Why were Luther's 95 Theses revolutionary for Christianity?

In 1517, Martin Luther protested indulgences in Germany.

Reaction – Counter-Reformation

How did the Catholic Church respond to the Protestant challenge?

The Council of Trent (1545–1563) reformed practices and reaffirmed teachings.

Reform – Church of England

How did Henry VIII reform religion and politics in England?

In the 1530s, Henry VIII founded the Anglican Church.

The Scientific Revolution

Revolution – Heliocentrism

How did Copernicus's theory revolutionize ideas about the universe?

In 1543, Copernicus proposed the sun-centered solar system.

Reaction – Galileo Trial

Why did the Catholic Church put Galileo on trial?

In 1633, Galileo was condemned for supporting heliocentrism.

Reform – Newton's Laws

How did Newton's discoveries reform scientific understanding?

In the late 1600s, Isaac Newton described gravity and motion.

Note: The following topic ideas are taken from broader world history.

Enlightenment & Early Revolutions

- **John Locke and Social Contract (1680–1700s)**
 - Overview: In the late 1600s, English philosopher John Locke argued that governments exist by consent of the governed and must protect natural rights.
 - Guiding Question: *How did Locke's ideas about social contracts inspire later revolutions and reforms?*
 - **English Bill of Rights (1689)**
 - Overview: After the Glorious Revolution, Parliament passed the English Bill of Rights, limiting the monarchy and protecting individual liberties.
 - Guiding Question: *Why was the English Bill of Rights a turning point in limiting royal power?*
-

Industrial & 19th-Century Europe

- **Luddite Revolt in England (1812)**
 - Overview: In early 19th-century England, textile workers known as Luddites destroyed machinery they feared threatened their jobs.
 - Guiding Question: *Why did industrial workers rebel against new technologies during the Industrial Revolution?*
- **Decembrist Revolt of 1825**
 - Overview: In Russia, army officers led the Decembrist Revolt against Tsar Nicholas I, demanding constitutional reform.
 - Guiding Question: *How did the Decembrist Revolt reveal growing tensions between autocracy and reform in Russia?*
- **Reform Act of 1832 (Britain)**

7th Grade/World History Topic Brainstorm

- *Overview:* Parliament's Reform Act of 1832 expanded voting rights to more men in Britain, shifting political power from elites.
 - *Guiding Question:* How did the Reform Act of 1832 change representation and democracy in Britain?
 - **Revolutions of 1848 (France and Germany)**
 - *Overview:* Across Europe, uprisings in 1848 demanded liberal reforms, workers' rights, and national independence, especially in France and Germany.
 - *Guiding Question:* Why did so many revolutionary movements erupt across Europe in 1848, and what reforms followed?
-

Early 20th Century

- **Russian Revolution of 1905**
 - *Overview:* After defeat in the Russo-Japanese War, protests in Russia forced Tsar Nicholas II to promise reforms through the Duma (parliament).
 - *Guiding Question:* How did the Revolution of 1905 challenge tsarist power in Russia?
- **Easter Rising in Dublin (1916)**
 - *Overview:* Irish nationalists launched the Easter Rising against British rule during World War I, sparking a push for independence.
 - *Guiding Question:* Why did Irish rebels stage the Easter Rising in 1916, and how did it influence Irish independence?
- **October/Bolshevik Revolution (1917)**
 - *Overview:* Led by Lenin, the Bolsheviks seized power in Russia in 1917, overthrowing the provisional government.

7th Grade/World History Topic Brainstorm

- *Guiding Question: How did the Bolshevik Revolution transform Russia into the first communist state?*
 - **Béla Kun and the Hungarian Communist Uprising (1919)**
 - Overview: In 1919, Béla Kun briefly established a Soviet-style government in Hungary before it was crushed by foreign and local opposition.
 - *Guiding Question: Why did Béla Kun's communist uprising in Hungary fail so quickly?*
 - **Irish War of Independence (1919–1921)**
 - Overview: Irish revolutionaries fought a guerrilla war against Britain, leading to the creation of the Irish Free State.
 - *Guiding Question: How did the Irish War of Independence succeed in ending British rule in most of Ireland?*
 - **Reforms of the Weimar Republic (1919)**
 - Overview: After World War I, Germany's Weimar Republic introduced democratic reforms, women's suffrage, and social welfare programs.
 - *Guiding Question: How did the Weimar Republic attempt to reform German society after World War I?*
-

Interwar & World War II

- **Spanish Civil War – Francisco Franco (1936–1939)**
 - Overview: From 1936 to 1939, Francisco Franco's fascists fought against leftist forces in Spain, ultimately establishing a dictatorship.
 - *Guiding Question: How did the Spanish Civil War reflect broader struggles between democracy and dictatorship in Europe?*
- **Kristallnacht (1938)**

7th Grade/World History Topic Brainstorm

- *Overview:* On November 9–10, 1938, Nazi-led mobs attacked Jewish homes, businesses, and synagogues across Germany in a violent pogrom.
 - *Guiding Question:* How did Kristallnacht mark a turning point in Nazi persecution of Jews?
 - **Warsaw Ghetto Uprising (1943)**
 - *Overview:* In 1943, Jewish resistance fighters in Warsaw rose up against Nazi forces, holding out for weeks before being crushed.
 - *Guiding Question:* Why was the Warsaw Ghetto Uprising a symbol of resistance during the Holocaust?
 - **Invasion of Normandy (1944)**
 - *Overview:* On June 6, 1944 (D-Day), Allied forces invaded Nazi-occupied France, opening a western front in World War II.
 - *Guiding Question:* How did the Normandy invasion change the course of World War II in Europe?
-

Cold War Era

- **Hungarian Revolution of 1956**
 - *Overview:* Hungarians revolted against Soviet control, but the uprising was brutally suppressed by Soviet tanks.
 - *Guiding Question:* Why did the Soviet Union crush the Hungarian Revolution of 1956, and what did it show about the Cold War?
- **Prague Spring of 1968**
 - *Overview:* Czechoslovak leader Alexander Dubček introduced reforms for “socialism with a human face” before Soviet troops invaded.
 - *Guiding Question:* How did the Prague Spring show the limits of

reform under Soviet rule?

- **Student Revolts of Paris ('May 68')**

- Overview: In May 1968, French students and workers protested against capitalism, consumerism, and authority, sparking nationwide strikes.
- *Guiding Question: Why did students and workers in France revolt in May 1968, and what reforms resulted?*

- **Gorbachev's Reforms (1980s)**

- Overview: In the 1980s, Soviet leader Mikhail Gorbachev introduced perestroika (economic reform) and glasnost (openness), weakening communist control.
 - *Guiding Question: How did Gorbachev's reforms contribute to the collapse of the Soviet Union?*
-

Post-Cold War

- **Yugoslav Civil Wars (1991–1995)**

- Overview: As Yugoslavia broke apart in the 1990s, violent ethnic conflicts erupted, including wars in Bosnia and Croatia.
 - *Guiding Question: Why did the breakup of Yugoslavia lead to civil wars, and how did the world respond?*
-

Late 19th–Early 20th Century

- **Philippine Revolution / Tagalog War (1896)**

- Overview: In 1896, Filipino revolutionaries led by the Katipunan rose against Spanish colonial rule, beginning the Philippine struggle for independence.

7th Grade/World History Topic Brainstorm

- *Guiding Question: How did the Philippine Revolution challenge Spanish colonial power in Asia?*

- **Chinese Revolution of 1911**

- Overview: In 1911, Sun Yat-sen and revolutionaries overthrew the Qing dynasty, ending imperial rule in China.
 - *Guiding Question: Why did the 1911 Revolution mark a turning point in Chinese history?*
-

Indian Independence Movements

- **Non-Cooperation Movement and Gandhi (1920s)**

- Overview: Led by Mahatma Gandhi in the 1920s, Indians boycotted British goods, schools, and titles to demand self-rule.
- *Guiding Question: How did Gandhi's Non-Cooperation Movement use peaceful resistance against British authority?*

- **Salt March (1930)**

- Overview: In 1930, Gandhi led a 240-mile march to the sea to protest British salt taxes, sparking global attention.
 - *Guiding Question: Why did Gandhi's Salt March become a symbol of resistance to British rule?*
-

Revolutions & Conflicts in Asia

- **Thai Revolution of 1932**

- Overview: In 1932, a group of military and civilian leaders in Siam (Thailand) staged a bloodless coup that ended absolute monarchy.
- *Guiding Question: How did the 1932 revolution transform*

Thailand's monarchy into a constitutional system?

- **Ho Chi Minh and Vietnam's Struggle for Independence (1940s)**

- Overview: In the 1940s, Ho Chi Minh and the Viet Minh fought French colonial rule, beginning Vietnam's independence movement.
- *Guiding Question: How did Ho Chi Minh lead Vietnam's struggle against foreign powers?*

- **Indo-Pakistani Conflict (1947–1971)**

- Overview: After the partition of British India in 1947, India and Pakistan fought wars over Kashmir and national identity.
- *Guiding Question: Why did partition lead to conflict between India and Pakistan, and how did it shape South Asia?*

- **Tibetan Uprising (1959)**

- Overview: In 1959, Tibetans revolted against Chinese rule, leading the Dalai Lama to flee into exile in India.
- *Guiding Question: How did the Tibetan Uprising challenge Chinese control and reshape Tibet's future?*

China: Revolution & Reform

- **Mao and the Cultural Revolution (1960s)**

- Overview: Beginning in 1966, Mao Zedong's Cultural Revolution sought to enforce communist ideology by purging perceived enemies and intellectuals.
- *Guiding Question: Why did Mao launch the Cultural Revolution, and how did it transform Chinese society?*

- **Deng Xiaoping's Economic Reforms (1980s)**

- Overview: In the 1980s, Deng Xiaoping introduced

market-oriented reforms in communist China, modernizing its economy.

- *Guiding Question: How did Deng Xiaoping's reforms change China's role in the world?*

Late 20th-Century People's Movements

- **People Power Revolution in the Philippines (1983–1986)**

- Overview: In the mid-1980s, millions of Filipinos protested peacefully against Ferdinand Marcos, leading to the restoration of democracy.
- *Guiding Question: How did the People Power Revolution succeed in toppling a dictatorship?*

- **Tiananmen Square Protests (1989)**

- Overview: In 1989, Chinese students gathered in Tiananmen Square to demand democracy, before the government violently suppressed the movement.
- *Guiding Question: Why did Chinese students protest in 1989, and how did the government's reaction shape global views of China?*

19th Century Imperialism

- **Scramble for Africa (19th century)**

- Overview: During the late 1800s, European powers divided nearly all of Africa at the Berlin Conference (1884–1885), ignoring existing borders and cultures.
 - *Guiding Question: How did the Scramble for Africa revolutionize the political and social map of the continent?*
-

Post-Colonial Africa

- **Hutu vs. Tutsi – Rise of Rwandan Genocide (1959)**

- *Overview:* In 1959, tensions between Hutus and Tutsis erupted in Rwanda, laying the groundwork for ethnic violence that would culminate in the 1994 genocide.
- *Guiding Question:* Why did ethnic divisions between Hutus and Tutsis intensify after independence?

- **The Congo Crisis (1960–1966)**

- *Overview:* After independence in 1960, the Congo faced political chaos, foreign intervention, and civil war that destabilized the new nation.
- *Guiding Question:* How did the Congo Crisis reveal the challenges of decolonization in Africa?

- **Angola War for Independence (1961–1975)**

- *Overview:* From 1961 to 1975, Angolan nationalist movements fought a long guerrilla war against Portuguese colonial rule, eventually winning independence.
- *Guiding Question:* How did Angola's independence struggle reflect wider African resistance to European empires?

Modern Struggles for Equality

- **South Africa – Apartheid (1948–1990s)**

- *Overview:* From 1948 until the early 1990s, South Africa's apartheid system enforced strict racial segregation until dismantled through protests and reforms.
- *Guiding Question:* How did South Africans and the world challenge apartheid and achieve reform?

Latin America & Caribbean: Revolution, Reaction, Reform

Independence Movements (18th–19th c.)

- **Haitian Revolution (1791–1804)**

- Overview: Enslaved Africans in Saint-Domingue rose up against French colonial rule, creating the first free Black republic in 1804.
- *Guiding Question: How did the Haitian Revolution inspire movements for freedom across the Americas?*

- **Hidalgo and the Mexican Revolt against Spain (1810)**

- Overview: Father Miguel Hidalgo launched Mexico's revolt against Spanish rule with his famous "Grito de Dolores" in 1810.
- *Guiding Question: Why did Hidalgo's call for independence ignite the Mexican Revolution?*

- **Mexican Revolution of 1810**

- Overview: Sparked by Hidalgo and later leaders like José María Morelos, Mexicans fought for independence from Spain until 1821.
- *Guiding Question: How did the early Mexican Revolution evolve under different leaders?*

- **José de San Martín and the Liberation of Chile (1810–1826)**

- Overview: Argentine general José de San Martín led campaigns from 1810 to 1826 that liberated Chile and parts of South America from Spain.
- *Guiding Question: How did José de San Martín's leadership shape South America's independence struggles?*

Reform & Civil Wars (19th c.)

- **Great Reforms of Benito Juárez (1840s–1850s)**

- Overview: Mexican leader Benito Juárez introduced liberal reforms reducing church and military power in the mid-19th century.
- *Guiding Question: Why were Juárez's reforms seen as revolutionary in Mexican politics and society?*

- **War of Reform in Mexico (1857–1861)**

- Overview: Mexico fought a civil war between liberals and conservatives over Juárez's reforms, weakening the country before French intervention.
 - *Guiding Question: How did the War of Reform reflect divisions between tradition and change in Mexico?*
-

Early 20th Century Upheavals

- **Ateneo de la Juventud (1910)**

- Overview: A group of young Mexican intellectuals in 1910 criticized dictatorship and promoted democratic and cultural renewal.
- *Guiding Question: How did the Ateneo de la Juventud help inspire revolutionary ideas in Mexico?*

- **Cristero War (1926–1929)**

- Overview: Mexican Catholics launched a violent rebellion against government restrictions on the church in the late 1920s.
- *Guiding Question: Why did the Cristero War erupt, and how did it shape church-state relations in Mexico?*

- **Sandino in Nicaragua (1927–1933)**

- Overview: Augusto César Sandino led a guerrilla war against U.S. occupation in Nicaragua, becoming a symbol of resistance.

7th Grade/World History Topic Brainstorm

- *Guiding Question: How did Sandino's rebellion challenge foreign influence in Nicaragua?*
 - **Banana Massacre (1928)**
 - Overview: In Colombia in 1928, government troops killed striking banana plantation workers demanding better labor rights.
 - *Guiding Question: How did the Banana Massacre expose tensions between labor, corporations, and governments?*
-

Interwar & Mid-20th Century Revolutions

- **Brazilian Revolution of 1930 – Getúlio Vargas**
 - Overview: In 1930, Getúlio Vargas seized power in Brazil, introducing nationalist and authoritarian reforms.
 - *Guiding Question: How did Vargas's rise to power reshape Brazilian politics and economy?*
- **Bolivian Civil War – David Toro (1930s)**
 - Overview: In the 1930s, David Toro's regime in Bolivia pursued nationalist reforms amid political turmoil and civil war.
 - *Guiding Question: How did civil war and reform under David Toro reshape Bolivia in the 1930s?*
- **1948 Costa Rican Civil War**
 - Overview: In 1948, Costa Rica's brief but bloody civil war ended in abolition of the military and democratic reforms.
 - *Guiding Question: Why did Costa Rica's civil war lead to long-lasting democratic change?*
- **Puerto Rican Revolution (1950)**
 - Overview: In 1950, Puerto Rican nationalists launched uprisings against U.S. rule, though the movement was quickly suppressed.

7th Grade/World History Topic Brainstorm

- *Guiding Question: How did the 1950 uprisings reflect Puerto Rico's struggle for independence?*

- **Cuban Revolution (1895 and 1959)**

- Overview: Cubans fought Spain in 1895 for independence, then in 1959 Fidel Castro and revolutionaries overthrew dictator Batista.
 - *Guiding Question: How did Cuba's two revolutions transform its political and social systems?*
-

Late 20th Century Conflicts

- **Augusto Pinochet and Chile (1973)**

- Overview: In 1973, General Augusto Pinochet led a coup against President Salvador Allende, establishing a military dictatorship.
- *Guiding Question: Why did Pinochet's coup reshape Chile's politics and society?*

- **Salvador Allende's Reforms in Socialist Chile (1970s)**

- Overview: Salvador Allende, elected in 1970, introduced socialist reforms in Chile until his overthrow in 1973.
- *Guiding Question: How did Allende's socialist reforms spark both hope and opposition in Chile?*

- **Zapatista Rebellion (1994)**

- Overview: In 1994, the Zapatista Army of National Liberation (EZLN) in Chiapas, Mexico rose up against poverty, inequality, and globalization.
- *Guiding Question: Why did the Zapatistas rebel in 1994, and how did they demand reforms for indigenous peoples?*