



## WHY STUDY HISTORY?

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Studying history always had a hypnotic effect on me. I easily fell asleep during History class. That's why history examinations were always big trouble for me. It didn't matter whether it was World History, Asian History or my country's history; the story was the same every time. This is not a testament to the ability of my History teachers to do their job effectively; it's just the way I am.

However, I have always been amazed at how many of my ESL students have been able to remember so much of their own country's history. I guess for them, History plays a huge role in making them what they are today. I have much to learn from the students I have taught English to. For them, history is a significant part of themselves. I like that concept.

We study history in order to learn from the lessons of the past. When we learn from the lessons of the past, we are not bound to repeat past mistakes in the present and the future. It has been repeated many times: Those who don't learn from the mistakes of the past are doomed to repeat them. And doing the same mistake over and over again can be a sign of refusal to move ahead and live for the present. Others have even called it sheer stupidity.

My country has had a colorful history. No matter that my country's history has been filled with tyranny, oppression and suffering; we as a people still consider ourselves fortunate for having survived those varied challenges toward becoming a united race. Our ancestors were the ones who fought bravely and suffered in silence so that we in the present and the generations after us may enjoy freedom and democracy. The road may not have been easy at all, but I still feel proud that the people in my country have been able to go through the journey in their own way. The road may have been strewn with thorns and sharp stones, but we have been able to arise as a race quite apart from others.

It is a country's history that shapes its people into becoming what they are in the present and what they ultimately will become in the future. We need to be grateful for whatever history lessons we derive for we are defined by those very lessons. The numerous baptisms of fire that our ancestors have undergone all contribute to how our descendants will face their own challenges in their own time.

For those who still have to contend with History lessons at school, find that specific degree of love for what you study. Once you have done so, you will surely be able to find your identity as a human being.

## QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION:

1. Define history. Why is it important?
2. For you, what was the most significant part of your country's history? Why is it so?
3. Do you believe that studying History always plays a huge role in defining the present and future? Why or why not?
4. How do you characterize your own studies of History?
5. Would you open up about History of your country to your own kids? How?