

Juval Noah Harari

illustrated by

Ricard Zaplana Ruiz



UNSTOPPABLE US

FROM THE
AUTHOR OF THE
BESTSELLING
Sapiens

HOW HUMANS TOOK OVER THE WORLD



VOL.
1



EDUCATORS' GUIDE



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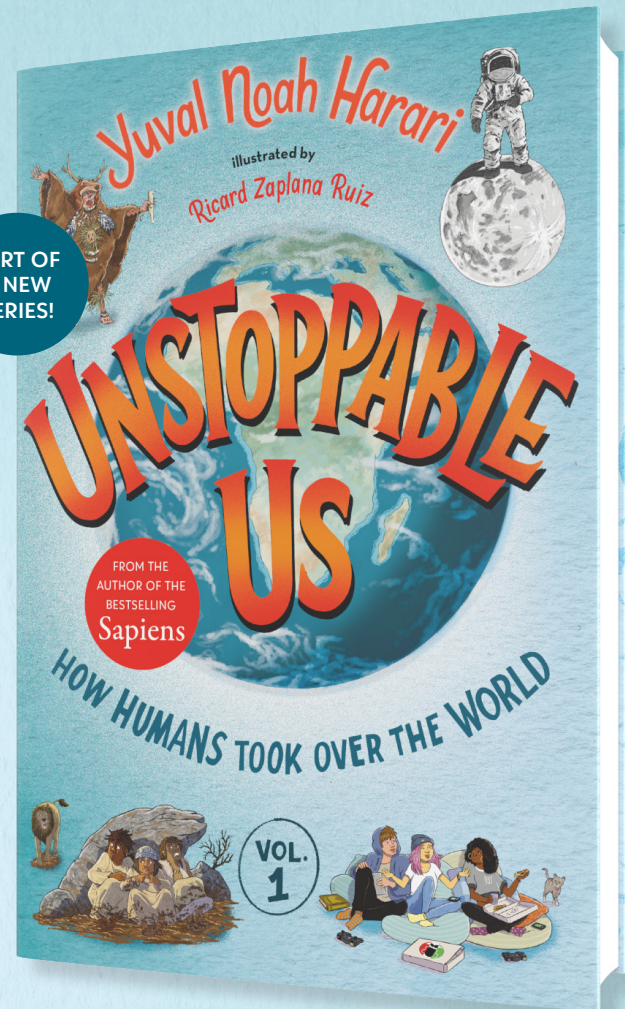
ABOUT THE BOOK

Even though we'll never outrun a hungry lion or outswim an angry shark, humans are pretty impressive—and the most dominant species on the planet. **SO, HOW DID WE BECOME “UNSTOPPABLE”?**

The answer to that is one of the strangest tales you'll ever hear. And it's a true story.

From learning to make fire and using the stars as guides to cooking meals in microwaves and landing on the moon, prepare to uncover the secrets of how we evolved from our first appearances millions of years ago.

Acclaimed author Yuval Noah Harari has expertly crafted an extraordinary story of how humans learned to not only survive but also thrive on Earth, complete with maps, a timeline, and full-color illustrations that bring his dynamic, unputdownable tale to life.



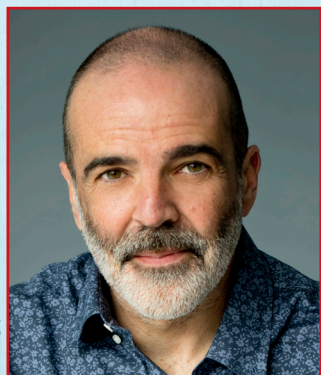
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Photograph courtesy of author

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Professor **YUVAL NOAH HARARI** is a historian, a philosopher, and the bestselling author of *Sapiens: A Brief History of Humankind*, *Homo Deus: A Brief History of Tomorrow*, *21 Lessons for the 21st Century*, and *Sapiens: A Graphic History*. His books have sold over 35 million copies in 65 languages, and he is considered one of the world's most influential public intellectuals today.



Photograph © Anna García

ABOUT THE ILLUSTRATOR

RICARD ZAPLANA RUIZ is an artist and illustrator with over twenty years of experience. He has worked as a story artist for animation, commercials, and live-action films. His artwork for children's books has been published worldwide since 2013. He was born and still resides in Barcelona, Spain.



GRAB A JOURNAL

In journals, students can write without too many constraints. The best journal prompts ask student to imagine or reflect. Ultimately, the journal can be a record of student beliefs and attitudes. As you read *Unstoppable Us*, assign the journal prompts below.

What Do You Think?

- Why are humans so powerful? What do humans have power over? How should humans use their power? Why? ("What are Humans All About?" p. xiv)
- What do you think the world would be like if humans either never learned to use fire or if we never developed electricity? What would change? Would anything be the same? How would humans live and interact? (p. 9)
- Answer the question from page 84: "If super-smart rats ruled the world one day, what would the rat scientists of the future think about us?" Identify two pieces of specific evidence that you think the rats would use to come to their conclusions.
- Identify one of the most important human inventions in history. Explain why you believe this invention is significant. See examples on page 158 for ideas and discuss more recent examples as a class.
- Why do you think the author describes humans as "the most dangerous animal in the world"? Elaborate on what you think about this statement. Use pages 179–181 for ideas.

Persuasive and Expository Writing

- Write a news article that describes what the four French teenagers found at Lascaux Cave or what eight-year-old Maria Justina found at Altamira Cave in Spain. (pp. 81–82)
- Cause and effect: Why were Stone Age societies relatively healthy? Write an essay that includes at least three examples from the book in your own words. (pp. 119–123)
- Imagine you are living in the late 1960s, when blue whales nearly went extinct. Write a letter to your representatives in Congress encouraging them to protect the whales. Use pages 174–179 for specific ideas about what to request. Alternatively, write a letter to your state representative about an issue we face today.



HANDS ON HISTORY

A Day in the Life Assignment

Choose one: create a vlog (video blog) or a podcast or write a diary entry that describes a day in your life had you lived 20,000 years ago. Use pages 119–126 to help you describe details about your day.

Note: Explain to students who create a video or podcast that they will upload it to an approved platform, rather than post it online, for their privacy.

Ancient Animals Museum Boards

Choose your favorite ancient animal from the list below. Draw the animal on a large piece of paper. Use *Unstoppable Us* and additional reliable sources to learn more about the animal. To complete your museum board, write a short paragraph with key information about your animal. Make sure you include your sources! Host a museum gallery walk showcasing the finished products.

Animal options (p. 144; pp. 150–151):
diprotodon, *genyornis*, *giant moa*,
glyptodon, *ground sloth*, *megalania*,
pakicetus, *procoptodon*, *thylacoleo*,
wonambi

Compare and Contrast Natural Regions

Create a Venn diagram or a three-column chart. Choose two natural regions from the book to research, and compare in your Venn diagram or chart. Your options are: Sonoran Desert, Central American rainforest, Amazon River, Andes Mountains, and Argentine pampas (p. 161). Consider these factors in your comparison: location, geography, climate, flora (plants), fauna (animals), and human population.

Cooperation Stations

Set up stations with different items that Stone Age people might have encountered. You might include stones, bamboo, wood, insects, worms, roots, berries, mushrooms, fox teeth, rabbits, tigers, or fish. (Obviously some objects will be representations, not the real thing.) Small groups rotate to each station and brainstorm how to survive during the Stone Age. Which of these objects would be useful? Which would make life more difficult? Pages 108–109 and 112–126 have ideas for the class to consider in a debriefing discussion.

Hands-On Science!

Observe an Ecosystem

Take students on a walk through the school grounds, a garden, or a nearby park, or take a field trip to nature. Ask students to make a list of all the different animals they see. Ask students to consider the food chain in the environment you are observing.



LAUNCHPAD FOR INQUIRY

Mini Research Questions

Dive deeper into topics from *Unstoppable Us* using the research questions below. Search for relevant information in reliable sources. Have students use the [mini research organizer](#) or record findings in their journal.

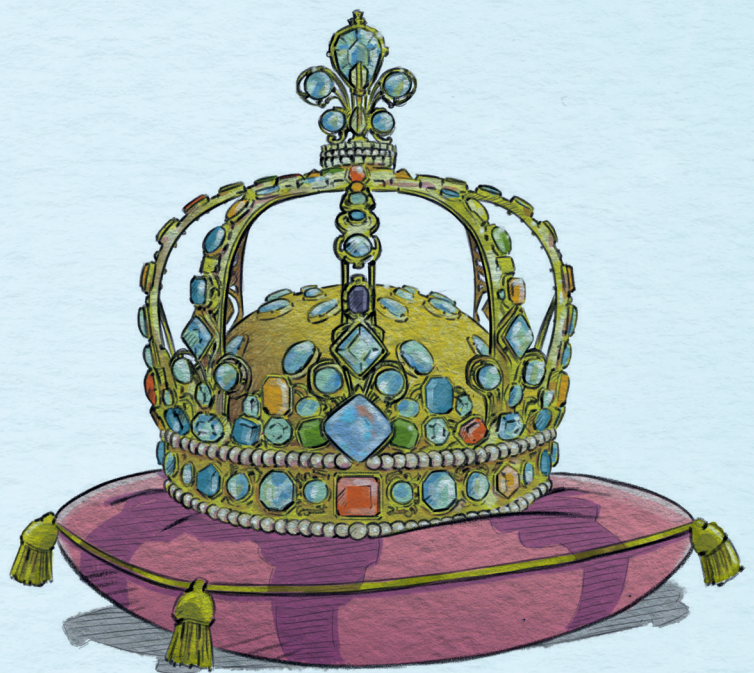
- **ANCIENT ANIMALS**—Choose one or two of the animals introduced in the book to investigate: *pakicetus*, *thylacoleo*, *giant moa*, *wonambi*, *procoptodon*, *megalania*, *diprotodon*, *glyptodon*, *ground sloth*, or *genyornis*.
- **DIVINE RIGHT OF KINGS**—Civilizations throughout history have believed that rulers are chosen by gods, or that rulers are gods. This idea was called the Divine Right of Kings in Europe and the Mandate of Heaven in China. France is one example given in *Unstoppable Us* (pp. 65–71). Learn more about this idea in relation to a civilization of your choice. Some options include ancient China, ancient Egypt, medieval Europe, and the Incan Empire.
- **NEANDERTHALS**—Investigate another type of human that lived during the Stone Age: the Neanderthals.
- **STUDENTS' CHOICE**—Create a prompt based on a concept from the book that captures your interest.
- **WOMEN WHO RULED**—Learn more about women who rule over nations (p. 68). Choose one female head of state to research. Suggestions: Empress Catherine the Great (Russia), Empress Wu (China), Empress Zewditu (Ethiopia), Pharaoh Hatshepsut (Egypt), Prime Minister Jacinda Ardern (New Zealand), Prime Minister Mia Mottley (Barbados), Queen Nzinga Mbande (present-day Angola).

The Environment and Us

Learn more about human impacts on the environment and youth environmental activists with the following resources:

- [Indigenous Activists on Tackling the Climate Crisis](#) video
- [Call to Learning for Climate Education](#) video

For educators and caregivers, developmentally appropriate resources to support this discussion include [Talking to Your Child About Climate Change](#) and [How to Talk with Children About Climate Change](#).



VISUAL LEARNING

Mapmaking

Use a [blank world map](#) to illustrate the range of [Neanderthals](#), [Denisovans](#), and early [Sapiens](#). (p. 145) Shade each species' range with a different color and create a map key.

Unstoppable Us Timeline

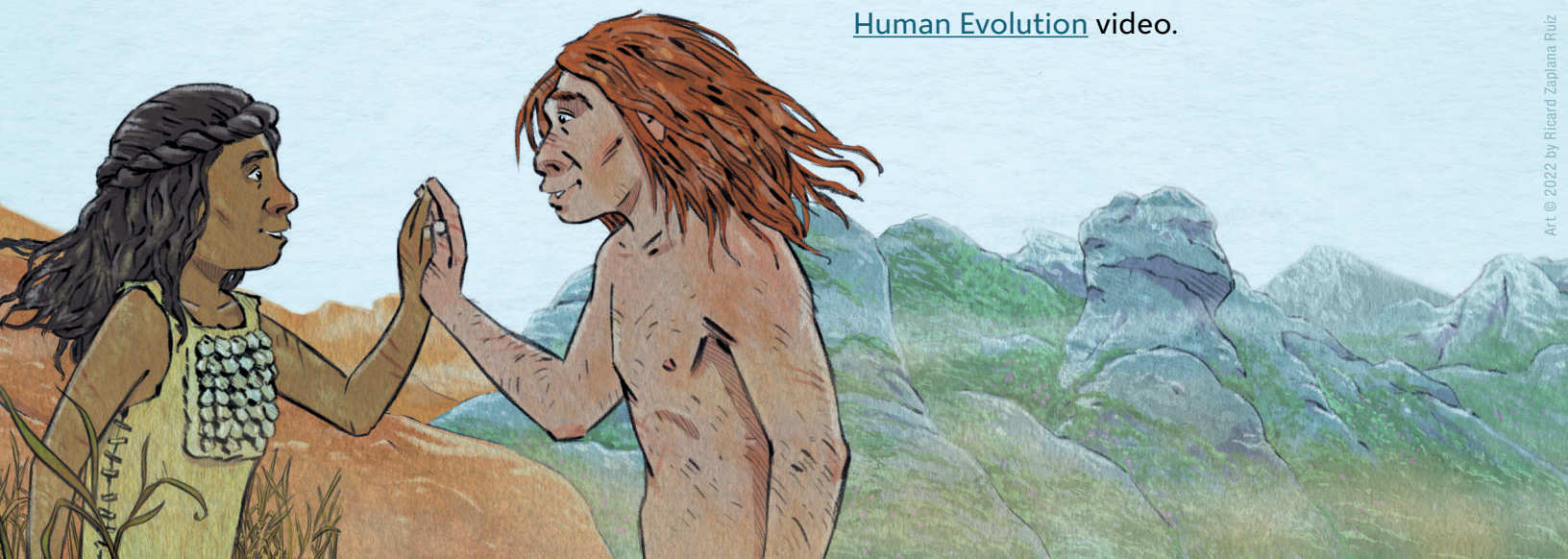
Create a timeline using butcher paper posted on classroom walls. Build the timeline as your class reads *Unstoppable Us*. You may wish to assign pairs of students to events, or work as a large group. Students can add illustrations to support their understanding. The earliest event is 6 million years ago (last common ancestor of humans and chimpanzees), and the most recent is 50 years ago (blue whales nearly disappear).

Overviews and *Unstoppable Us*

Use images from the [@dailyoverview](#) Instagram account to explore concepts from *Unstoppable Us*. For example, analyze land development posts to explore the effects of human behavior. You could also explore agricultural concepts in posts like the time-lapse video of the Salton Sea in California from July 2, 2022, and the Costa Rican pineapple plantation series from February 18, 2022. (pp. 122–123)

Video Clips

- See archaeology in action and hear about young people's experiences at the [Indigenous Archaeological Field School](#). (p. 18)
- Learn more about Neanderthals' characteristics and genetics with [There's Something About Neanderthals](#).
- Supplement the introduction to DNA on page 21 by showing the [Genetics 101 | National Geographic](#) video.
- Expand on the concept of globalization that is introduced on page 38 with the [Globalization 1—The Upside Crash Course](#) video.
- Explore an example of modern nomadic life with [Inside the Rugged Lives of Mongolia's Nomads—Short Film Showcase](#). (p. 112)
- Demonstrate migration routes of humans with a [map that shows how humans migrated across the globe](#). (p. 145)
- Learn more about humans migrating into the Americas, and related genetic research, in [Where Did the First Americans Come From?](#) (p. 160)
- Expand on *Unstoppable Us*'s discussion of evolution with this [Seven Million Years of Human Evolution](#) video.



CHECK FOR UNDERSTANDING

Think-Pair-Share Discussions

This style of discussion is a great warm-up, closing activity, or understanding check. Share the prompt and give students time to think independently. Next, have students discuss their ideas with a partner. Finally, share ideas as a class. Here are some potential topics:

- Why are stories important? Share a meaningful story that helped you learn something significant. (Hint: this could be a family story, a book, or a movie.) (p. 46)
- How did humans completely change Australia? (pp. 152–156) Discuss specific examples.
- What has surprised you about life in the Stone Age?
- How do you think about humans differently since reading *Unstoppable Us*?

Shared Fictions

We're the only animals that can invent and believe in legends, fairy tales, and myths. (p. 46)

Humans have a unique ability to create and share stories. We can communicate new realities, rather than only describing what exists or is in front of us. (pp. 46–48) Talk with your class about the shared stories that have been created in their lives. You may wish to use money, local sports team fandoms, or membership of a community or nation as

examples. How are these examples of shared stories? How do humans work together to create and perpetuate these shared realities? What is the value of sharing these understandings?

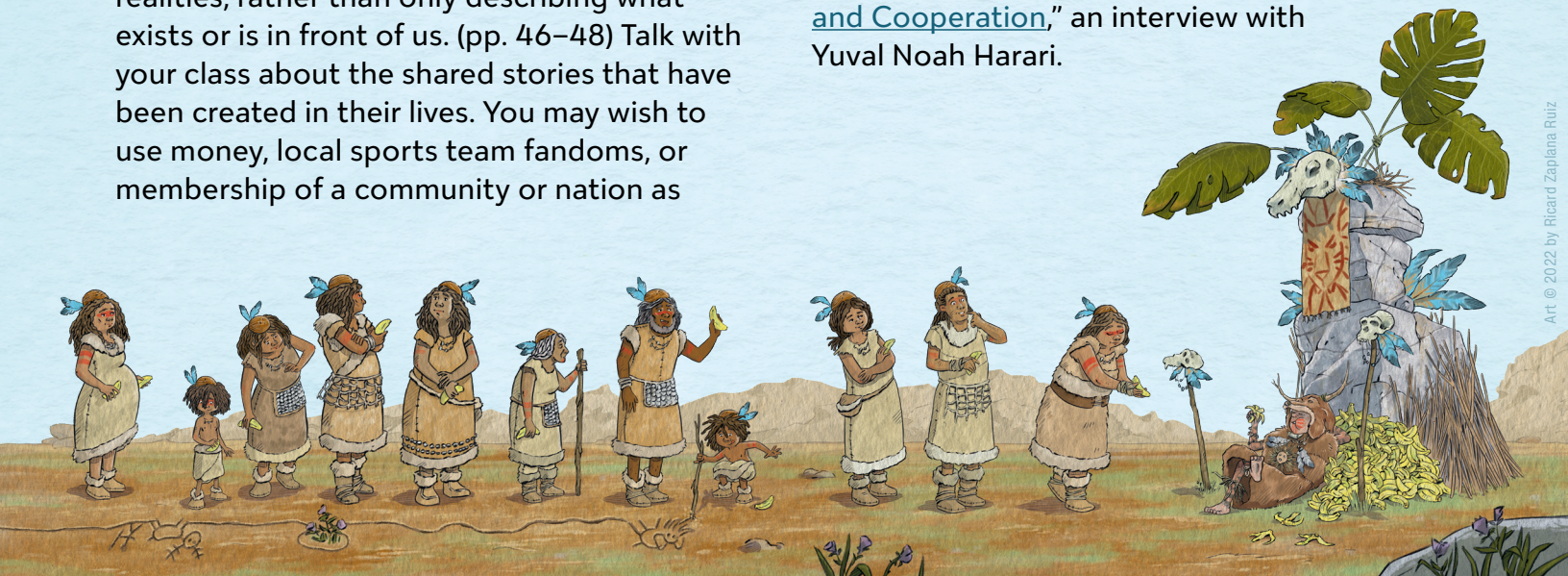
After discussing the shared realities and stories humans have created, students list three things that are a fundamental part of their lives that are nonetheless shared stories. They then choose one shared story from the list to elaborate on in writing or discussion. What meaning does the story or new reality have in their everyday life? How does it affect their experience of the world?

Future Narratives—Journal Entry or Think-Pair-Share Discussion

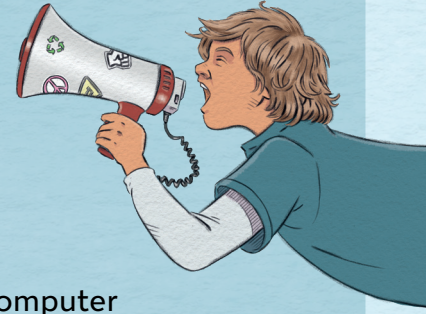
Describe one way you think humans could work together to create new realities in the future. Think about technological advances (for example, virtual reality, social media, artificial intelligence). How will these technologies change how we experience and interact with our world and one another?

Additional Reading for Educators

For further context on shared fictions, read "[What Makes Humans Different? Fiction and Cooperation](#)," an interview with Yuval Noah Harari.



MODIFICATION SUGGESTIONS



Art © 2022 by Ricard Zaplana Ruiz

Ideas for modifying materials so lessons are accessible to students with unique learning needs are listed below. Adjust as necessary and appropriate to the individual student.

- *Ancient Animals Museum Boards*: This activity can be completed on the computer instead of paper. Students can find several internet images of the animal rather than drawing it and type their paragraph.
- *Compare Natural Regions*: A three-column chart may be more accessible than a Venn diagram for students with fine motor skill or handwriting accommodations.
- *Journal Entries*: Offer students with language accommodations the option to do a bullet point list rather than writing full paragraphs, if appropriate. Journal responses can be typed rather than handwritten.
- *Mapmaking*: Provide starting points for each range.
- *Mini Research Questions and Writing Assignments*: All can be completed and submitted on computers instead of handwritten.
- *Think-Pair-Share Discussions*: Students with language needs or anxiety about speaking may wish to write discussion points on paper. With a prior heads up, they may opt to share with the class or allow you to share what they wrote.
- *Unstoppable Us Timeline*: Illustrations will support comprehension.
- *Videos*: Add closed captions by clicking "CC" on the bottom of the YouTube video window when showing video clips. It may also help to slow playback speed (use the gear symbol for settings to change to .75x) for some videos.



Gena Roisum is an educator who has experience in diverse public high school classrooms and in education support services and advocacy for PreK-12+ youth. She is licensed to teach social studies grades 5-12 and has a master's of arts in education with a certificate in environmental education. You can [reach out to her on LinkedIn](#).



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