

Juval Noah Harari

illustrated by

Ricard Zaplana Ruiz



UNSTOPPABLE US

FROM THE
AUTHOR OF THE
BESTSELLING
Sapiens

WHY THE WORLD ISN'T FAIR

VOL.
2



EDUCATORS' GUIDE

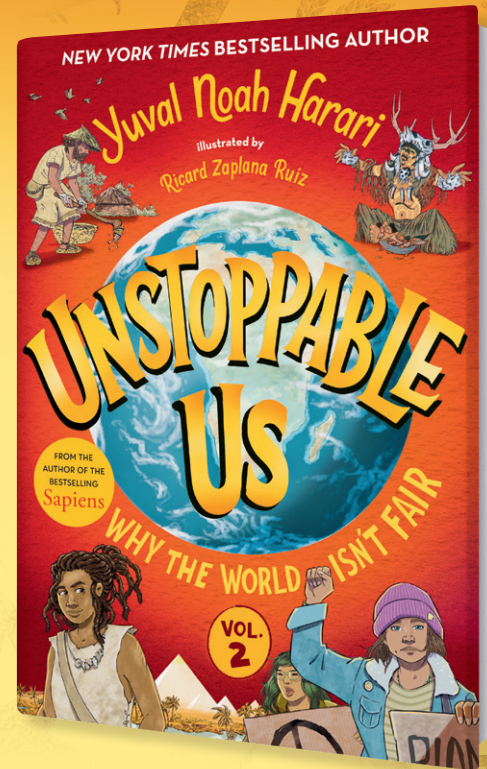


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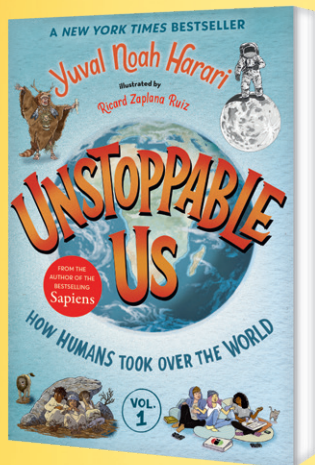
ABOUT THE BOOK

FROM WORLD-RENOWNED HISTORIAN AND PHILOSOPHER YUVAL NOAH HARARI COMES THE SECOND VOLUME in the bestselling *Unstoppable Us* middle-grade series.

Humans took over the world, but what happened next? How did our hunter-gatherer ancestors become village farmers? Why were kingdoms and laws established? How did we go from being the rulers of Earth to the rulers of each other? And why isn't the world fair? The answer to all of that is one of the strangest tales you'll ever hear. And it's a true story. From cultivating land and sharing resources to building pyramids and paying taxes, prepare to discover how humans created civilization—and suffered the consequences of it. Acclaimed author Yuval Noah Harari is back with more of the expertly crafted story of how humans became “unstoppable,” complete with maps, a timeline, and full-color illustrations that bring his dynamic and unputdownable writing to life.



Art © 2024 by Ricard Zaplana Ruiz



★ “Harari’s lively, reader-directed prose and Ruiz’s expressive graphics will help young readers grasp an almost-unimaginably distant past. . . . An enticingly depicted intro to human history and archaeology, simply expressed but extensive and engaging.”

—Kirkus Reviews, starred review

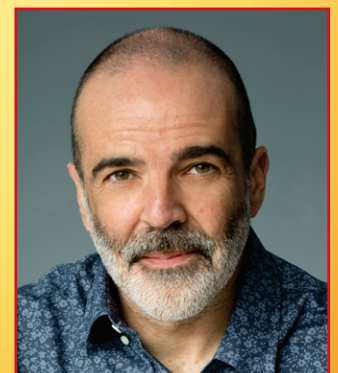
ABOUT THE AUTHOR AND ILLUSTRATOR



Photograph courtesy of author

YUVAL NOAH HARARI is a historian, 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.

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 resides in Barcelona, Spain.



Photograph © Anna García

ACCESSIBILITY NOTES

Consider turning captions on to support video content comprehension. It may also help to slow playback speed. To do this, use the gear symbol for settings in the bottom right and change it to 0.75x.

- Support literacy development by creating word walls for vocabulary terms that link to your content standards. Model critical thinking strategies while reading aloud to students. Partner work can also support students who are building literacy skills.
- Students with language needs or anxiety may more effectively engage in discussions if given opportunities to write their ideas down in advance.
- Journals can be handwritten or typed as needed.

ONLINE SAFETY NOTE

Screen any tools students use to make a video, podcast, or other media, and ensure they securely share content through a school-approved system.

PRE-READING ACTIVITIES

Predictions

Use the “Timeline of History” located after the contents and several sticky notes to preview *Unstoppable Us: Volume 2*. Work independently or with a partner to consider the timeline and the prompts listed below, then respond to the prompts on sticky notes. Post stickies on a wall or whiteboard under a heading for each prompt.

Look for themes, trends, and unique ideas and discuss as a group. What timeline clues helped students respond to the prompts?

Prompts:

- What do you think this book will be about?
- What do you wonder about the topics in the timeline?
- What do you already know about the topics in the timeline?
- What do you think the world could be like in 100 years? In 1,000 years? Why do you picture it that way?

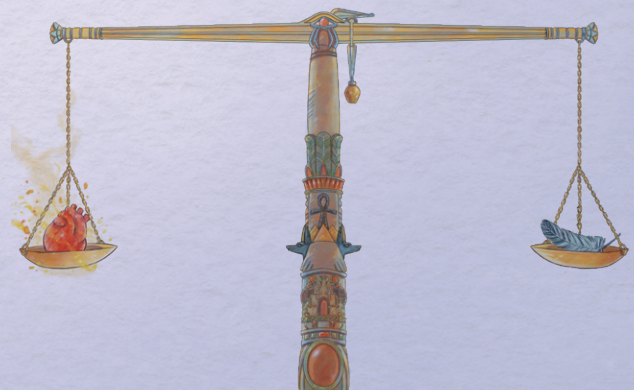
Dynamic History

Our understanding of the past is always changing. New archaeological findings can alter our perspectives about how people lived. Choose an archaeology news article that interests you. Helpful sites include the [Smithsonian Magazine website](#) or the [Science Magazine website](#).

Read the article and analyze it to answer the “Five Ws”: who, what, where, when, how, and why (try asking “why is this important?”). After summarizing the findings and importance of the article, take turns sharing what you learned in small groups.

Additional Resources

- [The stones that made us](#) group activity from Sapienship



THE POWER OF STORIES

Journal Prompts

Before discussing the power of stories, respond to one or more of the prompts below:

- What makes stories so powerful?
- Whose stories tend to be told in history? Why is this? What are the pros and cons of hearing stories from one perspective?
- Have you ever seen a story harm someone or a group of people?
- What is a story you would like to change? Why is this change important to you?

Discussion Groups

In small groups, share a story about your country or community. What do these stories say about being a member of your community, region, state, or country? Work together to identify a few stories about being a member of your community. Discuss as a large group.

Shared Dreams

Illustrate a shared dream from your family, friends, or community. Do this by either writing several paragraphs or creating a drawing or other type of artwork that shows the importance of this dream.

Extension Opportunity

Partner with an art teacher for the Shared Dreams assignment to integrate art into your classroom.

Additional Resources

- [Why do we tell ourselves stories?](#) group activity from Sapienship
- [Creation stories](#) group activity from Sapienship



WRITING: THE WORLD'S FIRST RECEIPTS

Gallery Walk

Create a primary source gallery walk about early writing and record-keeping. You may wish to include images of cuneiform (Mesopotamia), hieroglyphs (Egypt), oracle bones (China), [quipus](#) (Inca), Indus script (Indus Valley) and codices (Mexico). Encourage students to make educated guesses about what the writing may say and how the tools are used, and to share what they wonder about the record-keeping examples. Discuss the following prompts as a class:

- Humans have not always had writing. Why do we have writing today? What purpose does it serve?
- What types of writing do you read most often?
- Are there other ways information is commonly shared in your culture?

Ancient Alphabet Artwork

Provide cardstock, pencils, and markers for students to create bookmarks with their names written in an ancient language. Students can enter their name and initials to see their name written in [cuneiform](#) or [hieroglyphs](#) on the Penn Museum website.

Extension Opportunity

Partner with an art teacher to create a clay tablet or ceramics piece with a message written in cuneiform or hieroglyphs.

Additional Resources

- [Writing Cuneiform](#): two-minute video from the Getty Museum

Maya Math Game

Expand on the importance of writing for record-keeping while practicing math and legend-reading skills with the [Maya math game](#) ([writing, record keeping](#)) from the Smithsonian National Museum of the American Indian.



ECOSYSTEM ENGINEERS

Journal and Discussion Prompts

- How do humans influence or control the environment?
- Make a prediction: how did human life change after people learned how to cook grains like corn, rice, and wheat?
- Cause and effect: what do you think happens when people begin to intentionally plant and change the landscape?

Shaping the Environment

Explore approaches to land management and engaging with the environment with [PBS's four part media gallery](#) that features clips from *Changing Planet*. Consider the following questions while viewing:

- What strategies and tools do members of the Pintupi community in Australia use to help plants grow?
 - How does the use of fire support food access for the Pintupi people? How does it impact wildlife like the great desert skink?
 - What strategies and tools do the desert ranger teams use for habitat management?
 - How does the bilby impact the ecosystem when it digs burrows?

Nature Walk

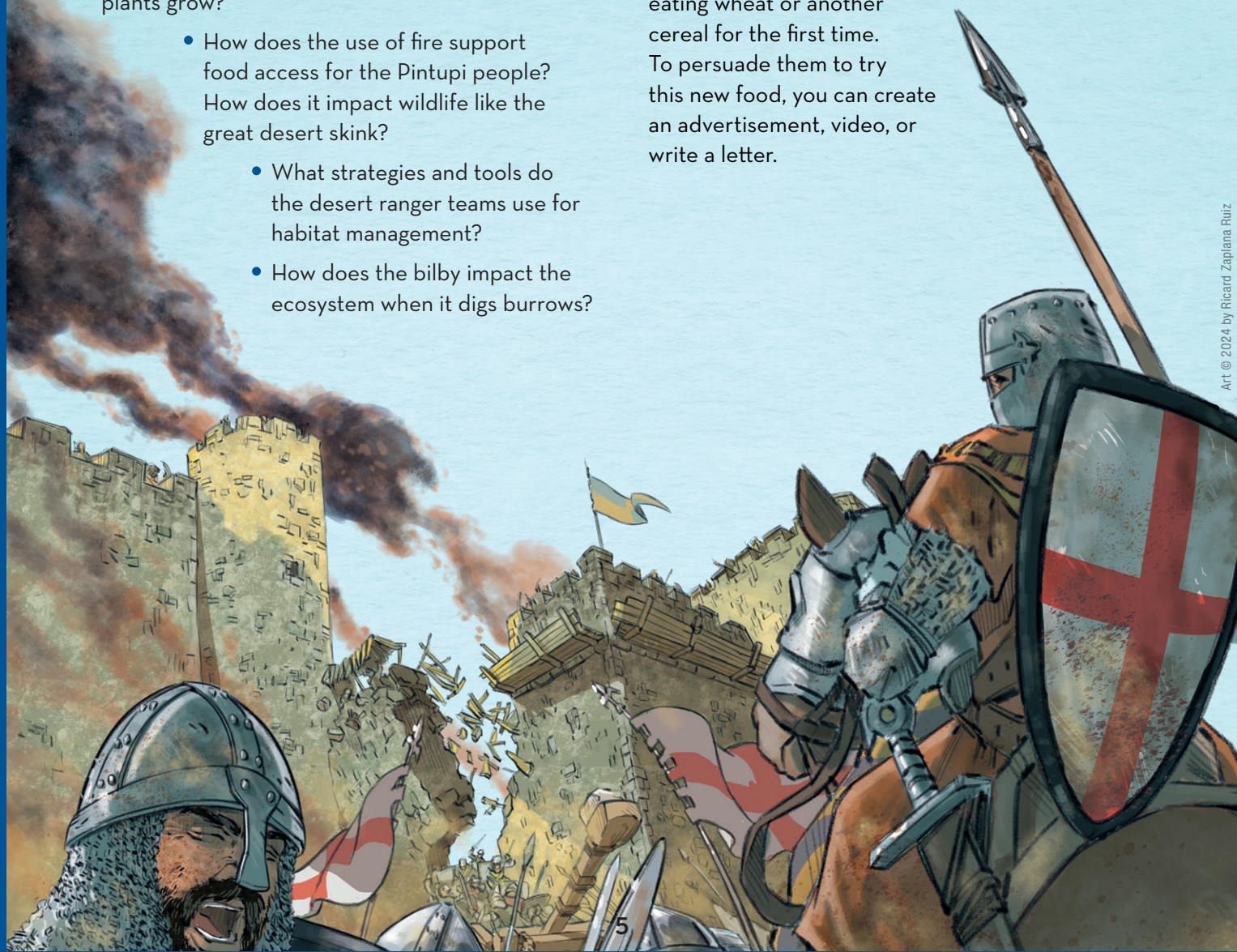
Walk around your neighborhood to observe human interactions with the landscape. What do you see from the natural world? How have humans influenced nature? You may wish to make a bingo card with features seen in your area (examples: landscaped yard, wildflowers, canals). After the walk, prompt discussion with sentence starters: "I noticed . . ." and "I wonder . . ."

Accessibility note:

Provide advance notice and reminders to students that you will be walking outside. Preview the route to make sure it is safe and accessible. If you are in a school, inform office staff about the plan.

Persuasive Writing

Imagine you are living during the shift to agriculture. You have to convince someone to try planting and eating wheat or another cereal for the first time. To persuade them to try this new food, you can create an advertisement, video, or write a letter.



Chat Stations

Create chat stations for small groups to rotate and engage in discussions about the domestication of animals, from beloved pets to working animals to food sources.

Station 1-Discuss the following as a group:

- Why are pets important to people today?
- Do you have pets, or would you like to someday? What makes having pets worth it or not?
- What do you think the first pet ever was? How do you think wild animals became pets?
- How do we choose which animals become pets and which become food or working animals?

Station 2-Provide copies of [“How Cats became Divine Symbols in Ancient Egypt”](#) from the History Channel. Read individually or take turns reading out loud. Then discuss the following:

- What surprised you from the article? What did you already know?
- How do we know how important cats were to ancient Egyptians? Use evidence from the article.
- How does the role of cats in ancient Egyptian life compare and contrast to their role in modern society?

Station 3-Play [“The Geography of Livestock”](#) video from the beginning until 5:34. Then discuss the following

- Where were chickens and cows first domesticated? Where did they spread after domestication?
- How do you think humans decide which animals are appropriate to eat? What makes a livestock animal different from a pet?
- How did peoples' lives change after domesticating animals? Think about examples like food and transportation.

Modern Nomads

Show [Nomads of Mongolia](#) by Brandon Li, a National Geographic short film. The film shares a modern take on nomadic lives and reminds students that agriculture and lifestyles can look different across cultures.

Discussion starters:

- What roles do you see different people playing in this video? What does this tell us about how their society works?
- What do relationships with nature and animals look like in this video? How does this compare and contrast with your experiences with nature?

Extension Opportunities

- Collaborate with a biology teacher while reading about selective breeding and genetics to align curriculum with biology concepts.
- Coordinate a public health lesson with a biology teacher about the spread of disease in human and animal populations. Examples include bubonic plague, smallpox, Spanish flu, Ebola, COVID-19.
- Collaborate with an agriculture educator for a lesson about cultivating staple crops in your area.

Additional Resources

- [Did animal domestication go too far?](#) group activity from Sapienship
- [How can we fight epidemics?](#) group activity from Sapienship
- [Nothing exists alone](#) group activity from Sapienship



DEVELOPMENT OF CIVILIZATIONS

When humans began settling in one place and domesticating plants and animals, life changed considerably. Explore the beginnings of civilization with the following activities. Analyze what systems are required to run a civilization, how youth voices can be heard in society, and what happens when practices are unfair.

Journal and Discussion Prompts

- How do people make decisions in your life? Think about friends, family, your city/town, state/province, country.
- What is a rule that you would like to change? What are the pros and cons of changing it? Do your best to argue for both sides. You can choose to create a T chart for this journal entry.
- What does school mean in your life? What are your family's expectations about it? Why do you think schools were created?
- Describe a time when you experienced unintended consequences. What happened? Did it change how you will do something in the future?
- What is something unfair that frustrates you? Why is it frustrating?

Change a Story-Choice Project

Warm Up: Discuss current stories that are changing. You may have an example to share with students. For example, since I was a student, it has become more accepted to talk openly about topics like mental health and gender identity in my community. Generate a brainstorm list as a large group.

Ask how young people can create change themselves. Brainstorm with sticky notes on a board or a tool like [Jamboard](#). Starter notes may say "petition," "attend a city council meeting," "protest."

Choice Project: Choose one story that you would like to change from the large group list or your own idea. Then pick a media format. Create an original persuasive piece that encourages others to change their views. It could be a piece of persuasive writing, a video, a podcast, a letter to a representative, a photo essay, or a piece of art.

Human Rights History

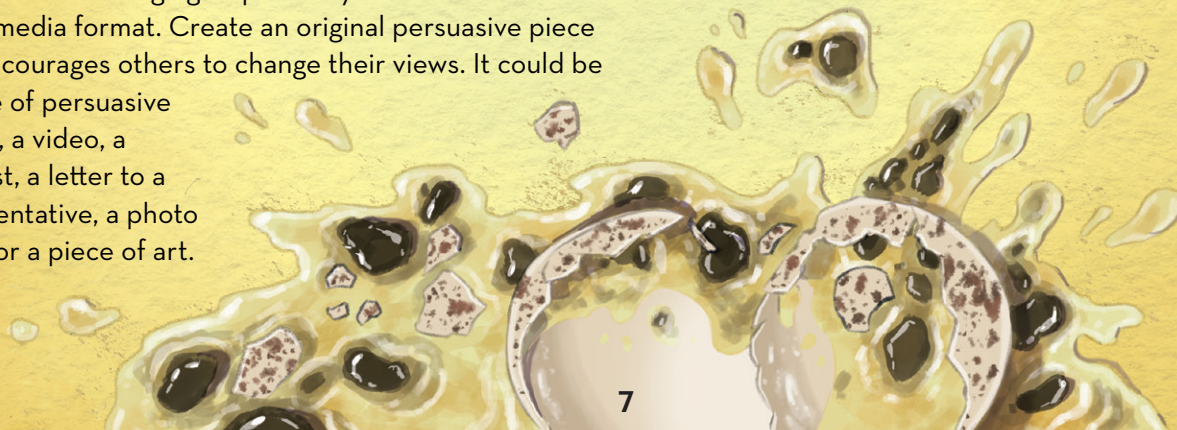
Expand on the concepts of unfairness and systems change by exploring examples of past and present advocacy for policy change.

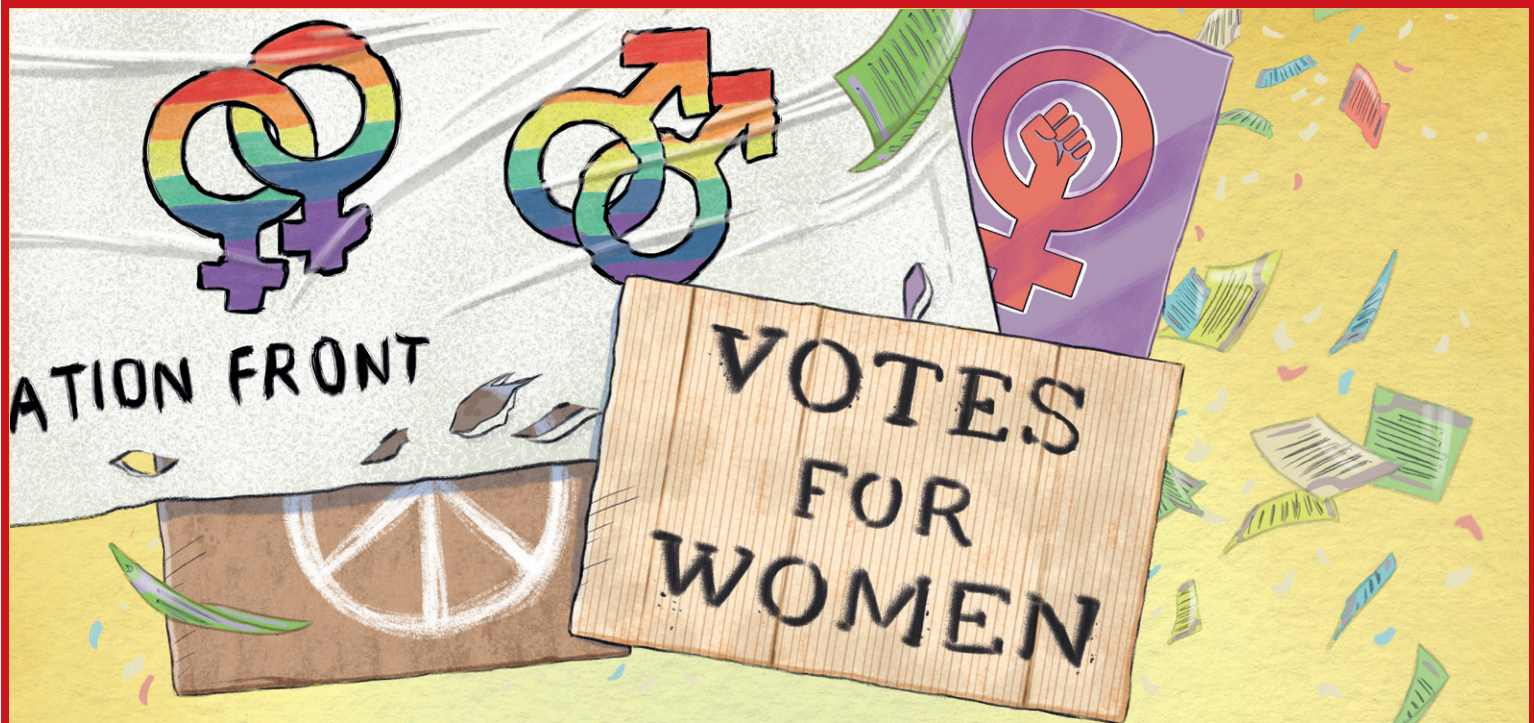
Show the [Malala Yousafzai at the United Nations video](#). Discuss the following in writing or group discussion:

- Who is Yousafzai's audience in this video? How might this impact how she shares her message?
- What are the main arguments she makes? What strategies does Yousafzai use to encourage listeners to take action?
- How do you feel after seeing this speech? What do you wonder?

Read the [Bayard Rustin article](#) from the National Museum of African American History & Culture. Discuss the following in writing or group discussion:

- Who was Bayard Rustin and what was he known for?
- How did perceptions of Rustin's sexuality impact his role in the American Civil Rights Movement?
- How did Rustin advocate for civil rights for LGBTQ+ people?





Additional Resources

- [LGBTQ+ terms and definitions](#) from the Annie E. Casey Foundation, for educator and learner reference.
- [Direct online and phone support resources for LGBTQ+ youth](#) from the Human Rights Campaign.

Science, Technology, & Early Civilizations

Show the [How to make a mummy](#) Ted-Ed video by Len Bloch. Discussion starters:

- What strategies, tools, and materials did ancient Egyptian priests use to prevent decomposition?
- How successful were they in preserving bodies?
- What can we learn from mummies today?

Show the [Egyptian mummy undergoes CT scan video](#) by Global News and [What's inside this mummy?](#) video from Northwestern University. Discussion starters:

- What technology are the researchers using to image the mummy of Akhet Kansu and the Roman-Egyptian mummy?
- What are they hoping to learn about these people?
- Do you have any ethical concerns about imaging a mummy in this way? What are some arguments for and against this research?

Show the [Indus Valley Civilization: Crash Course](#)

[Course](#) video to consider the ethics of the term “civilizations” and explore unique characteristics of the Indus Valley civilization (language we have not fully translated, plumbing systems). This video may be best shown at 0.75x speed.

Extension Opportunities

- Invite a local representative and/or advocate to speak about their experiences in government and politics.
- Pair these activities with your civics curriculum to support comprehension and application of key concepts.
- Team with an English language teacher to expand on persuasive writing and speaking strategies.



CULINARY CULTURAL DIFFUSION

Explore history and human geography through students' favorite foods and their diffusion. The [origin of crops interactive map](#) and [static map](#) from the International Centre for Tropical Agriculture are helpful resources.

Warm-Up Prompts

What are some of your favorite foods? What ingredients do you need to make them? Encourage students to consider each component of the meal, if necessary, giving them a few minutes to think. Then ask for examples and generate a list of their favorite foods. Have students vote on a meal to explore further as a class.

Activity

Select a favorite food and break it down into at least five major raw ingredients. Research each ingredient to learn where it originated. After identifying the ingredients' origins, add them to a world map in writing or with a drawing.

Reflect with the following discussion starters:

- Which ingredient origins made sense?
- Which were unexpected? Why?
- How would the world be different if these foods had not traveled with humans?

Exit Slip Option

Students write a short response to one of the reflection questions listed above or an idea that is still circling in their head from the activity.



EARLY CIVILIZATIONS MAPPING

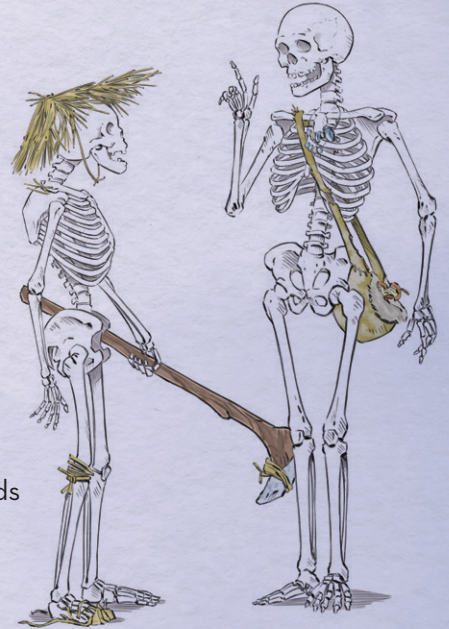
Practice geography skills and learn more about early river valley civilizations with a mapping project. Working individually or with a partner, shade the early river valley civilizations listed below on a [world map](#). For an added challenge, collaborate to draw the map itself and civilizations on a large piece of paper.

Include the following civilizations:

- China
- Indus Valley
- Egypt
- Mesopotamia

Resources

- [Cradles of civilization map](#)
- [Early river civilizations lesson from Study.com](#)
- [Ancient Egypt article](#) from National Geographic Kids
- [Huang He Valley article](#) from National Geographic



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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