

## Specific Questions About World History

You will hear a lot about “the big ideas” – broad questions historians answered studying facts from the past. Three form the foundation for our study of World History<sup>5</sup>:

- Humans and the Environment. How has the changing relationship between human beings and the physical and natural environment affected human life from early times to the present?
- Humans and Humans. Why have relations among humans become so complex since early times?
- Humans and Ideas. How have human views of the world, nature, and the cosmos changed?

### HOW CAN WE POSSIBLY COVER THE HISTORY OF THE ENTIRE WORLD?

Well, we won't — we can't. Do we choose specific time periods, skipping others? Do we choose specific civilizations, leaving others out? Neither of those sound like a good idea. To organize our study, though, we will look at broad themes across time. In fact, we look at nine Eras:<sup>6</sup>

- Era 1: The Beginnings of Human Society
- Era 2: Early Civilizations and the Emergence of Pastoral Peoples
- Era 3: Classical Traditions, Major Religions, and Giant Empires
- Era 4: Expanding Zones of Exchange and Encounter
- Era 5: Intensified Hemispheric Interactions
- Era 6: The Emergence of the First Global Age
- Era 7: An Age of Revolutions
- Era 8: A Half-Century of Crisis and Achievement
- Era 9: The 20<sup>th</sup> Century Since 1945: Promises and Paradoxes