

A Level Economics – Year 11 Prep Work #1

Welcome to the world of Economics. It is a very exciting one, and you already inhabit it! As a consumer, you have been making economic decisions since you first had pocket money and every day you hear and see Economics in action all around you.

This first section of home learning preparing you for the study of Economics at A Level focuses on **Economic History**.

Carl Sagan, an American astronomer once said: **“you have to know the past to understand the present”** and that is very much what this section of your pre-learning that you will do is all about.

A great book to read to help you with this is The Penguin History of Economics – ISBN 978-0140260427. It is currently available to buy on Amazon for £7.99.

<https://www.amazon.co.uk/Penguin-History-Economics-Roger-Backhouse/dp/0140260420>

I can appreciate that you might not be able to buy this but if you can, it is an interesting read and will give you a great background to the subject.

To help you get an appreciation of the history of Economics, work through these tasks and make notes as you go. Don't just make notes summarising what you read, also write questions – what does the reading prompt you to think about?

One area of Economic History that we need to be aware of is the key players – who are thought to be the most important people and why? This first set of activities aims to help you understand who is thought to be the most influential thinkers in this subject.

Activity 1

Who is Adam Smith and why is he considered one of the founding fathers of Economics?

- Use this link to write a short biography of Adam Smith: [Adam Smith Institute](#)
- Watch this video to find out more about him: [Political Theory – Adam Smith](#)
- Use your notes to write a short summary as to why he was thought to be so important to economic theory. If you use other sources, make sure you make a note of the sources you use.

Activity 2

We live in a capitalist society? What does that mean and how does this influence our lives?

Watch this video and make notes on it to enable you to understand the concept.

[History of Capitalism](#)

Activity 3

Who is Karl Marx and what contribution did he make to our understanding of socialism/communism?

- Use this link to write a short biography of Karl Marx: [BBC – Historic Figures](#)
- Watch this video to find out more about him: [Political Theory – Karl Marx](#)
- Use your notes to write a short summary as to why he was thought to be so important to economic theory. If you use other sources, make sure you make a note of the sources you use.
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Activity 4

So what is the difference between socialism and communism? Watch this short video and write a definition of each? Does this help you better understand the work of Karl Marx?

[Communism vs Socialism](#)

Checkpoint 1

You should now have an understanding of what capitalism is, and what communism/socialism is and how each of Adam Smith and Karl Marx have contributed to these ideas (philosophies). Read back through your notes and check that you have made enough detailed notes on these areas and make sure you have written down any additional sources that you have used.

So, clearly money plays a very important part in Economics. What is the history of money?

Activity 5

What happened in 1929? What caused the Wall Street Crash? How did it lead to the Great Depression?

Use this documentary to understand these questions. Make some notes as you go.

[1929 Stock Market Crash and the Great Depression](#)

Activity 6

Nearly 100 years on, and another global financial crisis. What caused this and what were the global impacts of this?

How was the UK affected? Are the effects still being felt?

Use this documentary to understand these questions. Make some notes as you go.

[BBC The Love of Money 3/3 – Back from the Brink](#)

Checkpoint 2

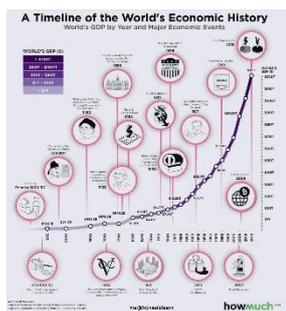
You should now have an understanding of the role money plays in society. You should also understand that economic history shows us that at times we face crises. What were the similarities and differences between the crashes of 1929 and 2007/8? Take some time to reflect on this and make some notes if you can identify any.

If you are interested in this, you might also consider watching the film *The Big Short* – it does have a 15 certificate but I would not show it in school due to some aspects of the film. It does show really well how the crisis happened. You could also read the book that summarises the story of the Lehman Brothers collapse, which is called *A Colossal Failure of Common Sense* by Larry McDonald.



Activity 7

So how does all that you have learnt so far fit into the overall picture of [Economic History](#). The picture below can be found on this link.



Get a bigger version of this on your screen and turn it into a picture of your own showing the key points on the timeline and adding your own notes. Up until now I have provided all the links for you – now you can find your own. For example, if you do not know what The Marshall Plan was, find out – summarise your research into a short paragraph. Remember to write down your sources.

One final source for you but it is a pretty advanced one, more suited to university study! It has way more than you need but gives you an idea of the scale of Economic History.

[An Economics timeline](#)

Checkpoint 3

You should now have a diagram of Economic History drawn out (maybe on a big piece of paper) and hopefully you have mini paragraphs about different people, events, time periods etc. written out. You may have seen links to learning you have done already at GCSE level in subjects such as History, Geography etc. You may have lots of questions – that is great. Write them down!!

So, that is the end of your first learning package learning about some of the aspects of Economic History – next time we will begin learning about the UK’s place within all of this, and more about the key turning points of our own Economic History. This will include our entry into and out of the EU, and all things Brexit related which in these uncertain times, seems like a distant memory now. Well it does to me!

If at any point you want support with this learning package, please email me: Miss Hanley, kjh@bournside.gloucs.sch.uk and I will help you.

If you want any more reading recommendations, I have lots of ideas of great books to read. Just let me know what you are particularly interested in.

Good luck and remember to ensure you keep your notes detailed and comprehensive. It will help you so much when you start learning formally in class in September.

A Hint of What is next

Globalization Era	Age of Discovery (15 th -18 th century)	Globalization 1.0 (19 th century – 1914)	Globalization 2.0 (1945-1989)	Globalization 3.0 (1989-2008)	Globalization 4.0
Leading Exports	Raw Material / Basic Goods	Textiles / Industrial Goods	Factories	Global Supply Chain	Digital Goods / Services
Leading Nations					
Exports as % World GDP	<5%	6→14%	5→15%	15→>20%	?
Enabling Era	Scientific Revolution (15 th -17 th century)	1 st Industrial Revolution (1780s–mid 19 th century)	2 nd Industrial Revolution (1870s-1910s)	3 rd Industrial Revolution (1960s-1990s)	4 th Industrial Revolution (2000s-2010s)
Enabling Innovations					
Characterizing GDP Trend	Europe ↗	Britain ↗↗	World ↗	United States ↗↗↗	China ↗↗↗↗

History of Globalization and Industrial Revolutions – by Peter Norham, World Economic Forum

- What is globalisation?
- How has this influenced economic history?
- How has the UK’s place in the world changed over time?
- Why has it?
- Why did we enter the EU? Why did we leave?
- What might the future hold?