**History of The world**

History of the World is a sub-part of UPSC Civil Services (Main) Examination’s General Studies Paper-I on Indian Heritage, History and Geography of the World. Under this sub-part, the broad areas which have been covered as per the UPSC Syllabus are: Important events from 18th century such as industrial revolution, world wars, redrawal of national boundaries, colonization, decolonization, political philosophies like communism, capitalism, socialism etc.- their forms and effect on the society.

UPSC always plays a mystery game leaving a lot of things ambiguous which is amply reflected in the introductory revised syllabus of World History. Thus, though the syllabus only outlines events from 18th century and does not talk of either the French Revolution or of German and Italian Unification nor of the Russian Revolution or of Nazism or Fascist State or of Cold War of the recent times, but they are equally important from the examination perspective of Modern World History. A glimpse of few of the important topics has been laid down below.

**THE INDUSTRIAL REVOLUTION**  
The transformation of industry and the economy in Britain between the 1780s and the 1850s is called the ‘industrial revolution’. This had far-reaching effects in Britain. Later, similar changes occurred in European countries and in the USA. These were to have a major impact on the society and economy of those countries and also on the rest of the world.

The industrial development in Britain is strongly associated with new machinery and technologies. These made it possible to produce goods on a massive scale compared to handicraft and handloom industries.  Industrialization led to greater prosperity for some, but in the initial stages it was linked with poor living and working conditions of millions of people, including women and children. This sparked off protests, which forced the government to enact laws for regulating conditions of work. But the Industrial Revolution and the huge wealth it created was unstoppable. A revolution started in Britain and powered by coal changed the world forever. Britain’s significance for world history rests on three elements: The Industrial Revolution, along with the imperial power and the development of political liberties which helped bring it about.

**THE FAR AMERICANS**  
The American Revolution (1775-83) is also known as the American Revolutionary War and the *U.S. War of Independence*. The conflict arose from growing tensions between residents of Great Britain’s 13 North American colonies and the colonial government, which represented the British crown. Skirmishes between British troops and colonial militiamen in Lexington and Concord in April 1775 kicked off the armed conflict, and by the following summer, the rebels were waging a full-scale war for their independence. France entered the American Revolution on the side of the colonists in 1778, turning what had essentially been a civil war into an international conflict. After French assistance helped the Continental Army force the British surrender at Yorktown, Virginia, in 1779, the Americans had effectively won their independence, though fighting would not formally end until 1783.

**THE HISTORY MAKING FRENCH REVOLUTION**  
A watershed event in modern world history, the French Revolution began in 1789 and ended in the late 1790s with the ascent of  Napolean Bonaparte. During this period, French citizens razed and redesigned their country’s political landscape, uprooting centuries old institutions such as absolute monarchy and the feudal system. Like the American Revolution before it, the French Revolution was influenced by Enlightenment ideals, particularly the concepts of popular sovereignty and inalienable rights. Although it failed to achieve all of its goals and at times degenerated into a chaotic bloodbath, the movement played a critical role in shaping modern nations by showing the world the power inherent in the will of the people.

**THE POLITICAL PHILOSOPHIES**  
The political philosophies as outlined by UPSC includes those of Capitalism, Socialism and Communism. Capitalism is the economic and social system (and also the mode of production) in which the means of production are predominantly privately owned and operated for profit, and distribution and exchange is in a mainly market economy. It is usually considered to involve the right of individuals and corporations to trade (using money) in goods, services, labour and land.

Some form of Capitalism has been dominant in the Western world since the end of feudalism in the Middle Ages, and has provided the main, although not exclusive, means of industrialization throughout much of the world. Its rise to prominence sprang out of the mercantilism of the 16th to the 18th Centuries, and followed the rise of Liberalism and laissez-faire economics in western society. The capitalist mode of production, however, may exist within societies with differing state systems (e.g. liberal democracy, fascism) and different social structures.

Socialism is a socio-economic system in which property and the distribution of wealth are subject to control by the workers, either directly through popular collectives such as workers’ councils, or indirectly exercised on behalf of the people by the state, and in which Egalitarianism or equality is an important goal. Thus, under Socialism, the means of production are owned by the state, community or the workers (as opposed to privately owned as under Capitalism).

Moving on to Communism, in modern usage, the term is applied to the movement that aims to overthrow the capitalist order by revolutionary means and to establish a classless society in which all goods will be socially owned. The theories of the movement come from Karl Marx, as modified by Vladimir Ilyich Lenin, leader of the successful Communist revolution in Russia. Communism, in this sense, is to be distinguished from socialism, which (as the term is commonly understood) seeks similar ends but by evolution rather than revolution.

**COLONIZATION AND DE-COLONIZATION**  
Colonialism is a political-economic phenomenon whereby various nations explored, conquered, settled, and exploited large areas of the world. The age of modern colonialism began about 1500, following the European discoveries of a sea route around Africa’s southern coast (1488) and of America (1492). With these events sea power shifted from the Mediterranean to the Atlantic and to the emerging nation-states of Portugal, Spain, the Dutch Republic, France, and England. By discovery, conquest, and settlement, these nations expanded and colonized throughout the world, spreading European institutions and culture. Colonialism has now come to be identified with rule over peoples of different race inhabiting lands separated by salt water from the imperial center; more particularly, it signifies direct political control by European states or states settled by Europeans, as the United States or Australia, over peoples of other races, notably over Asians and Africans. To this category should be added Japan’s rule over her dependent territories, lost after World War II. Some further features of the “colonial situation” are: domination of an alien minority, asserting racial and cultural superiority, over a materially inferior native majority; contact between a machine-oriented civilization with Christian origins, a powerful economy, and a rapid rhythm of life and a non-Christian civilization that lacks machines and is marked by a backward economy and a slow rhythm of life; and the imposition of the first civilization upon the second.

**THE WORLD WARS**  
**World War-1** was the first mass global war of the industrialized age, a demonstration of the prodigious strength, resilience and killing power of modern states. The war was also fought at a high point of patriotism and belief in the existing social hierarchy; beliefs that the war itself helped destroy, and that the modern world finds very hard to understand.

**World War-II** was the most devastating war witnessed by the world, which was global in all its respects as the conflagration was not confined to Europe alone, but engulfed the entire world. It took place between 1939 – 1945. It involved most of the world’s major countries divided into two opposing forces: the Allies and the Axis. Engagements were fought in the Pacific, in the jungles of South-East Asia, in the plains of Russia and in the deserts of Africa, in addition to Europe. In total, more than 100 million military personnel were mobilized during the war.

**COLD WAR**  
While the Cold War was an outcome of the emergence of the US and the USSR as two superpowers rival to each other, it was also rooted in the understanding that the destruction caused by the use of atom bombs is too costly for any country to bear. The logic is simple yet powerful. When two rival powers are in possession of nuclear weapons capable of inflicting death and destruction unacceptable to each other, a full-fledged war is unlikely. In spite of provocations, neither side would want to risk war since no political gains would justify the destruction of their societies.

In the event of a nuclear war, both sides will be so badly harmed that it will be impossible to declare one side or the other as the winner. Even if one of them tries to attack and disable the nuclear weapons of its rival, the other would still be left with enough nuclear weapons to inflict unacceptable destruction. This is called the *logic of ‘deterrence’*: both sides have the capacity to retaliate against an attack and to cause so much destruction that neither can afford to initiate war. Thus, the Cold War — in spite of being an intense form of rivalry between great powers — remained a ‘cold’ and not hot or shooting war. The deterrence relationship prevents war but not the rivalry between powers. Note the main military features of the Cold War. The two superpowers and the countries in the rival blocs led by the superpowers were expected to behave as rational and responsible actors. They were to be rational and responsible in the sense that they understood the risks in fighting wars that might involve the two superpowers.