

BIG HISTORY PROJECT

2019/20 SAMPLE YEAR-LONG COURSE PLAN

Zachary Cain, Big History Teacher, Edison Middle School, Champaign, Illinois

I have been teaching Big History to 125 sixth-graders for the past six years. While our students come to us from all types of backgrounds and ability levels, they all share an innate desire to understand the past. Our classes meet daily for 47 minutes each day, over the course of 36 weeks. We have chosen to use the year-long BHP course plan, with a focus on the overall narrative of BHP to help our students gain a greater understanding of how we have collectively arrived at our present world situation. We use a vast majority of the BHP resources provided for each of the units, but we also supplement the course with many hands-on projects that help foster our students' natural creativity and curiosity. We have also modified some BHP resources and activities to adapt them to the age level of our students. Feel free to contact me through the BHP Teacher Community on Yammer for additional information about activities I've either customized or added.



Profile	Sixth grade social studies teacher
School	Edison Middle School, Champaign, IL
A brief bio	This will be my nineteenth-year teaching in the Champaign School District, and my sixteenth teaching at Edison Middle School. This year will also mark our sixth-year teaching BHP to our students. I was born in Champaign and received my BA in history from the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign. I have been married to my wife, Bronwyn, for 16 years and we have 3 children.
Grades taught	6
Classes per day	5
Length of time per class	47 minutes
Length of school year	36 weeks
Number of BHP students per year	125
Base course plan	Year-long plan
How is your course content different from the standard course plan?	While we stick to the overall narrative and structure of the BHP course, we also supplement with many additional hands-on projects.



<p>How does your skills instruction differ from the standard course plan?</p>	<p>We focus on all of the traditional skills of BHP, but we also have our students focus on the CER writing process of Claim, Evidence, and Reasoning, which is specifically tied to our middle-level standards-based grading program. Within some of our modified assignments, students are able to do some “mini-investigation” CER assignments that give them additional practice making claims, finding adequate factual evidence to back up those claims, and using sound reasoning to explain how that evidence supports their claims.</p>
<p>What adjustments are you making to the content and skills to fit your students’ needs?</p>	<p>We will modify some readings, activities, and content to better suit our students age level. For the reading, we will adjust Lexile levels, provide access to the audio version of the reading, or use guiding questions to highlight the main points of the text. With some activities, we will shorten or extend them based on student choice. For content, we do have a couple of topics in Units 3 and 4 that will be mentioned, but will be left for more in-depth coverage in science classes because they fall within our district’s science curriculum.</p>
<p>What suggestions do you have for teachers who might choose to follow your course plan?</p>	<p>It might seem like a daunting task to teach 13.8 billion years of history in a single school year. Just keep the narrative at the heart of everything you do. If the students can keep the story of Big History at the forefront, they will truly come to enjoy and understand the course.</p>

Notes from BHP

1. There are a ton of videos, articles, and activities in the course, so feel free to pick and choose what works best for your students. Notes have been made in the outline to identify any lessons that focus on world history or science content. Activities, videos, and readings that teachers use to supplement their lessons have been added in red to the plans below.
2. Investigations 0, 2, 6, and 9 must be submitted to the Big History Project through the website. Each of these units has an Investigation Input Form into which students can copy and paste their essays. Each of these Investigations can also be submitted to BHP Score, which is a program in partnership with Revision Assistant that allows teachers to submit student Investigation essays for grading using the BHP Writing Rubric.

Course Learning Outcomes

1. Explain how thresholds of increasing complexity, differing scales of time and space, claim testing, and collective learning help us understand historical, current, and future events as part of a larger narrative.
2. Integrate perspectives from multiple disciplines to create, defend, and evaluate the history of the Universe and Universal change.
3. Deepen an understanding of key historical and scientific concepts and facts; use these in constructing explanations.
4. Engage in meaningful scientific inquiry and historical investigations by being able to hypothesize, form researchable questions, conduct research, revise one’s thinking, and present findings that are well-supported by scientific and historical evidence.
5. Critically evaluate, analyze, and synthesize primary and secondary historical, scientific, and technical texts to form well-crafted and carefully supported written and oral arguments.



6. Communicate arguments to a variety of audiences to support claims through analysis of substantive texts and topics; use valid reasoning and relevant and sufficient evidence through individual or shared writing, speaking, and other formats.
7. Locate and understand how our own place, our community's place, and humanity as a whole fit into and impact Big History's narrative.
8. Engage in historical analysis using the theories and practices from multiple disciplines, toward an integrated, interdisciplinary understanding of the history of the Universe.

Projected Pacing Guide*

Unit / Activity	Estimated Start	Estimated Duration
1	August 19	3 Weeks
2	September 9	3 Weeks
3	September 30	3 Weeks
4	October 21	3 Weeks
5	November 12	4 Weeks
Unit 5 PBL	December 9	2 Weeks
6	January 7	3 Weeks
7	January 27	4 Weeks
Unit 7 PBL	February 24	2 Weeks
8	March 9	3 Weeks
9	April 6	4 Weeks
10	May 4	3 Weeks

*Takes into account school holidays, in-service days, and other commonly missed time such as testing days

Program Evaluation Submission Schedule

Due Date	Unit	Item
<i>First week of school</i>	1	Teacher Perception Survey
	1	Student Perception Survey
	1	Investigation 0
<i>End of Unit 5</i>	5	Teacher Perception Survey
	5	Student Perception Survey
	5	Student Concept Assessment
<i>End of Unit 6</i>	6	Investigation 6
<i>End of course</i>	9	Investigation 9
	10	Teacher Perception Survey
	10	Student Perception Survey
	10	Student Concept Assessment
<i>Upon completion</i>	1	Teacher Log
	2	Teacher Log
	3	Teacher Log
	4	Teacher Log
	5	Teacher Log
	6	Teacher Log



	7	Teacher Log
	8	Teacher Log
	9	Teacher Log
	10	Teacher Log

Unit 1—What Is Big History?

Start Date: August 19, 2019 (3 weeks)

Learning Outcomes

1. Define thresholds of increasing complexity, origin stories, and scale.
2. Understand that Big History is a modern, science-based origin story that draws on many different types of knowledge.
3. Understand how you fit into the Big History narrative, using the concept of “thresholds” to frame your past, present, and future as well as the history of the Universe.
4. Understand what disciplines are and consider how the viewpoints of many different scholars can be integrated for a better understanding of a topic.
5. Learn to use timelines as a way to compare the scale of personal and historic events.
6. Identify a thesis statement and how writing is structured, and evaluate both of those elements in writing.

Unit 1 Driving Question

"Why do we look at things from far away and close up?"

Lesson 1.0—Welcome to Big History

1. **Activity:** History as Mystery
2. **Activity:** Easter Island Mystery
3. **Read:** Easter Island
4. **Activity:** Vocab – Word Wall
5. **Watch:** *What Is Big History?*
6. **Watch:** *The Big Bang – Crash Course*
7. **Activity:** Big History Website Scavenger Hunt
8. **Watch:** *A Big History of Everything – H2 (Clip 0:00 to 8:20)*
9. **Closing:** Investigation 0

Lesson 1.1—Scale

1. **Activity:** Scale – History of Me (Modified: My Threshold Moments Timeline Project)
2. **Watch:** *To Scale: The Solar System*
3. **Scale of the Universe Scavenger Hunt**
4. **Activity:** Vocab Tracking
5. **Activity:** Threshold Name Game
6. **Read:** “Big History Overview”
7. **Activity:** DQ Notebook
8. **Activity:** Scale – Big History on a Football Field (Modified: Thresholds of Increasing Complexity Poster Project)
9. **Activity:** Human History on a String
10. **Activity:** Scale – Timelines

Lesson 1.2—Origin Stories

1. **Watch:** *Big Questions – H2*



2. **Activity:** “Intro to Origin Stories”
3. **Read:** “Origin Stories Introduction”
4. **Read:** “Origin Story: Modern Scientific”
5. **Activity:** “Origin Stories Article Collection”
6. **Read:** “Origin Story: Chinese”
7. **Read:** “Origin Story Judeo-Christian”
8. **Read:** “Origin Story: Iroquois”
9. **Read:** “Origin Story: Mayan”
10. **Read:** “Origin Story: Greek”
11. **Read:** “Origin Story: Zulu”
12. **Read:** “Origin Story: Efik”
13. **Origin Story Comic Strip Project**
14. **Read:** “Cosmology and Faith”

Lesson 1.3—Claim Testing

1. **Opening:** Claim Testing – Snap Judgment
2. **Activity:** DQ Notebook
3. **Activity:** Vocab – Live Concept Mapping
4. **Read:** “Approaches to Knowledge”
5. **Watch:** *How Do We Decide What to Believe?*
6. **Activity:** Claim Testing – What are the Claim Testers?
7. **Claim Testers Trading Cards Project & Quiz**
8. **Activity:** Analyzing Investigation Writing – Claim and Focus
9. **Closing:** Investigation 1

Teacher unit notes: In this unit, we spend quite a bit of time talking about the essential skills and core concepts of the course, including claim testing, thinking across scale, integrating multiple disciplines, origin stories, thresholds of increasing complexity, and collective learning. We also spend a great deal of time setting up the various procedures and protocols that we will be using during the year, such as Three Close Reads, Cornell Notetaking strategies, and, for the first time this year, we will be trying to “flip the classroom” (most videos and readings will be done as homework, so that the majority of class time can be devoted to class discussion and whole-class and small-group activities). Contact me in the BHP Teacher Community on Yammer for additional information about activities I’ve either customized or added.

Unit 2—The Big Bang

Start Date: September 9, 2019 (3 weeks)

Learning Outcomes

1. Explain the basics of the Big Bang theory and the primary evidence that supports this theory.
2. Using evidence from texts and claim testing, explain why views of the Universe have changed over time and the roles that scientists played in shaping our understanding of the origin of the Universe.
3. Understand how to use claim testing to evaluate a claim or resource.
4. Locate Ptolemy, Copernicus, Galileo, Newton, and Hubble on a timeline and explain what each added to our collective understanding of the structure of the Universe.

Unit 2 Driving Questions

“How and why do individuals change their minds?”

“How do we know what we know about the past if there were no humans around to witness it?”



Lesson 2.0—The Big Bang

1. **Opening/Activity** – Causation: Natural Disasters
2. **Activity:** Vocab – Word Wall
3. **Activity:** DK Big History Book Scavenger Hunt
4. **Watch:** *A Big History of Everything* – H2 (Clip 8:25 to 12:04)
5. **Read:** “Complexity and Thresholds”
6. **Activity:** Narrative and Thresholds – The Big Bang
7. **Watch:** *Threshold 1 – The Big Bang*
8. **Activity:** **Threshold 1 Foldable Project**
9. **Activity:** This Threshold Today: The Big Bang
10. **Watch:** *Questions About the Big Bang*
11. **Closing:** Big Bang Infographic

Lesson 2.1—How Did Our Understanding of the Universe Change?

1. **Activity:** Claim Testing - Authority
2. **Activity:** DQ Notebook
3. **Activity:** Vocab Tracking
4. **Watch:** *Crash Course Big History: Why Cosmic Evolution Matters*
5. **Read:** “Claudius Ptolemy”
6. **Read:** “Galileo Galilei”
7. **Read:** “Nicolaus Copernicus”
8. **Read:** “Isaac Newton”
9. **Read:** Henrietta Leavitt
10. **Read:** “Edwin Hubble”
11. **Activity:** Scale - Changing Views Timeline
12. **Activity:** How Our View of the Universe Changed Dice Game & Mental Mapping Poster

Lesson 2.2—What Are Disciplines?

1. **Opening:** Disciplines – Who Knows What?
2. **Activity:** DQ Notebook
3. **Activity:** Vocab – Word Wheel
4. **Watch:** *Are We Alone?* – H2
5. **Watch:** *Ways of Knowing – Introduction to Cosmology*
6. **Watch:** *Ways of Knowing – Introduction to Astrophysics*
7. **Activity:** Disciplines - What Do You Know? What Do You Ask?
8. **Activity:** Analyzing Investigation Writing – Use of Evidence
9. **Closing:** Investigation 2

Note: Lesson 2.3 is for BHP Science implementations and is therefore omitted.

Teacher unit notes: In this unit, we add an additional Driving Question: “How do we know what we know about the past if there were no humans around to witness it?” This really helps to set the stage for the integration of multiple disciplines, as well as the need for claim testers to help weed out fact from fiction. While Lesson 2.1 is really at the heart of this unit, definitely take some time to dig into Lesson 2.2 and focus on the first of the many disciplines that will help to tell the BHP story.

Contact me in the BHP Teacher Community on Yammer for additional information about activities I’ve either customized or added.

Unit 3—Stars & Elements



Start Date: September 30, 2019 (3 weeks)

Learning Outcomes

1. Describe how stars form.
2. Explain what happens in the life of a star and explain what happens when a star dies.
3. Explain how the death of stars results in the creation of heavier elements.
4. Explain why the formation of stars and the emergence of elements are so important in our world.
5. Understand what scholars from multiple disciplines know about a topic and the questions they can ask to gain an understanding of the topic from an integrated perspective.
6. Understand how to use and apply the concept of periodization.
7. Identify various types of causes and consequences, including short-term, long-term, and triggering events.

Unit 3 Driving Question

"How can looking at the same information from different perspectives pave the way for progress?"

Lesson 3.0—How Were Stars Formed?

1. **Opening:** The Life of a Star
2. **Activity:** Vocab – Word Wall
3. **Watch:** How Were Stars Formed?
4. **Activity:** Narratives and Thresholds – The Stars Light Up
5. **Watch:** Threshold 2 – The Stars Light Up
6. **Activity:** Threshold 2 Foldable Project
7. **Activity:** Causation – Star Formation Part 1 (See note below with Part II)
8. **Watch:** A Big History of Everything – H2 (Clip 12:05 to 16:47)
9. **Activity:** This Threshold Today: The Stars Light Up
10. **Activity:** DQ Notebook
11. **Closing:** Star Comics

Lesson 3.1—Creation of Complex Elements

1. **Opening:** Is It in There?
2. **Activity:** Narratives and Thresholds – New Chemical Elements
3. **Activity:** Vocab Tracking
4. **Watch:** Threshold 3 – New Chemical Elements
5. **Activity:** Threshold 3 Foldable Project
6. **Watch:** What Did Stars Give Us?
7. **Watch:** Crash Course Big History: Why Star Stuff Matters
8. **Activity:** Causation – Star Formation Part II (Combined Parts I and II for Mental Maps and CER Writing Assignment)
9. **Read:** "A Little Big History of Silver"
10. **Closing:** Superhero Element (Movie Poster & Flipgrid Movie Trailer Project)

Lesson 3.2—Ways of Knowing: Stars and Elements

1. **Opening:** Claim Testing - Intuition
2. **Activity:** DQ Notebook
3. **Activity:** Vocab – Word Relay
4. **Watch:** Ways of Knowing – Intro to Chemistry
5. **Activity:** Disciplines - What Do You Know? What Do You Ask?
6. **Watch:** Crash Course Chemistry – Periodic Table of Elements
7. **Read:** "Dmitri Mendeleev – Building the Periodic Table of Elements"
8. **Read:** "Marie Curie – Chemistry, Physics, and Radioactivity"
9. **Activity:** Scale - Timelines and Periodization



10. **Activity:** Analyzing Investigation Writing – Applying BHP Concepts
11. **Closing:** Investigation 3 (Modified to focus on using BHP concepts when writing)

Note: Lessons 3.3 and 3.4 are for BHP Science implementations and are therefore omitted.

Teacher unit notes: There is a ton going on in this unit, and it's one where you could easily spend an entire semester if you try to cover everything. These are two points to keep in mind: 1. You do not need to do everything: Pick and choose what works best for your students. 2. Keep to the overall narrative of BHP. The essential thing that students need to understand from this unit is how stars form, and that aging and dying stars are what created the needed elements (ingredients) for later thresholds of increasing complexity to take place.

Contact me in the BHP Teacher Community on Yammer for additional information about activities I've either customized or added.

Unit 4—Our Solar System & Earth

Start Date: October 21, 2019 (3 weeks)

Learning Outcomes

1. Explain why planets are more complex than stars.
2. Use evidence to explain how the Earth and its atmosphere developed and changed over time.
3. Explain the basic mechanisms and key pieces of evidence for plate tectonics, and how plate tectonics impacts life on Earth.
4. Define geology, the types of questions geologists ask, and the tools they use to answer those questions.
5. Explain why geology is important to understanding the history of the Earth.
6. Understand how geologists can work with scientists and historians from other disciplines to form a deeper understanding of the history of the Earth.
7. Understand multiple causes and how identify them.
8. Demonstrate an ability to construct an argument in writing.

Unit 4 Driving Question

"How and why do theories become generally accepted?"

Lesson 4.0—Earth & the Formation of Our Solar System

1. **Opening:** Planet Card Sort
2. **Activity:** Vocab – Word Wall
3. **Activity:** Narratives and Thresholds – Earth & the Solar System
4. **Watch:** *Threshold 4 – Earth & the Solar System*
5. **Activity:** Threshold 4 Foldable Project
6. **Watch:** *How Did Earth and the Solar System Form?*
7. **Read:** "How Our Solar System Formed"
8. **Activity:** Causation – Categorizing Causes
9. **Activity:** Active Accretion

Lesson 4.1—What Was Young Earth Like?

1. **Opening:** Analyzing Investigation Writing – Organization
2. **Activity:** DQ Notebook
3. **Activity:** Vocab Tracking
4. **Watch:** *What Was the Young Earth Like?*
5. **Watch:** *The Early Atmosphere*



6. **Activity:** Earth & the Solar System “Because/Then” CER Puzzle and Writing Assignment
7. **Activity:** Formation of the Earth & Solar System Flipbook Project
8. **Closing:** This Threshold Today – Earth and the Solar System

Lesson 4.2—Why Is Plate Tectonics Important?

1. **Watch:** Crash Course: *The Solar System & the Earth*
2. **Watch:** *Our Shifting Globe*
3. **Read:** “Why We're All Lava Surfers”
4. **Closing:** *Biography of the Earth Children’s Book Project*

Lesson 4.3—Ways of Knowing: Our Solar System and Earth

1. **Opening:** Vocab – Word Sneak
2. **Activity:** DQ Notebook
3. **Watch:** *Introduction to Geology*
4. **Read:** “Alfred Wegener & Harry Hess”
5. **Activity:** Claim Testing - Evidence
6. **Read:** “Eratosthenes”
7. **Watch:** *Introduction to the Geologic Time Chart*
8. **Read:** “Principles of Geology”
9. **Activity:** Disciplines - What Do You Know? What Do You Ask?
10. **Activity:** Was There Science Before the Scientific Revolution?
11. **Activity:** Revising Investigation Writing – Claim and Focus
12. **Closing:** Investigation 4 (Modified to focus on writing good claims)

Note: Lessons 4.4 and 4.5 are for BHP Science implementations and are therefore omitted.

Teacher unit notes: This unit is always a lot of fun, and students begin getting excited because we are creeping into familiar territory with the formation of Earth and the Solar System. This is also a point in the year where we try to build in some outside activities at our local planetarium and bring in some guest speakers, such as professional astronomers and astrophysicists from our local university.

Contact me in the BHP Teacher Community on Yammer for additional information about activities I’ve either customized or added.

Unit 5—Life

Start Date: November 12, 2019 (4 weeks)

Learning Outcomes

1. Describe the conditions that made it possible for life to emerge on Earth.
2. Explain the differences between life and nonlife.
3. Describe the major events in the development of life on Earth and explain what is meant by the term *biosphere*.
4. Use evidence to explain adaptation and evolution, including Darwin’s theory of natural selection and DNA.
5. Demonstrate using texts as evidence in historical writing.

Unit 5 Driving Question

“How and why do theories evolve?”

Lesson 5.0—What Is Life?



1. **Opening:** DQ Notebook
2. **Activity:** [Vocab – Word Wall](#)
3. **Watch:** *A Big History of Everything – H2 (Clip 26:45 to 39:42)*
4. **Activity:** How Closely Related Are We?
5. **Watch:** *Crash Course: The Origin of Life*
6. **Read:** “Life and Purpose”

Lesson 5.1—How Did Life Begin and Change?

1. **Opening:** Spontaneous Generation
2. **Activity:** [Vocab Tracking](#)
3. **Watch:** *How Did Life Begin and Change?*
4. **Activity:** [Threshold 5 Foldable Project](#)
5. **Activity:** [Narratives and Thresholds – Life](#)
6. **Watch:** *Mini Thresholds of Life*
7. **Activity:** [Are These the Right Mini Thresholds of Life? \(Modified Mini-Thresholds of Life Foldable Project and CER Writing Assignment\)](#)
8. **Watch:** *Life in All Its Forms*
9. **Activity:** The Tree of Life Infographic
10. **Watch:** *Crash Course Big History: Why the Evolutionary Epic Matters*

Lesson 5.2—How Do Earth and Life Interact?

1. **Opening:** Living in the Extremes of the Biosphere
2. **Activity:** [Vocab – What’s My Word?](#)
3. **Activity:** DQ Notebook
4. **Read:** “What Is the Biosphere?”
5. **Watch:** *How Do Earth and Life Interact?*
6. **Activity:** A Year in the Life of a Species
7. **Watch:** *How We Proved an Asteroid Wiped Out the Dinosaurs*
8. **Activity:** [Mount Si Jurassic Park Research Report & Mural Project](#)
9. **Activity:** [Mass Extinction Mini-Lesson & Sixth Mass Extinction CER Writing Assignment](#)

Lesson 5.3—Ways of Knowing: Life

1. **Activity:** The Voyage of the Beagle
2. **Read:** “Darwin, Evolution, and Faith”
3. **Read:** “Crick, Watson, and Franklin”
4. **Watch:** *Codes – H2*
5. **Activity:** [Scale – Evolution and Life Timeline](#)
6. **Activity:** [Revising Investigation Writing: Use of Evidence](#)
7. **Closing:** [Invent a Species PBL & Tournament of Species](#)
8. **Activity:** [Racing Extinction CER Writing Assignment](#)
9. **Activity:** [First Semester Reflection & Threshold Card Sort Mini-Project](#)

Note: Lesson 5.4 is for BHP Science implementations and is therefore omitted.

Teacher unit notes: There is so much going on in this unit that students will definitely be ready for winter break by the time it’s done. Although they may be mentally exhausted by the end of the unit, it is one that students consistently rank as their favorite at the end of the course. A couple of additional points of emphasis that we use in this unit: 1. Although life exists in many different forms on our planet, it is remarkable how closely related all life is. 2. Although life is incredibly complex compared to the previous thresholds, it is also incredibly fragile, and we as a species must do better when it comes to preserving life on Earth.



Contact me in the BHP Teacher Community on Yammer for additional information about activities I've either customized or added.

Unit 6—Early Humans

Start Date: January 7, 2020 (3 weeks)

Learning Outcomes

1. Describe human evolution, using evidence and connection to other species of mammals.
2. Explain whether or not symbolic language makes humans different.
3. Describe how early humans lived.
4. Explain collective learning.
5. Understand what scholars from multiple disciplines know about a topic and the questions they can ask to gain an understanding of the topic from an integrated perspective.
6. Show early human migration on a map.
7. Demonstrate using BHP concepts accurately in writing.
8. Demonstrate an understanding of multiple causes and how they complicate the relationship between causes, consequences, and their interaction with one another.

Unit 6 Driving Question

"What makes humans different from other species?"

Lesson 6.0—How Our Ancestors Evolved

1. **Activity:** [Vocab – Word Wall](#)
2. **Activity:** [DK Big History Book Scavenger Hunt](#)
3. **Opening:** Early Ancestors
4. **Watch:** [Threshold 6 – Humans and Collective Learning](#)
5. **Activity:** [Threshold 6 Foldable Project](#)
6. **Activity:** [Early Human Ancestors Skull Analysis](#)
7. **Activity:** [Reading/Thinking/Writing Like an Anthropologist](#)
8. **Watch:** [Human Evolution – Crash Course](#)
9. **Activity:** [Evolution Comic \(Modified Early Human Ancestors Brochure Project\)](#)
10. **Read:** "Lucy and the Leakeys"
11. **Read:** "Jane Goodall"

Lesson 6.1—Ways of Knowing: Early Humans

1. **Activity:** [Vocab Tracking](#)
2. **Activity:** [DQ Notebook](#)
3. **Watch:** [Intro to Anthropology](#)
4. **Watch:** [Intro to Archaeology](#)
5. **Activity:** [Disciplines - What Do You Know? What Do You Ask?](#)
6. **Activity:** [Historos Cave \(Modified Interpreting the Archaeological Record CER Writing Assignment\)](#)
7. **Closing:** [Little Big History Kickoff](#)

Lesson 6.2—Collective Learning

1. **Opening:** [Collective Learning Snap Judgment](#)
2. **Read:** "Collective Learning" (Part 1)
3. **Watch:** [Crash Course Big History: Why Human Evolution Matters](#)
4. **Watch:** [Common Man – H2](#)
5. **Watch:** [Early Evidence of Collective Learning](#)



6. **Activity:** Culture and Collective Learning Debate
7. **Closing:** Causation - Alphonse the Camel
8. **Activity:** Multiple Causation: What Caused Neanderthals to Go Extinct CER Writing Assignment

Lesson 6.3—How Did the First Humans Live?

1. **Opening:** DQ Notebook
2. **Watch:** *How Did the First Humans Live?*
3. **Read:** “Foraging”
4. **Watch:** *From Foraging to Food Shopping*
5. **Activity:** Hunter Gatherer Menu
6. **Watch:** *Crash Course Big History: Why Human Ancestry Matters*
7. **Activity:** Human Migration Patterns
8. **Activity:** Little Big History – Choosing Your Focus
9. **Activity:** Revising Investigation Writing – Applying BHP Concepts
10. **Closing:** Investigation 6 (Focus on Evidence)
11. **Activity:** Cold Case: Otzi the Iceman—Was It Murder? CER Writing Assignment

Teacher unit notes: This is by far one of my favorite units. It’s one that I could spend an entire semester teaching. While it is easy to get bogged down with looking at all of the evolutionary changes that have taken place among our earliest human ancestors, the true key to this unit is getting students to understand that collective learning has been the key factor in our species’ success. Collective learning will also be the factor that will set in motion all of the following thresholds of increasing complexity, so this will be an important piece to return to in Units 7 through 10.

Contact me in the BHP Teacher Community on Yammer for additional information about activities I’ve either customized or added.

Unit 7—Agriculture & Civilization

Start Date: January 27, 2020 (4 weeks)

Learning Outcomes

1. Define agriculture and describe where it emerged.
2. Identify the features of agrarian civilizations.
3. Understand the similarities and differences between the lifestyles of hunter-gatherers and farmers.
4. Describe how early civilizations formed and their key features.
5. Understand what scholars from multiple disciplines know about agriculture and civilization and the information they can derive from them using an integrated perspective.
6. Describe how agrarian civilizations formed and analyze their key similarities and differences.
7. Use sentence starters to strengthen making an argument in writing.

Unit 7 Driving Question

"To what extent was farming an improvement over foraging?"

Lesson 7.0—The Rise of Agriculture

1. **Activity:** Vocab – Word Wall
2. **Activity:** This Threshold Today - Agriculture
3. **Watch:** *Threshold 7 —Agriculture*
4. **Activity:** Threshold 7 Foldable Project
5. **Activity:** DQ Notebook



6. **Watch:** *Why Was Agriculture So Important?*
7. **Watch:** *Jacqueline Howard Presents: History of Domestic Animals*
8. **Read:** “Collective Learning” (Part 2)
9. **Activity:** *Biography of a Crop*
10. **Read:** “What’s for Dinner Tonight? Evidence of Early Agriculture – The First Farmers”
11. **Closing:** *Little Big History Biography*

Lesson 7.1—The First Cities and States Appear

1. **Opening:** *Comparing Crops*
2. **Activity:** *Vocab Tracking*
3. **Watch:** *Where and Why Did the First Cities and States Appear?*
4. **Read:** *Agrarian Civilizations Introduction*
5. **Activity:** *Comparing Civilizations*
6. **Read:** “Uruk”
7. **Read:** “Mesoamerica”
8. **Read:** “Jericho”
9. **Read:** “East Asia”
10. **Read:** “Greco Roman”
11. **Read:** “Aksum”
12. **Read:** “Ghana”
13. **Read:** “We’re Not in Kansas Anymore: The Emergence of Early Cities”
14. **Read:** “The Origin of World Religions”
15. **Activity:** *Anatomy & Autopsy of a Civilization Poster Project and Gallery Walk Comparison*

Lesson 7.2—Ways of Knowing: Agriculture and Civilization

1. **Opening:** *Social Status, Power, and Human Burials*
2. **Watch:** *Intro to History*
3. **Read:** “Recordkeeping and History”
4. **Activity:** *Disciplines - What Do You Know? What Do You Ask?*
5. **Watch:** *Migrations & Intensification – Crash Course*
6. **Activity:** *DQ Notebook*
7. **Read:** “The Origin of Agriculture in Africa”
8. **Activity:** *Little Big History – Research Questions*
9. **Activity:** *The Rise, Fall, and Collapse of Civilizations*
10. **Closing:** *Were They Pushed or Did They Jump?*
11. **Activity:** *Revising Investigation Writing – Sentence Starters Part 1*
12. **Closing:** *Investigation 7 (Focus on Reasoning)*
13. **Activity:** *Claim Testing Mummification (Chicken Mummies)*

Note: Lesson 7.3 is for BHP Science implementations and is therefore omitted.

Teacher unit notes: This unit used to be our curriculum for the entire year, so it is very tempting to try to cover all of the favorite lessons we used to teach. The main focus, though, is on the development of agriculture, and all of the benefits (and detriments) that it brought for humans. Of course, there is absolutely no way of getting out of Unit 7 without claim testing mummification by actually mummifying chickens!

Contact me in the BHP Teacher Community on Yammer for additional information about activities I’ve either customized or added.

Unit 8—Expansion & Interconnection

Start Date: March 9, 2020 (3 weeks)



Learning Outcomes

1. Analyze what propelled the expansion and interconnection of agrarian civilizations.
2. Investigate the implications of interconnected societies and regions by looking at spread of people, plants, animals, disease, goods, and ideas.
3. Explain how new networks of exchange accelerated collective learning and innovation.
4. Describe the changing characteristics of societies in the four world zones before and after oceanic travel and the thickening of global networks.
5. Use sentence starters to strengthen the use of texts as evidence in writing.
6. Analyze a complex historical event through the lens of causality.

Unit 8 Driving Question

"What are the positive and negative impacts of interconnection?"

Lesson 8.0—Expansion

1. **Opening:** What Caused Expansion?
2. **Activity:** [Vocab – Word Wall](#)
3. **Opening:** DQ Notebook
4. **Watch:** *Why Did Civilization Expand?*
5. **Watch:** *The Modern Revolution – Crash Course*
6. **Activity:** World Zone Game
7. **Read:** "The Four World Zones"
8. **Closing – Causation – The Modern Revolution**

Lesson 8.1—Exploration & Interconnection

1. **Opening:** World Travelers
2. **Activity:** [Vocab Tracking](#)
3. **Watch:** *Crash Course Big History: Why Early Globalization Matters*
4. **Read:** "China: The First Great Divergence"
5. **Read:** "An Age of Adventure"
6. **Activity:** An Age of Adventure
7. **Read:** "Ibn Battuta"
8. **Read:** "Marco Polo"
9. **Read:** "Zheng He"
10. **Activity:** Explorers Mini Project (**Modified:** [International Explorers Hall of Fame Research & Poster Project](#))
11. **Watch:** *Brain Boost – H2*
12. **Activity:** [Human Migration Patterns II](#)
13. **Closing:** [Issues of Colonization Mini Project](#)
14. **Activity:** [Columbian Exchange Infographic Poster Project](#)

Note: Lesson 8.2 is for BHP World History implementations and is therefore omitted.

Lesson 8.3—Commerce & Collective Learning

1. **Opening:** Quick Poll – Has the Scientific Revolution Ended?
2. **Activity:** DQ Notebook
3. **Watch:** *Jacqueline Howard Presents: The History of Money*
4. **Read:** "One Lump or Two? The Development of a Global Economy"
5. **Watch:** *Systems of Exchange and Trade*
6. **Read:** "Benjamin Banneker: Science in Adversity"
7. **Read:** "The First Silk Roads"
8. **Read:** "Lost on the Silk Road"
9. **Read:** "A Curious Case: African Agrarianism"



10. **Activity:** Personal Supply Chain
11. **Activity:** *Is It Really an Ethnic Restaurant?*
12. **Activity:** Little Big History Final Project
13. **Read:** “She Blinded Me with Science: Collective Learning and the Emergence of Modern Science”
14. **Activity:** Debate: Has the Scientific Revolution Ended?
15. **Activity:** *Black Death Comic Book Project*
16. **Activity:** *Revising Investigation Writing – Sentence Starters Part 2*
17. **Closing:** Investigation 8 (*Focus on Counterclaims*)

Teacher unit notes: It is often hard to get students to comprehend the sheer size of the impact that globalization has had on our world since an interconnected world is all they have ever known. The World Zone Game is definitely a must-do activity to start off the unit, and coupling it with the Personal Supply Chain activity at the end of the unit really helps to bring home the impacts of globalization.

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Unit 9—Acceleration

Start Date: April 6, 2020 (4 weeks)

Learning Outcomes

1. Describe accelerating global change and the factors that describe it.
2. Understand the key features that define the Anthropocene.
3. Describe the acceleration in world population, technology, science, communication, and transportation. Explain how they have benefited and threatened humanity.
4. Explain the changes in the use, distribution, and importance of natural resources on human life.
5. Use sentence starters to build skills in applying BHP concepts to writing.

Unit 9 Driving Question

“To what extent has the Modern Revolution been a positive or a negative force?”

Note: Lesson 9.0 is for BHP World History implementations.

Lesson 9.1—Acceleration

1. **Opening:** The Appetite for Energy
2. **Activity:** *Vocab – Word Wall*
3. **Activity:** DQ Notebook
4. **Watch:** *Crash Course World History: The Industrial Revolution*
5. **Read:** “The Industrial Revolution”
6. **Activity:** *Threshold 8 Foldable Project*
7. **Activity:** *Industrial Revolution Infographic Poster Project*
8. **Watch:** *How Did Change Accelerate?*
9. **Read:** “Acceleration”
10. **Activity:** *Debate: Is Change Accelerating?*

Lesson 9.2—The Anthropocene

1. **Watch:** *Crash Course: The Anthropocene and the Near Future*
2. **Activity:** *Vocab Tracking*
3. **Read:** “The Anthropocene”



4. **Activity:** The Anthropocene Infographic Poster Project
5. **Read:** “Anthropocene Africa”
6. **Activity:** Graphing Population Growth
7. **Closing:** The Impact of Population Growth Essay

Lesson 9.3—Changing Economies

1. **Opening:** DQ Notebook
2. **Read:** “Collective Learning” (Part 4)
3. **Watch:** *A Big History of Everything* – H2 (Clip 1:07 to 1:14)
4. **Read:** “Smith, Marx, and Keynes”
5. **Activity:** This Threshold Today
6. **Activity:** Revising Investigation Writing: Sentence Starters Part 3
7. **Closing:** Investigation 9 (Bringing It All Together: Claim, Evidence, Reasoning, Counterclaims, and BHP Concepts)

Note: Lessons 9.4 to 9.7 are for BHP World History implementations and are therefore omitted. Lessons 9.8 and 9.9 are for BHP Science implementations and are therefore omitted.

Teacher unit notes: I really try to present both sides of the argument for why the Anthropocene was good and bad, and then push students to choose one side or the other to argue. This helps as a lead-in to Unit 10 and shapes their own personal visions of the future and where they believe humanity is headed.

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Unit 10—The Future

Start Date: May 4, 2020 (4 weeks)

Learning Outcomes

1. Explain the Big History story and its defining features and patterns.
2. Identify important human and environmental issues that affect the future of our species and the biosphere.
3. Propose a vision of the future based on new understandings of the past.

Unit 10 Driving Question

"What's the next threshold?"

Lesson 10.0—Looking Back

1. **Opening:** Timeline Review
2. **Activity:** Vocab – Word Wall
3. **Watch:** *The History of Everything* – TED
4. **Activity:** DQ Notebook
5. **Activity:** Scale
6. **Closing:** Disciplines: What Do You Know? What Do You Ask?

Lesson 10.1—The Biosphere

1. **Opening:** Natural Disasters
2. **Activity:** Vocab Tracking
3. **Watch:** *Crash Course World History: Globalization II – Good or Bad*



4. **Watch:** *The Atmosphere and Climate*
5. **Watch:** *Jacqueline Howard Presents: A Day on Mars*
6. **Activity:** *Gapminder Card Sort*
7. **Closing:** *Visions of the Future*

Lesson 10.2—Looking Forward

1. **Watch:** *A Big History of Everything – H2*
2. **Read:** *“Complexity and the Future”*
3. **Watch:** *Bill Gates: Visions of the Future*
4. **Watch:** *Crash Course: The Deep Future*
5. **Read:** *“Biography of Sylvester James Gates, Jr”*
6. **Activity:** *DQ Notebook*
7. **Activity:** *Threshold 9 Foldable Project*
8. **Activity:** *Thresholds of Increasing Complexity Year in Review Gallery Walk & Mural Project*
9. **Activity:** *Personal Visions of the Future Letter Project*
10. **Closing:** *The Future of Our Planet*

Note: Lesson 10.3 is for BHP Science implementations and is therefore omitted.

Teacher unit notes: At this point in the year, you might run into a time crunch. I have found that one of the best ways to truly wrap up the course is to spend at least one day doing a complete review by examining what parts of the BHP narrative have really stuck with the students. The David Christian TED Talk is a must for this.

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