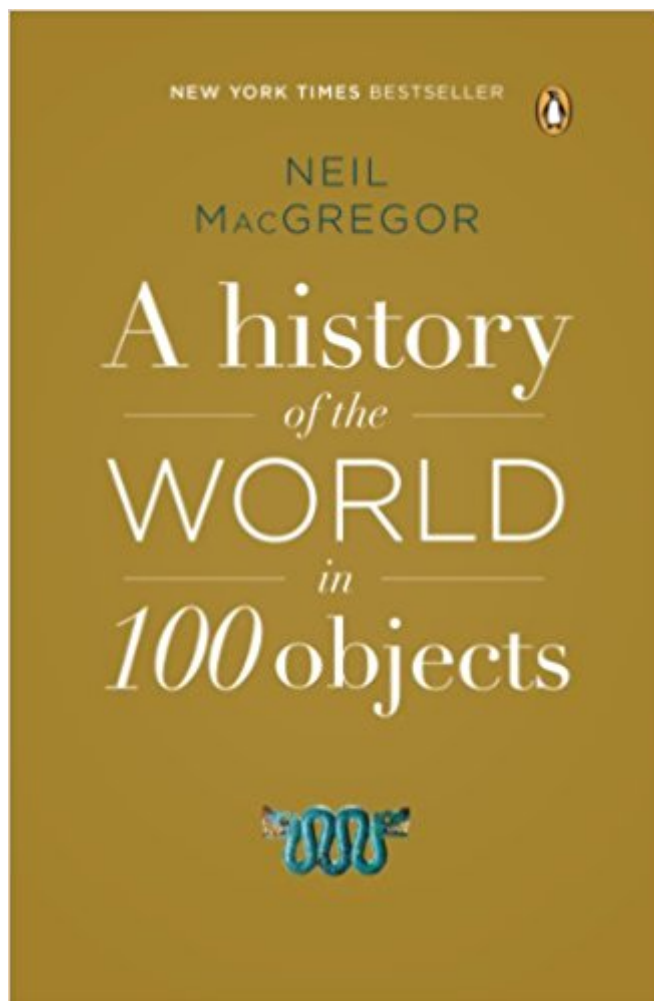


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# A History Of The World In 100 Objects



## Synopsis

"An enthralling and profoundly humane book that every civilized person should read." --The Wall Street Journal

• The blockbuster New York Times bestseller and the companion volume to the wildly popular radio series

When did people first start to wear jewelry or play music? When were cows domesticated, and why do we feed their milk to our children? Where were the first cities, and what made them succeed? Who developed math--or invented money? The history of humanity is one of invention and innovation, as we have continually created new things to use, to admire, or leave our mark on the world. In this groundbreaking book, Neil MacGregor turns to objects that previous civilizations have left behind to paint a portrait of mankind's evolution, focusing on unexpected turning points.

• Beginning with a chopping tool from the Olduvai Gorge in Africa and ending with a recent innovation that is transforming the way we power our world, he urges us to see history as a kaleidoscope--shifting, interconnected, constantly surprising. A landmark bestseller, *A History of the World in 100 Objects* is one of the most unusual and engrossing history books to be published in years.

• "None could have imagined quite how the radio series would permeate the national consciousness. Well over 12.5 million podcasts have been downloaded since the first programme and more than 550 museums around Britain have launched similar series featuring local history. . . . MacGregor's voice comes through as distinctively as it did on radio and his arguments about the interconnectedness of disparate societies through the ages are all the stronger for the detail afforded by extra space. A book to savour and start over."

• The Economist

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

Best Books of the Month, November 2011: In *A History of the World in 100 Objects*, Neal MacGregor, director of the British Museum, takes readers on a tour of the world by way of its material goods. From everyday items such as pots, utensils, and money to valuables such as art and jewelry, MacGregor shows that the things humans have left behind are often as rich and informative as written texts. Whether it's a strange and unique object like a throne made of rifles from Mozambique or a medieval German crystal, or a familiar one like a sculpture of the head of Augustus or Hokusai's painting *The Great Wave*, MacGregor skillfully weaves each one into the fabric of the society that it came from. In that sense, the book is much more than a museum catalog: it's a hundred keyhole views into a hundred different societies from around the world and throughout history. --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

Praise for *A History of the World in 100 Objects*: "A beautiful and absorbing book, a visual history of humanity . . . filled with equally fascinating objects, some famous, some not, nearly all of them intimate, telling and strange." •Dwight Garner, *The New York Times* "Spotlighting artworks, artifacts and documents from the British Museum's vast collections, Neil MacGregor, the museum's director, brilliantly elucidates and connects items ranging from Zhou Dynasty bronze vessels to Victorian tea sets, from the Rosetta Stone to etchings by David Hockney, from pieces of eight to the modern credit card. Traversing continents, cultures and epochs with perfect aplomb, it is ultimately a defense of why the universal museum remains a vital institution in today's world. This is an enthralling and profoundly humane book that every civilized person should read." •Jonathan Lopez, *Wall Street Journal* "A brave and original undertaking . . . Each of the sections has something interesting to say, and prior knowledge of a given topic does not prevent us from gathering new insights from the text and the illustrations, and new angles of vision. Some of the images scattered through the book are so astonishing and so far from our usual perceptions that I don't think I will ever forget them. . . . MacGregor writes with energy and flair, and this is an entertaining and informative book." •Jonathan Spence, *The New York Review of Books* "Arresting . . . This beautifully illustrated book demonstrates how much we can learn about past societies from the things they have left behind. British Museum director MacGregor provides insightful commentaries on each of the objects in an appealing, conversational style. . . . A book to savor, full of information and surprises." •Kirkus Reviews "MacGregor has done more to capture the magic and importance of history

than any number of academic monographs. We are swept from Africa 2 million years ago to the dawn of the 21st century on a whistle-stop tour that avoids most of the obvious destinations but still feels enormously satisfying. *•Sunday Times, History book of the Year* “Bound to be a popular present this Christmas . . . Everyone knows about the sculptures from the Parthenon. . . . but I was amazed by the boggle-eyed monster carved into the base of a wooden stool that once belonged to a chieftain of the largely forgotten Taino people of the Caribbean, who gave us words such as hurricane, barbecue, hammock and tobacco . . . Erudite and entertaining, monumental yet relaxed. *•The Telegraph, Best book of the Year* “The most enlightening book of recent times. *•The Independent* “Wonderful . . . The swirl and sweep of his story transports us to every corner of the globe, and illustrates how different cultures have always communicated, traded, and fought with one another. *•Tom Holland, The Observer* “Marvelous . . . brilliant, engagingly written, deeply researched. *•Mary Beard, The Guardian* “The style is authentic, personal and humorous. MacGregor demonstrates the power of objects to recover the place in history of lost civilisations. *•Andrew Roberts, Financial Times* “None could have imagined quite how the radio series would permeate the national consciousness. Well over 12.5 million podcasts have been downloaded since the first programme and more than 550 museums around Britain have launched similar series featuring local history. . . . MacGregor’s voice comes through as distinctively as it did on radio and his arguments about the interconnectedness of disparate societies through the ages are all the stronger for the detail afforded by extra space. A book to savour and start over. *•The Economist*

I’m afraid I must respectfully disagree with other customers in the review section. For the price, this is a FIVE-STAR book. It is illustrated beautifully with full color photographs. I have the hard-copy and not the Kindle version (though I do own a Kindle). My guess is that the pages would present stunningly on the Kindle for iPad or Kindle for Mac. I also have a Kindle E-ink reader. I doubt it would show well on that last device. I noticed one of the reviewers criticized the photo quality. I must disagree. I find it to be top notch. It is presented in a matte format rather than glossy print.. so my guess is the reviewer would have preferred the glossy versions. I, on the other hand, love the matte finishes on all the photographs which are nicely crisp and detailed.EXCELLENT book for the price. A perfect gift for a history buff. I love it and I bought it here on .

This is an excellent read. As usual, BBC does not disappoint. The book is compiled from transcripts

of a 100-episode series on BBC Radio. One hundred objects are thoughtfully picked from exhibits at the British Museum to chronicle the history of mankind, from its earliest beginnings up to the 21st century. The 100 chapters are short, but solid, each corresponding to an episode on radio. The book is great for leisurely, but very informative reading. A definite advantage that the book has over the radio episodes is that it shows each of the 100 objects in full colour. The book is highly recommended for any reader who is interested in understanding the development of mankind. It provides clear and useful background for reflecting on how we have come to where we are -- when and how we have progressed, as well as when and how often we have regressed. I read a Kindle version, which allows me to magnify photographs to look closely at the 100 objects. My only complaint is that, with Kindle, it has been rather more cumbersome for me to refer back to the page with the photographs in each chapter while I was cruising through.

I believe I learned more per page reading this book than any I've ever read. A tour through all of history using objects collected (stolen?) by the British Museum, this book is a bravura execution of material culture and archaeological studies. In fact, I used several entries with my Advanced Placement Literature class in order to expose them to effective and interesting "close reading." MacGregor does with objects what literary critics do with a passage of poetry: he describes the object (lovely pictures ARE included), he gives a fascinating context of the period in which this object was used, and finally, provides an analysis of what the object "says" about the people, nation, and region that used or owned it. I find this method of historical explication incredibly engaging. Rather than begin with abstract concepts like democracy, Federalism, or ethnic cleansing, MacGregor begins with the concrete--a vase, a coin, a flower pot-- and says here's what this culture produced, here's what that says about them. This also dovetails nicely with what I teach in class regarding advertising; that we can come to understand the ideals of a nation by studying its advertisements. Interestingly, the objects MacGregor chooses also function as "advertisements" for their respective milieus. A testament to how well this book is written and constructed is that I read it incredibly quickly. Before I knew it, I was on object 56 at the 300 something page mark and I had no mental fatigue. The fact that the book is organized in 100 3 to 4 pages "chapters" helps a lot because I found myself reading a few objects here and there whenever I had some spare time. I recommend this book highly to anyone who has even a fleeting interest in archaeology or cultural materialism; your efforts, and the rather hefty price of the book will be worth it.

Each of these BBC broadcasts, here in printed form, are absolutely brilliant. Mr. MacGregor has a

rigorous and poetic grasp of these various and symbolic representations of the past. I have had the privilege of visiting the British Museum at least 8 times during my lifetime. I plan to visit it again, like a small child, and seek out the brilliant treasures Mr. MacGregor describes.

This is an amazing book, it is interesting and has a readable text that is so often missed in nonfiction. Have listened to him on NPR and this is what made me want the book- gave it twice as a gift.

Well organized. The history behind each of these beautiful objects is so well presented. The high quality photos help make this book a treasure. Also, at the museum, only a subset of these objects is displayed at any time. To see them all, one would have to make many trips to London. If planing to visit the British Museum, knowing something about this collection of pieces beforehand, makes the adventure even more enjoyable.

This book will change your entire perspective of what historical objects in a museum represent. Neil MacGregor's discussion of each object is concise, well-written and often includes brief, but meaningful insights by an expert in an appropriate field. As an example, Neil MacGregor transforms what on the surface appears to be a mundane Egyptian sculpture of cattle, to a discussion of the transformation of humans as hunter/gatherers to communities which could only exist with the domestication of crops and livestock. In his concise discussion of that single object, Mr. MacGregor adds a very concise, clear discussion of the resulting geneology of modern cattle as from Asiatic origins and a brief discussion of the religious significance of cattle in some cultures.

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