

DRAFT

Using Games to Teach History

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Why this project?

I want to learn something new, and the students should too



History education is limited!

High school history is more or less a rehash of everything that came before it. This is our opportunity to change it.

You have the opportunity to teach your students about THEIR history, seize it!



Examples of games that use historical settings

Lots of games use a historical setting as a theme

However, these games have to be fair and replayable which means they are usually not historically accurate.

Popular games with historical settings:

- *Settlers of Catan* (founding of Iceland)
- *Tokaido* (Japan)
- *Lisboa* (Portugal)

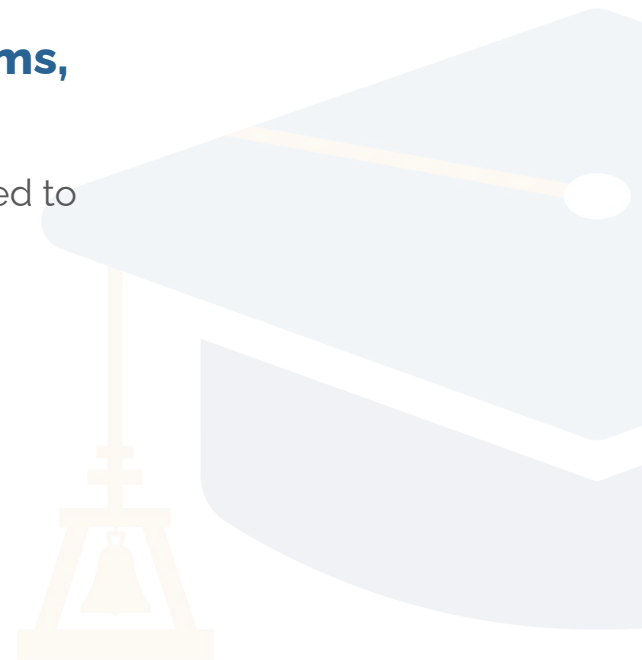
While fun, these games do not necessarily educate the player.



Some small violations of game design theory

The primary responsibility of the designer is to entertain the player (paraphrased from Ernest Adams, 2013).

This is still true, mostly. We have the luxury of games that are expected to only be played once.



Parameters for the project

My main objective is for students to learn new history that is not Eurocentric

This had led to some really interesting games!

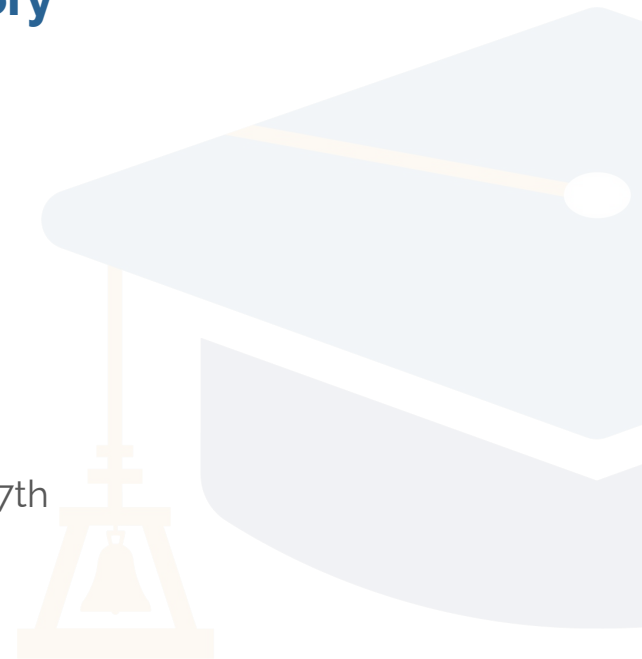
One event from the Middle East, one event from Sub-Saharan Africa*

0-100 ya

100-1,000 ya

1,000 - 3,000 ya

Not allowed: WW2, Medieval Europe, Ancient Egypt/Japan/Greece (7th grade)



GOOD examples of student games

These games were mechanically interesting and were accurate enough retellings of history

South African Rinderpest, 1890's

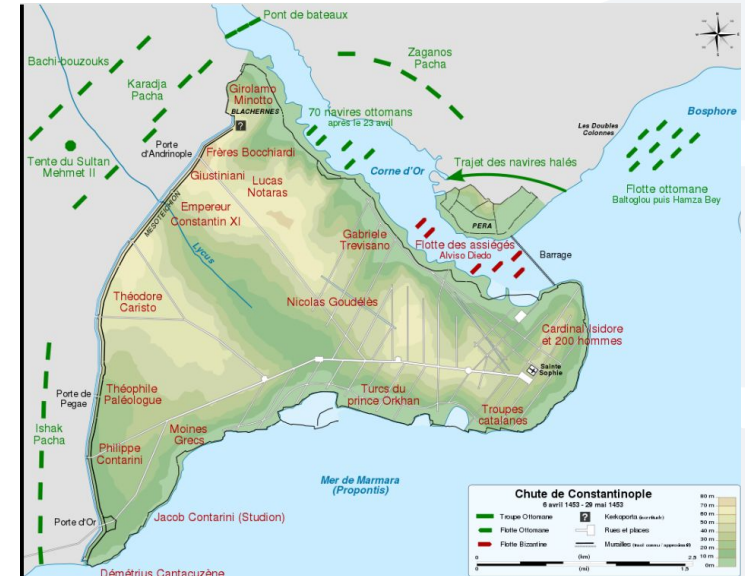
- ranching sim: feed cattle, breed cattle, etc., then things go badly (spoilers, they all died)

Fall of Constantinople, 1453

- Defend the city from invading Ottomans, fall back to next wall, repeat (spoilers, they all died)

Space Race, 1950's/60's

- Test rockets to be the first to the moon



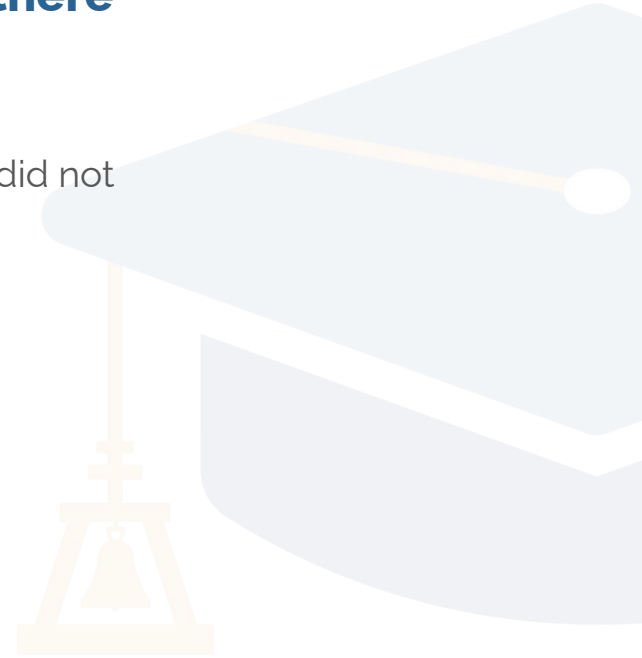
courtesy of Wikipedia

Failed examples of student games

So many of them. Frankly, most of them. Each year there are usually only 1-2 games that really shine.

Projects flop primarily for two reasons: lack of research and lack of playtesting. These games had some really interesting topics but just did not come together:

- *Wu Ding*
- *5th Pan-African Congress*
- *Inca Empire*
- *Rise of Christianity*
- *Babri Masjid 1992*



Where Things Go Sideways or, students hate research

ALL students MUST become topic experts!

Even if the finished game is terrible, you must ensure the students learn some new history. This unfortunately requires you to become an expert on ALL of the topics.

hurdles I have encountered in the past

- *Non-scholarly resources*
- *Students not reading*
- *Students not reading*
- *Students not reading*
- *Over reliance on the “responsible” student on the team to carry the load*
- *Students not reading*
- *Students not even bothering to watch YouTube videos about their topic*



Project Timeline

Subheader Title Case Raleway Black Style 18 Points

Project takes approximately 6 weeks but can be easily shortened dependant on expected outcomes

Pre-production takes 1.5 - 2 weeks, production 4

- *initial research of topics based on parameters*
- *choose topic*
- *detailed research and paper/presentation on topic*
 - *who/what/when/where/why, before/during/after event*
 - *how will this influence the end game?*
- *brainstorm mechanics and create initial prototype*
- *playtest*
- *playtest*
- *playtest*
- *rules rough draft*
- *finalize mechanics*
- *artwork*
- *rules final draft*
- *other supporting documents*



Parameters this year

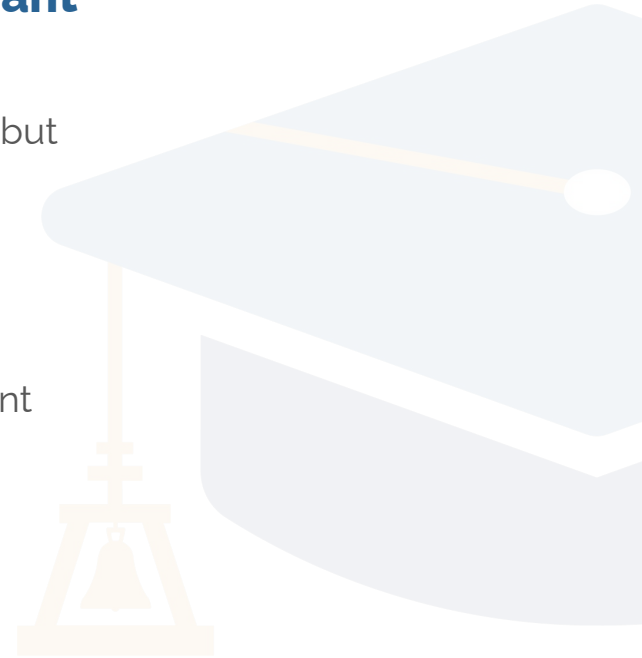
Starts next week!

No more ancient history, want events that are relevant to today

Still mandating one event from Africa, and one from the Middle East, but significantly condensing the time period options

- *1960 - 1980*
- *1980 - 2000*
- *2001 - 2020*

Will likely have to deny games about 9/11 and the War on Terror. I want world history, not US history overseas.



Supplies you will want to have on hand



End of Talk

