Spaceship Earth – Global History

Societies are groups of people who interact in a particular time and place, and have particular cultural and institutional elements in common, including:

- Beliefs and values
- History
- Structures of government, power, and authority
- Interaction with the natural environment
- Economic activities
- Social organization
- Communication and education
- Art forms

Why do societies change over time? The following factors are all can create change for the development or detriment of a society:

- Physical environment
- Power
- War
- Technology
- Culture, attitudes, and values
- Education
- Isolation and contact (trade – societies in close contact with other societies are likely to change most rapidly)

Spaceship Earth

The earth has been compared to a spaceship. Like a spaceship, Earth travels through space. Like a spaceship, it has passengers and crew (people and their governments). Like a spaceship, it has only limited resources of air, food, water, and other supplies, which have to be used carefully if they are to last. Not all people on the spaceship, however, have equal access to these resources. Some are very rich; others are very poor. As well, everyone on spaceship Earth does not have the same amount of power and influence. Some people have more control than others over the spaceship.

However, everyone on spaceship Earth is connected in some way …
“Like it or not, we find ourselves in a world where we are responsible for each other’s well-being … There is no substitute for global solutions based on international goals.” – R. Sivard (1991)

**Question:** What is the purpose of the comparison between Earth and a spaceship?

We live in a **global society** – our lives are shaped by the world in ways that we do not even realize. Much of what we use, eat, and wear is made outside of Canada. Many of our sports come from elsewhere: soccer and tennis from England, football from the US, curling from Scotland. When we visit the doctor, he or she is probably using information or medicine that has resulted from research done elsewhere in the world. Our calendar goes back to Ancient Rome. Some of the music we listen to uses South American or African rhythms. Whether we like it or not, we are part of the world, and the world is part of our lives.

**Question:** In the past week, how much of your life has been affected by products or influences from outside of Canada? List a few examples.

The history that we study today is **global history**. Everyone belongs to one race – the human race – and we all share one home, our Earth. Thus, the history of the world as a whole is more important than the history of individual nations.

Video: What is History For? (The School of Life)
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hLE-5ELGIPM

**Question:** Why do we study history?