

# **Introducing the Liberal Arts**

**A Guidebook for English Learners**

**Edited by**

**Cherie Brown**

**James Reid**

**Malcolm Sim**

**Clay Williams**



# **Introducing the Liberal Arts**

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*Edited by*

**Cherie Brown**

*Akita International University (retired), Japan*

**James Reid**

*Akita International University, Japan*

**Malcolm Sim**

*Akita International University, Japan*

**And**

**Clay Williams**

*Akita International University, Japan*



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India – Malaysia – China

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## ABOUT THE EDITORS

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**Cherie Brown** is a former Assistant Professor in the English for Academic Purposes (EAP) Program at Akita International University, Japan, and member of THT (Teachers Helping Teachers), a special interest group within the Japan Association of Language Teachers that conducts English as a Foreign Language (EFL) teacher-development programs in Vietnam, Bangladesh, Nepal, and Kyrgyzstan. She is co-author of “Max Vocab” and “Partners in the Classroom,” numerous other academic publications, and initiated the “Stories About Ourselves” project promoting the use of culturally relevant reading and critical thinking skills’ materials in Bangladeshi EFL classrooms. She holds an MA degree in Applied Linguistics, and her professional interests include EFL materials development, high-frequency vocabulary acquisition, the professional development of teachers in limited-resource settings, and collaborative learning and teaching. She is now enjoying retirement in her home country of New Zealand.

**James Reid** is the EAP Coordinator and an Assistant Professor at Akita International University. He has published research on student creativity and critical thinking and convenes an academic reading course on Liberal Arts disciplines. In addition to editing this book, he researched and wrote the chapters on Political Science, Geology, Zoology, and Environmental Science.

**Malcolm Sim** is a Professor and Head of the English for Academic Purposes (EAP) and Foreign Language Education (FLE) programs at Akita International University. His interests lie in the fields of applied linguistics and psychology and how they interact in TESOL contexts. This includes second language acquisition (particularly the role of affective factors), pragmatics, learner autonomy, learner beliefs, English-medium instruction (EMI), teacher education, and curriculum design. He has worked in the area of language education for over 25 years and continues to be intrigued and inspired by the challenges that teachers and students face as each strives to reach their goals.

**Clay Williams** is a Global Communication and Language Professor at Akita International University, Japan. His research explores reading development, phonological awareness, and cross-linguistic transfer in second language acquisition. He has published widely in international journals and is an active presenter at TESOL and applied linguistics conferences. In this book, he serves not only as one of the editors but also as the author of the chapter *Linguistics: How Does Language Work?*, which introduces students to the scientific study of language—tracing its historical development, major theories, and the subfields of linguistics. Williams emphasises language as a core aspect of human identity and cognition, inviting readers to reflect on how language shapes our understanding of the world.

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## ABOUT THE CONTRIBUTORS

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**Kuniko Abe, PhD** is a Select Professor at Akita International University, Japan, with expertise in Art History and visual culture. In this book, she contributed the chapter Art History, which introduces the discipline as both a study of artistic expression and a lens into cultural, historical, and social contexts. The chapter outlines major developments in the field, from connoisseurship and stylistic analysis to modern critical approaches and interdisciplinary methods. Abe also highlights how Art History fosters visual literacy and offers diverse career paths, from museum work to conservation and cultural law. The chapter encourages students to see artworks not just as objects of beauty, but as windows into the human experience across time.

**Masahiko Agata, BEcon** is an Honorary Select Professor at Akita International University. With a background in economics and extensive experience in higher education administration, reflecting a wealth of real business career that ranges from international financing, working in global teams of American and British company and organizations to a school foundation, he played a vital role in shaping Akita International University (AIUs) curriculum and institutional development over a decade. In this book, he contributed the chapter Management Studies, which introduces the evolution of management thinking—from early industrial approaches to modern leadership and organizational strategy. Agata emphasizes the integration of human values, ethics, and liberal arts into management education, highlighting how strategic and responsible leadership can contribute to sustainable, inclusive progress in business and society.

**Takeshi Akiba, PhD** is a Professor in the School of International Liberal Studies at Waseda University. His research focuses on constitutional law and sociology of law, especially regarding the rights of minorities. In this book, he authored the chapter Constitutional Law, which introduces students to the foundations and contemporary challenges of constitutional governance, focusing especially on Japan. Akiba explains how historical events, political values, and global comparisons shape the interpretation of constitutional principles such as pacifism, equality, and freedom. His chapter encourages readers to think critically about the real-world implications of constitutional law in democratic societies.

**Naoko Araki, PhD** is a Professor in the EAP Program at Akita International University, Japan. Her research explores the intersection of language education, performance, and intercultural understanding, with a focus on reducing learner anxiety and increasing communicative confidence through drama-based pedagogy. In this book, she contributed the chapter Drama for Education, which introduces readers to the educational potential of process drama. Drawing on classroom practice and global research, the chapter highlights how drama supports language learning, fosters empathy, and creates dynamic, student-centered learning environments across a range of disciplines.

**Leigh Bennett, MA** is a Lecturer in EAP at Akita International University. In this book, he contributed the chapter Sociolinguistics, which explores the fascinating relationship between language and society. Bennett introduces foundational ideas from pioneers like John Lyle Fischer and William Labov, while also covering key topics such as language variation, style-shifting, language attitudes, and sociolinguistic competence. Through accessible examples and thoughtful questions, the chapter reveals how our speech reflects identity, culture, and context—helping readers

understand why language is never neutral and how being aware of these dynamics benefits language learners and global citizens alike.

**Seth Clippard, PhD** is an independent scholar and former faculty member at Hung Kuang University in Taichung, Taiwan. His academic interests lie in the intersection of religion, philosophy, and cultural theory, focusing on how belief systems shape human understanding and social structures. In Dr. Clippard's chapter on Religious Studies, he introduces the field as an interdisciplinary pursuit that draws from philosophy, history, anthropology, and sociology to explore the nature and impact of religion. The chapter traces the evolution of the academic study of religion from theology to a critical, comparative discipline. It discusses foundational thinkers, the challenge of defining "religion," and the shifting boundaries of religious inquiry. Clippard also highlights the relevance of Religious Studies in today's world, noting its value in fostering empathy, cross-cultural understanding, and analytical thinking. Whether examining sacred texts, rituals, or modern political movements, Religious Studies equips students with the tools to interpret complex social phenomena and engage thoughtfully with diverse worldviews.

**Jeanette Dennisson, MS** is a Professor at St. Marianna University School of Medicine. Her research background informs her teaching, which helps scientists and healthcare professionals gain the language skills to publish, present, and collaborate internationally. In her Biology chapter, Dennisson presents biology as an inquiry-based science rooted in childhood curiosity. She covers genetics, classification, and evolution, while tracing biology's history from natural history to biotechnology. She also addresses ethical questions around cloning and genetic data, stressing the importance of responsible research. In her Chemistry chapter, she uses everyday examples like baking and cleaning to explain atoms, chemical reactions, and catalysis. She outlines chemistry's evolution from alchemy to spectroscopy and highlights its role in developing medicines, materials, and green technologies. Dennisson encourages students to view science as a dynamic, interdisciplinary process—one that explains life and empowers them to engage ethically with the world's challenges.

**Florent Domenach, PhD**, is a Professor of Computer Science at Akita International University. With research interests in programming languages, computational logic, and software engineering, he is also active in reforming computer science education for Liberal Arts students. In the chapter Programming, he argues passionately that learning to program is not just about mastering code—it is about learning how to think. Domenach invites readers to see programming as a powerful tool for creativity, logic, and critical agency in the digital age, enabling students to move from passive users of technology to active designers of tomorrow's solutions.

**Patrick Dougherty, EdD** is Dean of Faculty and Professor at Akita International University, Japan. With a background in EAP and rhetoric, his teaching and research focus on developing students' academic communication skills, critical thinking, and persuasive writing. He has extensive experience in curriculum design and liberal arts education. In this book, he contributed the chapter on Rhetoric, which introduces readers to the classical art of persuasion and explores how rhetorical strategies—such as ethos, pathos, and logos—continue to shape the way we communicate in everyday life, media, and politics. The chapter highlights the practical value of rhetoric, both as a tool for analyzing persuasive messages and as a skill set for expressing ideas more clearly, effectively, and ethically across disciplines.

**Wenti Du, PhD** is an Associate Professor of Economics in the Global Business Program at Akita International University, Japan, specializing in open economy macroeconomics and financial economics. In this book, she contributed the chapter Macroeconomics, which introduces readers to the big-picture forces that shape economies, from inflation and unemployment to national income and government policy. The chapter traces the history of the field from the Great Depression and the ideas of Keynes and Friedman to modern approaches like New Keynesianism and real business-cycle theory. Du explains how tools like fiscal and monetary policy work in practice and how studying macroeconomics can help individuals make better life and financial decisions. The chapter also explores career paths in economics, finance, government, and international organizations.

**Attila Egri-Nagy, PhD** is a Professor of Mathematics at Akita International University. He is recognized for his work in algebraic computation, abstract algebra, and artificial intelligence, often exploring how mathematical thinking applies across disciplines. In this book, he authored the chapter Mathematics, which reintroduces the subject not

as a set of rigid rules, but as a tool for clear and creative thinking. Emphasizing abstraction and mental modeling, Egri-Nagy invites students to see mathematics as a flexible language for communication when solving real-world problems—especially when integrated with computer programming and a Liberal Arts perspective.

**Joel Friederich, MFA** is a Professor in the EAP Program at Akita International University in Japan, with an MFA in Creative Writing and Poetry. His work focuses on literary expression in academic contexts and the role of creative writing in liberal arts education. In this book, he contributed the chapter Creative Writing, which traces the historical development of creative writing as a university subject, highlighting its roots in humanism and its emphasis on personal experience. The chapter explores how writing workshops emerged as the core pedagogy of the discipline and argues for the value of creative writing in nurturing voice, imagination, and intellectual freedom in higher education.

**Laura Kobata** is a Senior Assistant Professor at the Center for Global Education and Research at the University of Fukui, Japan. Her academic work focuses on EMI, academic writing, and intercultural learning. She introduces the subject as a reflection of the human experience and a powerful tool for developing empathy, critical thinking, and global understanding. She explores literature's evolution from ancient religious texts and classical drama to modern novels, digital formats, and diverse global voices, and highlights how literary study deepens our awareness of culture, identity, and communication, inviting us to engage with language, society, and the self. Kobata also emphasizes the practical value of studying literature, noting its relevance in various careers—from education and media to marketing, law, and even medicine. Through this chapter, she invites students to see English Literature not just as a subject, but as a lifelong gateway to human connection and intellectual growth.

**Sig Langegger, PhD** is an Associate Professor of Geography in the Faculty of International Liberal Arts at Akita International University. His research explores urban space, migration, and the politics of belonging, and his work has been published in international journals in geography and urban studies. In this book, he contributed the chapter The Geography of Public Health, which introduces students to how physical and human geography intersect with public health, sanitation, and city planning. Langegger highlights historical milestones and contemporary challenges in disease prevention, emphasizing how mapping, infrastructure, and social equity shape the health of populations.

**Julian Manning, PhD** is a Professor of English and Social and Cultural Studies at Nihon University College of Art. Holding a PhD in Social Anthropology, his research focuses on ritual, performance, and identity in Japanese and Southeast Asian contexts. In this book, he contributed the chapter Social Anthropology, which critically explores the meaning and use of the concept of “culture”—from universalist and nationalist ideologies to the modern anthropological view of culture as dynamic, diverse, and historically constructed. Manning challenges essentialist thinking and reveals how anthropology can help us understand human difference with nuance, empathy, and intellectual rigor.

**William McGovern, PhD** The late William McGovern was an Assistant Professor of History in the Global Studies Program at Akita International University. His academic interests included modern European history, political theory, and historiography, and he was known for his interdisciplinary approach to liberal arts education. In McGovern's chapter on History, he introduces the discipline within the context of International Liberal Arts, highlighting how historians study change over time and how historical methods have evolved—from 19th-century empiricism to postmodern and global perspectives. The chapter addresses major academic debates, the inclusion of marginalized voices, and the growing focus on transnational approaches. It also explores the real-world relevance of historical thinking, emphasizing skills such as critical analysis, research, and communication.

**Hideyuki Nakagawa, PhD** is a Professor in the Global Business Program at Akita International University. His research explores poverty alleviation, labour markets, and public policy in developing countries, particularly in Southeast Asia. He has conducted extensive fieldwork and evaluation studies on aid effectiveness and randomized controlled trials. In this book, he contributed the chapter Development Economics, introducing students to the causes and consequences of global poverty and inequality. Nakagawa presents real-world case studies from India and Indonesia, highlighting how rigorous research and data-driven decision-making can improve development.

**Yasushi Nara, PhD**, is a Professor of Theoretical and Nuclear Physics in the Global Connectivity Program at Akita International University. His research spans particle transport models, computational physics, and interdisciplinary applications of physics in higher education. In this book, he authored the chapter *Physics*, which introduces readers to fundamental scientific questions about the universe, matter, and motion. Drawing from historical discoveries and modern theories like relativity and quantum mechanics, Nara explains how the scientific method, rational thinking, and experimentation have shaped our current understanding of physical reality. His chapter invites students to think deeply about the nature of scientific inquiry and humanity's place in the cosmos.

**Tomas Nilsson, PhD** is a Senior Lecturer at Linnaeus University in Sweden, specializing in storytelling and rhetoric for organizational purposes. He frequently collaborates on international projects related to leadership, marketing, and tourism. In this book, he authored the chapter *Marketing*, which introduces students to the core concepts, history, and real-world applications of marketing in today's global and digital world. Nilsson explores the classic 4Ps framework, evolving marketing strategies, and the growing importance of sustainability and branding. He also outlines diverse career paths in the field, making this chapter especially relevant for students interested in creativity, communication, and business innovation.

**Hisako Omori, PhD** is an Associate Professor at Akita International University. Her research focuses on religion, agency, and power, and she is interested in the category of the person and the unit of an individual in various cultural contexts. In this book, she contributed the chapter *Cultural Anthropology*, which introduces students to the study of human behavior through the lens of culture, fieldwork, and participant-observation. Omori traces the historical roots of anthropology and its colonial legacy, while highlighting its evolving role in addressing global issues, from public health crises to cultural understanding in modern societies.

**Sean O'Reilly, PhD** is Professor of Japanese History, Popular Culture, and Cinema at Akita International University, Japan. His research spans cultural history, media studies, and the social impact of visual storytelling. In Dr. O'Reilly's chapter on *Film Studies*, he introduces the field as a vital discipline that explores how movies shape our thoughts, emotions, and understanding of the world. The chapter traces the development of film studies from its early roots to contemporary concerns, including gender and racial representation, narrative techniques, and the power of cinematic form to influence viewers. It also explains key concepts such as cinematography, editing, sound, and *mise-en-scène*, helping students become visually literate and critically aware. Emphasizing both enjoyment and analysis, the chapter reveals how studying film deepens our appreciation of cinema while preparing students for careers in media, education, production, and beyond. O'Reilly argues that films are more than entertainment—they are cultural texts that reflect and shape global society.

**Matthew Ryczek, MA** is a lecturer at Rikkyo University in the Center for Foreign Language Education and Research. In this book, he contributed the chapter *Sociology*, an engaging introduction to the study of human behavior in society. The chapter explores key sociological theories and thinkers—such as Auguste Comte, Emile Durkheim, and Karl Marx—while explaining the importance of social structures, norms, and the concept of the sociological imagination. With relatable real-world examples and a clear overview of both micro and macro perspectives, Ryczek shows how sociology can help us better understand ourselves, our communities, and the forces shaping the modern world.

**Kyle Michael James Shuttleworth, PhD** is Assistant Professor of Philosophy at Akita International University, Japan. His research focuses on environmental ethics, comparative philosophy, and the intellectual traditions of East Asia. Professor Shuttleworth contributed two chapters to this book: *Western Philosophy* and *Japanese Philosophy*. In *Western Philosophy*, he introduces students to key branches of philosophical inquiry—metaphysics, epistemology, logic, and ethics—tracing their historical development from Ancient Greece through to contemporary debates in analytic and continental traditions. He highlights how philosophy fosters systematic, critical, and open-minded thinking in response to enduring human questions. In *Japanese Philosophy*, he explores how Japanese thinkers adopted Western philosophical frameworks to reinterpret Buddhist concepts such as nothingness and non-duality. The chapter highlights the Kyoto School's distinctive contributions and introduces Watsuji Tetsurō's theories of *fūdo* (climatic and cultural environment) and ethical “betweenness,” proposing their relevance to ecological thinking today. Together,

these chapters show how philosophical inquiry—across cultures and contexts—remains central to understanding our place in the world.

**Eric Yanchenko, PhD** is an Assistant Professor of AI and Data Science at Akita International University. His research interests include statistical inference on mesoscale structures in networks, developing priors for scale parameters in Bayesian hierarchical models and Bayesian optimization. In the chapter *Statistics*, he unpacks the real-world value of statistical thinking—arguing that statistics is far more than numbers and formulas. With applications ranging from weather forecasts to AI, he presents statistics as a vital decision-making tool in the age of data. For Yanchenko, viewing problems through a statistical lens can facilitate clear thinking in a complex world

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# TEACHER'S GUIDE

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Each reading in this volume introduces one of the subject disciplines that may be studied in a Liberal Arts University program of study and describes the relationship of the subject discipline to the study of the liberal arts as a whole. By exploring the various chapters in this volume, readers will learn something about the background of each field of study, along with a rationale for pursuing that subject at the university level.

To assist with readability for the target audience, each reading text has been modified from an original authentic academic text to remove unnecessary idiomatic language or convoluted grammatical constructions. The vocabulary has been analyzed and selected according to its frequency in English, using the online Lextutor vocabulary analysis tool.

Following the vocabulary analysis, the level of difficulty of each reading text was adjusted according to the two well-known high-frequency English vocabulary lists commonly used by English language teachers and researchers today: the General Service Word Lists and the Academic Word List (AWL). Words found in the second 1,000 General Service List of high-frequency words (known as the GSL), and words that appear in the AWL of high-frequency academic words (or AWL), are identified in each reading by means of bold type, helping students notice the words they need to learn within the context of each sentence in which they are found and within the context of the text as a whole.

These high-frequency general and academic English words are the most important words for learners to acquire for everyday English and use in academic life. They should be the highest priority for all teachers and learners of English.

Following each reading text are two lists comprised of the words found in the text that are most important for learners to study and learn, along with a glossary explaining words and phrases that are useful (to help with understanding the text) but not necessary for students to spend time learning. In each case, the first list identifies high-frequency words from the second 1000 GSL, which native speakers of English use in all types of everyday communicative exchanges. In fact, only around 5,000 English words are commonly used by speakers of English on a daily basis. Considering this, it makes sense for teachers to ensure that learners are exposed to these words before being exposed to less frequent words, as these are the words they are most likely to encounter and the words they most need to know.

Professor Paul Nation, a vocabulary researcher and vocabulary expert, reminds us that “The high-frequency words of the language are... so important that considerable time should be spent on them by teachers and learners...” He says that “... the time spent on them is well justified by their frequency, coverage, and range. In general, high-frequency words are so important that anything that teachers and learners can do to make sure they are learned is worth doing.” (2001).

The second list found after each reading contains words from the AWL that are commonly found in academic use, regardless of subject discipline. The AWL was created by Prof. Averil Coxhead of Victoria University, Wellington, New Zealand, for the purpose of introducing students of English to the words they most need to know for university study. The AWL contains around 570 word families divided into ten sub-lists according to frequency, with those in sub-list 1 being the most common and those in sub-list 10 being less common (however, it is worth pointing out that all 570 word families are important because the high frequency at which they appear in academic life overall).

The lists of headwords for the AWL can be found here: <https://www.victoria.ac.nz/lals/resources/academicwordlist/information/thesublists>.

According to Professor [Coxhead \(n.d.\)](#),

Just over 94% of the words in the AWL occur in 20 or more subject areas. This principle ensures that the words in the AWL are useful for all learners, regardless of their area of study or what combination of subjects they take at the tertiary level.

To successfully use the material in this volume, students and teachers should first be thoroughly familiar with, at the very least, 80% of the first 1,000 English words found on the General Service Lists of high-frequency English words (either the original list by West, M. (1953.) "A General Service List of English Words. London: Longman, Green and Co." which, though out of print, can be found in PDF format at the following URL address <https://www.victoria.ac.nz/lals/about/staff/Publications/general-service-list-headwords.pdf> or the New General Service List, available from <http://www.newgeneralservicelist.org/>).

Students should be encouraged to study the words listed for each chapter and to revise them often. Most importantly, they should use these words as much as possible in their own original sentences (through speaking practice or writing activities) to ensure that meaning is retained. They should also be encouraged to check out the meaning of each word and to identify the form of the word they need to use as they put the word to use for themselves. This is because it is the "need" to know a word, the "search" for meaning, and the "evaluation" inherent in the selection of the appropriate form of the word for the moment that ensures the deep processing required for memory-making ([Laufer & Hulstijn, 2001](#)).

## Practical Suggestions

All teachers, of course, have curriculum guidelines they need to follow. This book, then, is designed to supplement existing programs and is not necessarily designed as a stand-alone course book, although a teacher may choose to use it in this way if they wish. The purpose, as explained earlier, is to provide students who are learning English with English language material that explains the various Liberal Arts disciplines and, at the same time, provides a rationale for pursuing studies in these disciplines at the tertiary level. Rather than working through the entire book chapter by chapter, the authors recommend that teachers select those readings that they believe best suit the needs and interests of their learners. The learners themselves can be involved in this decision if teachers indicate the various topic options to them. By making a careful selection, it is hoped that enough readings will be chosen to provide learners with an insight into future study possibilities in the medium of English at the university level. This can motivate them to consider a broader range of future study options than they may have considered previously. By systematically and thoroughly working through each of the selected readings, learners will begin to build a conceptual framework that will enable them to understand what Liberal Arts studies entail. Simultaneously, due to the material's graded nature and focus on key high-frequency vocabulary, they will develop and review the most critical English vocabulary and broaden their grammatical knowledge.

There are several ways in which a teacher might use the readings in this book. The aim of the authors is not to prescribe how to use this volume but simply to suggest. Teachers should feel free to use the material as they see fit and to experiment with and adapt the suggestions given below, keeping the needs and goals of their own learners in mind.

- Assign the selected reading text as homework. Have your learners note down any vocabulary or phrases they don't understand in their notebooks and bring these to class for the first discussion of the reading text. In class, have learners work in small groups (no larger than four people) to share their notes with the intention of assisting each other in better understanding the material. Alternatively, teachers can prepare a handout of questions for discussion.
- After reading the text and understanding it as much as possible, learners can also work with a partner to create written questions, in English, about the content within the reading text they want clarified. Set a specific number of questions to be created, for example, three or four. Collect their questions. In a later class, they put their questions on display for everyone to see. Divide the class into small groups and tell each group to select four questions they want to discuss. Allow time for each group to discuss each of their selected questions, asking them to make brief notes of their answers and ideas as they go. If any groups finish early, ask

them to choose another discussion question. Towards the latter part of the lesson, have each group randomly select a reporter to report back to the whole class. The reporters should say which questions their group selected and briefly explain the answers or any new insights they came up with in their discussion. The teacher can comment or ask the whole class questions too at this stage.

- After reading the text (either in class or at home), each learner could write a short paragraph in English summarizing two or three key points (remind them to keep this brief, they do not have to explain everything) and then state what they have personally learned from the reading text, using as many of the target vocabulary words as possible. They should also indicate whether, after having read the selected reading text, they would be interested in studying that subject at the university or not, giving reasons for their opinion. This writing can be shared with a partner and followed up with a pair discussion.
- Alternatively, and depending on the level of ability of your learners, assign different reading texts to different learners or pairs of learners. Have them work together, over two or three lessons, to create a poster or mini-presentation that summarizes the key ideas of the reading text they have studied. Their presentation should require them to use some of the new target vocabulary listed after the reading text they studied. They should then present their material to the others in the class. This presentation, which should be around five to eight minutes long, can be delivered to the whole class, or you could arrange a “poster presentation day,” dividing your class in half to take turns to present. In this case, half the class presents (two or three times), while the other half of the class rotates around the room and listens to each presentation in turn. After half the lesson time is over (or you could spread this across two lessons), the presenters and listeners exchange places, and the process is repeated. During the presentations, the teacher can visit each presenter or pair of presenters in turn and either assess the presentation or, if you choose not to assess them, make notes for feedback later. In a final lesson, have learners comment to each other in groups or write individually, in English, about something they learned about each discipline area that was represented in each presentation. They should state whether or not the presentation motivated them in any way to study that subject further at the university or not and why.

The above ideas do not constitute an exhaustive list of suggestions but are simply a starting point providing possibilities for teachers to consider. At all times, teachers should monitor their learners' discussions and make notes of any concepts or language that seem to present common problems. Discuss these with the whole class after each of the selected reading texts has been studied and together, enjoy a shared exploration of the world of liberal arts.

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## SECTION 1

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# THE HUMANITIES: AN INTRODUCTION

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In this book, we have classified the subjects covered as either humanities, social sciences, or sciences. The humanities include **disciplines** such as literature, philosophy, and history, which **focus** on **interpreting** and analyzing human **culture**, values, and experiences. Unlike the social sciences, which use both **qualitative** and **quantitative\* methods** to study **societal\*** behaviors, the humanities **emphasize subjective\*** and **interpretive approaches**. In **contrast**, the physical sciences—such as physics, chemistry, and biology—**rely** on **empirical** methods to understand the natural world.

It is important to note that certain **disciplines**, including history, linguistics, and anthropology, can be studied as either humanities or social sciences, depending on the research methods used. In this book, we have decided to consider history a humanity due to its interpretive study of past human events and cultures, while classifying linguistics and anthropology as social sciences because they focus on systematic, empirical research of human behavior, language, and societies.

So, what are the humanities, well as the name **implies**, the humanities cover the essential **aspects** of *being human*. We can think of the humanities as a discipline that **seeks** to formally study and **analyse** human beings, their **cultures**, and the various ways they express themselves as a **species\***. Put simply, it's the *study of ourselves*. Given the **classical** (and **literal\***) **definition** of the **liberal** arts as the “art of freedom,” **emphasising** building **intellectual\* capacity** to be able to reason, argue, and to defend one's **premises\*** and thus one's liberty, it is no **coincidence** that we first **delve\*** into the essentials of what is **quintessentially\*** human. The concept of *studia humanitatis\** (i.e., Latin for “studies of humanity”), **comprising** literature, grammar, history, **rhetoric\***, **philosophy**, etc., has been at the **core** of education since at least the **Renaissance\*** in the 15th century. In order to really understand the world around us, we must first turn our attention inwards to know our own nature (i.e., *nosce te ipsum\**, Latin for “know **thysself\***”).

In this section, we will be examining many of the **classical domains** of the study of humanities. We'll look at literature and film, we'll examine **drama** and **creative** writing, we'll **analyse** religion, history and Art History, and we'll examine **rhetoric** and Philosophy. While this may, at first **glance\***, appear to be a **dizzying array\*** of disconnected subject matters, they are all central to the **theme** of what is at the **core** of being human. Humans **communicate**, we tell stories, we **create** art and literature. History and religion are at the **core** of **culture**, **simultaneously\*** directing practice and giving a **rationale\*** for those **cultural** acts. Literature, **drama**, and art are the most **tangible** expressions of **culture**, and language is the **vehicle** for **culture** and **ultimately** how we **cooperate** as a **species\***.

So, let's look at the field of humanities and examine the question of what it is to be human!

## 2 Introducing the Liberal Arts

### Vocabulary

#### *Words From the Second 1,000 General Service High Frequency Word List*

argue	examining
attention	film
century	formal
defend	grammar
discipline	liberty
educate	practise
essential	

#### *Words From the Academic Word List (AWL)*

interpretive	domain
analyse	drama
approaches	emphasize
aspect	empirical
capacity	imply
classic	liberal
coincide	methods
communicate	philosophy
comprise	rely
concept	section
contrast	seek
cooperate	theme
core	ultimately
create	vehicle
culture	focus
define	qualitative

### Glossary

**Delve** (verb): Investigate deeply

**Dizzying array** (noun): An overwhelmingly large number of something

**Glance** (verb/noun): Look at briefly

**Intellectual** (adjective/noun): Relating to the power to know

**Literal** (adjective): Conforming to the simplest or plainest meaning of a word

**Nosce te ipsum** (phrase): Latin expression meaning “know yourself”

**Premises** (noun): The idea that an argument is based upon

**Quantitative** (adjective): Refers to anything that is measurable or expressible in numerical terms, often involving quantities or amounts

**Quintessential** (adjective): The purest or most typical of a category

**Renaissance** (noun): A period from the 14th to 17th centuries in Europe which revived classical learning and wisdom

**Rhetoric** (noun): The art of using language effectively to persuade

**Simultaneously** (adverb): Happening at the same time

**Societal** (adjective): Refers to anything related to society or its organization, structures, and functioning.

**Species** (noun): A group of closely related organisms

**Studia humanitatis** (phrase): Latin expression meaning “studies of humanity”

**Subjective** (adjective): Refers to something based on personal feelings, opinions, or perspectives rather than external facts or objective reality

**Tangible** (adjective): Something real or concrete; touchable

**Thyself** (pronoun): An older word for “yourself” (singular)

**Ultimately** (adverb): In the end; at the end

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## CHAPTER 1

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# HISTORY

William McGovern  
*Akita International University, Japan*

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### Introduction

In this chapter, we will consider the subject of History as it fits within the field of **International Liberal Arts** studies. History is one of the oldest and most well-studied fields of all time. This interest in History comes from the common human need to understand our past. Although the basic ideas and ways that **historians\*** study history have changed greatly over time, the desire to understand our history has not changed.

History, as a subject of study, includes both **academic** points of view of **scholars\*** and popular (nonacademic) points of view of ordinary people. As a subject of study, History has a large influence on the way **individuals**, groups, and nations understand themselves. History and the way we view it produce shared experiences, memories, and a sense of belonging to a particular group of people. These ideas and beliefs help to shape how people view themselves, their **communities**, and the world around them.

The ways historians study and use our knowledge of the past help us to increase our understanding of what has happened in earlier times and of what is happening now, in the present.

### Introduction to History

The word “History” means both (1) past events and (2) the study of the past. As an academic field, History centers on the second point. History covers all forms of human experience, from **culture** and social life to the **economy**, deep (or **intellectual\***) human thought and politics. Historians study many **aspects** of human existence, from the ancient world to the present day, as well as anywhere in the world where human beings can be found living.

At its heart, history seeks to understand change over time — how and why events, individuals, groups, **institutions**, nations, and the world developed in certain ways. Historians use many different **methods** and **theories**. These methods and theories are often also used by other academics working in different fields of study to understand changes that occur over time and the causes of these changes. Historians **aim** not only to understand the past but also to understand how the past influences the present.

## The History of History

History is one of the oldest and most respected academic fields. Although some historical accounts date back thousands of years, the modern academic base of history has developed over recent **centuries**.

From the earliest beginnings of modern science and a **period** known as “**The Enlightenment\***” (also known as “The Age of Reason”), scholars began to accept that knowledge of the world and human society should be based on events that can be observed.

**During** the 19th century, many historians began to follow the ideas of the **German\*** scholar Leopold von Ranke. Ranke is generally understood to be the person who began the modern study of History. He said that historians should try to understand the past as it actually happened. He also said that historians should not make judgements of the events and the people who took part in those events. Because of this view, Ranke trained his students to first go to “**primary**” **sources** — that is, **documents** that were produced at the same time in history where the events the students are learning about took place. Ranke believed doing this was more useful than studying later sources of **information** that were written a long time after those events. For **empiricists\***, as historians who follow Ranke’s ideas are sometimes called, our understanding of history should be based upon **objective** study and historical proof.

These ideas remain important in the academic study of history. However, many historians have since questioned whether full scientific objectivity is actually possible. Because of these questions, historians developed a number of different methods and theories to try to understand the past from new points of view. They have tried to understand the lives of people who had less of a voice in the historical record. For example, beginning around the middle of the 20th century, social historians moved away from political history toward the study of ordinary people.

Over time, social historians began to give more **attention** to the way economic and social forces cause historical change. To do this, they tried to understand the experiences of **peasants\***, working-class people, women, and people belonging to different **racial\*** and **ethnic** groups. Other scholars were interested in how people living in parts of the world, such as Africa and South Asia, tried to fight back against colonization.

Scholars coming after Ranke have also recognized that primary sources are almost always incomplete. These sources often **reflect** the ideas and beliefs of a small number of well-**educated** people. This group of people in a society is often called “the **elite\***.”

Recently, a growing number of academics, known as **cultural** historians, have moved away from studying the lives of certain **categories\*** of people to understanding those categories themselves and how they are formed. Instead of thinking only about the experiences of women or racial **minorities**, for example, cultural historians have begun to study how the categories of **gender** and race themselves were built and **challenged**.

The different ways of studying history often cross over into each other. For example, historians might use methods and theories from social, cultural, and gender history together as they try to understand and get a complete picture of the past.

## Current Debates in History

Recently, new ways to study the past have been developed. These theories and methods come from new ways of thinking about earlier historical **models**. For example, **postmodern\*** historians (sometimes called **post-structuralist\*** historians) disagreed with the idea that it is possible to understand the past without our present experience, knowledge and beliefs shaping our thinking. In other words, they believe it is impossible to be completely **objective\*** about the past.

Many postmodern scholars suggested that any primary source, or **text**, contained **multiple** and sometimes **opposed** meanings. When someone tried to read such a source, their thinking was shaped by their own **biases** and understandings of the ideas in the text. In other words, any understanding of the sources would be shaped by the **subjective\*** opinion belonging to the reader.

Other newer ways of studying history have come from the fact that many scholars are not happy with the common way that history is studied. Many historians think that scholars think of their area of study only within the idea of a nation-state or events in particular places. These historians **argue** that doing this causes us to forget that there are

larger forces at work. They believe this may lead us to put too much importance on Western states, Western people, and Western institutions.

Historians who argue this way favor studying history from a bigger point of view, that is, from a **global** point of view, and they stress global **connections** and the fact that these change over time. They are also interested in the development of **globalization**. Some other scholars, known as **transnational\*** historians, are more interested in how communities form, in institutions, and in the economic forces that connect people and institutions in two or more nation-states.

## History in Modern International Liberal Arts

Although the **exact** meaning of liberal arts is questioned, the idea of liberal arts can be found several centuries ago (or maybe far longer). To begin, the idea was mostly found in the study of **logic** (the study of the ways in which people think and reason). Over time, Western universities added other fields, such as history and literature, as well as scientific fields, such as **mathematics\*** and **physical** sciences. The 19th century saw the beginning and growth of numerous academic subjects. This growth included subjects within the social and physical sciences, as well as increasing specialization among scholars, students, and universities.

However, during the 20th century, the popularity of liberal arts education has grown, both at smaller liberal arts colleges and some universities. A liberal arts education tries to help students to follow their interests and to study a wide range of subjects. As a field of study, history takes theories and methods from many other fields, such as **anthropology\***, literature, political science, **psychology**, and **sociology\***. In addition, a growing number of historians tend to include global or transnational forces (forces that cross national **boundaries**).

## Real-World Applications of History

The study of history has a number of **practical** applications. Many history students go on to work in universities, **museums\***, and historical **sites**. However, studying history also prepares students to find other kinds of **careers\*** too. Many of the **skills** taught in history classes—such as **critical** thinking, **research**, writing, how to build and support academic arguments, and **communication**—are useful in many different careers. Examples of these include education, the **media**, public **administration** and **policy**, the foreign service, business, politics, and law.

History also has many other real-world applications, though these might not be **immediately** clear to us. One of the reasons most modern nation-states provide primary and secondary school students with an education in history is because it builds and strengthens a shared sense of national **identity**, values, and the **responsibilities** of **citizenship\***. History is also useful for understanding the wider world. As part of international liberal arts, studying history will give you a deeper knowledge of different cultures, nations, and global systems. This can be useful when you meet or work with people from around the world. Studying history will also help you to be better at **analyzing** world events and the people and institutions that take part in them.

Adapted from a text by the late Professor William McGovern, PhD  
Who was Assistant Professor History, Global Studies Program.  
Akita International University.  
Japan.

## Vocabulary

### Words from the Second 1000 General Service List

aim  
argue/arguments  
attention

boundaries  
centuries connect connections  
critical

discipline	opposed
during	practical
educated education	preservation
exact	refers
immediately	reflect
information	responsibilities
international	skills
models	ten
multiple	

### ***Words from the Academic Word List***

academic	individuals
administration	institutions
analyze	liberal
area	logic
aspects	media
biases	methods
categories	minorities
challenged	objective objectivity
communication	period
communities	physical
constructed	policy
cultural/culture	primary
debates	psychology
documents	range
economic economy	research
emphasize	seeks
ethnic	sites
gender	source
global globalization	text
identity	theories

### **Glossary**

It is not necessary for learners to memorize these words.

**Anthropology** (noun): The academic study of humans and human behavior and societies in the past and present.

**Career** (noun): Often understood as one's profession or job pathway.

**Categories** (plural noun): Groupings of people, ideas or things according to qualities or characteristics that they have in common.

**Citizenship** (noun): The state of being recognized as a legal member of a certain country or nation.

**Empiricists** (plural noun): The name given to scholars who stress the importance of objectivity and scientific and historical evidence to support ideas and beliefs.

**The Elite** (noun phrase): Used to describe a small group of people who are privileged above other people because of high status, advanced education or extreme wealth.

**The Enlightenment** (noun): A Western 17th- and 18th-century intellectual and philosophical movement that stressed rational thinking as the way to understand the world and freedom of thought.

**German** (adjective): Used to describe the people and language of the country of Germany.