

## WHEN YOUTUBE IS YOUR HISTORY TEACHER

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History is one of those things everyone can enjoy, as long as it's presented to them in some easily palatable manner. YouTube is one such platform where there are a number of channels that dedicate themselves to making easy-to-digest content. They may not be able to do much in the way of "teaching" history, but in terms of providing inspiration to do more, they're as good as it gets.

Suffice to say most things that come easy aren't very useful, and when it comes to history, there never will be a substitute for proper research using books and references and hard graft at the library. But the amount of willpower it'd take for an everyday Joe to wake up one day and decide to go to the library and sieve through a 3000-page volume of "The Rise and Fall of the Third Reich" would be too much to ask. And that's where YouTube comes in, simply as a stepping stone for someone who, with the pressing of the right buttons, could potentially get obsessed with the intricacies of military and political stratagem from decades past that has shaped the world as we know today. A well-made animation on the Battle of Kursk can drive a person to learn the history of tanks and other moving war machines, not from YouTube, but from other detailed sources which would have looked very boring to someone who hasn't watched the animation beforehand. The recurring pattern in channels that make videos on history on YouTube is their attempt to ingrain humour and drama into their narration to increase the video's entertainment value. Some channels, like *Extra Credit*, take this liberty to levels that get close to fiction, and that pays dividend by getting viewers hooked to their videos in a way others do not. *Extra Credit* usually has its viewers vote on a specific historical event, like the Battle of Kursk, and makes a series of 7-10 minute videos that go over the important and interesting aspects of that particular slice of history.

*Crash Course* has an existing collection of videos that are grouped into different series, longer than those of



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Extra Credit and usually in chronological order covering a much larger span of time. For instance, they don't have a series on the World Wars but their 42-episode World History series begins with the Agricultural Revolution and ends with Globalisation, including a couple of videos on the World Wars in the middle.

*Historia Civilis* is an excellent channel for those

interested in ancient Roman history. Although this channel doesn't have the most appealing narration, they do provide some concise overview of the structures and inner workings of the Roman republic, of how the legions were formed and how the senate worked, which is not always easy to come by.

*The Great War* is different from the channels mentioned above as it deals with the history of the First World War in a detailed manner. The series began in July 2014, documenting events as it happened in the same week 100 years ago during the Great War. It's scheduled to go on until 2018, providing a sense of living the history as it happened all those years ago.

YouTube, like it does with everything else, provides a plethora of options when it comes to history channels. For those with a chronic shortage of time, *Jabzy* makes 3-minute history videos that are not the easiest to process but are quick as hell. Then there are channels like *Feature History*, *Epic History*, and *Simple History* which all follow the model of short videos that don't get into too many details. *Suibhne* is a channel that does an excellent job creating visually appealing animations that go over histories of entire countries or civilisations. The people behind *The Great War* also have a channel called *It's History* that focuses their considerable talents on other periods in history. If you find yourself attracted to the famous battles of history, *BazBattles* is a channel that deserves a look.

For the proper history buff, YouTube channels will never be enough because with them, there will always remain the trade-off between information and entertainment. But if you're looking to binge on something other than Bangla rap music, or want to make your meal-time entertainment informative instead of disgusting, then these channels are exactly what you are looking for.

Azmin Azran is a 17-year-old boy stuck in the body of a 17-year-old boy. He talks a lot, mostly about football and politics because that's what's on TV most of the time. Contact him for an onslaught of uncomfortable jokes at azminazran@gmail.com

