

The following are lessons featured on TED-Ed. You can create lessons from scratch around any YouTube video to “flip” your class and help jumpstart classroom discussions. Please preview the lessons and see if you find them suitable for your school community’s values. I encourage you to take the [TED-ED TOUR](#) prior to viewing any of the following lessons. If you like the lessons, please think about making your own: [CREATE A TED-ED LESSON](#).

The Fall of the Roman Empire

[It's a church. It's a mosque. It's Hagia Sophia. - Kelly Wall](#) If walls could talk, Turkey's Hagia Sophia would have an abundance of stories to tell. Once a church, then a mosque, and now a museum, this world marvel has stood the test of time and war, surviving centuries of conquest by some of history’s greatest empires. Kelly Wall takes us through the history of each layer of this great jewel of human desire.

[The city of walls: Constantinople - Lars Brownworth](#) The world owes much of its cultural legacy to Constantinople’s walls. When Constantinople was under siege by neighboring enemies, the Roman city’s elaborate system of moats, outer walls, and inner walls stood tall. Surviving numerous fire attacks, the walls were eventually brought down by more modern tools of warfare, but, thankfully, classical culture survived.

Islamic World, 400 A.D./C.E. – 1500s

[Muhammad: Legacy of a Prophet](#) Fourteen hundred years ago, a humble merchant who could not read or write changed the face of Arabia. Today, his influence has spread to every corner of the world, including the U.S.

[On reading the Koran - Lesley Hazleton](#) Lesley Hazleton sat down one day to read the Koran. And what she found -- as a non-Muslim, a self-identified "tourist" in the Islamic holy book -- wasn't what she expected. With serious scholarship and warm humor, Hazleton shares the grace, flexibility and mystery she found, in this myth-debunking talk.

Africa, 400 A.D./C.E. – 1500

China, 400 A.D./C.E. – 1500s

[The deadly irony of gunpowder - Eric Rosado](#) In the mid-ninth century, Chinese chemists, hard at work on an immortality potion, instead invented gunpowder. They soon found that this highly inflammable powder was far from an elixir of life -- they put it to use in bombs against Mongol invaders, and the rest was history. Eric Rosado details how gunpowder has caused devastation around the world, despite the incandescent beauty of fireworks.

[The Silk Road: Connecting the ancient world through trade - Shannon Harris Castelo](#) With modern technology, a global exchange of goods and ideas can happen

at the click of a button. But what about 2,000 years ago? Shannon Harris Castelo unfolds the history of the 5,000-mile Silk Road, a network of multiple routes that used the common language of commerce to connect the world's major settlements, thread by thread.

[The hidden meanings of yin and yang - John Bellaimey](#) The ubiquitous yin-yang symbol holds its roots in Taoism/Daoism, a Chinese religion and philosophy. The yin, the dark swirl, is associated with shadows, femininity, and the trough of a wave; the yang, the light swirl, represents brightness, passion and growth. John Bellaimey explains why we all contain the spirit of yin and of yang -- and how we can achieve a balance of both in our lives.

[Silk, the ancient material of the future - Fiorenzo Omenetto](#) Fiorenzo Omenetto shares 20+ astonishing new uses for silk, one of nature's most elegant materials -- in transmitting light, improving sustainability, adding strength and making medical leaps and bounds. On stage, he shows a few intriguing items made of the versatile stuff.

Japan, 400 A.D./C.E. – 1500s

Middle Ages in Western Europe, 400 A.D./C.E. – 1500s

[The past, present and future of the bubonic plague - Sharon N. DeWitte](#) The bubonic plague, which killed around 1/5 of the world's population in the 14th century, is still around today -- but it now claims only a few thousand lives each year. How did that number shrink so drastically? Sharon N. DeWitte investigates the causes and effects of the Black Death and explains how knowing this information can help us prepare for any future outbreaks of the disease.

[Distorting Madonna in Medieval art - James Earle](#) After Rome was destroyed, people were wary of attachment to physical beauty. As Christianity gained traction, Romans instead began to focus on the metaphysical beauty of virtue, and art began to follow suit. James Earle discusses how Medieval paintings of Madonna were affected by this shift.

Renaissance and Reformation

[Da Vinci's Vitruvian Man of math - James Earle](#) What's so special about Leonardo da Vinci's Vitruvian Man? With arms outstretched, the man fills the irreconcilable spaces of a circle and a square -- symbolizing the Renaissance-era belief in the mutable nature of humankind. James Earle explains the geometric, religious and philosophical significance of this deceptively simple drawing.

[Dissecting Botticelli's Adoration of the Magi - James Earle](#) The scene of the three wise men offering gifts to a newborn Jesus was widely painted during the

Renaissance era, so how did painter Sandro Botticelli create a version that's still well known today? James Earle describes who and what set Botticelli's *Adoration of the Magi* apart in the annals of art history.

[The many meanings of Michelangelo's Statue of David - James Earle](#) We typically experience classic works of art in a museum, stripped of their original contexts, but that serene setting can belie a tumultuous history. Take Michelangelo's statue of David: devised as a religious symbol, adopted as a political emblem, and later iconized for its aesthetic beauty. James Earle walks us through the statue's journey, to show how art gains layers of meaning over time.

[Tycho Brahe, the scandalous astronomer - Dan Wenkel](#) If you think scientists lead boring, monotonous lives, you must not know about Tycho Brahe. The 16th century astronomer who accurately predicted planetary motion led quite a dramatic life -- complete with a kidnapping, a sword duel and even a clairvoyant dwarf. Dan Wenkel dives into the history behind this sensational scientist, explaining how he continued to inspire intrigue even after his death.

[Shakespearean dating tips - Anthony John Peters](#) Beyond giving the world dozens of English language masterpieces and inventing countless words (including the word countless), William Shakespeare, ever the overachieving bard, especially had a way with the romantic turn of phrase. Anthony John Peters explains why Shakespeare's coy use of metaphor was so effective -- and may just help you get a date today.

[Insults by Shakespeare - April Gudenrath](#) "You're a fishmonger!" By taking a closer look at Shakespeare's words--specifically his insults--we see why he is known as a master playwright whose works transcend time and appeal to audiences all over the world.

The Enlightenment and Scientific Revolution

[Newton's 3 Laws, with a bicycle - Joshua Manley](#) Why would it be hard to pedal a 10,000 pound bicycle? This simple explanation shows how Newton's 3 laws of motion help you ride your bike.

The Age of Exploration

[History vs. Christopher Columbus - Alex Gendler](#) Many people in the United States and Latin America have grown up celebrating the anniversary of Christopher Columbus's voyage. But was he an intrepid explorer who brought two worlds together or a ruthless exploiter who brought colonialism and slavery? And did he even discover America at all? Alex Gendler puts Columbus on the stand in History vs. Christopher Columbus.