

# The Vikings A Very Short Introduction Very Short Introductions

The Ice Age: A Very Short Introduction Very Short Stories Food: A Very Short Introduction The Soviet Union: A Very Short Introduction The Beats: A Very Short Introduction Voyage with the Vikings The Celts: A Very Short Introduction Sport: A Very Short Introduction The Crusades: A Very Short Introduction Teeth: A Very Short Introduction The Computer: A Very Short Introduction The Vikings The Middle Ages: A Very Short Introduction The Etruscans: A Very Short Introduction The British Constitution: A Very Short Introduction The Oxford Illustrated History of the Vikings Iran: A Very Short Introduction The Tudors: A Very Short Introduction The Silk Road: A Very Short Introduction From the Vikings to the Normans The Age of the Vikings The Reformation: A Very Short Introduction The Vikings on Film Viking Age England Philosophy of Law: A Very Short Introduction A Brief History of the Vikings The Trojan War: A Very Short Introduction The Crusades: A Very Short Introduction The Cultural Revolution: A Very Short Introduction The Renaissance: A Very Short Introduction Fashion: A Very Short Introduction Icelanders in the Viking Age Exploration: A Very Short Introduction Paganism: A Very Short Introduction A History of the Vikings The Anglo-Saxon Age: A Very Short Introduction The Mongols: A Very Short Introduction The Brain: A Very Short Introduction The Eye: A Very Short Introduction The Quakers: A Very Short Introduction

## The Ice Age: A Very Short Introduction

Covers the different geographical areas of the Viking world, and traces the Viking story from the first raids on isolated coastal communities toward the end of the eighth century to the establishing of permanent settlements

## Very Short Stories

China's decade-long Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution shook the politics of China and the world. Even as we approach its fiftieth anniversary, the movement remains so contentious that the Chinese Communist Party still forbids fully open investigation of its origins, development, and conclusion. Drawing upon a vital trove of scholarship, memoirs, and popular culture, this Very Short Introduction illuminates this complex, often obscure, and still controversial movement. Moving beyond the figure of Mao Zedong, Richard Curt Kraus links Beijing's elite politics to broader aspects of society and culture, highlighting many changes in daily life, employment, and the economy. Kraus also situates this very nationalist outburst of Chinese radicalism within a global context, showing that the Cultural Revolution was mirrored in the radical youth movement that swept much of the world, and that had imagined or emotional links to China's red guards. Yet it was also during the Cultural Revolution that China and the United States tempered their long hostility, one of the innovations in this period that sowed the seeds for China's subsequent decades of spectacular economic growth.

## Food: A Very Short Introduction

The British constitution has grown organically in response to changes in its economic, political, and social environment, and is not contained in a single authoritative text. In this Very Short Introduction, Martin Loughlin examines the nature and authority of the constitution, and its challenging prospects for the future.

## **The Soviet Union: A Very Short Introduction**

Iran has rarely been out of the headlines. Yet media interest and extensive coverage has tended to hinder rather than help our understanding of Iran as an idea, an identity, and a people, leading to a superficial understanding of what is a complex and nuanced political culture and civilization. This Very Short Introduction presents a radical reinterpretation of Iranian history and politics, placing the Islamic Revolution in the context of a century of political change and social transformation. By considering the various factors that have contributed towards the construction of the idea of Iran and the complex identity of Iranians themselves, Ali Ansari steers a clear path towards a more realistic understanding for us all. ABOUT THE SERIES: The Very Short Introductions series from Oxford University Press contains hundreds of titles in almost every subject area. These pocket-sized books are the perfect way to get ahead in a new subject quickly. Our expert authors combine facts, analysis, perspective, new ideas, and enthusiasm to make interesting and challenging topics highly readable.

## **The Beats: A Very Short Introduction**

Teeth are amazing - the product of half a billion years of evolution. They provide fuel for the body by breaking apart other living things; and they must do it again and again over a lifetime without themselves being broken in the process. This means that plants and animals have developed tough or hard tissues for protection, and teeth have evolved ways to sharpen or strengthen themselves to overcome those defences. And just as different jobs require different tools, animals with different diets have different shaped teeth to deal with the variety of foods that they eat. In this Very Short Introduction, Peter S. Ungar, an award-winning author and leading scientist, presents the story of teeth. Ungar outlines the key concepts, including insights into the origin of teeth and their evolution. Considering why teeth are important, he describes how they are made, and how they work, including their fundamental importance in the fossil record. Ungar finishes with a review of mammal teeth, looking at how they evolved and how recent changes to our diet are now affecting dental health. ABOUT THE SERIES: The Very Short Introductions series from Oxford University Press contains hundreds of titles in almost every subject area. These pocket-sized books are the perfect way to get ahead in a new subject quickly. Our expert authors combine facts, analysis, perspective, new ideas, and enthusiasm to make interesting and challenging topics highly readable.

## **Voyage with the Vikings**

Almost twenty years after the Soviet Unions' end, what are we to make of its existence? Was it a heroic experiment, an unmitigated disaster, or a viable if

flawed response to the modern world? Taking a fresh approach to the study of the Soviet Union, this Very Short Introduction blends political history with an investigation into the society and culture at the time. Stephen Lovell examines aspects of patriotism, political violence, poverty, and ideology; and provides answers to some of the big questions about the Soviet experience. ABOUT THE SERIES: The Very Short Introductions series from Oxford University Press contains hundreds of titles in almost every subject area. These pocket-sized books are the perfect way to get ahead in a new subject quickly. Our expert authors combine facts, analysis, perspective, new ideas, and enthusiasm to make interesting and challenging topics highly readable.

## **The Celts: A Very Short Introduction**

The Sagas of Icelanders are enduring stories from Viking-Age Iceland filled with love and romance, battles and feuds, tragedy and comedy. Yet these tales are little read today, even by lovers of literature. The culture and history of the people depicted in the Sagas are often unfamiliar to the modern reader, though the audience for whom the tales were intended would have had an intimate understanding of the material. This text introduces the modern reader to the daily lives and material culture of the Vikings. Topics covered include Icelandic religion, social customs, the settlement of disputes, and major milestones in life of Viking-Age Icelanders. Issues of dispute among scholars, such as the nature of settlement and the division of land, are addressed in the text.

## **Sport: A Very Short Introduction**

From around 900 to 400 BC, the Etruscans were the most innovative, powerful, wealthy, and creative people in Italy. Their archaeological record is both substantial and fascinating, including tomb paintings, sculpture, jewellery, and art. In this Very Short Introduction, Christopher Smith explores Etruscan history, culture, language, and customs. Examining the controversial debates about their origins, he explores how they once lived, placing this within the geographical, economic, and political context of the time. Smith concludes by demonstrating how the Etruscans have been studied and perceived throughout the ages, and the impact this has had on our understanding of their place in history. ABOUT THE SERIES: The Very Short Introductions series from Oxford University Press contains hundreds of titles in almost every subject area. These pocket-sized books are the perfect way to get ahead in a new subject quickly. Our expert authors combine facts, analysis, perspective, new ideas, and enthusiasm to make interesting and challenging topics highly readable.

## **The Crusades: A Very Short Introduction**

The Iliad, Homer's epic tale of the abduction of Helen and the decade-long Trojan War, has fascinated mankind for millennia. Even today, the war inspires countless articles and books, extensive archaeological excavations, movies, television documentaries, even souvenirs and collectibles. But while the ancients themselves believed that the Trojan War took place, scholars of the modern era have sometimes derided it as a piece of fiction. Combining archaeological data and

textual analysis of ancient documents, this Very Short Introduction considers whether or not the war actually took place and whether archaeologists have really discovered the site of ancient Troy. To answer these questions, archaeologist and ancient historian Eric H. Cline examines various written sources, including the works of Homer, the Epic Cycle (fragments from other, now-lost Greek epics), classical plays, and Virgil's Aeneid. Throughout, the author tests the literary claims against the best modern archaeological evidence, showing for instance that Homer, who lived in the Iron Age, for the most part depicted Bronze Age warfare with accuracy. Cline also tells the engaging story of the archaeologists--Heinrich Schliemann and his successors Wilhelm Dörpfeld, Carl Blegen, and Manfred Korfmann--who found the long-vanished site of Troy through excavations at Hisarlik, Turkey. Drawing on evidence found at Hisarlik and elsewhere, Cline concludes that a war or wars in the vicinity of Troy probably did take place during the Late Bronze Age, forming the nucleus of a story that was handed down orally for centuries until put into final form by Homer. But Cline suggests that, even allowing that a Trojan War took place, it probably was not fought because of Helen's abduction, though such an incident may have provided the justification for a war actually fought for more compelling economic and political motives. About the Series: Oxford's Very Short Introductions series offers concise and original introductions to a wide range of subjects--from Islam to Sociology, Politics to Classics, Literary Theory to History, and Archaeology to the Bible. Not simply a textbook of definitions, each volume in this series provides trenchant and provocative--yet always balanced and complete--discussions of the central issues in a given discipline or field. Every Very Short Introduction gives a readable evolution of the subject in question, demonstrating how the subject has developed and how it has influenced society. Eventually, the series will encompass every major academic discipline, offering all students an accessible and abundant reference library. Whatever the area of study that one deems important or appealing, whatever the topic that fascinates the general reader, the Very Short Introductions series has a handy and affordable guide that will likely prove indispensable.

## **Teeth: A Very Short Introduction**

The study of the Quaternary ice age has revolutionized ideas about Earth system change and the pace of landscape and ecosystem dynamics. The Ice Age: A Very Short Introduction looks at evidence from the continents, the oceans, and the ice core records, and the human stories behind it all. Jamie Woodward examines the remarkable environmental shifts that took place during the Great Ice Age of the Quaternary Period. He explores the evolution of ideas, evaluates the contributions of the leading players in the great debates, and presents some of the ingenious methods that have been used to retrieve information about the recent geological past. In an era of warming climate, the study of the ice age past is now more important than ever. This book examines the wonders of the Quaternary ice age - to show how ice age landscapes and ecosystems were repeatedly and rapidly transformed as plants, animals, and humans reorganized their worlds. ABOUT THE SERIES: The Very Short Introductions series from Oxford University Press contains hundreds of titles in almost every subject area. These pocket-sized books are the perfect way to get ahead in a new subject quickly. Our expert authors combine facts, analysis, perspective, new ideas, and enthusiasm to make interesting and

challenging topics highly readable.

## **The Computer: A Very Short Introduction**

Enthralling, well-documented, and vivid account by a leading authority on the subject chronicles the activities of those bold sea raiders of the North who terrorized Europe from the 8th to the 11th centuries.

## **The Vikings**

First published as part of the best-selling The Oxford Illustrated History of Britain, John Blair's Very Short Introduction to the Anglo-Saxon Age covers the emergence of the earliest English settlements to the Norman victory in 1066. This book is a brief introduction to the political, social, religious, and cultural history of Anglo-Saxon England. ABOUT THE SERIES: The Very Short Introductions series from Oxford University Press contains hundreds of titles in almost every subject area. These pocket-sized books are the perfect way to get ahead in a new subject quickly. Our expert authors combine facts, analysis, perspective, new ideas, and enthusiasm to make interesting and challenging topics highly readable.

## **The Middle Ages: A Very Short Introduction**

'From the Fury of the Northmen deliver us, O Lord.' Between the eighth and eleventh centuries, the Vikings surged from their Scandinavian homeland to trade, raid and invade along the coasts of Europe. Their influence and expeditions extended from Newfoundland to Baghdad, their battles were as far-flung as Africa and the Arctic. But were they great seafarers or desperate outcasts, noble heathens or oafish pirates, the last pagans or the first of the modern Europeans? This concise study puts medieval chronicles, Norse sagas and Muslim accounts alongside more recent research into ritual magic, genetic profiling and climatology. It includes biographical sketches of some of the most famous Vikings, from Erik Bloodaxe to Saint Olaf, and King Canute to Leif the Lucky. It explains why the Danish king Harald Bluetooth lent his name to a twenty-first century wireless technology; which future saint laughed as she buried foreign ambassadors alive; why so many Icelandic settlers had Irish names; and how the last Viking colony was destroyed by English raiders. Extending beyond the traditional 'Viking age' of most books, A Brief History of the Vikings places sudden Scandinavian population movement in a wider historical context. It presents a balanced appraisal of these infamous sea kings, explaining both their swift expansion and its supposed halt. Supposed because, ultimately, the Vikings didn't disappear: they turned into us.

## **The Etruscans: A Very Short Introduction**

Highlighting the latest archaeological evidence, Julian Richards reveals the whole Viking world: their history, society and culture, and their expansion overseas for trade, colonization, and plunder.

## **The British Constitution: A Very Short Introduction**

Crusading fervour gripped Europe for over 200 years, creating one of the most extraordinary, vivid episodes in world history. Whether the Crusades are regarded as the most romantic of Christian expeditions, or the last of the barbarian invasions, they have fascinated generations ever since, and their legacy of ideas and imagery has resonated through the centuries, inspiring Hollywood movies and great works of literature. Even today, to invoke the Crusades is to stir deep cultural myths, assumptions and prejudices. Yet despite their powerful hold on our imaginations, our knowledge of them remains obscured and distorted by time. Were the Crusaders motivated by spiritual rewards, or by greed? Were the Crusades an experiment in European colonialism, or a manifestation of religious love? How were they organized and founded? With customary flair and originality, Christopher Tyerman picks his way through the many debates to present a clear and lively discussion of the Crusades; bringing together issues of colonialism, cultural exchange, economic exploitation, and the relationship between past and present. ABOUT THE SERIES: The Very Short Introductions series from Oxford University Press contains hundreds of titles in almost every subject area. These pocket-sized books are the perfect way to get ahead in a new subject quickly. Our expert authors combine facts, analysis, perspective, new ideas, and enthusiasm to make interesting and challenging topics highly readable.

## **The Oxford Illustrated History of the Vikings**

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## **Iran: A Very Short Introduction**

From shortly before AD 800 until the Norman Conquest, England was subject to raids from seafaring peoples from Scandinavia—the Vikings. However, they were not only raiders but also traders and settlers. Using the latest archaeological evidence, the author reassesses the Viking contribution to Late Anglo-Saxon England and examines the creation of the new mixed Anglo-Scandinavian identity.

## **The Tudors: A Very Short Introduction**

We live in an age of globalization on every conceivable level, but globalization has a deeper history than politicians and pundits often allow, and nothing is more significant to its history than exploration. Wherever trade or faith or empire followed, explorers usually led. Their motives were as many-sided and various as their actions; their legacies are contested and mixed. But none can doubt the significance of explorers to the making of the modern world. For as long as human societies have existed, people have felt the urge to venture outside of them, either in search of other societies or in search of new land or adventure. *Exploration: A Very Short Introduction* surveys this quintessential human impulse, tracing it from pre-history to the present, from east to west around the globe, and from the depths of volcanoes to the expanses of space. Focusing on the theme of exploration as encounter, Stewart Weaver discusses the Polynesians in the Pacific, the Norse in the Atlantic, and other early explorers. He reflects on the Columbian "discovery" of the Americas, James Cook and the place of exploration in the Enlightenment, and Alexander von Humboldt's epochal encounter with tropical South America. The book's final chapters relate exploration to imperial expansion in Africa and Central Asia, assess the meaning of the race to the North and South Poles, and consider the significance of today's efforts in space and deep sea exploration. But what accounts for this urge? Through this brief study of the history of exploration, Weaver clearly shows how the impulse to explore is also the foundation of the globalized world we inhabit today. Exploration combines a narration of explorers' daring feats with a wide-lens examination of what it fundamentally means to explore. ABOUT THE SERIES: The Very Short Introductions series from Oxford University Press contains hundreds of titles in almost every subject area. These pocket-sized books are the perfect way to get ahead in a new subject quickly. Our expert authors combine facts, analysis, perspective, new ideas, and enthusiasm to make interesting and challenging topics highly readable.

## **The Silk Road: A Very Short Introduction**

The concept of law lies at the heart of our social and political life. Legal philosophy, or jurisprudence, explores the notion of law and its role in society, illuminating its meaning and its relation to the universal questions of justice, rights, and morality. In this Very Short Introduction Raymond Wacks analyses the nature and purpose of the legal system, and the practice by courts, lawyers, and judges. Wacks reveals the intriguing and challenging nature of legal philosophy with clarity and enthusiasm, providing an enlightening guide to the central questions of legal theory. In this revised edition Wacks makes a number of updates including new material on legal realism, changes to the approach to the analysis of law and legal theory, and updates to historical and anthropological jurisprudence. ABOUT THE SERIES: The Very Short Introductions series from Oxford University Press contains hundreds of titles in almost every subject area. These pocket-sized books are the perfect way to get ahead in a new subject quickly. Our expert authors combine facts, analysis, perspective, new ideas, and enthusiasm to make interesting and challenging topics highly readable.

## **From the Vikings to the Normans**

In the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, the Mongols carved out the largest land-based empire in world history, stretching from Korea to Russia in the north and from China to Syria in the south, and unleashing an unprecedented level of violence. But as Morris Rossabi reveals in this Very Short Introduction, within two generations of their bloody conquests, the Mongols evolved from conquerors and predators to wise rulers who devised policies to foster the economies of the lands they had subjugated. By adopting political and economic institutions familiar to the local populations and recruiting native officials, they won over many of their non-Mongol subjects. In addition, Mongol nobles were ardent patrons of art and culture, supporting the production of Chinese porcelains and textiles, Iranian tiles and illustrated manuscripts, and Russian metalwork. Perhaps most important, the peace imposed by the Mongols on much of Asia and their promotion of trade resulted in considerable interaction among merchants, scientists, artists, and missionaries of different ethnic groups--including Europeans. Modern Eurasian and perhaps global history starts with the Mongol empire.

## **The Age of the Vikings**

'Paganism' is an evocative word that, even today, conjures up deep-seated emotions and prejudices. Until recently, it was primarily a derogatory term used by Christians to describe the non-Christian cultures confronted and vanquished by their Churches. For some it evokes images of sacrifice and barbaric behaviour, while for others it symbolises a peace-loving, nature-worshipping spiritual relationship with the earth. This Very Short Introduction explores the meaning of paganism - through a chronological overview of the attitudes towards its practices and beliefs - from the ancient world through to the present day. Owen Davies largely looks at paganism through the eyes of the Christian world, and how, over the centuries, notions and representations of its nature were shaped by religious conflict, power struggles, colonialism, and scholarship. Despite the expansion of Christianity and Islam, Pagan cultures continue to exist around the world, whilst in the West new formations of paganism constitute one of the fastest-growing religions. Focussing on paganism in Europe, but exploring the nature of paganism globally, Davies looks at how Europeans discovered new cultures through colonial expansion, missionary work, and anthropological study. Contemporary social paganism can be a liberating and social force, and the idea of a global Pagan theology is now on the religious map. ABOUT THE SERIES: The Very Short Introductions series from Oxford University Press contains hundreds of titles in almost every subject area. These pocket-sized books are the perfect way to get ahead in a new subject quickly. Our expert authors combine facts, analysis, perspective, new ideas, and enthusiasm to make interesting and challenging topics highly readable.

## **The Reformation: A Very Short Introduction**

In the late 1950s and early 1960s, the writers of the Beat Generation revolutionized American literature with their iconoclastic approach to language and their angry assault on the conformity and conservatism of postwar society. They and their followers took aim at the hypocrisy and taboos of their time--particularly those involving sex, race, and class--in such provocative works as Jack Kerouac's *On the Road* (1957), Allen Ginsberg's "Howl" (1956), and William S. Burroughs's



Naked Lunch (1959). In this Very Short Introduction, David Sterritt offers a concise overview of the social, cultural, and aesthetic sensibilities of the Beats, bringing out the similarities that connected them and also the many differences that made them a loosely knit collective rather than an organized movement. Figures in the saga include Neal Cassady, Gregory Corso, Lawrence Ferlinghetti, John Clellon Holmes, Carolyn Cassady, and Gary Snyder. As Sterritt ranges from Greenwich Village and San Francisco to Mexico, western Europe, and North Africa, he sheds much light on how the Beats approached literature, drugs, sexuality, art, music, and religion. Members of the Beat Generation hoped that their radical rejection of materialism, consumerism, and regimentation would inspire others to purify their lives and souls as well. Yet they urged the remaking of consciousness on a profoundly inward-looking basis, cultivating "the unspeakable visions of the individual," in Kerouac's phrase. The idea was to revolutionize society by revolutionizing thought, not the other way around. This book explains how the Beats used their antiauthoritarian visions and radical styles to challenge dominant values, fending off absorption into mainstream culture while preparing ground for the larger, more explosive social upheavals of the 1960s. More than half a century later, the Beats' impact can still be felt in literature, cinema, music, theater, and the visual arts. This compact introduction explains why. About the Series: Oxford's Very Short Introductions series offers concise and original introductions to a wide range of subjects--from Islam to Sociology, Politics to Classics, Literary Theory to History, and Archaeology to the Bible. Not simply a textbook of definitions, each volume in this series provides trenchant and provocative--yet always balanced and complete--discussions of the central issues in a given discipline or field. Every Very Short Introduction gives a readable evolution of the subject in question, demonstrating how the subject has developed and how it has influenced society. Eventually, the series will encompass every major academic discipline, offering all students an accessible and abundant reference library. Whatever the area of study that one deems important or appealing, whatever the topic that fascinates the general reader, the Very Short Introductions series has a handy and affordable guide that will likely prove indispensable.

## **The Vikings on Film**

There is a companion web site associated with the book (<http://vsicomputer.wordpress.com/>). It contains chapter summaries, links to relevant material and posts about items of news relevant to the book's contents. Computers have changed so much since the room-filling, bulky magnetic tape running monsters of the mid 20th century. They now form a vital part of most people's lives. And they are more ubiquitous than might be thought - you may have more than 30 computers in your home: not just the desktop and laptop but think of the television, the fridge, the microwave. But what is the basic nature of the modern computer? How does it work? How has it been possible to squeeze so much power into increasingly small machines? And what will the next generations of computers look like? In this Very Short Introduction, Darrel Ince looks at the basic concepts behind all computers; the changes in hardware and software that allowed computers to become so small and commonplace; the challenges produced by the computer revolution - especially whole new modes of cybercrime and security issues; the Internet and the advent of 'cloud computing'; and the promise of whole new horizons opening up with quantum computing, and even

computing using DNA. ABOUT THE SERIES: The Very Short Introductions series from Oxford University Press contains hundreds of titles in almost every subject area. These pocket-sized books are the perfect way to get ahead in a new subject quickly. Our expert authors combine facts, analysis, perspective, new ideas, and enthusiasm to make interesting and challenging topics highly readable.

## **Viking Age England**

The Middle Ages is a term coined around 1450 to describe a thousand years of European History. In this Very Short Introduction, Miri Rubin provides an exploration of the variety, change, dynamism, and sheer complexity that the period covers. From the provinces of the Roman Empire, which became Barbarian kingdoms after c.450-650, to the northern and eastern regions that became increasingly integrated into Europe, Rubin explores the emergence of a truly global system of communication, conquest, and trade by the end of the era. Presenting an insight into the challenges of life in Europe between 500-1500 — at all levels of society — Rubin looks at kingship and family, agriculture and trade, groups and individuals. Conveying the variety of European experiences, while providing a sense of the communication, cooperation, and shared values of the pervasive Christian culture, Rubin looks at the legacies they left behind. ABOUT THE SERIES: The Very Short Introductions series from Oxford University Press contains hundreds of titles in almost every subject area. These pocket-sized books are the perfect way to get ahead in a new subject quickly. Our expert authors combine facts, analysis, perspective, new ideas, and enthusiasm to make interesting and challenging topics highly readable.

## **Philosophy of Law: A Very Short Introduction**

The Vikings maintain their grip on our imagination, but their image is too often distorted by myth. It is true that they pillaged, looted, and enslaved. But they also settled peacefully and traveled far from their homelands in swift and sturdy ships to explore. The Age of the Vikings tells the full story of this exciting period in history. Drawing on a wealth of written, visual, and archaeological evidence, Anders Winroth captures the innovation and pure daring of the Vikings without glossing over their destructive heritage. He not only explains the Viking attacks, but also looks at Viking endeavors in commerce, politics, discovery, and colonization, and reveals how Viking arts, literature, and religious thought evolved in ways unequalled in the rest of Europe. The Age of the Vikings sheds new light on the complex society, culture, and legacy of these legendary seafarers.

## **A Brief History of the Vikings**

Forty-six very short science fiction, fantasy and horror stories. Perfect for reading while commuting, standing in line while waiting to renew your driver's licence, waiting for that friend who is always running late for drinks or other situations where you just don't have time to spend on a longer story. Travel to fantasy worlds, fly with super heroes and tremble in the face of unkind mysteries and horrible horrors.

## **The Trojan War: A Very Short Introduction**

More than ever before, the Renaissance stands as one of the defining moments in world history. Between 1400 and 1600, European perceptions of society, culture, politics and even humanity itself emerged in ways that continue to affect not only Europe but the entire world. This wide-ranging exploration of the Renaissance sees the period as a time of unprecedented intellectual excitement and cultural experimentation and interaction on a global scale, alongside a darker side of religion, intolerance, slavery, and massive inequality of wealth and status. It guides the reader through the key issues that defined the period, from its art, architecture, and literature, to advancements in the fields of science, trade, and travel. In its incisive account of the complexities of the political and religious upheavals of the period, the book argues that Europe's reciprocal relationship with its eastern neighbours offers us a timely perspective on the Renaissance that still has much to teach us today. ABOUT THE SERIES: The Very Short Introductions series from Oxford University Press contains hundreds of titles in almost every subject area. These pocket-sized books are the perfect way to get ahead in a new subject quickly. Our expert authors combine facts, analysis, perspective, new ideas, and enthusiasm to make interesting and challenging topics highly readable.

## **The Crusades: A Very Short Introduction**

The monarchs of the Tudor period are among some of the most well-known figures in British history. John Guy presents a compelling and fascinating exploration of the Tudors in the new edition of this Very Short Introduction. Looking at all aspects of the period, from beginning to end, he considers Tudor politics, religion, and economics, as well as issues relating to gender and minority rule, and the art, architecture, and social and material culture of the time. Introducing all of the key Tudor monarchs, Guy considers the impact the Tudor period had not only at the time, but also the historical legacy it left behind. ABOUT THE SERIES: The Very Short Introductions series from Oxford University Press contains hundreds of titles in almost every subject area. These pocket-sized books are the perfect way to get ahead in a new subject quickly. Our expert authors combine facts, analysis, perspective, new ideas, and enthusiasm to make interesting and challenging topics highly readable.

## **The Cultural Revolution: A Very Short Introduction**

In this Very Short Introduction, Prof Lord John Krebs provides a brief history of human food, from our remote ancestors 3 million years ago to the present day. By looking at the four great transitions in human food - cooking, agriculture, processing, and preservation - he considers a variety of questions, including why people like some kinds of foods and not others; how your senses contribute to flavour; the role of genetics in our likes and dislikes; and the differences in learning and culture around the world. In turn he considers aspects of diet, nutrition, and health, and the disparity between malnutrition in some places and overconsumption in others. Finally, he considers some of the big issues - the obesity crisis, sustainable agriculture, the role of new technologies such as genetic modification of crops, and ends by posing the question: how will it be possible to

feed a population of 9 billion in 2050, without destroying our natural environment? ABOUT THE SERIES: The Very Short Introductions series from Oxford University Press contains hundreds of titles in almost every subject area. These pocket-sized books are the perfect way to get ahead in a new subject quickly. Our expert authors combine facts, analysis, perspective, new ideas, and enthusiasm to make interesting and challenging topics highly readable.

## **The Renaissance: A Very Short Introduction**

Sport is big business; international in nature and the focus of much media and cultural attention. In this Very Short Introduction, Mike Cronin charts the history of sport, from its traditional origins in folk football and cock fighting to its position as a global phenomenon today. Looking at a variety of sports from team games such as rugby, cricket, and football to games for individuals such as golf, tennis, and skiing, he considers how these first emerged and captivated the interest of ordinary people, and how sport has been transformed within our daily lives. Exploring the relationship between sport and class, gender, commerce, identity, and ethics, Cronin considers some of the central issues in sport today, including the high pay of professional footballers and the glamour of sports women, as well as fair play standards. Charting sport through the ages and around the world, this is a short guide to the history, development, and place of sport in contemporary global society. ABOUT THE SERIES: The Very Short Introductions series from Oxford University Press contains hundreds of titles in almost every subject area. These pocket-sized books are the perfect way to get ahead in a new subject quickly. Our expert authors combine facts, analysis, perspective, new ideas, and enthusiasm to make interesting and challenging topics highly readable.

## **Fashion: A Very Short Introduction**

Savage and bloodthirsty, or civilized and peaceable? The Celts have long been a subject of enormous fascination, speculation, and misunderstanding. From the ancient Romans to the present day, their real nature has been obscured by a tangled web of preconceived ideas and stereotypes. Barry Cunliffe seeks to reveal this fascinating people for the first time, using an impressive range of evidence, and exploring subjects such as trade, migration, and the evolution of Celtic traditions. Along the way, he exposes the way in which society's needs have shaped our visions of the Celts, and examines such colourful characters as St Patrick, Cú Chulainn, and Boudica. ABOUT THE SERIES: The Very Short Introductions series from Oxford University Press contains hundreds of titles in almost every subject area. These pocket-sized books are the perfect way to get ahead in a new subject quickly. Our expert authors combine facts, analysis, perspective, new ideas, and enthusiasm to make interesting and challenging topics highly readable.

## **Icelanders in the Viking Age**

Fashion is a dynamic global industry that plays an important role in the economic, political, cultural, and social lives of an international audience. It spans high art and popular culture, and plays a significant role in material and visual culture. This

book introduces fashion's myriad influences and manifestations. Fashion is explored as a creative force, a business, and a means of communication. From Karl Lagerfeld's creative reinventions of Chanel's iconic style to the multicultural reference points of Indian designer Manish Arora, from the spectacular fashion shows held in nineteenth century department stores to the mix-and-match styles of Japanese youth, the book examines the ways that fashion both reflects and shapes contemporary culture. Using historical and contemporary examples, it gives a clear understanding of how fashion has developed since the renaissance, while raising questions about its status, ethical credibility, and influence on consumers. The book provides insight into the structure of the fashion industry and how fashions are designed, promoted and consumed, in relation to relevant historical, social and cultural contexts. It is structured thematically, to look at the role and development of designers, the growth of shopping and the different businesses involved in making and selling fashionable clothes. Fashion's relationship to the wider culture is also explored, by considering its representation in art and collaborations between designers and artists, the moral controversies surrounding fashion, and attempts to produce ethical clothing, and the effects of globalisation on the fashion trade. ABOUT THE SERIES: The Very Short Introductions series from Oxford University Press contains hundreds of titles in almost every subject area. These pocket-sized books are the perfect way to get ahead in a new subject quickly. Our expert authors combine facts, analysis, perspective, new ideas, and enthusiasm to make interesting and challenging topics highly readable.

## **Exploration: A Very Short Introduction**

The eye is one of the most remarkable achievements of evolution, and has evolved up to 40 times in different parts of the animal kingdom. In humans, vision is the most important sense, and much of the brain is given over to the processing of visual information. In this Very Short Introduction, Michael Land describes the evolution of vision and the variety of eyes found in both humans and animals. He explores the evolution of colour vision in primates and the workings of the human eye, to consider how that contributes to our visual ability. He explains how we see in three dimensions and the basic principles of visual perception, including our impressive capacity for pattern recognition and the ability of vision to guide action. ABOUT THE SERIES: The Very Short Introductions series from Oxford University Press contains hundreds of titles in almost every subject area. These pocket-sized books are the perfect way to get ahead in a new subject quickly. Our expert authors combine facts, analysis, perspective, new ideas, and enthusiasm to make interesting and challenging topics highly readable.

## **Paganism: A Very Short Introduction**

The phrase "silk road" evokes vivid scenes of merchants leading camel caravans across vast stretches to trade exotic goods in glittering Oriental bazaars, of pilgrims braving bandits and frozen mountain passes to spread their faith across Asia. Looking at the reality behind these images, this Very Short Introduction illuminates the historical background against which the silk road flourished, shedding light on the importance of old-world cultural exchange to Eurasian and world history. On the one hand, historian James A. Millward treats the silk road

broadly, to stand in for the cross-cultural communication between peoples across the Eurasian continent since at least the Neolithic era. On the other, he highlights specific examples of goods and ideas exchanged between the Mediterranean, Persia, India, and China, along with the significance of these exchanges. While including silks, spices, and travelers' tales of colorful locales, the book explains the dynamics of Central Eurasian history that promoted Silk Road interactions--especially the role of nomad empires--highlighting the importance of the biological, technological, artistic, intellectual, and religious interchanges across the continent. Millward shows that these exchanges had a profound effect on the old world that was akin to, if not on the scale of, modern globalization. He also disputes the idea that the silk road declined after the collapse of the Mongol empire or the opening of direct sea routes from Europe to Asia, showing how silk road phenomena continued through the early modern and modern expansion of the Russian and Chinese states across Central Asia. Millward concludes that the idea of the silk road has remained powerful, not only as a popular name for boutiques and restaurants, but also in modern politics and diplomacy, such as U.S. Secretary of State Hilary Clinton's "Silk Road Initiative" for India, Pakistan, and Afghanistan.

## **A History of the Vikings**

How does the brain work? How different is a human brain from other creatures' brains? Is the human brain still evolving? In this fascinating book, Michael O'Shea provides a non-technical introduction to the main issues and findings in current brain research, and gives a sense of how neuroscience addresses questions about the relationship between the brain and the mind. Chapters tackle subjects such as brain processes, perception, memory, motor control and the causes of 'altered mental states'. A final section discusses possible future developments in neuroscience, touching on artificial intelligence, gene therapy, the importance of the Human Genome Project, drugs by design, and transplants. ABOUT THE SERIES: The Very Short Introductions series from Oxford University Press contains hundreds of titles in almost every subject area. These pocket-sized books are the perfect way to get ahead in a new subject quickly. Our expert authors combine facts, analysis, perspective, new ideas, and enthusiasm to make interesting and challenging topics highly readable.

## **The Anglo-Saxon Age: A Very Short Introduction**

This readable and authoritative volume covers the history of the Britain and Ireland between 800 and 1100 A.D. Seven chapters contributed by a team of experts cover key of this period, such as the Vikings, monarchies and other political structures, relationships between lords and labourers, developments in trade and urbanization, the christianization of society, the functions and dissemination of writing and scholarship, and relationships between Britain, Ireland and the Mediterranean civilizations to the south. To create a fully-rounded overview of the period, Wendy Davies, the volume's editor, has provided an Introduction giving a geographical context to the chapter narratives and discussing the available source material, and a Conclusion which pulls together the themes and currents running through the individual chapters.

## **The Mongols: A Very Short Introduction**

Factual and fanciful tales of the Nordic warriors known as Vikings have proven irresistible to filmmakers for nearly a century. Diverse, prominent actors from Kirk Douglas, Richard Widmark and Sidney Poitier to Tim Robbins and John Cleese, and noted directors, including Richard Fleischer, Clive Donner and Terry Jones, have all lent their talents to Viking-related films. These fourteen essays on films dealing with the Viking era discuss American, British and European productions. Analyzed in detail are such films as *The Vikings* (1958), *The Long Ships* (1964), *Alfred the Great* (1969), *Erik the Viking* (1989) and *Outlander* (2008), as well as two comic-strip adaptations, the 1954 and 1989 films of *Prince Valiant* and the animated *Astérix and the Vikings* (2006). A comprehensive filmography is also included.

## **The Brain: A Very Short Introduction**

The Quakers are a fascinating religious group both in their origins and in the variety of reinterpretations of the faith since. Emerging from the social unrest of the English civil war, the Quakers have gone on to have an influence way beyond their numbers: be it their continued stance against war or their pioneering work against slavery. At the same time, Quakers maintain a distinctive worship method to achieve the direct encounter with God which has been at the heart of the movement since its beginning. This book charts the history of Quakerism and its present-day diversity, and outlines its approach to worship, belief, theology and language, and ecumenism. ABOUT THE SERIES: The Very Short Introductions series from Oxford University Press contains hundreds of titles in almost every subject area. These pocket-sized books are the perfect way to get ahead in a new subject quickly. Our expert authors combine facts, analysis, perspective, new ideas, and enthusiasm to make interesting and challenging topics highly readable.

## **The Eye: A Very Short Introduction**

The Reformation transformed Europe, and left an indelible mark on the modern world. It began as an argument about what Christians needed to do to be saved, but rapidly engulfed society in a series of fundamental changes. This Very Short Introduction provides a lively and up-to-date guide to the process. It explains doctrinal debates in a clear and non-technical way, but is equally concerned to demonstrate the effects the Reformation had on politics, society, art, and minorities. Peter Marshall argues that the Reformation was not a solely European phenomenon, but that varieties of faith exported from Europe transformed Christianity into a truly world religion. The complex legacy of the Reformation is also assessed; its religious fervour produced remarkable stories of sanctity and heroism, and some extraordinary artistic achievements, but violence, holy war, and martyrdom were equally its products. A paradox of the Reformation - that it intensified intolerance while establishing pluralism - is one we still wrestle with today. ABOUT THE SERIES: The Very Short Introductions series from Oxford University Press contains hundreds of titles in almost every subject area. These pocket-sized books are the perfect way to get ahead in a new subject quickly. Our expert authors combine facts, analysis, perspective, new ideas, and enthusiasm to make interesting and challenging topics highly readable.

## **The Quakers: A Very Short Introduction**

Beth and her cousin Patrick travel in Mr. Whittaker's invention, the Imagination station, to 1000 A.D. Greenland, where they meet Erik the Red and Leif Eriksson and witness the spread of Christianity in that country.



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