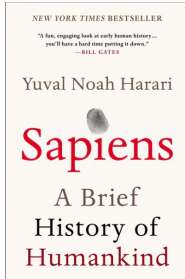


# Books by the Stack



## **Sapiens: A Brief History of Humankind by Yuval Noah Harari**

A narrative history of humanity's creation and evolution explores how biology and history have defined understandings of what it means to be human and details the role of modern cognition in shaping the ecosystem and civilizations.

**Why you'll like it:** *History & science writing. Accessible. Scholarly.*

**About the Author:** Yuval Noah Harari received a PhD in history from the University of Oxford. He lectures at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem, specializing in world history. He has written several books including *Sapiens: A Brief History of Humankind* which became a 2016 New York Times Bestsellers. (Bowker Author Biography)

### **Questions for Discussion**

1. "There are no gods in the universe, no nations, no money, no human rights, no laws and no justice outside the common imagination of human beings." (pg. 31) What are some of the imagined realities you believe in?
2. Do you feel you are missing out by living in a world with only one human species? Could other human species ever possibly survived?
3. Of all the human developments described in *Sapiens*, which one do you think was the most significant in the course of our history?
4. By what means is homo sapiens the dominant species on planet earth?
5. "It is wrong to judge thousands of years of history from the perspective of today." (pg. 93) From what other perspective can we judge it? Can we really get inside the perspective of a 3 year-old girl living thousands of years ago?
6. Which side of the debate do you fall on: the agriculture revolution set humankind in the road to prosperity or perdition?
7. What was the most surprising fact or assertion that you came across while reading the book? Did you disagree with any of Harari's arguments or interpretations?
8. Do you think that the major world religions are comparable to 'shared mythologies' such as nations, corporations, and currency? When does a mythology become a reality?
9. Is imperialism really defensible on the grounds that empires paid for culture and most of us are the product of empires?
10. Do you find the notion that families and communities have been completely destroyed by free market capitalism shocking? Do you recognize the effects of this in your own life?
11. Humankind has only been present for a minute fraction of planet earth's existence – do you think that our civilization will retain its current position in centuries to come?

**12.** Why does Harari refer to the Agricultural Revolution as “history’s biggest fraud”? How does he account for it and why does he claim that the Agricultural Revolution reduced human happiness? “We did not domesticate wheat. It domesticated us.” (p.81)

**13.** What, for Harari, are the most important developments in the history of humanity between the Agricultural and Scientific Revolutions?

**14.** How can reading about history help us in the present day and the future?

*(Questions provided by the Amsterdam Non-Fiction Book Club and the publisher)*



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