

# Big History, Small World

Cynthia Stokes Brown



**BIG HISTORY,  
SMALL WORLD**  
CYNTHIA STOKES BROWN

BERKSHIRE

Big history becomes engaging and personal in *Big History, Small World* by Cynthia Stokes Brown, the first guide in English to a new approach to history that has been specifically designed for high school students. It's also ideal for the general reader who shares Bill Gates's fascination with this new blend of history and science, and fits neatly with the free curriculum available at the Big History Project, cofounded by Professor David Christian and Bill Gates, the founder of Microsoft.

*Big History, Small World* is organized into twelve chapters. In the first chapter, Brown discusses the scientific method. In the last chapter she discusses the different ways people interpret big history and find meaning in it. The other ten chapters are based on eight major turning points, or thresholds, in the cosmic story. One threshold, the emergence of life, gets two chapters, while a discussion of the future fills chapter eleven.

This book is not formatted as a traditional textbook, although it can easily be used as one. Each chapter has questions on the frontier of knowledge, as well as suggestions of how the content applies directly to the reader, to answer the perennial question: "Why do I have to learn this?" There are illustrations, charts, diagrams, a glossary and timeline, and short biographies of scientists and historians who have been influential in developing big history.

**Cynthia Stokes Brown** has taught world history in high-school and trained high-school teachers at Dominican University of California, where she piloted big history courses and helped initiate the big history program now required for all freshmen. She is the author of the general-interest book on big history, *Big History: From the Big Bang to the Present* (New York: New Press, 2nd ed. 2012) and also wrote a university-level textbook with David Christian and Craig Benjamin, *Big History: Between Nothing and Everything* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 2014). She is a founding member of the International Big History Association and associate editor of its new *Journal of Big History*.

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David Christian and Bill Gates work together on the Big History Project. David Christian is the author of *This Fleeting World: A Short History of Humanity*, also published by Berkshire.

