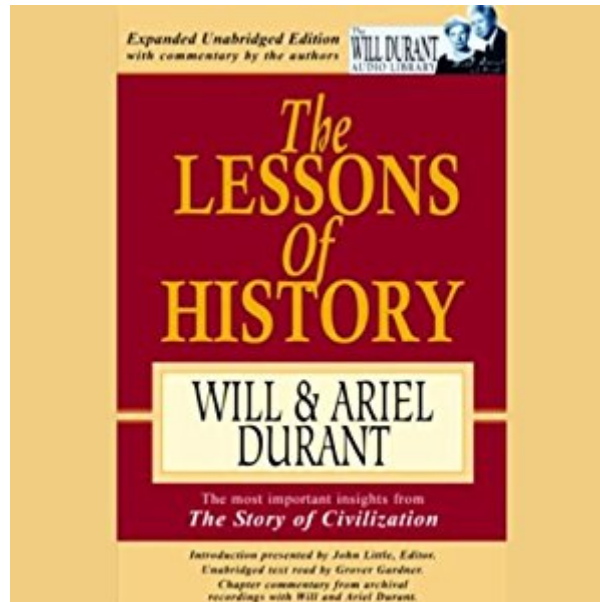




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# The Lessons Of History



## Synopsis

[Read by Grover Gardner] [Introduction written and read by John Little] [With archival recordings of the Durants in conversation] The authors devoted five decades to the study of world history and philosophy, culminating in the masterful eleven-volume Story of Civilization. In this compact summation of their work, Will and Ariel Durant share the vital and profound lessons of our collective past. Their perspective, gained after a lifetime of thinking and writing about the history of humankind, is an invaluable resource for us today. The rare archival recordings of the Durants in conversation, made from 1957-1977, illuminate our present condition and offer insightful guidance for the future. [This audio edition includes two previously unpublished essays.] --This text refers to the Audio CD edition.

## Book Information

Audible Audio Edition

Listening Length: 5 hours and 39 minutes

Program Type: Audiobook

Version: Unabridged

Publisher: Blackstone Audio, Inc.

Audible.com Release Date: May 27, 2004

Language: English

ASIN: B0002P0EJU

Best Sellers Rank: #24 in Books > Audible Audiobooks > History > World #1051 in Books > History > World

## Customer Reviews

The book is provocative and does really lend the right perspective to looking at history, and our behaviors and systems through the lens of time. I've taken away some interesting lessons, and groundings from it. I'd give it 4.5 stars vs. 5 just for some of his personal commentary on some of the sections, which I assume is justified. I found myself mildly offended at times, but not without merit on the author's end. I would recommend this for anyone interested in history and anthropology. A quick and insightful read.

Having spent decades writing a massive multi-volume history of the world, Will and Ariel Durant are ideally placed to discern patterns and offer opinions on what to make of it all. With this compact and lively book of only 100 pages, they do exactly that. In short and concise chapters, they range across

considerations of geography, biology, 'race', character, morals, religion, economics, socialism, government, war, rise and fall, and progress. They give many historical examples along the way, but the reader should understand that these examples are intended only as illustrations, not 'evidence', since the whole point is that we're asking them to apply their judgment. And even if you don't always wind up agreeing with them, the Durants are people whose opinions are worth considering carefully. Because the book covers such a wide and ambitious scope in such a short space, it's densely packed with insights and opinions, sometimes provocative ones, and in fact there's so much here to digest that I'll need to read this book again before attempting a detailed summary. That's why I say this is a considerable education in just one short book. However, for now, perhaps we can broadly say that history shows humans to be complex at both individual and group levels, and capable of both the highest heights and lowest lows, so it's difficult to find any "lessons of history" which are clear and explicit enough to enable even remotely detailed prediction of how our common future will unfold. That doesn't mean that there are simply no useful lessons, or even worse that we should ignore history, but deciding which lessons to apply in particular circumstances is clearly a subtle art requiring much judgment and easily prone to error. I'll leave it at that for now, along with offering a strong recommendation that all students of history read this book (and the unabridged audiobook is also excellent). Indeed, I would recommend this book to anyone interested in better understanding the human condition. After all, surely the past tells us at least a little about what we are and where we might be going?

Great insight and review of humanity through the lens of history. My first read of Durant and surely it won't be the last. Didn't give 5 stars because in some topics there were conclusions that seem more of a personal opinion of the author and less of an analysis of patterns of behavior.

The #1 writer of history and those who should be studied in history as you go through the season of advancement in the societies of life in the World and the advancement in KNOWLEDGE.

A lot to learn from this book

After reading this wonderful, although brief, volume, I regret that I never completed studying the original volumes scanning recorded history authored by Will and Ariel Durant. As I began it, it seemed impossible that anyone could condense the rises and declines of nations with any degree of coherence. Yet it rang true for me, tying together the strands of global history with a well crafted

analysis. The central issue regarding the "nature of man" requires reflection, for it is the vanity of an individual that seeks to deny evil and blind oneself to horrific events, many of these in the name of power and greed. Upon completion of the work, the key question for the reader seems to be, has civilization built upon the past with enlightened progress, or are we destined to repeat all the mistakes that ever plagued mankind? The Durants press their opinion with a degree of optimism, while leaving open the answers for posterity. For thought-provoking analysis, this is a great book for discussion groups. I loved reading it.

Great book, it points out how Communism is nothing new it is merely the re-branding of feudalism and oligarchy's of the past have operated on similar levels of centralized control. Even the Egyptians at one time operated with very tight control on property. It touches on this and many other aspects of human history a must read.

Great book. Unvarnished truth, without the bias of political correctness.

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