



Schools Handout # 1

History of Cambodia



- Cambodia's roots began in the 1st to 6th centuries
- It was originally called 'Funan', and was the oldest Indianised state in Southeast Asia
- Even back then, Cambodians wore checkered scarfs, known as krommas, which are still used today
- The Khmer Empire gained power in 802 with their leader King Jayavarman II
- For the next 600 years, powerful Kings dominated much of present-day Southeast Asia
- The Kings began building many temples,

including 100 in the Angkor complex and over 1,000 in the whole country

- Man-made irrigation systems were also developed, allowing for three rice crops a year
- At its peak, the Khmer empire covered much of what today is Cambodia, Thailand, Laos, and southern Vietnam.
- During the 15th century almost all of Angkor city was abandoned, except Angkor Wat, which had been converted into a Buddhist temple. It is suggested that Angkor city was abandoned due to flood and war
- There was much foreign influence in the 15th to 17th centuries, with Siam (nowadays known as Thailand) and Vietnam fighting over the country
- In 1863, King Norodom signed a protectorate treaty with France
- In 1945 the French were briefly ousted by Japan, and in 1953 Cambodia won independence
- The 1950's and 1960's saw Cambodia developing self-sufficiency and prospering in many areas, including education
- In the 1970's the Vietnam war spilled into Cambodia, resulting in homelessness, hunger and deaths
- In 1975 Cambodia was taken captive under the Khmer Rouge regime

