

# Catching The Wave: A Review of The World Is Flat

By: Matt

The World Is Flat

Non-Fiction

Thomas Friedman

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How has human communication evolved in the last one hundred years? In 1914 people would talk face to face and write letters. Now I could be in New York and Video Chat live with a friend in Hong Kong! In Thomas Friedman's book *The World Is Flat* he shows how the passing and use of various types of information has evolved due to the shifting of world economics and geopolitical agendas. The world is ever evolving and has recently been going through a new wave of globalization. This new wave is like no other with mass technological advancement, rapid evolution and growth of the human population, and a general deeper knowledge of the world around us. Friedman delivered an informative piece to explain the events occurring in and leading up to this new world we live in.

Friedman primarily a journalist, joined the *NY Times* in 1981 and serves as a foreign affairs columnist and an economic correspondent. He is famous for winning the Pulitzer Prize in 2002, one of the highest honors achieved in writing. Friedman is considered an expert on

the topic of globalization due to his vast coverage of it over the span of his 33 year career with the NY Times.

*The World Is Flat* is split into 7 sections, each section with its own distinct logical appeal. All seven sections relate back to his thesis, which is basically how world communication has gone through a massive evolution. Sometimes the author takes an aggressive fact based approach, when explaining a single event, or will tell stories that connect to an outlying idea such as his when he compares the flow of a river to Walmart's vast efficiency. The first part of the book explains, in depth, the forces that have shaped our world. A couple of key forces that stand out are the fall of the Berlin Wall, the rise of the Internet, and how companies have used outsourcing to increase productivity in their companies. Friedman explains that these events opened the floodgates to a much more expanded world; communication, efficiency, and general knowledge, in his eyes, have reached an all time high because of these events.

Friedman then discusses the potential pitfalls of the ever so flattening world, he discusses how competition will increase for jobs and resources, and how the greedy and evil could take advantage of such a "free world". Friedman does a solid job of really conveying the central thesis by pulling together events that feed into one major idea of a new form of globalization. Friedman sees the world evolving at a super rapid pace, sometimes too fast for human beings to keep up. The great American way instilled in us by our founding fathers has been found far east in countries such as Japan, China and India.

Although this book is written by a renowned author I felt as though there were many major weaknesses. This is one of the few books I have ever read that even trashing it at

times was extremely annoying. The story felt very disconnected and it almost felt like I was reading multiple stories in one book. Going in a million directions, *The World is Flat* simply left me in confused state, information was just swirling around my head, and the text was extremely hard to process. The book also lacked narrative The facts fed to you in this book don't cover up the fact that there is no real storyline, Friedman does not even make an attempt to establish a storyline. Friedman presents information in a way that is monotonous and the progression of events doesn't keep the reader enticed for longer than 5 minutes. High hopes for this book were sadly forgotten once reading the first 15 pages.

A high school student would not like to read this book. It's incredibly long and he tries to tie together events that seem unconnected or irrelevant. Also, complex vocab words such as hierarchy and heterogeneous can intimidate readers of all ages. Many teenagers these days are excited by what is happening at the current moment; this book tells of events that occurred in the past which makes it a hard read for anyone not interested in world history or even history in general. If you want a story to expand your knowledge base, this is definitely the book to read. Overall ,I'd have to give this book a 3.0 at of 5. Although I am fascinated by history the general flow of the story left me uninterested and bored for most of it.