

# THE HISTORY CHANNEL CLASSROOM STUDY GUIDES

## Modern Marvels

### Antibiotics: The Wonder Drugs

One of the marvels of the twentieth century is the use of antibiotics to cure infectious diseases. Prior to the discovery of penicillin and other antibiotics in the 1940s, there were no protections against even the mildest of infections. Something as simple as a cut or scrape could turn deadly if it became infected. In World War I, more soldiers died from the infections of their wounds than the trauma of the wound. Antibiotics changed that. Called the

- [alleviate](#)
- [anthrax](#)
- [arduous](#)
- [gangrene](#)
- [gregarious](#)
- [hubris](#)
- [immunity](#)
- [inured](#)
- [placebo](#)
- [prescribe](#)
- [repertoire](#)
- [serendipitous](#)
- [succumb](#)

### Discussion Questions

1. Antibiotics have been called the
2. Alexander Fleming discovered penicillin quite by accident. How did he make this discovery?
3. How did antibiotics change the world? How are they historical agents?
4. What did healers use before the discovery of antibiotics to treat infectious diseases?
5. Scientists believe that ancient Egyptians used the antibiotic tetracycline. Why do they believe this? What is their proof?
6. How did the French scientist, Louis Pasteur, change science?
7. The best ways to avoid getting a disease is to have immunity to it. How do bodies build immunities to diseases?
8. Discuss how World War I battlefields were
9. Discuss Alexander Fleming's contribution to science and to world history.
10. Louis Pasteur called a mind such as Alexander Fleming's a
11. What are the dangers of the overuse of antibiotics? What is the future for the drug and the medical community?

### Extended Activities

1. Create a timeline that illustrates the evolution of antibiotics.
2. Research antibiotics on the Internet. What different kinds are there? For what diseases are they used? What are their side effects?