



The World Is Flat

©2009 eNotes.com, Inc. or its Licensors. Please see [copyright information](#) at the end of this document.

Author Thomas L. Friedman dissects technological advances that are creating a more level economic playing field with previously disadvantaged countries rising in knowledge and wealth rivaling that of the United States and other world powers in *The World Is Flat: A Brief History of the Twenty-first Century*. Telephone and computer technology, previously a stronghold of developed countries, has been accessed and mastered by countries such as China and India, making these nations economically competitive. This leveling or “flattening” of access and opportunity inspired Friedman to write about this phenomenon and provided the title for this book. Friedman sees the flattening effect as so profound as to be compared in scope to the Industrial Revolution.

Prominent in Friedman's thesis is the effect of outsourcing jobs from the United States to foreign countries. Reallocating jobs from America to a foreign country raises that country's economy and standard of living, and consequently, the demand for American goods and services. In Friedman's view, this is a positive development which will continue to refine and grow until world economies are lateral, i.e., a flat line. A flat world means we are mutually economically dependent and in more communication with each other. This represents opportunity to some and a threat to others. A worst case scenario regarding the latter would be a retaliatory nuclear terrorist event, the effect of which would be to create barriers to shared information and thus a return to more isolationist policies.

In the final analysis, there can be a positive “flat” world with mutual benefits for all, or a negative “flat” world, where through terrorism, there would be mutual detriment for all.

Copyright Notice

©2009 eNotes.com, Inc.

ALL RIGHTS RESERVED.

No part of this work covered by the copyright hereon may be reproduced or used in any form or by any means graphic, electronic, or mechanical, including photocopying, recording, taping, Web distribution or information storage retrieval systems without the written permission of the publisher.

For complete copyright information, please see the online version of this work:
<http://www.enotes.com/world-flat-salem>