The World Before Modern Times

Prehistory–1500

The Period in Perspective

Around 3000 B.C., civilizations began to emerge in four different areas of the world—Western Asia, Egypt, India, and China—and give rise to the great empires of the ancient world. By the beginning of the first millennium A.D., however, the great states of the ancient world were mostly in decline or at the point of collapse. On the ruins of the ancient empires, new patterns of civilization began to take shape.

At the same time, between 400 and 1500, new civilizations were beginning to appear in a number of other parts of the world—Japan, Southeast Asia, Africa, and across the Atlantic Ocean in the Americas. All of these states were increasingly linked by trade into the first “global civilization.”

Primary Sources Library
See pages 772–773 for primary source readings to accompany Unit 1.

Use The World History Primary Source Document Library CD-Rom to find additional primary sources about The World Before Modern Times.
“...let no day pass without discussing goodness...”

—Socrates, The Apology
Systems of Law

Law is a code of conduct and rights recognized by a society. It provides social control, order, and justice, and it enables people to know their rights and responsibilities. Law is also the cornerstone of a constitutional government, helping to ensure justice and fair treatment of all citizens. “Where law ends, tyranny begins,” said William Pitt, an English leader in 1770.

Roman Republic

Laying the Foundation

Around 451–450 B.C., a group of judges posted 12 tablets in Rome’s main forum, or marketplace. According to legend, the common people of Rome had demanded that the laws be written down for all to see, so that they would then know their rights.

The Twelve Tables, as they were called, remained in effect for almost 1,000 years. When Roman armies conquered other nations, they brought their laws with them. By A.D. 120, the entire Mediterranean world was governed by Roman law.

The Romans developed important legal principles: the law applied to all people regardless of wealth or power, and people should be ruled by law rather than the whims of their leaders. In A.D. 533–534, the Byzantine emperor Justinian consolidated all Roman law into a single written code. The Justinian Code, The Body of Civil Law as it is properly named, became the foundation of today’s civil law system.
Unifying the Law

In 1799, a French general named Napoleon Bonaparte set out to build an empire even larger than Rome’s. To rule this empire, Napoleon followed the Roman example. He appointed a commission to write a uniform code of laws. This code, known as the Napoleonic Code, was completed in 1804.

Although Napoleon ruled as emperor, he drew upon many of the legal precedents first introduced by the Romans. This included the principle that the same laws should be used to govern all people. Under Napoleon, this code was adopted in areas across the globe, such as present-day Belgium, Spain, and Latin America.

Why It Matters

The Romans developed the principle that people should be ruled by law rather than by the whims of leaders. How did the United States ensure that leaders would not place themselves above the law?
The First Civilizations and Empires

Prehistory–A.D. 500

Key Events
As you read, look for the key events in the history of the first civilizations and empires.
• The agricultural revolution of the Neolithic Age gave rise to more complex human societies that became known as the first civilizations.
• The Sumerians in Mesopotamia were among the first groups to build a civilization.
• Under the Shang, Zhou, Qin, and Han dynasties, China developed into a flourishing empire and produced numerous cultural, scientific, and technological achievements.

The Impact Today
The events that occurred during this time period still impact our lives today.
• Paleolithic peoples used technological inventions to change their physical environment, just as humans do today.
• Judaism, Hinduism, Buddhism, and Confucianism continue to have a major impact on people and events around the world.

World History—Modern Times Video  The Chapter 1 video, “Before History,” chronicles the emergence of the first civilizations and empires.
The Great Sphinx and the Great Pyramids at Giza, Egypt, symbolize the power and longevity of Egyptian kingdoms.

1500 B.C. 1000 B.C. 500 B.C. A.D. 1 A.D. 500

Death mask of King Tutankhamen of Egypt

1333 B.C. King Tutankhamen rules Egypt

221 B.C. Qin dynasty begins

563 B.C. Siddhartha Gautama, founder of Buddhism, is born

A.D. 220 Han dynasty ends

HISTORY Online

Chapter Overview
Visit the Glencoe World History—Modern Times Web site at wh.mt.glencoe.com and click on Chapter 1—Chapter Overview to preview chapter information.
In the winter of 1849, a daring young Englishman made a difficult journey into the deserts and swamps of southern Iraq. He moved south down the banks of the river Euphrates while braving high winds and temperatures that reached 120 degrees Fahrenheit (48.9° C). The man, William Loftus, led a small expedition in search of the roots of civilization. As he said, “From our childhood we have been led to regard this place as the cradle of the human race.”

Guided by native Arabs into the southernmost reaches of Iraq, Loftus and his small group of explorers were soon overwhelmed by what they saw. He wrote, “I know of nothing more exciting or impressive than the first sight of one of these great piles, looming in solitary grandeur from the surrounding plains and marshes.”

One of these “piles” was known to the natives as the mound of Warka. The mound contained the ruins of the ancient city of Uruk, one of the first real cities in the world and part of one of the world’s first civilizations. Southern Iraq, known to ancient peoples as Mesopotamia, was one of four areas in the world where civilization began.

Why It Matters

In the fertile river valleys of Mesopotamia, Egypt, India, and China, intensive farming made it possible to support large groups of people. The people in these regions were able to develop the organized societies that we associate with civilization. The beginnings of Western civilization lie in the early civilizations of Southwest Asia and Egypt.

History and You  Make a list of ancient cities mentioned in this chapter. Using the Internet or library, research what current archaeological work is being conducted at those sites. Select one site and prepare a brief report on what types of artifacts are being recovered from that area.
CHAPTER 1 The First Humans

Guide to Reading

Main Ideas
• By 10,000 B.C., Homo sapiens sapiens had spread throughout the world.
• Systematic agriculture brought about major economic, political, and social changes for early humans.

Key Terms
hominid, nomad, Neolithic Revolution, systematic agriculture, domestication, civilization

People to Identify
Neanderthals, Homo sapiens sapiens

Places to Locate
Africa, Europe

Preview Questions
1. What important developments took place during the Paleolithic Age?
2. What changes occurred during the Neolithic Revolution that made the development of cities possible?

Reading Strategy
Summarizing Information
As you read this section, fill in a chart like the one below listing six characteristics of a civilization.

| 1 | 4 |
| 2 | 5 |
| 3 | 6 |

Preview of Events

| 3,000,000 B.C. |
| 100,000 B.C. |
| 30,000 B.C. |
| 10,000 B.C. |
| 8000 B.C. |
| 3000 B.C. |

3,000,000 B.C. Australopithecines make simple stone tools
100,000 B.C. Neanderthals appear
30,000 B.C. Neanderthals are extinct
8000 B.C. Neolithic Age begins
8000 B.C. Systematic agriculture develops
3000 B.C. River valley civilizations develop

Voices from the Past

In 1879, a Spanish landowner, who was an amateur archaeologist, took his 12-year-old daughter Maria with him to examine a cave on their farm in northern Spain. While her father busied himself digging for artifacts at the entrance to the cave, Maria wandered inside, holding a lantern. She was startled by what she discovered:

"Ahead was a big dark hole like a doorway. Beyond it was a huge long room. I held my lantern high for a better look. Then, suddenly, I saw big red-and-black animals all over the ceiling. I stood amazed, looking at them."

—Secrets from the Past, Gene S. Stuart, 1979

Today, the simple cave paintings made by Stone Age artists provide historians with clues to the lives of early humans.

Before History

Historians rely mostly on documents, or written records, to create their pictures of the past. However, an account of prehistory—the period before written records—depends on the work of archaeologists and anthropologists. These scientists rely on the analysis of artifacts and human fossils to construct theories about the development of early human beings.

Early Stages of Development
The earliest humanlike creatures lived in Africa as long as three to four million years ago. Called australopithecines (aw•STRAY•loh•PIH•thuh•SYNS), or “southern apes,” they flourished in eastern and southern Africa. They were the first hominids (humans and other humanlike creatures that walk upright) to make simple stone tools.
A second stage in early human development occurred with the appearance of Homo erectus (“upright human being”), a species that emerged around 1.5 million years ago. Homo erectus made use of larger and more varied tools.

Around 250,000 years ago, a third—and crucial—stage in human development began with the emergence of a new species, Homo sapiens (“wise human being”). Two distinct subgroups, Neanderthals and Homo sapiens sapiens, both developed from Homo sapiens.

Neanderthals were first found in the Neander Valley in Germany. Their remains have been dated between 100,000 and 30,000 B.C. and have been found in Europe and Southwest Asia. Neanderthals relied on a variety of stone tools and seem to be the first early people to bury their dead.

The first anatomically modern humans (people who looked like us), known as Homo sapiens sapiens (“wise, wise human being”), appeared in Africa between 150,000 and 200,000 years ago. Recent evidence indicates that they began to spread outside Africa around 100,000 years ago.

**The Spread of Homo Sapiens Sapiens**  By 30,000 B.C., Homo sapiens sapiens had replaced the Neanderthals, who had largely died out, possibly as a result of conflict between the two groups.

The spread of these first modern humans was a slow process, but by 10,000 B.C., members of the Homo sapiens sapiens subgroup of the species Homo sapiens could be found throughout the world. All humans today, whether they are Europeans, Australian Aborigines (A•buh•RI•NEES), or Africans, belong to the same subgroups of human beings.

**Reading Check**  Identify and describe the three stages of early human development.

**The Hunter-Gatherers of the Old Stone Age**

Just as people do today, Paleolithic peoples used technological innovations, including stone tools, to change their physical environment.

The term Paleolithic Age is used to designate the early period of human history from approximately 2,500,000 to 10,000 B.C. in which humans used simple stone tools. Paleolithic is Greek for “old stone,” and the Paleolithic Age is sometimes called the Old Stone Age.

For hundreds of thousands of years, human beings lived in small communities, seeking to survive by hunting, fishing, and gathering in an often hostile environment. Over a long period of time, Paleolithic peoples learned how to create more sophisticated tools; how to use fire; and how to adapt to, and even change, their physical environment. Paleolithic peoples were primarily nomads (people who moved from place to place) who hunted animals and gathered wild plants for survival. They also created a human culture that included sophisticated cave paintings.

**Reading Check**  Identifying What are the two most important technological innovations of Paleolithic peoples?
The Neolithic Revolution

Despite all of our technological progress, human survival still depends on the systematic growing and storing of food, an accomplishment of people in the Neolithic Age.

The end of the last Ice Age, around 8000 B.C., was followed by what is called the Neolithic Revolution—that is, the revolution that occurred in the Neolithic Age, the period of human history from 8000 to 4000 B.C. The word neolithic is Greek for “new stone.” The name New Stone Age is somewhat misleading, however. The real change in the Neolithic Revolution was the shift from the hunting of animals and the gathering of food to the keeping of animals and the growing of food on a regular basis—what we call systematic agriculture.

The planting of grains and vegetables provided a regular supply of food. The domestication (adaptation for human use) of animals added a steady source of meat, milk, and wool. Animals could also be used to do work. The growing of crops and the taming of food-producing animals created what historians call an agricultural revolution. Some believe this revolution was the single most important development in human history.

Agriculture developed independently in different regions of the world.

1. **Interpreting Maps** Between what latitudes did the earliest farming develop?
2. **Applying Geography Skills** What geologic, geographic, and climatic factors influenced the development of farming?

The growing of crops on a regular basis gave rise to more permanent settlements, which historians call Neolithic farming villages. Once people began settling in villages or towns, they saw the need to build houses for protection and other structures for storage. Organized communities stored food and other material goods, which encouraged the development of trade.

As village inhabitants mastered the art of farming, they gradually began to develop more complex societies. As their wealth increased, these societies began to create armies and to build walled cities. By 3000 B.C., large numbers of people were concentrated in the river valleys of Mesopotamia, Egypt, India, and China. This would lead to a whole new pattern for human life.
The Emergence of Civilization

In general terms, the culture of a people is the way of life that they follow. As we have seen, early human beings formed small groups that developed a simple culture that enabled them to survive. As human societies grew and became more complex, a new form of human existence—called civilization—came into being.

A civilization is a complex culture in which large numbers of human beings share a number of common elements. Historians have identified the basic characteristics of civilizations. Six of the most important characteristics are cities, government, religion, social structure, writing, and art.

An increase in food production in the river valleys of Mesopotamia, Egypt, India, and China led to a significant growth in human population and the rise of cities. Growing numbers of people, the need to maintain the food supply, and the need to build walls for defense soon led to the growth of governments in these new urban civilizations.

All of the new urban civilizations developed religions to explain the workings of the forces of nature and the fact of their own existence. Rituals were developed to please the gods and goddesses. A new social structure based on economic power also arose. Rulers and an upper class of priests, government officials, and warriors dominated society.

Abundant food supplies created new opportunities, enabling some people to work in occupations other than farming. The demand of the upper class for luxury items encouraged artisans and craftspeople to create new products.

Writing was an important feature in the life of these new civilizations. Above all, rulers, priests, merchants, and artisans used writing to keep accurate records. Significant artistic activity was another feature of the new civilizations. Temples and pyramids were built as places for worship or sacrifice, or for the burial of kings and other important people. The emergence of civilizations was a dramatic new stage in the story of world history.

The First Razor

Archaeologists have unearthed evidence that prehistoric men were shaving as early as 18,000 B.C. Some cave paintings portray beardless men, and early gravesites contain sharpened shells that were the first razors. Later, people hammered razors out of bronze and eventually out of iron.

Describing Describe the relationship between an increase in food production and the rise of cities and governments.
Understanding Cause and Effect

Why Learn This Skill?
It is important to understand how or why an event occurred. What action or situation caused a particular event? What were the effects or consequences of that particular action or situation?

Learning the Skill
Understanding cause and effect involves considering how or why an event occurred. A cause is the action or situation that produces an event. An effect is the result or consequence of an action or situation. To identify cause-and-effect relationships, follow these steps:

- Identify two or more events or developments.
- Decide whether or not one event caused the other. Look for “clue words” such as because, led to, brought about, produced, as a result of, so that, since, and therefore.
- Identify the outcomes of events.

Making a graphic organizer can help you understand cause and effect. Read the passage below and examine the graphic organizer:

Unlike the floods on Mesopotamia’s rivers, the flooding of the Nile was gradual and predictable. The river was seen as life-giving, not life-threatening. Whereas massive, state-controlled irrigation and flood control were needed in Mesopotamia, the small villages along the Nile easily managed small irrigation systems that required no state assistance. As a result, Egyptian civilization tended to remain more rural. Many small villages were gathered along a narrow band of land on both sides of the Nile.

Practicing the Skill
On a separate piece of paper, make a cause-and-effect diagram for each of the following statements. Some of the statements may have more than one cause and effect.

1. Irrigation and drainage ditches made it possible to grow crops on a regular basis. The resulting abundance of food supplies enabled large numbers of people to live together in cities.
2. Under Hammurabi’s code, a son found guilty of striking his father had his hand cut off.
3. The Hyksos invaded Egypt and defeated the Egyptian soldiers. Their new rulers taught the conquered Egyptians how to use bronze to make tools and weapons.

Applying the Skill
Read an account of a current event in your community as reported in a local newspaper. Determine at least one cause and one effect of that event. Show the cause-and-effect relationship in a chart.

Glencoe’s Skillbuilder Interactive Workbook, Level 2, provides instruction and practice in key social studies skills.
Western Asia and Egypt

Main Ideas
- The civilizations of western Asia and Egypt contributed technology and beliefs that affect our lives today.
- The rise and fall of empires is an important part of history.

Key Terms
- city-state
- empire
- patriarchal
- cuneiform
- dynasty
- hieroglyphics
- Judaism
- monotheistic

People to Identify
- Sargon
- Hammurabi
- Menes
- King Solomon
- Cyrus

Places to Locate
- Tigris River
- Euphrates River
- Fertile Crescent
- Nile River
- Lower Egypt
- Upper Egypt
- Jerusalem
- Royal Road

Preview Question
1. How did geography affect the civilizations of western Asia and Egypt?

Reading Strategy
Organizing Information
As you read this section complete a chart like the one below listing the geographic locations of the civilizations of western Asia and Egypt.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Western Asia</th>
<th>Egypt</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Voices from the Past

The Nile was crucial to the development of Egyptian civilization.

"The Egyptian Nile," wrote one Arab traveler, "surpasses all the rivers of the world in sweetness of taste, in length of course and usefulness. No other river in the world can show such a continuous series of towns and villages along its banks." In their "Hymn to the Nile," Egyptians wrote of their reliance on the river: "The bringer of food, rich in provisions, creator of all good, lord of majesty, sweet of fragrance. . . . [The Nile] makes the granaries wide, and gives things to the poor. He who makes every beloved tree to grow."—Ancient Near Eastern Texts, James B. Pritchard, 1969

Egypt, like Mesopotamia, was one of the first river valley civilizations. Like the people of Mesopotamia, the Egyptians left records of their developing civilization.

The City-States of Ancient Mesopotamia

The ancient Greeks spoke of the valley between the Tigris and Euphrates Rivers as Mesopotamia, the land "between the rivers." Mesopotamia was at the eastern end of an area known as the Fertile Crescent, an arc of land from the Mediterranean Sea to the Persian Gulf. Because this land had rich soil and abundant crops, it was able to sustain an early civilization.

Farming in ancient Mesopotamia could be done only when people controlled the flow of the rivers. Irrigation and drainage ditches—part of a large-scale system of water control—made it possible to grow crops on a regular basis. The resulting abundance of food enabled large numbers of people to live together in cities.
The first states in Mesopotamia were city-states (cities that came to have political and economic control over the surrounding countryside). They were created by the Sumerians, a people whose origin remains a mystery. By 3000 B.C., the Sumerians had established a number of independent city-states in southern Mesopotamia, including Eridu, Ur, and Uruk.

The most prominent building in a Sumerian city was the temple dedicated to the chief god or goddess of the city. The Sumerians believed that gods and goddesses owned the cities. The people devoted much of their wealth to building temples, as well as elaborated houses for the priests and priestesses who served the gods.

Priests and priestesses, who supervised the temples and their property, had a great deal of power. Eventually, however, ruling power passed into the hands of kings. Kings led armies and organized workers for the irrigation projects on which Mesopotamian farming depended.

**Empires in Ancient Mesopotamia**

As the number of Sumerian city-states grew and the city-states expanded, new conflicts arose. City-state fought city-state for control of land and water. Located on the flat land of Mesopotamia, the Sumerian city-states were also open to invasion by other groups.

To the north of the Sumerian city-states were the Akkadians (uh•KAY•dee•uhn). Around 2340 B.C., Sargon, leader of the Akkadians, overran the Sumerian city-states and set up the first empire in world history. An empire is a large political unit or state, usually under a single leader, that controls many peoples or territories. Empires are often easy to create but difficult to maintain. The rise and fall of empires is an important part of history.

Attacks from neighboring hill peoples eventually caused the Akkadian Empire to fall. Its end by 2100 B.C. brought a return to warring city-states. Not until 1792 B.C. did a new empire come to control much of Mesopotamia. Leadership came from Babylon, a city-state south of Akkad, where Hammurabi (HA•muh•RAH•bee) came to power. He gained control of Sumer and Akkad, thus creating a new Mesopotamian kingdom. As ruler, Hammurabi built temples, encouraged trade, and brought an economic revival to his land. After his death in 1750 B.C., however, Hammurabi’s empire fell to new invaders.
The Code of Hammurabi

Hammurabi is remembered for his law code, a collection of 282 laws. Many of its ideas were similar to later Israelite codes.

The Code of Hammurabi was based on a system of strict justice. Penalties for criminal offenses were severe, and they varied according to the social class of the victim. A crime against a member of the upper class (a noble) by a member of the lower class (a commoner) was punished more severely than the same offense against a member of the lower class. The principle of retaliation (“an eye for an eye, tooth for a tooth”) was a fundamental part of this system of justice.

The law code encouraged the proper performance of work with what could be called consumer protection laws. Builders were held responsible for the buildings they constructed. If a house collapsed and caused the death of the owner, the builder was put to death. If the collapse caused the death of the son of the owner, the son of the builder was put to death. If goods were destroyed, they had to be replaced and the house rebuilt at the builder’s expense.

The largest category of laws in the Code of Hammurabi focused on marriage and the family. Parents...
arranged marriages for their children. After marriage, the two parties signed a marriage contract. Without a contract, no one was considered legally married.

Society in ancient Mesopotamia was **patriarchal**—that is, Mesopotamian society was dominated by men. Hammurabi’s code makes it clear that women had far fewer privileges and rights in marriage than did men.

A woman’s place was in the home. If she failed to fulfill her duties, her husband had legal grounds for divorce. If a wife was not able to bear children or tried to leave home to engage in business, her husband could divorce her. A wife who was a “gadabout... neglecting her house [and] humiliating her husband,” could be drowned.

Fathers ruled their children as well as their wives. Obedience was expected: “If a son has struck his father, he shall cut off his hand.” If a son committed a serious enough offense, his father could disinherit him. Obviously, Hammurabi’s law code covered almost every aspect of people’s lives.

**Reading Check** **Identifying** Identify at least three aspects of Mesopotamian society as revealed by the Code of Hammurabi.

### The Creativity of the Sumerians

The Sumerians invented the oldest writing system. Historians also credit them with many technological innovations.

**Writing** Around 3000 B.C., the Sumerians created a **cuneiform** (“wedge-shaped”) system of writing. Using a reed stylus (a tool for writing), they made wedge-shaped impressions on clay tablets, which were then baked or dried in the sun. Once dried, these tablets lasted a very long time. Several hundred thousand tablets have been found. They have been a valuable source of information for modern scholars.

Writing was important because it allowed a society to keep records and to pass along knowledge from person to person and generation to generation. Writing also made it possible for people to communicate ideas in new ways. This is especially evident in **The Epic of Gilgamesh**, a Mesopotamian poem that records the exploits of a legendary king named Gilgamesh.

**Technology** The Sumerians also invented several tools and devices that made daily life easier and more productive. They developed the wagon wheel, for example, to help transport people and goods from place to place. The potter’s wheel to shape containers, the sundial to keep time, and the arch used in construction are other examples of Sumerian technology. The Sumerians were the first to make bronze out of copper and tin, creating finely crafted metalwork.

The Sumerians also made outstanding achievements in mathematics and astronomy. In math, they devised a number system based on 60. Geometry was used to measure fields and to erect buildings. In astronomy, the Sumerians charted the heavenly constellations. A quick glance at your watch and its division into 60 minutes in an hour should remind you of our debt to the Sumerians.

**Reading Check** **Identifying** Name two major inventions of the Sumerians and tell how those inventions affect our lives today.

### The Course of Egyptian History

The **Nile** is a unique river, beginning in the heart of Africa and coursing northward for more than 4,000 miles (6,436 km). It is the longest river in the world. Before it empties into the Mediterranean, the Nile splits into two major branches. This split forms a triangular territory, the delta. The Nile Delta is called **Lower Egypt**; the land upstream, to the south, is called **Upper Egypt**. Egypt’s important cities developed at the tip of the delta, the point at which the Nile divides.

Egyptian history can be divided into three major periods: the Old Kingdom, the Middle Kingdom, and the New Kingdom. These were periods of long-term stability marked by strong leadership, freedom from invasion, the building of temples and pyramids, and considerable intellectual and cultural activity. Between the periods of stability were ages of political chaos and invasion, known as the Intermediate periods.

The history of Egypt begins around 3100 B.C., when **Menes** (MEE•NEEZ) the king united the villages of Upper and Lower Egypt into a single kingdom and created the first Egyptian royal dynasty. A **dynasty** is a family of rulers whose right to rule is passed on within the family.

**The Old Kingdom** The Old Kingdom, which lasted from around 2700 to 2200 B.C., was an age of prosperity and splendor. Like the kings of the Sumerian city-states, the monarchs of the Old Kingdom were powerful rulers over a unified state. Among the various titles of Egyptian monarchs, that of pharaoh (originally meaning “great house” or “palace”) eventually became the most common.

Kingship was a divine institution in ancient Egypt and formed part of a universal cosmic order: “What
is the king of Upper and Lower Egypt? He is a god by whose dealings one lives, the father and mother of all men, alone by himself, without an equal. ” In obeying their pharaoh, subjects believed that they were helping to maintain a stable world order.

The Pyramids One of the great achievements of Egyptian civilization, the building of pyramids, occurred in the time of the Old Kingdom. Pyramids were built as part of a larger complex of buildings dedicated to the dead—in effect, a city of the dead. The area included several structures: a large pyramid for the pharaoh’s burial; smaller pyramids for his family; and several mastabas, rectangular structures with flat roofs used as tombs for the pharaoh’s officials.

To preserve the physical body after death, the Egyptians practiced mumification, a process of slowly drying a dead body to prevent it from rotting. This process took place in workshops run by priests, primarily for the wealthy families who could afford it. Workers first removed the liver, lungs, stomach, and intestines and placed them in four special jars that were put in the tomb with the mummy. The priests also removed the brain by extracting it through the nose. They then covered the corpse with a natural salt that absorbed the body’s water. Later, they filled the body with spices and wrapped it with layers of linen soaked in resin. At the end of the process, which took about 70 days, a lifelike mask was placed over the head and shoulders of the mummy. The mummy was then sealed in a case and placed in its tomb.

Pyramids were tombs for the mummified bodies of pharaohs and their families. The largest and most magnificent of all the pyramids was built under King Khufu (KOO•POO). Constructed at Giza around 2540 B.C., the famous Great Pyramid of King Khufu covers 13 acres (5.3 ha), measures 756 feet (230 m) at each side of its base, and stands 481 feet (147 m) high.

Guarding the Great Pyramid at Giza is a huge statue carved from rock, known as the Great Sphinx. This colossal statue is 240 feet (73 m) long and 66 feet (20 m) high. It has the body of a lion and a human head. The head is believed by many to be a likeness of Khufu’s son Khafre, who ordered the statue’s construction.

The Middle Kingdom The Old Kingdom’s collapse was followed by a period of chaos that lasted about 150 years. Eventually, a new royal dynasty gained control of all Egypt and began the Middle Kingdom, a period of stability lasting from about 2050 to 1652 B.C. Egyptians later portrayed the Middle Kingdom as a golden age—an age of stability.

One feature of the Middle Kingdom was a new concern of the pharaohs for the people. Pharaohs of the Middle Kingdom undertook a number of helpful projects. The draining of swampland in the Nile Delta provided thousands of acres of new farmland.
Hatshepsut
Ruled 1503–1482 B.C.
Egyptian pharaoh

Hatshepsut was the daughter of the pharaoh Thutmose I. She married her half-brother, who became the pharaoh Thutmose II. When he died, Hatshepsut assumed the full power of pharaoh. Statues show Hatshepsut clothed and bearded as a king would be. She was addressed as “His Majesty.”

Hatshepsut’s reign was a prosperous one. She is best known for the temple dedicated to herself at Deir el Bahri on the west bank of the Nile at Thebes. One of the inscriptions she had placed there reads: “Now my heart turns to and fro, in thinking what will the people say, they who shall see my monument in later years, and shall speak of what I have done.”

The digging of a canal to connect the Nile to the Red Sea aided trade and transportation.

The New Kingdom The Middle Kingdom came to an end around 1652 B.C. with the invasion of Egypt by a group of people from western Asia known to the Egyptians as the Hyksos (HIK•SAHS). The Hyksos used horse-drawn war chariots and overwhelmed the Egyptian soldiers, who fought from donkey carts.

For almost a hundred years, the Hyksos ruled much of Egypt. The conquered Egyptians learned a great deal, however, from their conquerors. From the Hyksos, the Egyptians learned to use bronze in the making of their farming tools and their weapons. The Egyptians also mastered many of the military skills of the Hyksos, especially the use of horse-drawn war chariots.

Eventually, a new dynasty of pharaohs used the new weapons to drive out the Hyksos and reunite Egypt. The New Kingdom was established and lasted from approximately 1567 to 1085 B.C. This reunification launched the Egyptians along a new militaristic path. During the period of the New Kingdom, Egypt created an empire and became the most powerful state in Southwest Asia.

Massive wealth boosted the power of the New Kingdom pharaohs. The Egyptian rulers showed their wealth by building new temples. Hatshepsut—the first woman to become pharaoh—built a great temple at Deir el Bahri, near Thebes.

The New Kingdom was not without troubles, however. New invasions in the thirteenth century B.C. by the “Sea Peoples,” as Egyptians called them, drove the Egyptians back within their old frontiers and ended the Egyptian Empire. The New Kingdom itself collapsed in 1085 B.C.

For the next thousand years, Egypt was dominated by Libyans, Nubians, Persians, and finally Macedonians after the conquest of Alexander the Great (see Chapter 2). In the first century B.C., the pharaoh Cleopatra VII tried to reestablish Egypt’s independence. However, her involvement with Rome led to her defeat and suicide, and Egypt became a province in Rome’s mighty empire.

Contrasting What were the major differences between the Old Kingdom, the Middle Kingdom, and the New Kingdom?

Society in Ancient Egypt

Over a period of thousands of years, Egyptian society maintained a simple structure. It was organized like a pyramid, with the god-king at the top. The pharaoh was surrounded by an upper class of nobles and priests, who joined in the elaborate rituals of the pharaoh’s life. The members of this ruling class ran the government and managed their own landed estates. (See page 772 to read excerpts from Vizier Ptahhotep’s An Egyptian Father’s Advice to His Son in the Primary Sources Library.)

Below the upper class were merchants, artisans, scribes, and tax collectors. Merchants carried on an active trade up and down the Nile, as well as in town and village markets. Egyptian artisans made an
incredible variety of well-built, beautiful goods: stone dishes; painted boxes; wooden furniture; gold, silver, and copper tools and containers; and linen clothes.

By far, the largest number of people in Egypt simply worked the land. In theory, the pharaoh owned all the land but granted portions of it to the subjects. Most of the lower classes were peasants who farmed the land of these estates. They paid taxes in the form of crops to the pharaoh, nobles, and priests; lived in small villages or towns; and provided military service and forced labor for building projects.

Reading Check Summarizing List the social classes of ancient Egypt and identify their roles.

Writing, Art, and Science

Writing in Egypt emerged around 3000 B.C. The Greeks later called this earliest Egyptian writing hieroglyphics, meaning “priest-carvings” or “sacred writings.” The hieroglyphic system of writing, which used both pictures and more abstract forms, was complex. Learning and practicing it took much time and skill. Hieroglyphic script was used for writing on temple walls and in tombs. A highly simplified version of hieroglyphics, known as hieratic script, came into being. It used the same principles as hieroglyphic writing, but the drawings were simplified by using dashes, strokes, and curves to represent them. Hieratic script was used for business transactions, record keeping, and the general needs of daily life. Egyptian hieroglyphs were at first carved in stone. Later, hieratic script was written on papyrus, a paper made from the papyrus reed that grew along the Nile.

Pyramids, temples, and other monuments bear witness to the architectural and artistic achievements of the Egyptians. Artists and sculptors were expected to follow particular formulas in style. This gave Egyptian art a distinctive look for thousands of years. For example, the human body was often portrayed as a combination of profile, semiprofile, and frontal view to accurately represent each part.

Egyptians also made advances in mathematics and science. Mathematics helped them in building their massive monuments. Egyptians were able to calculate area and volume and used geometry to survey flooded land. The Egyptians developed an accurate 365-day calendar by basing their year not only on the movements of the moon, but also the bright star Sirius. Egyptians also had medical expertise. Archaeologists have recovered directions from Egyptian doctors for treating wounds and diseases.

Reading Check Contrasting What are the differences between hieroglyphics and hieratic script?

New Centers of Civilization: The Israelites

By 1500 B.C., much of the creative impulse of the Mesopotamian and Egyptian civilizations was beginning to decline. By 1200 B.C., a power vacuum had emerged in western Asia that allowed a number of small states to emerge and flourish. The Israelites were one of these peoples. Though the Israelites did not create an empire, their religion, Judaism, flourished as a world religion and later influenced the religions of Christianity and Islam.
Conflict in Palestine

Conflict in Southwest Asia has a long history. When the Israelites entered Canaan, around 1220 B.C., other peoples were already settled there. One of these peoples was the Philistines. For over two centuries, Israelites and Philistines fought for control.

By 1020 B.C., the Israelites found themselves on the verge of being conquered by the Philistines. The Israelites decided to give up their loose tribal organization, choosing to unite behind one of their members—Saul—as king.

At first, Saul and the small army he organized were successful. Around 1000 B.C., however, when they dared to meet the Philistines on an open plain, Saul and his army were defeated.

David, the next king of the Israelites, defeated the Philistines and established control over much of Canaan. Although the Israelites eventually would be conquered and scattered, Canaan (later called Palestine) remained the Promised Land in the minds of many Jews.

In 1948, the independent Jewish state of Israel was established in part of Palestine. About 90 percent of the people in Palestine were Arabs who were not eager to be governed by the Israelis. Arab neighbors of the new state were outraged. In 1964, an Arab organization called the Palestine Liberation Organization was founded to bring about an independent Arab state of Palestine. Conflict between Arabs and Israelis over Palestine continues to this day.

The “Children of Israel”

The Israelites were a group of Semitic-speaking people. Much of the history and the religious beliefs of the Israelites were eventually recorded in written form in the Hebrew Bible, parts of which are known to Christians as the Old Testament. According to their history, the Israelites migrated from Mesopotamia to the land that they referred to as Canaan. They followed a lifestyle based on grazing flocks and herds rather than on farming. Then, because of drought, the Israelites migrated to Egypt, where they were enslaved until a leader named Moses led them out of Egypt. They wandered for many years in the desert of the Sinai Peninsula until they returned to Canaan.

Recent interpretations of archaeological evidence sometimes contradict the details of the biblical account. What is generally agreed, however, is that between 1200 and 1000 B.C., the Israelites emerged as a distinct group of people, organized in tribes, who established a united kingdom known as Israel.

By the time of King Solomon, who ruled from about 970 to 930 B.C., the Israelites had established control over much of Canaan and had made Jerusalem into the capital of Israel. Solomon greatly strengthened royal power. He expanded the government and army and encouraged trade. Solomon is best known for building a temple in the city of Jerusalem. The Israelites viewed the temple as the symbolic center of their religion and of the Israelite kingdom itself. Under Solomon, ancient Israel was at the height of its power.

After Solomon’s death, tension between the northern and southern Israelite tribes led to the creation of two separate kingdoms—a northern kingdom of Israel and a southern kingdom of Judah. Both kingdoms eventually fell to the large empires of the Assyrians and Babylonians. However, the people of Judah survived, eventually becoming known as the Jews and giving their name to Judaism. It became a stateless religion based on the belief that God was not fixed to one particular land but instead was creator and lord of the whole world.
The Spiritual Dimensions of Israel  According to Jewish beliefs, there is but one God, called Yahweh (YAH•WAY), the Creator of the world and everything in it. In the Jewish view, God ruled the world; all peoples were his servants, whether they knew it or not. God had created nature but was not in nature. The stars, moon, rivers, wind, and other natural phenomena were not gods, as other ancient peoples believed, but God’s handiwork. All of God’s creations could be admired for their awesome beauty, but not worshipped as gods.

This powerful creator, however, was not removed from the life he had created. God was just and good, and he expected goodness from his people. If they did not obey his will, they would be punished. However, God was also full of mercy and love: “The Lord is gracious and compassionate, slow to anger and rich in love. The Lord is good to all; he has compassion on all he has made.” Each person could have a personal relationship with this powerful being.

The Jews were monotheistic; they believed in one God. The covenant, law, and prophets were three aspects of the Jewish religious tradition. The Jews believed that during their exodus from Egypt, when Moses led his people out of bondage toward the promised land, God made a covenant, or contract, with them. Yahweh promised to guide them if they obeyed the law of God stated in the Ten Commandments. According to the Bible, Yahweh gave these commandments to Moses on Mount Sinai.

The Jews believed that certain religious teachers, called prophets, were sent by God to serve as his voice to his people. The following selection from the biblical book of Isaiah makes clear the prophets’ belief that unjust actions would bring God’s punishment.

The Lord enters into judgment against the elders and leaders of his people: ‘It is you who have ruined my vineyard; the plunder from the poor is in your houses. What do you mean by crushing my people and grinding the faces of the poor?’ declares the Lord, the Lord Almighty. The Lord says, ‘The women of Zion are haughty . . . with ornaments jingling on their ankles. Therefore the Lord will bring sores on the heads of the women of Zion; the Lord will make their scalps bald . . . instead of fragrance there will be a stench; . . . instead of fine clothing, sackcloth; instead of beauty, branding. Your men will fall by the sword, your warriors in battle. The gates of Zion will lament and mourn; destitute, she will sit on the ground.’

The age of prophecy lasted from the eleventh to the fifth centuries B.C., during the time when the people of Israel and Judah faced threats or endured conquests by powerful neighbors. The prophets declared that faithlessness to God would bring punishment and catastrophe, but that turning from evil would bring God’s mercy.

From the prophets came new concepts that enriched the Jewish tradition. Later prophets, such as Isaiah, embraced a concern for all humanity. All nations would someday come to the God of Israel. This vision included the end of war and the establishment of peace for all the nations of the world. In the words of the prophet Isaiah:

He will judge between the nations and will settle disputes for many people. They will beat their swords into plowshares and their spears into pruning hooks. Nation will not take up sword against nation, nor will they train for war anymore.

The prophets also cried out against social injustice. They condemned the rich for causing the poor to suffer. They denounced luxuries as worthless, and they threatened Israel with prophecies of dire punishments for these sins. They said that God’s command was to live justly, share with one’s neighbors, care for the poor and the unfortunate, and act with compassion.

The religion of Israel was unique among the religions of western Asia and Egypt. The most dramatic difference was the Jewish belief that there is only one

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### The Ten Commandments

1. I am the Lord thy God . . . . Thou shalt have no other gods before me.
2. Thou shalt not make unto thee any graven image . . . .
3. Thou shalt not take the name of the Lord thy God in vain . . . .
4. Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy.
5. Honor thy father and thy mother . . . .
6. Thou shalt not kill.
7. Thou shalt not commit adultery.
8. Thou shalt not steal.
9. Thou shalt not bear false witness against thy neighbor.
10. Thou shalt not covet . . . anything that is thy neighbor’s.

Source: Exodus 20:1–17
God for all peoples (monotheism). In all other religions at that time, only priests (and some rulers) had access to the gods. In the Jewish tradition, God’s wishes, though communicated to the people through prophets, had all been written down. No spiritual leader could claim that he alone knew God’s will. This knowledge was open to anyone who could read the Torah.

**Reading Check** Identifying Which aspect of the Israelite culture had the greatest impact on Western civilization?

### The Rise of New Empires

A small and independent Israelite state could exist only as long as no larger state dominated western Asia. New empires soon arose in Assyria and Persia, however, that conquered vast stretches of the ancient world.

**The Assyrian Empire** The first of the new empires was formed in Assyria, located on the upper Tigris River. The Assyrians were a Semitic-speaking people who exploited the use of iron weapons to establish an empire by 700 B.C. The Assyrian Empire included Mesopotamia, parts of the Iranian Plateau, sections of Asia Minor, Syria, Palestine, and Egypt down to Thebes. Within less than a hundred years, however, internal strife and resentment of Assyrian kings began to tear the Assyrian Empire apart. In 612 B.C., the empire fell to a coalition of Chaldeans and Medes (people who lived in the East), and was divided between those two powers.

The Assyrians used terror as an instrument of warfare. They regularly laid waste to the land in which they were fighting. They smashed dams; looted and destroyed towns; set crops on fire; and cut down trees, particularly fruit trees. The Assyrians were especially known for committing atrocities on their
captives. King Ashurnasirpal recorded this account of his treatment of prisoners: “3,000 of their combat troops I felled with weapons. . . . Many I took alive; from some of these I cut off their hands to the wrist, from others I cut off their noses, ears and fingers; I put out the eyes of many of the soldiers. . . . I burned their young men and women to death.”

The Persian Empire The Persians were an Indo-European people who lived in what is today southwestern Iran. Primarily nomadic, the Persians were organized in groups until one family managed to unify them. One of the family’s members, Cyrus, created a powerful Persian state that stretched from Asia Minor to western India.

Cyrus ruled from 559 to 530 B.C. In 539 B.C., he entered Mesopotamia and captured Babylon. His treatment of Babylonia showed remarkable restraint and wisdom. Cyrus also issued an edict permitting the Jews, who had been brought to Babylon earlier in the century, to return to Jerusalem.

The people of his time called Cyrus “the Great.” Indeed, he must have been an unusual ruler for his time, a man who demonstrated much wisdom and compassion in the conquest and organization of his empire. Unlike the Assyrian rulers, Cyrus had a reputation for mercy. Cyrus had a genuine respect for other civilizations. In building his palaces, for example, he made use of Assyrian, Babylonian, and Egyptian designs and building methods.

Cyrus’s successors extended the territory of the Persian Empire. His son Cambyses (kam•BY•SEEZ) successfully invaded Egypt. Darius, who ruled from 521 to 486 B.C., added a new Persian province in western India that extended to the Indus River. He then moved into Europe, conquering Thrace and creating the largest empire the world had yet seen.

An efficient system of communication was crucial to sustaining the Persian Empire. Well-maintained roads made it easy for officials to travel throughout the entire kingdom. The Royal Road stretched from Lydia to Susa, the chief capital of the empire. Like the Assyrians, the Persians set up way stations that provided food and shelter, as well as fresh horses, for the king’s messengers.

In this vast system, the Persian king—the “Great King”—occupied an exalted position. The Great King held the power of life and death.

After Darius, the Persian kings became more and more isolated at their courts, surrounded by luxuries provided by the immense quantities of gold and silver that flowed into their treasuries. As the Persian kings increased taxes to gain more wealth, loyalty to the empire declined. Struggles over the throne weakened the monarchy (rule by a king or queen). Over a period of time, this bloody struggle for the throne weakened the empire and led to its conquest by the Greek ruler Alexander the Great during the 330s B.C.

Examining What caused the Persian Empire to decline after the death of Darius?

Reading Check 34

CHAPTER 1 The First Civilizations and Empires

Critical Thinking
6. Describe What were the unique aspects of the Jewish religion compared to the other religions of western Asia and Egypt? Include the impact of Judaism on the development of Islam and Christianity.

7. Organizing Information Use a chart like the one below to compare the Old Kingdom, Middle Kingdom, and New Kingdom of Egypt.

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<td>New Kingdom</td>
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Analyzing Visuals
8. Compare the Royal Standard of Ur on page 25 with the photo of the war chariot on page 29. What can historians learn about the cultures of the Sumerians and the Egyptians from these two pieces of art? What technologies and cultural values are evident?

9. Expository Writing Explain why Hammurabi’s code was a significant development. Develop a set of laws based on the Code of Hammurabi that would apply to your community today. Explain why your code differs from that developed by Hammurabi, or why it is similar.
Hammurabi’s Code

Although there were earlier Mesopotamian legal codes, the Code of Hammurabi is the most complete. The law code emphasizes the principle of retribution (“an eye for an eye”) and punishments that vary according to social status. Punishments could be severe, as these examples show.

22: If a man has committed highway robbery and has been caught, that man should be put to death.

23: If the highwayman has not been caught, the man that has been robbed shall state on oath what he has lost and the city or district governor in whose territory or district the robbery took place shall restore to him what he has lost.

25: If fire broke out in a free man’s house and a free man, who went to extinguish it, cast his eye on the goods of the owner of the house and has appropriated the goods of the owner of the house, that free man shall be thrown into that fire.

196: If a free man has destroyed the eye of a member of the aristocracy, they shall destroy his eye.

198: If he has destroyed the eye of a commoner or broken the bone of a commoner, he shall pay one mina of silver.

199: If he has destroyed the eye of a free man’s slave or broken the bone of a free man’s slave, he shall pay one-half his value.

229: If a builder constructed a house for a nobleman but did not make his work strong, with the result that the house which he built collapsed and so has caused the death of the owner of the house, that builder shall be put to death.

232: If it has destroyed goods, he shall make good whatever it destroyed; also, because he did not make the house strong that he built and it collapsed, he shall reconstruct the house that collapsed at his own expense.

—The Code of Hammurabi

Hammurabi’s code was written on a stone monument, approximately seven feet (2.1 m) tall, called a stele. The upper section of the stele shows Hammurabi standing in front of the seated sun god.

Analyzing Primary Sources

1. Explain the principle of retribution.

2. According to the Code of Hammurabi, what was most highly valued in Mesopotamian society? What was the least valued? Explain your answers.

3. What is the guiding principle in the American criminal justice system? How does this compare with Hammurabi’s justice?
Confucius wanted to promote good government in China. Confucius said:

“If the people be led by laws, and uniformity be imposed on them by punishments, they will try to avoid the punishment, but will have no sense of shame. If they be led by virtue, and uniformity be provided for them by the rules of propriety, they will have the sense of shame, and will become good.” He also said, “Let the ruler be filial and kind to all people; then they will be faithful to him. Let him advance the good and teach the incompetent; then they will eagerly seek to be virtuous.”

—The Chinese Classics, James Legge, 1893

Confucianism, an ancient Chinese philosophy, sought to spell out the principles that would create stability and order in society.

**Early Civilization in India**

India is a land of diversity. Today, about 110 languages and more than 1,000 dialects (varieties of language) are spoken in India. Diversity is also apparent in India’s geography. The Indian subcontinent, shaped like a triangle hanging from the southern ridge of Asia, is composed of a number of core regions, including mountain ranges, river valleys, a dry interior plateau, and fertile coastal plains.

As in Mesopotamia and Egypt, early civilization in India emerged in river valleys. Between 3000 B.C. and 1500 B.C., the valleys of the Indus River supported a flourishing civilization. It extended hundreds of miles from the Himalaya, the highest mountains in the world, to the coast of the Arabian Sea. Archaeologists have found the remains of more than a thousand settlements in this region. Two
of the ruins, about 400 miles (643.6 km) apart, were sites of what once were the major cities of Harappa (huh•RA•puh) and Mohenjo-Daro (moh•HEHN•joh DAHR•oh). An advanced civilization—known as Harappan or Indus civilization—flourished in these cities for hundreds of years.

Eventually they extended their control throughout all of India.

**Society in Ancient India** The conquest by the Aryans had a lasting impact on Indian society. Out of the clash between conqueror and conquered came a set of social institutions and class divisions that has lasted in India, with only minor changes, to the present day.

The **caste system** of ancient India was a set of rigid social categories that determined not only a person’s occupation and economic potential, but also his or her position in society. There were five major divisions of Indian classes (known as castes in English) in ancient times.

The priestly class, whose members were known as the Brahmans, was usually considered to be at the top of the social scale. They were in charge of the religious ceremonies that were so important in Indian society. The second caste was the Kshatriyas (KSHA•tree•uhz), or warriors. The third-ranked caste in Indian society was the Vaisyas (VYSH•yuhz), or commoners. The Vaisyas were usually the merchants who engaged in commerce.

Below these three castes were the Sudras (SOO•druhz), who made up the great bulk of the Indian population. Most Sudras were peasants, artisans, or people who worked at other forms of manual labor. They had only limited rights in society.

At the lowest level of Indian society—and in fact not even considered a real part of the caste system—
were the Untouchables. The Untouchables probably made up about 5 percent of the total population of ancient India. The Untouchables were given menial, degrading tasks that other Indians would not accept, such as collecting trash and handling dead bodies. They were not considered human, and their very presence was considered harmful to members of the other classes.

**Reading Check** Summarizing What are the names of the castes in Indian society?

**Hinduism**

Two of the world’s great religions, Hinduism and Buddhism, began in India. **Hinduism** had its origins in the religious beliefs of the Aryan peoples who settled in India after 1500 B.C. Evidence about the religious beliefs of the Aryan peoples comes from the Vedas, collections of hymns and religious ceremonies that were passed down orally through the centuries by Aryan priests and then eventually written down.

Early Hindus believed in the existence of a single force in the universe, a form of ultimate reality or God, called **Brahman**. It was the duty of the individual self—called the *atman*—to seek to know this ultimate reality. By doing so, the self would merge with Brahman after death.

By the sixth century B.C., the idea of reincarnation had appeared in Hinduism. **Reincarnation** is the belief that the individual soul is reborn in a different form after death. After a number of existences in the earthly world, the soul reaches its final goal in a union with Brahman.

Important to this process is the idea of karma, the force generated by a person’s actions that determines how the person will be reborn in the next life. According to this idea, what people do in their current lives determines what they will be in their next lives. In the same way, a person’s current status is not simply an accident. It is a result of the person’s actions in a past existence.

The system of reincarnation provided a religious basis for the rigid class divisions in Indian society. It justified the privileges of those on the higher end of the scale. After all, they would not have these privileges if they were not deserving. At the same time, the concept of reincarnation gave hope to those lower on the ladder of life. The poor, for example, could
hope that if they behaved properly in this life, they would improve their condition in the next.

How does one achieve oneness with God? Hindus developed the practice of yoga, a method of training designed to lead to such union. (In fact, yoga means “union.”) The final goal of yoga was to leave behind the cycle of earthly life and achieve union with Brahman, seen as a kind of dreamless sleep.

Most ordinary Indians, however, could not easily relate to this ideal and needed a more concrete form of heavenly salvation. It was probably for this reason that the Hindu religion came to have a number of humanlike gods and goddesses, including three chief ones: Brahma the Creator, Vishnu the Preserver, and Siva (SIH•vuh) the Destroyer. Many Hindus regard the multitude of gods as simply different expressions of the one ultimate reality, Brahman. However, the various gods and goddesses give ordinary Indians a way to express their religious feelings. Hinduism is the religion of the vast majority of the Indian people.

**Reading Check**

Comparing How do karma and yoga relate to reincarnation?

**Buddhism**

In the sixth century B.C., a new doctrine, called Buddhism, appeared in northern India and soon became a rival of Hinduism. Buddhism was the product of one man, Siddhartha Gautama (sih• DAHR•tuh GOW•tuh•muh). Born around 563 B.C., Siddhartha Gautama is better known as the Buddha, or “Enlightened One.”

In his lifetime, Siddhartha gained thousands of devoted followers. People would come to him seeking to know more about him. They asked, “Are you a god?”

“No,” he answered.

“Are you an angel?”

“No.”

“Are you a saint?”

“No.”

“What are you?”

The Buddha replied, “I am awake.”

The religion of Buddhism began with a man who claimed that he had awakened and seen the world in a new way.

Siddhartha denied the reality of the material world. The physical surroundings of humans, he believed, were simply illusions. The pain, poverty, and sorrow that afflict human beings are caused by their attachment to things of this world. Once people let go of their worldly cares, pain and sorrow can be forgotten. Then comes bodhi, or wisdom. (The word bodhi is the root of the word Buddhism and of Siddhartha’s usual name—Gautama Buddha.) Achieving wisdom is a key step to achieving nirvana, or ultimate reality—the end of the self and a reunion with the Great World Soul.

Siddhartha preached this message in a sermon to his followers in the Deer Park at Sarnath (outside India’s holy city of Banaras). It is a simple message based on the Four Noble Truths:

1. Ordinary life is full of suffering.
2. This suffering is caused by our desire to satisfy ourselves.
3. The way to end suffering is to end desire for selfish goals and to see others as extensions of ourselves.
4. The way to end desire is to follow the Middle Path.

This Middle Path is also known as the Eightfold Path, because it consists of eight steps:

1. **Right view** We need to know the Four Noble Truths.
2. **Right intention** We need to decide what we really want.
3. **Right speech** We must seek to speak truth and to speak well of others.
4. **Right action** The Buddha gave five precepts: “Do not kill. Do not steal. Do not lie. Do not be unchaste. Do not take drugs or drink alcohol.”

5. **Right livelihood** We must do work that uplifts our being.

6. **Right effort** The Buddha said, “Those who follow the Way might well follow the example of an ox that arches through the deep mud carrying a heavy load. He is tired, but his forward-looking gaze will not relax until he comes out of the mud.”

7. **Right mindfulness** We must keep our minds in control of our senses.

8. **Right concentration** We must meditate to see the world in a new way.

Siddhartha accepted the idea of reincarnation, but he rejected the Hindu division of human beings into rigidly defined castes based on previous reincarnations. He taught instead that all human beings could reach nirvana as a result of their behavior in this life.

**Reading Check** **Contrasting** How does Buddhism differ from Hinduism?

### New Empires in India

For most of the time between 325 B.C. and A.D. 500, India was a land of many different states. Two major empires, however, were able to create large, unified Indian states.

The first of these empires, the Mauryan Empire in northern India, lasted from 324 to 183 B.C. The

Mauryan Empire flourished during the reign of **Asoka** (uh.SHOH.kuh), who ruled from 269 until 232 B.C. Asoka is generally considered to be the greatest ruler in the history of India.

After his conversion to Buddhism, Asoka used Buddhist ideals to guide his rule. He set up hospitals for both people and animals. He sent missionaries to **China** and other parts of Asia, thus introducing Buddhism to those areas.

Asoka was more than a kind ruler, however. His kingdom prospered as India’s role in regional trade began to expand. India became a major crossroads in a vast commercial network.

One of the most important parts of that network was the route known as the **Silk Road**, so called because silk was China’s most valuable product. The Silk Road reached from the city of Changan in China across central Asia to Mesopotamia, covering a distance of about 4,000 miles (6,436 km). People used camels to transport goods through the mountains and deserts of the Silk Road, winding up at Antioch, a port city on the Mediterranean Sea. At Antioch, luxury goods from the West were traded for luxury goods from the East, which were then shipped across the Mediterranean to Greece and Rome.

After Asoka’s death in 232 B.C., the Mauryan Empire began to decline, and in 183 B.C., it collapsed. India then fell back into disunity until a new empire arose. This new empire, the Gupta Empire, flourished from A.D. 320 until the late fifth century when the invasion of the Huns reduced its power.

**Reading Check** **Evaluating** Why was Asoka considered a great ruler?

### Early Chinese Civilizations

Of the great civilizations discussed so far, China was the last to come into full flower. By the time the first Chinese dynasty began to emerge as an organized state, the societies in Mesopotamia, Egypt, and India had already reached an advanced level of civilization. One likely reason for China’s late arrival was its isolation from the emerging centers of culture elsewhere in the world. Basically, China was forced to develop on its own.

**The Shang Dynasty** The Shang dynasty (about 1750 to 1045 B.C.) created the first flourishing Chinese civilization. Under the Shang, China developed organized government, a system of writing, and advanced skills in the making of bronze vessels.
The Chinese believed they could communicate with supernatural forces to obtain help in worldly affairs. To do so, they made use of oracle bones. These were bones on which priests scratched questions asked by the rulers, such as: Will the king be victorious in battle? Will the king recover from his illness? Heated metal rods were then stuck into the bones, causing them to crack. The priests interpreted the shapes of the cracks as answers from the gods. The priests wrote down the answers, then the bones were stored. The inscriptions on the bones have become a valuable source of information about the Shang period.

The Zhou Dynasty During the Zhou dynasty (1045 to 256 B.C.), China began to adopt many of the features that characterized Chinese civilization for centuries. Especially important politically was the Mandate of Heaven.

The Zhou dynasty claimed that it ruled China because it possessed the Mandate of Heaven. The Zhou believed that Heaven—which was an impersonal law of nature—kept order in the universe through the Zhou king. Thus, he ruled over all humanity by a mandate, or authority to command, from Heaven. The king, who was chosen to rule because of his talent and virtue, was then responsible for ruling the people with goodness and efficiency.
The Mandate of Heaven, however, was double-edged. The king was expected to rule according to the proper “Way,” called the Dao (DOW). It was his duty to keep the gods pleased in order to protect the people from natural disaster or a bad harvest. If the king failed to rule effectively, he could be overthrown and replaced by a new ruler.

The Mandate of Heaven was closely tied to the pattern of dynastic cycles. From the beginning of Chinese history to A.D. 1912, China was ruled by a series of dynasties. The Zhou dynasty, as we have seen, lasted for almost eight hundred years. Others did not last as long, but the king of each dynasty ruled with the Mandate of Heaven.

No matter how long the dynasties lasted, all went through a cycle of change. A new dynasty established its power, ruled successfully for many years, and then began to decline. The power of the central government would begin to collapse, giving rise to rebellions or invasion. Finally, the dynasty collapsed and a new dynasty took over, beginning another dynastic cycle.

The Qin Dynasty  The collapse of the Zhou dynasty was followed by two hundred years of civil war. A new dynasty, known as the Qin, then created an era of Chinese unity. The Qin dynasty was founded by Qin Shihuangdi (CHIN SHUR•HWONG•DEE), meaning “the First Qin Emperor.”

Qin Shihuangdi, a person of much ambition, unified the Chinese world, but his major foreign concern was in the north. In the vicinity of the Gobi resided a nomadic people known to the Chinese as the Xiongnu (SYEN•NOO), who often made raids into Chinese territory. Qin Shihuangdi’s answer to this problem was to strengthen the existing system of walls to keep the nomads out.

Today we know Qin Shihuangdi’s project as the Great Wall of China. However, the Great Wall that we know today from films and photographs was built 1,500 years after the rule of Qin Shihuangdi. Some of the walls built by Qin Shihuangdi do remain standing, but many of them were constructed of loose stone, sand, or piled rubble, and disappeared long ago.
This is not to say, of course, that Qin Shihuangdi’s wall was not a massive project. It required the efforts of thousands of laborers. Many of them died while working there and, according to legend, are now buried within the wall. The wall enabled the First Qin Emperor to enjoy some success in fighting off the threat of the nomads, but the victory was only temporary.

The Han Dynasty
The First Qin Emperor was also the last of his dynasty. A new dynasty—the Han—then established an empire that lasted over four hundred years (202 B.C. to A.D. 220).

China under the Han dynasty was a vast empire. The population increased rapidly—by some estimates rising from about twenty million to over sixty million at the height of the dynasty. The large population created a growing need for a bigger and more efficient bureaucracy to keep the state in proper working order.

During the glory years of the Han dynasty, China extended the boundaries of its empire far into the sands of central Asia and southward along the coast of the South China Sea into what is modern-day Vietnam. Chinese culture appeared to be unrivaled, and its scientific and technological achievements were unsurpassed.

Reading Check
Explain why did the First Qin Emperor build walls across northern China?

The Family in Ancient China
Few social institutions have been as closely identified with China as the family. As in most agricultural societies, in ancient China the family served as the basic economic and social unit. However, the Chinese family took on an almost sacred quality as a symbol of the entire social order.

At the heart of the concept of family in China was the idea of filial piety. The word filial refers to a son or daughter. Filial piety, then, refers to the duty of members of the family to subordinate their needs and desires to those of the male head of the family.
Thus, the term describes a system in which every family member had his or her place. The concept is important in Confucianism, as you will see later in this section.

What explains the importance of the family in ancient China? The need to work together on the land was a significant factor. In ancient times, as today, farming in China required the work of many people. Children, too, were essential to the family’s needs. They worked in the fields during their early years. Later, sons were expected to take over the burden of physical labor on the family plots and provide for the well-being of their parents.

Male supremacy was a key element in the social system of ancient China, as it was in the other civilizations that we have examined. The male was considered so important because he was responsible for providing food for his family. In ancient China, men worked in the fields. They also governed society and were the warriors, scholars, and government ministers. Women raised the children and worked in the home.

✔ Reading Check Explaining Why were males considered to be superior to females in Chinese families?

The Importance of Confucius

The civilization of China is closely tied to Confucius (in pinyin, Kongfuzi), a philosopher who lived in the sixth century B.C. Confucius traveled the length of China observing events and seeking employment as a political counselor. He had little success in his job search and instead became a teacher to hundreds of students who sought his wise advice. Some of his students became ardent disciples of their teacher and recorded his sayings. Until the twentieth century, almost every Chinese pupil studied his sayings. This made Confucianism, or the
system of Confucian ideas, an important part of Chinese history.

Confucius believed that the universe was made in such a way that if humans would act in harmony with its purposes, their own affairs would prosper. Much of his concern was with human behavior. The key to proper behavior was to behave in accordance with the Dao (Way).

Two elements stand out in the Confucian view of the Dao: duty and humanity. The concept of duty meant that all people had to subordinate their own interests to the broader needs of the family and the community. Everyone should be governed by the Five Constant Relationships: parent and child, husband and wife, older sibling and younger sibling, older friend and younger friend, and ruler and subject. Each person in the relationship had a duty to the other. Parents should be loving, and children should revere their parents. Husbands should fulfill their duties, and wives should be obedient. The elder sibling should be kind, and the younger sibling respectful. The older friend should be considerate, and the younger friend deferential. Rulers should be benevolent, and subjects loyal.

The Confucian concept of duty is often expressed in the form of a “work ethic.” If each individual worked hard to fulfill his or her duties, then the affairs of society as a whole would prosper as well.

An army of life-sized terra-cotta soldiers was found in Qin Shihuangdi’s tomb.

Above all, the ruler must set a good example. If the king followed the path of goodness and the common good, then subjects would respect him, and society would prosper.

The second key element in the Confucian view of the Dao is the idea of humanity. This consists of a sense of compassion and empathy for others. It is similar in some ways to Christian ideas but with a twist. Christians are taught, “Do unto others as you would have others do unto you.” Confucius would say, “Do not do unto others what you would not wish done to yourself.” Confucius urged people to “measure the feelings of others by one’s own.”

**Reading Check**

Describe the meaning of duty and humanity in the Confucian view of the Dao.
Using Key Terms

1. People who move from place to place for survival are called _____.

2. An _____ is a large political unit or state, usually under a single leader, that controls many peoples or territories.

3. The Zhou dynasty claimed that it ruled China because it possessed the _____.

4. The _____ of animals provided a steady source of meat, milk, and wool.

5. _____ refers to the duty of members of the family to be subordinate to the male head.

6. The _____ was the shift from hunting and gathering to systematic agriculture.

7. Since the Israelites worshipped one god, they are called _____.

8. _____ had its origins in the religious beliefs of the Aryans.

9. The Sumerians created a wedge-shaped system of writing known as _____.

10. Two elements stand out in _____: duty and humanity.

11. Keeping animals and growing food on a regular basis is called _____.

12. The religion of _____ began with Siddhartha Gautama.

13. The rise of cities, growth of governments, and development of religion are characteristics of _____.

Reviewing Key Facts

14. Culture Explain the social divisions in the caste system of India.

15. Culture Describe the lifestyle of Paleolithic peoples.

16. History What was the consequence of the most significant development of the Neolithic Age?

17. Culture List at least four characteristics of civilization.

18. Geography What geographic feature do the civilizations of the Fertile Crescent, Egypt, and India have in common?

19. Science and Technology Use examples from this chapter to show the different ways writing was used in early civilizations.

20. Culture Describe the pyramid-like structure of Egyptian society.

21. Government What did the Persian and Assyrian Empires use to maintain communication in their vast empires?

22. Culture Name three important Hindu deities.

23. History Why is Asoka considered to be the greatest ruler in the history of India?

24. Economy How did India benefit from the Silk Road?

25. Citizenship How did Confucianism impact the relationship between king and subject?

26. Government Explain how the Mandate of Heaven was closely tied to the pattern of dynastic cycles in China.

The chart below features some of the key people and achievements of early civilizations.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Civilization</th>
<th>Religion/Philosophy</th>
<th>Key People</th>
<th>Achievements</th>
<th>Government/Society</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mesopotamian</td>
<td>Gods and goddesses</td>
<td>Sargon</td>
<td>Cuneiform writing</td>
<td>City-states</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Hammurabi</td>
<td>Wagon wheel</td>
<td>Code of Hammurabi</td>
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<tr>
<td>Egyptian</td>
<td>Priests</td>
<td>Menes</td>
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<td>Old, Middle, and New Kingdoms</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Divine kingship</td>
<td>Hatshepsut</td>
<td>365-day calendar</td>
<td>Pyramid-shaped social structure</td>
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<tr>
<td>Israelite</td>
<td>Judaism</td>
<td>Solomon</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Monotheistic</td>
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<td>Israelite tribes divided</td>
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<tr>
<td>Indian</td>
<td>Hinduism</td>
<td>Siddhartha Gautama</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Buddhism</td>
<td>Asoka</td>
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<td>Chinese</td>
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<td>Confucius</td>
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<td>Qin Shihuangdi</td>
<td>Paper</td>
<td>Cyclical dynasties</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td>Family central to society</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Directions: Choose the best answer to the following question.
The basic change that occurred with the Neolithic Revolution was
A an increase in human population.
B the cultivation of rice.
C the shift to raising animals as a regular source of food.
D an increase in the importance of hunting.

Test-Taking Tip: Always read the question and all the answer choices. Do not simply choose the first answer that seems to have something to do with the topic. In this question, you want the choice that comes closest to defining the Neolithic Revolution.

Critical Thinking
27. Comparing and Contrasting What are the advantages and disadvantages of a city-state and an empire as governing systems? Consider the question from the point of view of a ruler and of a subject.
28. Drawing Conclusions To build the Great Wall of China or the pyramids of Egypt required tremendous amounts of material, finances, and labor. Describe how and why empires were able to devote vast resources to these projects.
29. Analyzing Identify at least two beliefs associated with each of the following religions/philosophies: Judaism, Hinduism, Buddhism, and Confucianism.

Writing About History
30. Descriptive Writing The Silk Road was important to trade, and the road provided economic benefits to the people who used it. However, ideas and information could also travel along the road. Write an article comparing the Silk Road to the Internet as vehicles to share information. Describe the impact of each on the cultures they benefited.

Analyzing Sources
Read the following decree of Asoka, one of India’s greatest rulers.

By order of the Beloved of the Gods [Asoka] to the officers in charge: Let us win the affection of all people. All people are my children, and as I wish all welfare and happiness in this world and the rest for my own children, so do I wish it for all men. . . . For that purpose many officials are employed among the people to instruct them in righteousness and to explain it to them.

31. What does the title “Beloved of the Gods” imply?
32. How does this quote reflect the Buddhist beliefs that were adopted by Asoka?

Applying Technology Skills
33. Using the Internet Search the Internet for the e-mail address of an Egyptologist from an international museum or university. Compose a letter requesting information about aspects of ancient Egyptian culture such as architecture, religion, or hieroglyphics.

Analyzing Maps and Charts
Study the map above to answer the following questions.
34. In what mountain range does the Indus River originate?
35. Identify the two rivers found within the Shang Empire.
36. Name the river valley civilizations studied thus far.

Making Decisions
37. Each of the cultures studied so far had unique characteristics and faced unique challenges. Which culture would you prefer to live in as an ordinary citizen? Support your decision with reasons why you chose that civilization and reasons why you did not choose the other civilizations.

Standardized Test Practice
Directions: Choose the best answer to the following question.
The basic change that occurred with the Neolithic Revolution was
A an increase in human population.
B the cultivation of rice.
C the shift to raising animals as a regular source of food.
D an increase in the importance of hunting.

Test-Taking Tip: Always read the question and all the answer choices. Do not simply choose the first answer that seems to have something to do with the topic. In this question, you want the choice that comes closest to defining the Neolithic Revolution.