

World History

1-3 Notes

Beginnings of Civilization

Rise of Cities

- A civilization is a complex, highly organized social order.
- The first cities emerged after farming began.
- The surpluses in turn helped populations to expand.
- As populations grew, some villages swelled into cities.

River Valley Civilization

- Conditions in the river valleys favored farming.
- Animals would go to rivers for water.
- Water would also provide transportation.
- Rivers also provided problems such as flood control.
- Farmers would work together to build dikes, dig canals, and carve out irrigation ditches to control water.
- Ancient cities were frequently surrounded by high walls.

Cities on the Americas

- Civilization in the Americas often did not rise in valleys.
- Two major civilizations were Aztecs, and Incas emerged in the highlands of Mexico and Peru.
- In Americas, the first cities may have begun as religious centers.

Features of Civilization

- Historians distinguish eight basic features found in most early civilizations.
- The eight features are: cities, well-organized central governments, complex religions, job specialization, social classes, arts and architecture, public works, and writing
- City governments were far more powerful than the councils of elders and local chiefs of farming villages.
- At first priest had the greatest power, but in time warrior kings emerged as the chief political leaders.
- Government became more complex as rulers issued laws, collected taxes, and organized systems of defense.
- Complex Religions- Like their Stone Age ancestors, most ancient people believed in many god.
- Job Specialization- Urban people developed so many new crafts that single individual could no longer master all the skills needed to make tool, weapons, or other goods
- Cities had other specialists, such as bricklayers, singers, dancers and storytellers.
- Social Classes- Priests and nobles usually occupied the top level.
- The small level were wealthy merchants, followed by humbler artisans, below them were the farmers.
- Slaves occupied the lowest social level.
- Arts and Architecture- The arts and architecture of ancient civilizations expressed the beliefs and values of the people who created them.

- Public Works- Linked to temples and palaces were vast public works that strong rulers ordered to be built.
- Writing- Writing was critically a new skill developed by early civilization.
- Archaeologists have found masses of ancient writing, ranging from treaties and tax rolls to business and marriage contracts.
- The earliest writing was made up of pictograms, which are drawings that looked like the objects they represented.

Spread of Civilization

- As ancient rulers gained more power, the rulers conquered territories beyond the boundaries of their cities.
- An empire is a group of states or territories controlled by one ruler.

Civilizations and Change

- All societies and civilizations change
- Ancient civilizations changed in many ways over centuries such as physical environments and interactions among people.
- Like the Stone Age ancestors people of early civilization depended heavily on the physical environment.
- Changes in the environment could have an immediate impact on people's lives.
- Another important change was cultural diffusion with the spread of ideas, customs, and technologies.

- Cultural diffusion occurred through migration, trade, and warfare.