

AP World History: THE BACKSTORY

ANCIENT & CLASSICAL PERIODS - TO 600 CE

ANCIENT PERIOD to 600 BCE

Key Concept 1.1 – PALEOLITHIC HUNTER-GATHERERS [*THEME: Interaction with Environment (ENV)*]

The term big geography draws attention to the global nature of world history. Throughout the Paleolithic period, **humans migrated from Africa** to Eurasia, Australia, and the Americas. Early humans were mobile and creative in **adapting to different geographical settings** from savanna to desert to tundra. Humans also developed varied and **sophisticated technologies**.

- Humans developed increasingly diverse and **sophisticated tools**—including multiple uses of **fire**—as they adapted to new environments.
- People **lived in small groups** that structured social, economic, and political activity. These bands exchanged people, ideas, and goods.

Key Concept 1.2 – NEOLITHIC REVOLUTION & THE BIRTH OF AGRICULTURE [*THEMES: Economic Systems (ECN); Interaction with Environment (ENV); Social Organization (SIO)*]

In response to warming climates at the end of the last Ice Age, about 10,000 years ago, some groups adapted to the environment in new ways, while others remained hunter-foragers. **Settled agriculture** appeared in several different parts of the world [Neolithic Revolution]. The switch to agriculture created a **more reliable**, but not necessarily more diversified, **food supply**. Farmers also **affected the environment** through cultivation of selected plants to the exclusion of others, the construction of **irrigation systems**, and the use of **domesticated animals** for food and labor. **Populations increased**; village life developed, followed by urban life with all its complexity.

Patriarchy and **forced-labor systems** developed, giving elite men concentrated power. **Pastoralism** emerged in parts of Africa and Eurasia. Like agriculturalists, pastoralists tended to be more socially stratified than hunter-foragers. Pastoralists' mobility facilitated **technology transfers through** their **interaction** with settled populations.

- **Agriculture emerged** independently in Mesopotamia, the Nile River Valley, Sub-Saharan Africa, the Indus River Valley, the Yellow River (or Huang He) Valley, Papua New Guinea, Mesoamerica, and the Andes.
- People in each region **domesticated** locally available **plants and animals**.
- **Pastoralism** developed in Afro–Eurasian grasslands, affecting the environment in a variety of ways.
- Agricultural communities created **water control systems** needed for crop production, drastically **affecting environmental diversity**.
- Pastoralism and agriculture led to **more** reliable and abundant **food** supplies, which **increased the population** and led to **specialization of labor**, including new classes of artisans and warriors and the development of elites.
- **Technological innovations** led to improvements in agricultural production, trade, and transportation. [*Illustrative examples, technological innovations: Pottery, Wheels*]
- **Patriarchal forms of social organization** developed in both pastoralist and agrarian societies.

Key Concept 1.3 – CORE/FOUNDATIONAL CIVILIZATIONS - FIRST STATES

[**THEME: Governance (GOV) - Political**]

About 5,000 years ago, urban societies developed, laying the foundations for the **first civilizations**. The term *civilization* is normally used to designate large societies with cities and powerful states. While there were many differences between civilizations, they also shared important features. They all produced **agricultural surpluses** that permitted significant **specialization of labor**. All civilizations contained **cities** and generated **complex institutions**, including political bureaucracies, armies, and religious hierarchies. They also featured clearly stratified social hierarchies and organized long-distance trading relationships. Economic exchanges intensified within and between civilizations, as well as with nomadic pastoralists. As populations grew, competition for surplus resources, especially food, led to greater social stratification, specialization of labor, increased trade, more complex systems of government and religion, and the development of record keeping. As civilizations expanded, people had to balance their need for more resources with environmental constraints. Finally, the accumulation of wealth in settled communities spurred warfare between communities and/ or with pastoralists; this violence drove the development of new technologies of war and urban defense.

- Core and foundational civilizations developed in a variety of geographical and environmental settings where agriculture flourished.
 - o MIDDLE EAST – Mesopotamia in the Tigris and Euphrates River Valleys

- o MIDDLE EAST/NORTH AFRICA – Egypt in the Nile River Valley
 - o SOUTH ASIA - INDIA – Mohenjo-daro and Harappa in the Indus River Valley
 - o EAST ASIA - CHINA – Shang in the Yellow River (Huang He) Valley
 - o LATIN AMERICA [Mexico] – Olmec in Mesoamerica
 - o LATIN AMERICA [South America] - Chavín in Andean South America
- States were powerful new systems of rule that mobilized surplus labor and resources over large areas. Rulers of early states often claimed divine connections to power. Rulers also relied on the support of the military, religious, or aristocratic elites.

➤ As states grew and **competed for land and resources**, they undertook **territorial expansion** and conquer surrounding states.

➤ Pastoralists were often the developers and disseminators of new weapons and modes of transportation that transformed warfare in agrarian civilizations. *[Illustrative examples, new weapons: Composite bows, Iron weapons; Illustrative examples, new modes of transportation: Chariots, Horseback riding]*

➤ **Culture** played a significant role in unifying states through **laws, language, literature, religion, myths, and monumental art**. o Early civilizations developed monumental architecture and urban planning. *[Illustrative examples, monumental architecture and urban planning: Ziggurats, Pyramids, Defensive walls]*

o Systems of record keeping arose independently in all early civilizations and writing and record keeping subsequently spread. *[Illustrative examples, systems of record keeping: Cuneiform, Hieroglyphs]*

➤ States developed **legal codes** that reflected existing **hierarchies** and facilitated the rule of governments over people. *[Illustrative examples, legal codes: Code of Hammurabi (Babylonia), Code of Ur-Nammu (Sumer)]*

➤ New religious beliefs that developed in this period—including the Vedic religion [**HINDUISM**], Hebrew monotheism [**JUDAISM**—continued to have strong influences in later periods.

➤ **Interregional cultural and technological exchanges** grew as a result of expanding trade networks and large-scale population movements, such as the

Indo–European and Bantu migrations. [*Illustrative examples, development of interregional trade: Trade between Mesopotamia and Egypt, Trade between Egypt and Nubia, Trade between Mesopotamia and the Indus Valley, Trade between China and Southwest Asia*]

➤ Social hierarchies, including patriarchy, intensified as states expanded and cities multiplied.

CLASSICAL PERIOD, 600 BCE – 600 CE

Key Concept 2.1 – PHILOSOPHIES & BELIEF SYSTEMS [*THEME: Culture (CDI)*]

As states and empires increased in size, and contacts between regions multiplied, people transformed their religious and cultural systems. **Religions and belief systems provided a social bond and an ethical code to live by.** These shared beliefs also **influenced and reinforced political, economic, and occupational stratification.** Religious and political authority often merged as **rulers (some of whom were considered divine) used religion,** along with military and legal structures, **to justify their rule** and ensure its continuation. **Religions and belief systems also generated conflict,** partly because beliefs and practices varied greatly within and among societies.

➤ New belief systems and cultural traditions emerged and spread, often asserting universal truths. ○ **BUDDHISM:** The core beliefs preached by the historic Buddha and collected by his followers in sutras and other scriptures were, in part, a reaction to the Vedic beliefs and rituals dominant in South Asia. Buddhism branched into many schools and changed over time as it spread throughout Asia—first through the support of the Mauryan emperor Ashoka, and then through the efforts of missionaries and merchants and the establishment of educational institutions to promote Buddhism’s core teachings.

○ **CONFUCIANISM:** Confucianism’s core beliefs and writings originated in the writings and lessons of Confucius. They were elaborated by key disciples, including rulers such as Wudi, who sought to promote social harmony by outlining proper rituals and social relationships for all people in China.

○ **DAOISM:** Core belief of balance between humans and nature assumed that the Chinese political system would be altered indirectly. Daoism also influenced the development of Chinese culture.

o **CHRISTIANITY**: Core beliefs based on the teachings of Jesus of Nazareth as recorded by his disciples and their belief in his divinity. Christianity drew on Judaism as well as Roman and Hellenistic influences. Christianity eventually gained Roman imperial support and spread through the efforts of missionaries and merchants through many parts of Afro-Eurasia.

o **GRECO-ROMAN PHILOSOPHY**: Greco–Roman religious and philosophical traditions offered diverse perspectives on the study of the natural world, the connection to the divine, and the nature of political power and hierarchy. Some of these perspectives emphasized logic, empirical observation, and scientific investigation.

o **Shamanism**, animism, and **ancestor veneration** continued in their traditional forms in some instances, and in others were incorporated into other religious traditions.

o **Confucianism** emphasized filial piety.

o Some Buddhists and Christians practiced a monastic life.

OTHER RELIGIOUS/CULTURAL TRADITIONS continued and in some places were incorporated into major religious traditions.

➤ **GENDER & STATUS**: Belief systems generally reinforced existing social structures while also offering new roles and status to some men and women.

➤ **ART & ARCHITECTURE**: Reflected the values of religions and belief systems.

[Illustrative examples, art and architecture: Hindu art and architecture, Buddhist art and architecture, Christian art and architecture, Greco–Roman art and architecture]

Key Concept 2.2 – RISE, DECLINE, & FALL OF

CLASSICAL EMPIRES [**THEME: Governance (GOV) - Political**]

As the early states and empires grew in number, size, and population, they frequently **competed for resources and came into conflict with one another**. In quest of land, wealth, and security, some empires expanded dramatically. In doing so, they **built powerful military machines and administrative institutions** that were capable of organizing human activities over long distances, and they created **new groups of military and political elites** to manage their affairs. As these empires expanded their boundaries, they also faced the need to **develop policies and procedures to govern their relationships with ethnically and culturally diverse populations**,

sometimes to integrate them within an imperial society and sometimes to exclude them. In some cases, the successes of these empires created further problems. By **expanding their boundaries too far, they created political, cultural, and administrative difficulties that they could not manage**. They also experienced **environmental, social, and economic problems** when they over-utilized their lands and subjects and when **disproportionate wealth became concentrated in the hands of privileged classes**.

➤ **RISE & ADMINISTRATION OF EMPIRES:** The number and size of key states and empires grew dramatically as rulers imposed political unity on areas where previously there had been competing states. **[MAP TEST #1 will include these key states & empires.]**

- o Middle East/Southwest Asia: **Persian empire**

- o East Asia: Qin and Han empires

- o South Asia: Mauryan and Gupta empires

- o **Mediterranean region: Phoenicia and its colonies, Greek city-states and colonies, and Hellenistic and Roman empires**

- o **Mesoamerica: Teotihuacan, Maya city-states**

- o Andean South America: Moche

- o North America: Chaco and Cahokia

➤ Empires and states developed **new techniques of imperial administration** based, in part, on the success of earlier political forms.

- o imperial rulers created administrative institutions, including **centralized governments**, as well as elaborate legal systems and **bureaucracies**.

- o Imperial governments promoted trade and projected **military power** over larger areas using **a variety of techniques**, including issuing currencies; diplomacy; developing supply lines; building fortifications, defensive walls, and roads; and drawing new groups of military officers and soldiers from the local populations or conquered populations.

➤ Imperial cities served as centers of trade, public performance of religious rituals, and political administration for states and empires. **[MAP TEST #1 will include these**

imperial cities: Persepolis, Chang'an, Pataliputra, Athens, Carthage, Rome, Alexandria, Constantinople, Teotihuacan]

➤ The social structures of empires displayed hierarchies that included cultivators, laborers, slaves, artisans, merchants, elites, or caste groups.

➤ Imperial societies relied on a range of methods to maintain the production of food and provide rewards for the loyalty of the **elites**. [*Illustrative examples, methods of ensuring production and social hierarchy: Corvée labor, Slavery, Rents and tributes*]

➤ **Patriarchy** continued to shape gender and family relations in imperial societies of this period.

➤ **DECLINE & FALL OF EMPIRES:** The Roman, Han, Persian, Mauryan, and Gupta empires encountered political, cultural, and administrative difficulties that they could not manage, which eventually **led to their decline, collapse**, and transformation into successor empires or states. ○ Through excessive mobilization of resources, erosion of established political institutions, and economic changes, imperial governments generated social tensions and created economic difficulties by concentrating too much wealth in the hands of elites.

○ Security issues along their frontiers, including the threat of invasions, challenged imperial authority.

Key Concept 2.3 – NETWORKS OF TRANSPORTATION, COMMUNICATION, & EXCHANGE [*THEMES: Economic Systems (ECN); Interaction with Environment (ENV)*]

With the organization of large-scale empires, the volume of **long-distance trade increased dramatically**. Much of this trade resulted from the **demand for raw materials and luxury goods**. **Land and water routes** linked many regions of the Eastern Hemisphere. The **exchange of people, technology, religious and cultural beliefs, food crops, domesticated animals, and disease pathogens** developed alongside the trade in goods across extensive networks of communication and exchange. In the Americas and Oceania, localized networks developed.

➤ **NEW TECHNOLOGIES & INNOVATIONS** facilitated long-distance communication and exchange. ○ **Land Routes:** domesticated pack animals to transport goods.

○ **Maritime routes** (East Africa to East Asia): lateen sail, knowledge of monsoon winds

➤ EXCHANGES OF PEOPLE TECHNOLOGY, RELIGION, & CULTURE: ○ **CROPS & AGRICULTURAL TECHNIQUES** spread of crops, including rice and cotton from South Asia to the Middle East, encouraged changes in farming and irrigation techniques. [*Illustrative examples, changes in farming and irrigation techniques: qanāt system, water wheels, Improved wells and pumps*]

○ **DISEASE PATHOGENS** urban populations and contributed to the decline of some empires, including the Roman and Han.

○ **RELIGIOUS & CULTURAL BELIEFS:** Christianity, Hinduism, and Buddhism—were transformed as they spread partly as a result of *syncretism* (or blending).

***** NOTES ***:**

1) Illustrative Examples are just that – examples of what I will use to teach the Content/Concept/Skill/Reasoning Process. I may use ALL, SOME, or SOMETHING ELSE. Illustrative examples are NOT *specifically* tested on the AP Exam, but can be used as evidence to support an argument.

2) Keep this handout in the *Backstory to 1200 CE* section of your binder. You will refer to it often & when we begin reviewing for the AP Exam in the spring.