

**UNIT 1:  
CULTURAL  
FOUNDATIONS  
3000 BCE - 600 CE**

Foundational Civilizations

Nile River Valley, Mesopotamia, Crescent,  
Indus Valley, Chinese River Valley, Olmec,  
Chavin

Early Classical Civilizations

Greece, Persia, Rome, Qin/Han China,  
Maurya/Gupta India

Belief Systems and Religions

Hinduism, Buddhism, Daoism, Legalism,  
Confucianism, Judaism, Christianity,  
Zoroastrianism

## Reading Calendar for Unit 1: Foundations (3000 BCE - 600 CE)

Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
Aug 12	13	14	15	16
19	20 p 1-2 (Southwest Asia)	21 p 3-4 (Egypt)	22 p 5-7 (India and China)	23 <i>*make sure you have read 1-7 by today!*</i>
26 <b>QUIZ: River Valley Civilizations, p 1-7</b> p 8, 11-13 (Intro; Confucianism and Daoism)	27	28 p 10-11 (Hinduism and Buddhism)	29 p 9-10 (Judaism and Christianity)	30
2 <b>LABOR DAY NO SCHOOL</b>	3 <b>QUIZ: Belief systems, p 8-13</b>	4 Read pgs 14-18 by next Wednesday	5	6
9	10 p 14-18	11 <b>QUIZ: Classical Civilizations</b>	12	13
16 In-class essay	17	18	19 <b>UNIT 1 TEST: WRITING</b>	20 <b>UNIT 2 TEST: MULTIPLE CHOICE</b>

The pages written in the box are the homework for that specific night. We will be talking about the content that you read for homework the next day in class, so you should come prepared. However, I will not be checking daily to see if you've done that respective reading. You need to make sure that you have read those pages by the day of the quiz. What that means for you: prioritize. If you have a job and basketball practice and a marching band competition on a Tuesday, it's okay to not read that night. Just make sure you get your work done by the quiz. Do not wait until the night before the quiz to read. That's setting yourself up for failure (and not a lot of sleep).

You should be taking notes as you read. In theory, you could wait until the night before the notes are due, but you will regret it. Don't make your life that hard, y'all.

Be proactive! If you know you have something one night that will make it hard to get your reading done (a football game, choir concert, work, etc.), then get ahead so you don't have as much to do that night!

Chapter 2

3500 B.C.—331 B.C.

# Civilizations and Empires in Southwest Asia

Southwest Asia became the home of the world's earliest civilizations. The first civilization arose in Sumer in the Fertile Crescent. Migrating peoples moving into the Fertile Crescent added new elements to that civilization. Slowly, empires developed and spread their control.

## **Civilization arose in the Fertile Crescent.**

Southwest Asia is a region marked by dry plateaus, fertile river valleys, and rugged mountains. At the center of the region is a rich arc of land known as the Fertile Crescent (map, page 28). Centered on present-day Iraq, this region is watered by several important rivers including the Tigris, Euphrates, and Jordan. The land between the Tigris and Euphrates rivers is known as Mesopotamia (map, page 34). Here, about 5,000 years ago, the people of Sumer developed the world's first civilization.

While all groups of people have a culture, not all groups have a way of life that can be called a **civilization**. To be a civilization, a culture must have certain key traits. These include cities, specialized workers, writing, advanced tools and technology, and complex **institutions**, or organizations, such as government.

By 3000 B.C., the Sumerians had built at least a dozen fair-sized cities. As centers of civilization, these cities were more than villages with large populations. They were also centers of trade, religion, and government. Each city controlled not only life within its walls but also in the surrounding countryside. Thus it functioned as a political unit known as a **city-state** (city tour, pages 30–31).

Most of the people of Sumer worked as farmers, raising grain and other crops in the countryside around the cities. By irrigating their crops, these farmers raised a surplus of food. This surplus made it possible for other people in the cities to work at different jobs. Most of these people were **artisans**—skilled workers

such as potters, metalworkers, and weavers who made goods by hand. They were among the specialized workers that contributed to Sumer's civilization.

As the people of Sumer developed industries and trade, they needed a way to record their transactions. They developed a wedge-shaped way of writing called **cuneiform**. Using a sharpened reed, scribes wrote on clay tablets.

The Sumerians were skilled in many fields of science and technology. Many of the basic tools and machines on which humans still depend—including the wheel, the plow, and the sailboat—were invented by Sumerians. The Sumerians were also skilled in working metals such as copper and bronze.

As city-states developed in Sumer, the people developed complex institutions for religion and government. Historians believe that priests controlled the earliest Sumerian governments. At the center of each city was a temple containing a many-tiered structure called a **ziggurat**. The ziggurat served both as a place of worship and a kind of city hall from which priests managed the affairs of the city. Later military commanders and finally kings began to control the government.

Sumerians were **polytheists**, believing in many gods. They considered these gods to be both immortal and all-powerful, yet also to have human-like characteristics. To keep the gods happy, the people of Sumer built impressive ziggurats and made rich offerings.

## **Newcomers contributed to civilization.**

Beginning around 2,000 B.C., groups from neighboring lands periodically invaded Sumer. Each new group adopted the ways of life it found in Sumer and gradually added new ideas to it.

The first conquerors came from the city of Babylon, upstream from Sumer. Although originally nomads, the Babylonians quickly adopted the settled life of the Sumerians. Their most famous contribution to civilization was a code of laws designed by a great king, Hammurabi (ham-uh-RAH-bee). Carved in cuneiform on an eight-foot slab of black stone, Hammurabi's Code included nearly 300 laws covering such matters as family relationships, trade, and land ownership.

About 1550 B.C., the invasion of Babylonia by nomadic warriors divided the empire into small

kingdoms and independent city-states. Notable among them were the civilizations of the Phoenicians and the Jews (map, page 34).

The rise of Phoenician civilization was based on manufacture, trade, and seafaring. The Phoenicians built a number of cities along the eastern shore of the Mediterranean Sea. Although never a great political power, the Phoenicians developed cities and trade around the Mediterranean. Their rich purple dye was only one item in their trade that dominated the Mediterranean economy. Phoenician merchants developed a simplified kind of writing for keeping business records. Consisting of just 22 symbols, it was much easier to use than cuneiform (chart, page 36). It was adapted later by Greece and Rome.

The Jews settled on a strip of land called Canaan (later known as Palestine) near the Mediterranean Sea. Like the Phoenicians, the Jews were not a great political power. Their special contribution to civilization was their ideas about religion. Unlike other peoples of Southwest Asia, the Jews were **monotheists**, believers in one God. The laws of the Jewish religion, of which the Ten Commandments are a part, demanded a high standard of moral conduct. This emphasis on justice and morality set Judaism apart from other religions of the time and made it a major influence on later civilizations.

### ***Conquerors ruled ever larger empires.***

For hundreds of years, no one group was able to gain control of all of Southwest Asia. Finally, in about 850 B.C., the Assyrians [uh-SIHR-ee-uhnz] from northern Mesopotamia conquered the region. Using swords and iron-tipped spears, they established a rule known for its cruelty to conquered peoples. By 650 B.C., their empire extended into Northern Africa (map, page 39).

Around 600 B.C., the Assyrian empire fell to the Chaldeans, who made Babylon their capital. Rebuilt by a remarkable king, Nebuchadnezzar (NEB-yuh-kuhd-NEZ-uhr), Babylon featured beautiful terraced hanging gardens and a seven-tiered ziggurat from which priests observed the stars. The Chaldeans' observations of the stars formed the basis for both astronomy and astrology. In the course of their conquests, Nebuchadnezzar's armies captured the Jewish city of Jerusalem, pillaged its temple, burned the city, and took many of the Jews as slaves.

Shortly after Nebuchadnezzar's death in 562 B.C., his empire fell to the Persians, a people from the mountains and plateaus of modern-day Iran. Under their great king Cyrus, the Persians established a huge, well-run empire (map, page 43). Unlike the Assyrians, Cyrus governed the many peoples of his empire fairly and justly. He practiced religious tolerance and allowed the Jews to return home.

Darius, a successor of Cyrus, continued the Persian tradition of good government. He built an excellent road system to unite the empire. To increase trade and wealth, he ordered the use of coins of a standard value. Darius also divided Persia into provinces, roughly one for each group of people within the empire. The people of each province practiced their own religion, spoke their own language, and to some extent followed their own laws.

The Persian Empire lasted about 200 years. During this long period of comparative peace, the region's great cities prospered and learning and the arts progressed. Thus, the Persians preserved the achievements of earlier civilizations and made contributions of their own.

### ***Chapter Review***

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**Define** civilization, institution, city-state, artisan, cuneiform, ziggurat, polytheist, monotheist

**Identify** Fertile Crescent, Mesopotamia, Sumer, Babylonians, Hammurabi, Hammurabi's Code, Phoenicians, Jews, Hittites, Assyrians, Nineveh, Chaldeans, Babylon, Persians

### ***Connecting Past and Present***

Cities in ancient times became the earliest centers of civilizations. Ur, Nineveh, Babylon, and Jerusalem prospered as the core of their own civilizations and as the center from which those civilizations spread.

The past two hundred years have brought a change in the number and nature of cities. While the world's population has grown, it has also become increasingly urban. Today, about two fifths of the world's people live in urban areas, and that number continues to increase. The largest metropolitan area in the world is that of Mexico City, with a population of about 14.5 million.

The Nile valley in Egypt became the home of a second great civilization, that of Egypt. Isolated by deserts, Egypt thrived under the rule of a long succession of pharaohs. While empires rose and fell in Southwest Asia, the civilization of Egypt developed continuously for 3,000 years.

### ***The Nile River shaped Egyptian life.***

The northeast corner of Africa is a vast desert, a bleak, bone-dry land of craggy, sandstone cliffs, windswept plateaus, and narrow valleys. Some 8,000 years ago, before the region turned completely to desert, people settled there to farm. Eventually they built one of the most remarkable civilizations of the ancient world. The key to their civilization was the 4,000-mile-long Nile River that cuts through the desert and brings life to Egypt (map, page 49).

Regularly as the seasons, the Nile flooded every summer. Along its banks it left a deposit of rich black mud. Beginning about 6000 B.C., farmers discovered that they could raise grains in this fertile soil. Each year after the flood, the farmers planted their crops. Throughout the growing season, they used water from the Nile to irrigate their crops.

For thousands of years, life in the Nile valley remained simple. In time, however, Egyptians began to develop institutions, with agricultural districts called *nomes* (nohmz) among the first. In 3200 B.C., the *nomes* of Egypt were divided into two groups under two kings, or **pharaohs** (FAIR-ohz). One king ruled Lower Egypt, the kingdom nearest the Mediterranean Sea, while another ruled Upper Egypt to the south (map, page 49).

The people of the two Egypts traded with each other, using the Nile as a means of transportation. About this time, they also began to trade with the people of Mesopotamia. Trade brought connections with other cultures and exposed the Egyptians to new ideas as well as to new foods, tools, and goods.

In 3100 B.C., a strong-willed king of Upper Egypt, Menes (MEE-nee-z), united the two Egypts. Menes established his capital at Memphis, near the boundary between the two Egypts. Following the death of Menes, the double crown of Upper and Lower Egypt passed from father to son to grandson. Such a series of rulers from a single family is called a **dynasty**.

### ***Egypt's pharaohs ruled as gods.***

Egyptian pharaohs were more than political and military leaders. Egyptians believed the pharaohs were gods, almost as splendid and powerful as the gods of the heavens. Egyptians believed that the pharaoh bore full responsibility for the well-being of the kingdom. It was the pharaoh who caused the sun to rise, the Nile to flood, and the crops to grow.

Egyptians believed that the pharaoh continued to rule, even after death. They therefore provided for his comfort not only in life but also after his death. The pharaohs of the early dynasties were buried in huge, free-standing stone tombs called **pyramids** (illustrations, page 53). About 80 pyramids still stand in the desert near the Nile. The largest is the 481-foot Great Pyramid at Giza, completed about 2556 B.C.

The time of the pharaohs' rule is divided into three major periods. About 500 years after Menes united Upper and Lower Egypt, rulers of the family known as the Third Dynasty founded the Old Kingdom (2660–2180 B.C.). This was the great age of pyramid building.

For a time around 2180 B.C., climatic changes led to crop failures in Egypt. Civil unrest grew, and nobles struggled against pharaohs for power. This period, called the First Illness, ended the Old Kingdom.

Conditions stabilized around 2080 B.C., and Egypt entered the time known as the Middle Kingdom. Pharaohs moved the capital from Memphis to Thebes (map, page 49). They also undertook vast public projects to improve their kingdom. One was the digging of a canal from the Nile to the Red Sea to improve trade.

The Middle Kingdom ended around 1640 B.C. as invaders known as the Hyksos swept into Egypt from Asia during the Second Illness. Although they were hated rulers, the Hyksos introduced the chariot, bronze-working, and new techniques of spinning and weaving to the people of Egypt.

Warlike pharaohs finally drove the Hyksos from Egypt and instituted the New Kingdom (1570–1075 B.C.). During this time, rulers like Queen Hatshepsut and Thutmose III built Egypt into a true empire, extending its control as far east as Palestine and Syria. The New Kingdom was also an age when great temples and monuments were built, including the temples at Karnak and Abu Simbel.

After reaching its peak around 1288 B.C., the empire entered a long period of decline. Unknown invaders called the “People of the Sea” devastated Egypt around 1200 B.C. In 671 B.C., the Assyrians gained control.

### ***Egypt's way of life endured 3,000 years.***

Egyptian society was highly structured. If you think of Egyptian society as a pyramid, the pharaoh stood at the top. Below the pharaoh and his family were the nobles. Below them were the peasants and, at the bottom, the slaves.

Egypt's nobles worked for the pharaoh as governors, generals, tax collectors, priests, and officials. Women, who held many of the same rights as men, also served as government officials and priests. Noble families enjoyed many luxuries and lived in well-appointed one-story houses. Although most wealthy Egyptians were born as nobles, some people gained that position through service to the pharaoh. Education too—the skills of reading and writing—was a key to advancement for both boys and girls.

Peasants worked as farmers on the pharaohs' and nobles' land. Although they had few comforts, they usually had enough to eat. They also found time for music, games, and festivals. In the flood season, when farming was impossible, they worked for the pharaoh as laborers, building tombs, dikes, or canals.

Slaves, like the peasants, worked very hard. The more fortunate slaves worked in the homes of the rich. Through loyal service, house slaves could hope someday to be granted their freedom. Other slaves worked as laborers, often enduring harsh treatment at the hands of overseers.

Egyptian religion emphasized justice, right, truth, and order. The Egyptians believed that when they died the gods would judge them by these ideals. They believed in many gods. Foremost was powerful Osiris, god of the dead, who weighed each person's heart in judgment. Priests, the people believed, could influence the gods. Priests thus earned power and wealth that rivaled the pharaohs'.

One pharaoh, Akhenaton—possibly trying to limit the power of the priests—declared that Aton, the sun god, was the only god. Akhenaton destroyed temples to other gods and banned worship of them. Yet Akhenaton's monotheism died with him and Egyptians reverted to older beliefs.

Usually only wealthy Egyptians sent their children to school. Among the subjects Egyptian children studied were reading, writing, arithmetic, and geometry—the last, an Egyptian invention. Much of this knowledge was recorded in a form of writing that we call **hieroglyphics** (HY-er-oh-GLIF-ihks) (chart, page 62). Early Egyptians wrote on stone and clay. Later Egyptians created a kind of paper out of **papyrus** (puh-PY-ruhs), a reed that grew in the marshes.

In later centuries, the ability to read hieroglyphics was lost. Only the discovery of the Rosetta Stone in 1799 enabled modern scholars to translate the writing of ancient Egypt (illustration, page 62).

Egyptian civilization made many contributions to mathematics and science. Annual surveys after the Nile's flooding led to skill in surveying and measuring. The need to know the time of the Nile's floods led to the development of an accurate calendar. Finally, Egyptian doctors were the most famous in the ancient world. They knew how to set broken bones, reduce fevers, and check a person's heart rate by feeling for a pulse. Thus, they approached their study of medicine in a remarkably scientific way.

### ***Chapter Review***

**Define** pharaoh, dynasty, pyramid, hieroglyphics, papyrus

**Identify** Nile River, Upper Egypt, Lower Egypt, Menes, Hyksos, Thutmose III, Osiris, Akhenaton

### ***Connecting Past and Present***

The Egypt of the pharaohs depended on the Nile River for its life. Modern Egypt does as well. The greatest part of its almost 55 million people still live along the Nile.

Since ancient times, people have sought ways to increase the river's bounty. In 1971, the Aswan High Dam spanning the Nile was completed in Upper Egypt. This dam increased Egypt's irrigatable area by more than a million acres and produced vitally needed hydroelectric power.

## Chapter 4

# 2500 B.C.—A.D. 220 *Ancient India and China*

Thousand of years ago, two great civilizations grew up on either side of the mighty Himalaya Mountains in Asia. The first and older developed in the fertile Indus River valley of India. India in time became the home of new peoples and their religions. The other civilization took shape in the river valleys of China. There, strong rulers built a great empire.

### ***A new culture arose in northern India.***

India is a **subcontinent**, a great landmass extending south from the continent of Asia. In the north of India, the Indus and Ganges rivers form an enormous, fertile plain. Like the Nile, Tigris, and Euphrates rivers, the Indus flooded each year, providing good soil for farming. It was in the Indus valley that the first civilization of ancient India developed (map, page 68).

The people of the Indus valley built a number of cities, the largest of which were Harappa and Mohenjo-Daro (city tour, pages 67–70). Each city was laid out neatly in a grid pattern, with many homes and buildings built of oven-fired brick. Within the cities, many people worked as merchants, traders, and artisans. Most people of the Indus valley, however, lived by farming outside city walls. The careful planning of these cities suggests a strong central government.

The cities of the Indus valley flourished for some 1,000 years. Then, around 1750 B.C., they fell into decay. Historians suspect that agricultural failures led to the decline. The invasion of nomadic herders called Aryans from central Asia completed the destruction of the Indus civilization.

Some of the Indus valley people may have fled southward as the Aryans pushed into their land. Others remained and served as slaves of the newcomers. Over time, the Aryans and the Indus peoples formed a new society and a new civilization. An important aspect of this civilization was the religion known as Hinduism.

The religious ideas that took shape are described in four collections called *Vedas*. The oldest and most famous, the *Rig-Veda*, consists of more than 1,000 hymns to many different gods. Originally the *Vedas* were committed to memory by priests and transmitted orally. Centuries later, they were written down. The *Vedas* gave their name to the period of Indian history from 1500 to 500 B.C.—the Vedic Age. They remain an important expression of faith to millions of Indians today.

Sometime around 400 B.C., wise teachers tried to interpret and explain the hidden meaning of the Vedic hymns. The teachers' comments were memorized by their students and later written down as a collection of essays known as *Upanishads*. They identify the basic beliefs of Hinduism (text, page 71).

Hindu society divided people into four broad castes, or classes. The *Brahmins*, or priestly class, was highest. Next came the *Kshatriyas* (kah-SHAHT-ree-uhz), the rulers and warriors. The third group, the *Vaishyas* (VYSH-yuhz) were landowners, merchants, and artisans. The *Shudras* (SHOO-druh-z), or servant and slave class, made up the fourth group. Below the *Shudras* were the outcastes, or untouchables, who could not mingle with other Hindus.

Over time, these basic divisions multiplied into the hundreds, and contact between castes was rigidly controlled. Occupations were assigned by caste. People were not allowed to marry outside their caste. The only way one could get to a higher caste was to lead a good life, fulfill the duties of one's caste, and reach a higher caste through **reincarnation**, or rebirth.

### ***Buddhism spread under Mauryan rulers.***

Around 530 B.C., a young man named Siddhartha Gautama challenged the ideas of the Brahmin priests. Even a lowborn person, he said, could gain enough wisdom in one lifetime to escape the cycle of death and rebirth. He set out to find wisdom through harsh discipline and suffering. Wisdom, he believed, was the answer to the pain he saw around him. Gautama went on to teach others what he had learned through study and meditation. Thereafter, he was known as Buddha, a title meaning "the Enlightened One." Buddha's message, taught in everyday language without complicated rituals, quickly won converts across all levels of Indian society.

## Four Noble Truths of Buddhism

**First Noble Truth** Everything in life is suffering and sorrow.

**Second Noble Truth** The cause of all this pain is people's cravings and desires.

**Third Noble Truth** The way to end all pain is to end all desires.

**Fourth Noble Truth** People can overcome desires and attain *nirvana*, or enlightenment and release from pain and selfishness, by following the Eightfold Path of right knowledge, purpose, speech, action, living, effort, mindfulness, and meditation.

Buddha lived near the end of the Vedic Age. At that time, India was composed of many separate kingdoms. Invasions by Persians in 512 B.C. and Greeks under Alexander the Great in 326 B.C. brought some of these kingdoms under a centralized control. Unification was not complete, however, until an Indian ruler, Chandragupta Maurya, conquered all of northern India by 298 B.C. Chandragupta and his descendants are known as the Mauryan dynasty (map, page 74).

Chandragupta was a cruel leader who ruled by force and fear. His grandson, Ashoka, developed a different approach to governing.

At first Ashoka ruled as cruelly as Chandragupta, but he later felt remorse and vowed to follow Buddha's teachings. Ashoka issued edicts, or public announcements of his policies, and inscribed them on huge stone pillars throughout his empire. Among other things, the edicts guaranteed just treatment for all and urged people to live righteously. Ashoka sent hundreds of Buddhist missionaries to other lands. Largely through his efforts, Buddhism spread far beyond India and became a major world religion.

After Ashoka's death, the Mauryan empire fell apart. Yet the basic elements of Indian civilization were to survive centuries of disunity.

### Imperial government united China.

About 1,000 years after the Indus valley people built their first cities, another civilization began in China. Despite its late start, that civilization would outlast all the other ancient civilizations. Chinese civilization grew up in the fertile valleys of two rivers, the Yellow River and the Yangtze River (map, page 77). China's first cities appeared about 2000 B.C. near the Yellow River.

Ancient China was isolated by its geography. The only outsiders the Chinese knew were the warlike nomads of Mongolia to their north. In the Chinese

view, the rest of the world was peopled by barbarians, people who are not civilized.

The civilization that grew up in China was highly unified. The family was central to society and greatly honored. Everyone in the family had a clear role. The elderly had privileges and power; the young had practically none; women were subservient to men.

The family was also closely linked to religion. The spirits of family ancestors were worshiped and thought to have the power to bring good or bad fortune. Every family paid respect to its ancestors and made sacrifices in their honor.

Beyond their loyalty to family, the Chinese owed obedience and respect to their ruler. The ruler had supreme responsibility for the welfare of the people. The Chinese believed that just rulers had divine approval, called the Mandate of Heaven. Evil rulers could lose the mandate, leading to their overthrow.

As in Egypt, history in China was marked by a succession of dynasties. From ancient times until the early 1900's, one dynasty gained power, flourished, and declined, and was replaced by another in an endless cycle. Four dynasties ruled the Middle Kingdom between 1500 B.C. and A.D. 220—the Shang, Chou, Ch'in, and Han (maps, pages 81 and 86).

<sup>Shang</sup> Civilization emerged in China during the Shang dynasty. Cities built of wood spread along the length of the Yellow River. The society there was sharply divided between nobles and peasants. Nobles owned land and served in the army and the government. Meanwhile, peasants tilled the soil for their overlords. Artisans formed a separate class. They developed the bronzeworking and silkmaking for which China was to become famous.

The Chinese also developed a writing system during the Shang era. Each character in the Chinese method of writing stood for an idea, not a sound. Thus the system had thousands of different characters, making it difficult to learn. On the other hand, one could read Chinese without being able to speak it. People in all parts of China could communicate through writing, even if their spoken languages were very different.

The Chou dynasty continued the rule begun by the Shang. By 771 B.C., however, the Chou dynasty had gradually weakened. Barbarians from the north and west invaded China and sacked the Chou capital. Although the Chou kings established a new capital, China's noble families vied for power. As a result, the country entered a 500-year period of chaos known as "the time of the warring states." In this time of bloodshed, traditional values collapsed. Concerned that civilization seemed doomed, Chinese philosophers looked for ways to save society.

One philosopher, a scholar known as Confucius, urged social harmony. He believed that order and



good government could be restored if society was reorganized around five basic relationships—the relationship between ruler and subject, father and son, husband and wife, older brother and younger brother, and friend and friend. If people related properly to those above and below them, social order would be properly regulated. Although Confucius spent his life teaching, the writings of his students preserved his ideas.

For another Chinese thinker, Lao Tzu, following nature was the key to order and harmony. The cloud, the breeze, and the stream move without effort, he said, because they follow the *Tao* (dow), meaning “the Way” or the universal force that guides all things. He urged humans to do the same. Those who adopted Taoism withdrew from society to live close to nature.

A third philosophy, that of the Legalists, held that a highly efficient and powerful government was the key to restoring order. Legalists stressed punishments and rewards. Eventually, the harsh ideas of the Legalists were used to unite the country again.

### Ch'in and Han emperors strengthened China.

In 256 B.C., the Ch'in dynasty took control of China from the Chou. One Ch'in ruler, Shih Huang-ti, came to power in 246 B.C. and built China into a mighty empire. Following Legalist philosophy, Shih Huang-ti set out to destroy his enemies inside and outside China. He eliminated anyone who challenged his authority, burning books and even banning ideas that criticized his rule.

Although widely hated for his ruthlessness, Shih Huang-ti accomplished a great deal. He ended civil war, conquered the barbarians to the south, built a 1,400-mile Great Wall to protect China to the north, and doubled the country's size (map, page 86). Most importantly, he unified China through a network of highways and reorganized the government into a form that would last for more than 2,000 years.

Shih Huang-ti's son succeeded him. However, within a few years the mistreated peasants rebelled and in 202 B.C. began a new dynasty, the Han.

Civilization flowered under the Han. They revoked many of the hated laws of the Ch'in emperors and expelled Legalist thinkers from the imperial palace. They also encouraged arts, science, and learning.

The most powerful of the Han emperors was Wu-ti, who ruled from 140 to 87 B.C. Wu-ti secured China's northern border and otherwise extended the boundaries of the empire (map, page 86). He proclaimed Confucianism the official set of beliefs for his government. In 124 B.C., he founded a national university to teach the great writings of the past, including the words of Confucius. Those who sought

high positions in Han government had to pass written tests on these classics, setting a pattern that would last for centuries.

Wu-ti's western conquests led to the growth of trade over a dangerous 4,000-mile route known as the Great Silk Road. By this route, China opened contacts with Persia and the Mediterranean world.

In the years following Wu-ti's reign, China's prosperity declined. The peasants in particular suffered. Eventually the peasants revolted and overthrew the Han dynasty. Although the Han regained power after a few years, they were never again able to unify the country.

During the late years of the Han dynasty, around 50 B.C., Buddhism came into China via the Great Silk Road. During this time of unrest, many Chinese turned to the new religion and its religious comfort. Thus, as the once glorious Han empire collapsed, Buddhism spread rapidly in the troubled land.

### Chapter Review

**Define** subcontinent, reincarnation, caste, edict, barbarian

**Identify** Indus River, Harappa, Mohenjo-Daro, Aryans, Hinduism, Vedas, Upanishads, Brahman, untouchables, Buddha, Ashoka, Middle Kingdom, Yellow River, Yangtze River, Shang, Chou, Confucius, Lao Tzu, Legalists, Ch'in, Han, Wu-ti, the Great Silk Road

### Connecting Past and Present

The caste system that began with the ancient Aryans still remains a part of Indian society. In 1950, India adopted a constitution with a bill of rights that outlawed untouchability and discrimination based on caste. Amendments to the constitution in 1976 added to protections for untouchables. Yet caste still contributes to tensions within India today, with untouchables the targets of segregation and abuse. At the same time, today's India is the world's largest political democracy.

How might we define belief systems? They include both religions and philosophies, and they form comprehensive guidelines for human behavior, both for individuals and collectivities. They often answer "big questions," such as "What is the meaning of life?"; "What things in life are most worthwhile?"; "Where did we come from?"; and "What happens after we die?" Although we may give any number of explanations as to how religions and philosophies are different, a basic distinction is that religions are more concerned with events and forces outside the natural world. Philosophies, on the other hand, are focused on human interactions with others and in finding answers to the big questions in this world, not in another, less directly comprehensible one. Of course, religious and philosophical beliefs overlap significantly so that any one belief system may actually qualify as both.

#### CHAPTER FOUR: MAJOR BELIEF SYSTEMS BEFORE 600 C.E.



Belief systems were basic building blocks for most ancient civilizations, and it is impossible to develop an understanding of them without delving into the religious and philosophical beliefs that people of these times held. Some belief systems disappeared when the civilizations ended, but others have endured to this day, including Hinduism, Judaism, Confucianism, Daoism, Buddhism and Christianity. In this chapter we will focus on these major belief systems, as well as polytheism, the form of religion that most ancient civilizations practiced. In this early era, as in all periods that followed, belief systems and all the values, customs, and practices associated with them have shaped the story of the world.



#### PERSPECTIVES: THE SACRED AND THE PROFANE, ACCORDING TO EMILE DURKHEIM

Emile Durkheim, an early 20th century French sociologist, stated that religion involves "things that surpass the limits of our knowledge." He defined religion as a social institution that focuses on a conception of the sacred. He contrasted the sacred to the profane, with the sacred being the extraordinary that inspires a sense of awe and reverence, and the profane being the ordinary, unexceptional facets of everyday life. According to Durkheim, all societies make these distinctions, understanding profane things in terms of their usefulness, and setting apart the sacred from everyday life, denoting it as forbidden.

#### EARLIEST BELIEF SYSTEMS

The earliest belief systems appear to have centered on spirits whose presence could be sensed in certain objects or in special places. For example, hunters and gatherers often believed that particular groves, springs, or wild animals were sacred. The idea of spirits lived on in later religions that came to focus on gods as people settled into communities. Polytheism is the belief in many gods, with each god having a specialty, usually related to nature. The rituals of early farmers often centered on the Earth Mother, a deity believed to be the source of new life, an all-powerful male Sky God, and divinities representing fire, wind, and rain. Most of the early civilizations – including Egypt, Mesopotamia, the Indus River Valley people, the Olmec, the Chavin, Greece, and Rome – were all polytheistic. Their religions were particular to the civilizations, although there were striking similarities among many of them. Ancient China was probably originally polytheistic, but it was unique in its emphasis on the will of the ancestors, and by the Han period, Confucianism had become the most important belief system binding the Chinese civilization together.

During the era between 600 B.C.E. and 600 C.E., an important change occurred in two of the religions – Christianity and Buddhism – that allowed them both to spread to many new areas from their places of origin. The two religions followed the Silk Road and the Indian Ocean circuit, and their numbers grew greatly. Both were transformed into universalizing religions, with cores of beliefs that transcend cultures and actively recruit new adherents. As a result, both religions grew tremendously in the years before 600 C.E., putting them in the position of becoming new sources of societal "glue" that would hold broad areas with varying political allegiances together. Meanwhile, some important ethnic religions, such as Judaism, the Chinese religions (Daoism and Confucianism), and Hinduism created strong bonds among people, but had little emphasis on converting outsiders to their faiths.

## JUDAISM

Judaism originated with a small Middle Eastern group called the Hebrews, a Semitic people influenced by Babylonian civilization. Information about the Hebrews comes partly from archaeological excavations and references in contemporary documents from Egypt and Assyria, but mainly from the **Hebrew Bible**, a compilation of beliefs, events, and people from early history. These stories were transmitted orally for many years, and were written down probably in the 10<sup>th</sup> century B.C.E. The text that we have today dates from the 5<sup>th</sup> century B.C.E., with a few later additions. The founder of the religion was **Abraham**, a man born in Ur in Mesopotamia who rejected the polytheism of his homeland and migrated with his family to the land of Israel, on the eastern shore of the Mediterranean Sea. The Hebrew Bible tells about a migration to Egypt, where the people were enslaved, and then returned to Israel to found a kingdom. The kingdom reached its height under kings Saul, David, and Solomon during the 11<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup> centuries B.C.E. To commemorate the faith, Solomon built a Jewish temple, but it was destroyed by the neo-Babylonians in the 6<sup>th</sup> century B.C.E. The temple was rebuilt, but was destroyed by the Romans in the 2<sup>nd</sup> century C.E. In both cases, the Hebrews suffered a **diaspora**, or a scattering of their people by the conquerors, which spread them to many parts of the earth. The religion survived, though, to influence other major religions, including Christianity and Islam, to make monotheism a powerful religious concept.

The Jewish concept of God represents an important change in human views toward the sacred. The gods in most early religions were whimsical, capricious and quite human, despite their supernatural powers. The Hebrews saw God as more abstract, less human, all knowing, all powerful, and always just. They also viewed their relationship to God as a covenant (agreement) that assured divine care in exchange for their devotion to one God. The belief that God sets high standards for ethical conduct and moral behavior was also powerful, one that set Hebrews apart from other early religions and has endured through the ages.

## ZOROASTRIANISM

The official religion of the Persian Empire was **Zoroastrianism**, based on the teachings of Zoroaster, born in the 7<sup>th</sup> century B.C.E. His beliefs were eventually recording in the 3<sup>rd</sup> century B.C.E. in the *Zend Avesta*, the sacred book of Zoroastrianism. At the center of this religion was Ahuramazda, the supreme deity who brought all things into being. Zoroaster's spiritual message was essentially monotheistic, but the good spirit of Ahuramazda was opposed by the evil spirit known as Angra Mainyu. Through free will, humans could choose between right and wrong, and so they played a role in the great universal struggle between good

## MARKER EVENT: THE DEVELOPMENT OF MONOTHEISM

Monotheism, or the belief in one god, is an important marker event in world history for many reasons, including the influence it has had on many major world religions. Some scholars identify Akhenaten, an Egyptian ruler of the New Kingdom, as the originator of the idea, with his attempt to promote his god, Aten, as the supreme deity. However, the idea did not catch on outside the royal family, and the religion died with Akhenaten.

The first monotheistic religion to last was probably Judaism, originating in the Middle East about 4000 years ago. The Jewish belief in one god distinguished the Hebrews from all other people around them, and it remains basic to the faith today. Christianity and Islam have very strong roots in Jewish traditions, including the belief in one god. Another early religion with close ties to Judaism was Zoroastrianism, which recognized Ahura Mazda as a supreme deity engaged in a cosmic conflict with a destructive spirit, Angra Mainyu. Zoroastrianism was the religion of the Ancient Persians and several of the states that rose from its remains.

and evil that would finally be reconciled at the end of the world. Although Zoroastrianism faded as the Persian Empire weakened, its beliefs influenced other, more long-lasting monotheistic religions.

## CHRISTIANITY

Christianity emerged as a new religion in the early years of the Roman Empire in Judea, the old Jewish kingdom that had become a Roman province. Its founder was **Jesus of Nazareth**, a Jewish prophet and teacher that Christians regard as the son of God. His supporters believed that he fulfilled a long-standing belief in the coming of a Messiah. He lived during the time of Augustus, and he advocated a purification of the Jewish religion that would establish the kingdom of God on earth. He appealed especially to the poor because his message was universal: all people were welcome in the kingdom of God, no matter what their social status or ethnicity. Jesus also promised a better life, not only after death,

but on earth as well, since the just would be rewarded and the evil punished with a "Second Coming" of God. His message of a moral code based on love, charity, and humility, and not on possessions and money, also made the new religion appealing. However, his talk about a kingdom of God on earth alarmed the Romans, who saw his message as insubordinate to their rule. Some Jewish officials also believed him to be a dangerous agitator that threatened their religious authority. As a result, Jesus was put to death about 30 C.E., but his followers believed that he, as the son of God, was resurrected from the dead, a belief that became central to the new faith.

The new religion was spread by Jesus's disciples, twelve men who followed him, but the man most responsible for the rapid growth of Christianity was Paul, a missionary who appealed to Greeks and Romans. Paul was Jewish, but he was born in a Greek city and was familiar with the Greco-Roman culture, so he put basic Christian beliefs in terms that Greeks and Romans could understand. He preached in Greece, Italy, Anatolia, and other areas around the eastern Mediterranean shores. Paul's emphasis on Christianity as a universal religion was largely responsible for the fact that by the 4<sup>th</sup> century C.E., about 10% of the residents of the Roman Empire were Christian. Although early Christians were persecuted, the Emperor Constantine issued the Edict of Milan in 313, which announced the official toleration of Christianity as a faith. Constantine became a Christian himself (probably on his deathbed), and thereafter all emperors in the East and West (except one) were Christians. In 381, the emperor Theodosius made Christianity the official religion of Rome, too late to serve as a new "glue" for the crumbling empire, but in time to preserve Christianity as a faith that would help to organize the chaos when political power failed.

## HINDUISM

Although Hinduism is the world's third largest religion today, most of its 800 million adherents live in India. Its historical roots are grounded in the caste system and reflect the cultural development of the Indian subcontinent, making it today's largest ethnic religion. Hinduism evolved over thousands of years, blending the early religions of the Aryans and Dravidians. After Buddhism challenged the inequality endorsed by the earlier religions, Hinduism emerged with revisions that increased its appeal to ordinary Indians, but still very much tied to Indian society and culture.

Most eastern religions, including Hinduism, emphasize a universal spirit that is responsible for what occurs in the universe and encompasses all of humankind. The spirit is disembodied but all pervasive, and all human souls, each called an *atman*, are actually pieces of the spirit that are trapped in physical bodies.

The soul's greatest desire is to reunite with the universal spirit, an opportunity that it has whenever a person dies. Each person has a *karma*, or a destiny that has been shaped by years of cause and effect, that is outwardly revealed by an individual's caste, or station in life. Attached to that karma is *dharma*, or a set of duties that the individual must fulfill. If a person has fulfilled his or her *dharma*, the *atman* will be reincarnated in the next life as a person of a higher caste. Members of the Brahmin caste, then, in the original Aryan religion, had attained their status through many reincarnations. Ultimately, the higher castes have the opportunity to attain *moksha*, or reunion with the universal spirit, a rare, but highly prized goal. In modern India, castes are now illegal, so the religion has been modified over time, but it is this basic entanglement between spiritual attainment and social status that Buddhism was most critical of in its early days.

Hindu beliefs allow for many different forms that the universal spirit (Brahman) may take, including almost any of the pantheon of Hindu gods. It is simplistic to say that Hinduism is polytheistic because all the gods are actually part of the universal spirit. Historically, the religion almost certainly incorporated local gods into the mainstream beliefs. The two supreme deities are *Vishnu*, the preserver, and *Shiva*, the destroyer. They are opposites, and yet each is too complex to be summed up in those basic descriptions. Different aspects of Indian gods are usually represented in sculpture or painting by the presence of multiple arms and *mudras*, or hand signals, that communicate with Hindu believers.

The doctrines of Hinduism stem from the *Vedas*, epic poems sung by ancient priests that were eventually written down. The most significant is the *Rig-Veda* that deals with deities (Indra and Varuna) and their relationships with humans. Central Hindu beliefs may also be found in the *Mahabharata*, the world's longest poem, and the *Ramayana*, a poem that demonstrates the fulfillment of *dharma*, particularly as it relates to husband and wife relationships. Probably the single best-known story is the *Bhagavad-Gita*, a segment of the *Mahabharata* about the warrior Arjuna, who strove to treat other human beings well, while fulfilling his *dharma*. All of the poems provide moral guidelines for Hindus.

## BUDDHISM

Discussed in Chapter Three, Buddhism started in the Ganges River Valley near with Siddhartha Gautama, a member of the kshatrya caste who abandoned his privileged life to seek the meaning of life. The enlightenment that he experienced while meditating under a bodhi tree in a deer field became the heart of the religion, although it took many forms as it diffused to other parts of Asia. The *Buddha* ("Enlightened One") taught that everyone, regardless of caste, could attain *nirvana*, or union with the universal spirit, which offers release from human

suffering. Nirvana is the rough equivalent to moksha in Hinduism, but moksha could only be achieved by the upper classes, not the people of ordinary caste. The Buddha also taught that nirvana can be reached through an understanding of the **Four Noble Truths** and the **Eightfold Path**, not through reincarnation from one caste to another. The Four Noble Truths are:

- 1) All of life is suffering.
- 2) All suffering is caused by desire for things that ultimately won't fulfill us.
- 3) Desire can only be overcome by ending all desire.
- 4) Desire can only be ended by following the Eightfold Path.



### ORIGINAL DOCUMENTS; THE BHAGAVAD-GITA

The *Bhagavad-Gita* is a segment from the longest epic poem in the world, the *Mahabharata*. Just before the warrior Arjuna must go to battle against his cousins, his charioteer, the god Krishna in disguise, reveals to him the nature of the human soul (atman) and the cycle of rebirth:

"Our bodies are known to end,  
but the embodied Self is enduring,  
indestructible, and immeasurable;  
therefore, Arjuna, fight the battle!  
He who thinks this Self a killer  
and he who thinks it killed,  
both fail to understand;  
it does not kill, nor is it killed.  
It is not born,  
it does not die...  
it is enduring, all pervasive,  
fixed, immobile, and timeless...  
The self embodied in the  
body of every being is indestructible;  
you have no cause to grieve for all these creatures, Arjuna!"

Reference: Barbara Stoler Miller, *The Bhagavad Gita: Krishna's Counsel in Time of War*. New York: Bantam, 1986.

The Eightfold Path is composed of eight steps that must be mastered one at a time, and they all involve "right" thinking and acting: right knowledge, right purpose, right speech, right action, right living, right effort, right mindfulness, and right meditation. By following the Eightfold Path, anyone can attain nirvana. Buddhism has a broad appeal since its message is that through self-discipline, anyone can achieve satisfaction in life.

Buddhism survived through the sponsorship of the great king Ashoka, and it spread rapidly along the trade routes that became so active during the era between 600 B.C.E. and 600 C.E. As it spread it intermingled with native religions along the way and developed many variations, including these major divisions:

- **Theravada (Hinayana)** -- This division is the stricter version of the faith, with "Theravada" literally meaning "the narrower vehicle." Theravada Buddhism emphasizes the monastic life for both men and women, and strictly adheres to the steps that must be taken on the Eightfold Path. It claims to be the pure form of the Buddha's teaching, and does not believe that the Enlightened One was anything other than a mortal man. This branch spread mainly to Southeast Asia, although it always has remained relatively small.
- **Mahayana** -- This "great vehicle" division grew to encompass most Buddhists, and took many variations. Mahayana Buddhists believe that Siddhartha Gautama took the initial steps toward defining the religion, and that other Buddhas appeared after him. A concept that came to be accepted was a **bodhisattva**, a person who had taken the Eightfold Path and reached perfection, but had delayed entering nirvana in order to help others along the way. Bodhisattvas serve as examples of inspiration that often appear in Buddhist temples beside the image of the Buddha. Mahayana Buddhists began to worship Buddha as a god, and erected stupas (mounds that symbolize the universe) over relics of Siddhartha in temple courtyards. This version of Buddhism is much more accepting of different life styles and paths to nirvana, and as it traveled to other lands, it often absorbed concepts from native religions.

### CONFUCIANISM

Confucius (Kung Fu-tzu) lived in the late Zhou Era during the Warring States Period. He was a middle-level bureaucrat in the Chinese government whose wisdoms became more celebrated after his death than they were while he was still alive. He did not leave any writings, but his followers compiled his teachings into the *Analekts* after his death. Confucius built on earlier Chinese traditions, including the mandate of heaven and the yin-yang principle of opposite

forces in harmony. Most importantly, Confucius based his philosophy on the model of the Chinese family. He was most concerned with the chaos of the times he lived in (551-479 B.C.E.), and his philosophy envisions an ideal society of harmony and order that contrasted greatly with the reality around him.

Confucianism rests on the principle of **reciprocity**, or the notion that people give and take equally within the context of five basic relationships of society:

- parent and child
- sovereign and minister
- husband and wife
- older and younger brother
- friend and friend

### ORIGINAL DOCUMENTS: THE ANALECTS ON THE "GENTLEMAN"

Confucius idealized the "gentleman" (or noble man) as the model for all human behavior. The gentleman's behavior reflects the values of xiao, ren, and li, and he operates comfortably within the context of the five reciprocal relationships of humankind.

The following excerpts from *The Analects*, the classic compilation of Confucian beliefs and sayings, describe the gentleman:

"The gentleman first practices what he preaches and then preaches what he practices." (Vol II:13)

"The gentleman understands what is right; the inferior man understands what is profitable." (Vol IV:16)

"The gentleman makes demands on himself; the inferior man makes demands on others." (Vol XV:20)

Reference: *Sources of Chinese Tradition*, W. Theodore de Bary, ed. New York: Columbia University Press, 1960.

The first four relationships are hierarchical or unequal, but a natural part of society, according to Confucius. Superior rank (parent, sovereign, husband, older brother) does not mean that behavior is unchecked. Just as the mandate of heaven required the emperor to be responsible to his people, Confucius reminded those in superior positions of their duties regarding inferiors. For those in subordinate positions, their duty is to obey and support superiors. If everyone within these five relationships behaves as he or she should, society would be ideally harmonious, and such political and social turmoil as occurred during the Warring States Period, could never happen again. Confucian teachings rest on three essential values:

- **Xiao** -- Filial piety is the devotion of the individual to family and the strong ties that hold families together. Xiao obliges children to respect their parents and obey family elders, look after their welfare, support them in old age, and remember them as revered ancestors after their deaths.
- **Ren** -- Confucius believed that the five basic relations should be characterized by ren, or kindness and benevolence. Outward behavior that reflects ren includes courtesy, respect, diligence and loyalty. Confucius believed that the Chinese government desperately needed ren in its relationships with subjects and other states.
- **Li** -- A sense of propriety requires people to treat one another according to convention, and li puts emphasis on orderly rituals that demonstrate respect and reciprocity in relationships.

Confucius's principles were reinforced after his death by his disciples, and many important poets expanded the philosophy, including Mencius and Xunzi, who established different interpretations of it in the 3<sup>rd</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> centuries B.C.E.

Because Confucianism lays the foundation for an orderly society, it is a "belief system" in that it touches on a broad range of human behaviors, serving as an overall guide that integrates many interrelated values and customs. It is usually seen as a philosophy because it emphasizes human societal relationships, and although it does not refute the existence of gods or "the heavens," Confucianism clearly puts people in control of their own behavior.

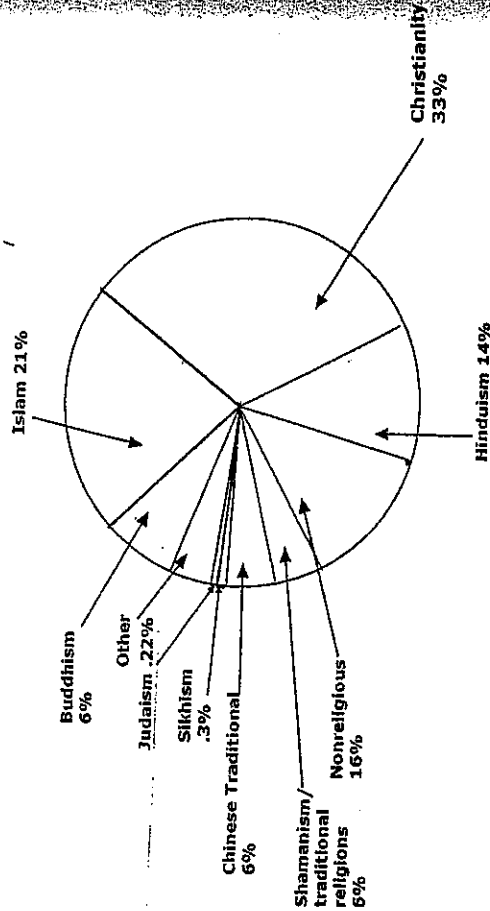
### DAOISM

Unlike Confucianism that encourages people to become active citizens, **Daoism** encourages them to retreat from society and develop a reflective and introspective consciousness. Dao is the "way" of nature, or a force that is not necessarily good or bad, but is inevitable. Some works describe it as the original force of

the cosmos, and others see it as a passive force that does nothing, yet accomplishes everything. Dao has often been compared to water, which even though it appears to be soft and compliant, still has the power to erode mountains. Since the Dao is inevitable, human beings must learn to live in harmony with it, which means the path of least resistance. Governments under the control of ambitious men try to defy nature, and as a result, they end in ruin. Human striving has brought about the chaos in the world because people have not accepted the Dao. A chief value of Daoism is "wuwei" – disengagement from the affairs of the world, and the ability to live simply, and in harmony with nature.

According to Chinese tradition, the founder of Daoism was Laozi, who lived during the 6th century B.C.E. Although he wrote mainly about withdrawal from the world, he did give some advice to Chinese rulers. He warned them not to enjoy war and its spoils or to overindulge when people were hungry. He believed that happy kingdoms resulted from wise rule, but he disagreed with Confucius on the need for a strong, centralized state. Instead, he emphasized the wise man's individual search for the meanings of life through following the Dao.

By 600 C.E., Confucianism and Daoism were well entrenched in Chinese society and had spread to Southeast Asia and the Korean Peninsula, but they were beginning to collide with the steady diffusion of the universal religions along the trade routes. Christianity spread into the western areas of China, but es-



Major Religions of Today's World as a Percentage of World Population. Although there are many different religions in the world, most people that identify themselves as religious adhere to the few religions identified on the chart. 60% of the world's population identifies with one of the three universalizing religions: Christianity, Islam, or Buddhism. The largest single ethnic religion is Hinduism, with 14% of the world's population, mostly located on the Indian subcontinent.

Note: Percentages do not add up to 100% due to rounding up for all categories.

established a firmer foothold in the remote areas north of the Mediterranean Sea. Buddhism, however, slowly but surely picked up followers in east and central Asia, and soon challenged the foothold that Confucian scholars had established during the Han Dynasty. Only one of the world's great religions – Islam – had not made an appearance yet, but all of that changed during the 7th century as the new faith came on the scene and rapidly grew.

**Compare/contrast the belief systems below.**

# Chapter 5

## 2000 B.C.–323 B.C. Ancient Greece

Ancient Greece was a small country with few resources and limited political power. Yet, for about 600 years, between about 750 B.C. and 150 B.C., the people of this country on the Aegean Sea produced poetry, art, entertainment, ideas, and forms of government that continue to influence the way we think, live, and govern ourselves today.

### **Greek culture grew up around the Aegean Sea.**

Greece has a long coastline, dotted with bays and inlets and with many islands (map, page 96). Some writers have said that the Greeks did not live on a land but *around* a sea. Sea travel and trade were important to the Greeks because their homeland was poor in resources. About three-quarters of Greece is rugged mountains. Because travel from one section of the country to another was difficult, the Greeks developed independent, self-sufficient communities.

The mild Mediterranean climate of Greece encouraged outdoor activities. Greek men spent much of their time in the marketplace, or agora, and the gymnasium, discussing current events and politics. The mild climate also encouraged outdoor religious and civic celebrations and theatrical productions in outdoor amphitheaters.

The earliest civilization to appear in Greece was that of the Minoans on the island of Crete. For unknown reasons, that civilization ended abruptly. Around 2000 B.C., during the Bronze Age, Greek-speaking peoples began to move into mainland Greece. These peoples are often known as Mycenaeans (MY-suh-NEE-uhnz). Warrior kings who lived in huge and luxurious fortresses ruled the Mycenaeans. These kings obtained wealth through piracy and wars.

The most famous war of the Mycenaeans was the Trojan War, named for Troy, a seaport city in Asia

Minor. Homer, a Greek poet, told stories of the Trojan War in long, heroic poems called **epics**. According to Homer, Greek armies attacked and destroyed Troy because a Trojan youth had abducted Helen, the beautiful wife of a Greek king. In his poems *The Iliad* and *The Odyssey*, Homer celebrated the ideal of **arete**, which means to strive for excellence, to show courage, and to win honor.

Greek warriors had the chance to realize the ideal of arete through the Olympic games, an athletic event held in Olympia every four years, beginning in 776 B.C. These games allowed young charioteers, boxers, wrestlers, runners, and javelin throwers from all over Greece to compete with one another. Winners received a wreath of olive leaves, but the most important prize was fame and honor. The Olympic games were not just a chance for athletes to compete, however. Athletic games were a form of homage to the gods.

The twelve most powerful gods and goddesses of the Greeks were believed to live on Mount Olympus, the tallest mountain in Greece. The gods and goddesses had human characteristics. They loved, they hated, they became jealous, they quarreled, but they were immortal and more powerful than human beings. The Greeks developed a rich set of myths and stories about their gods and goddesses. These myths helped explain the mysteries of nature, the origins of the world, and the power of human passions.

### **Greek city-states competed for power.**

Around 750 B.C., city-states became the most important form of political organization in Greece. The Greek word for city-state, **polis**, is the root of our words *politics*, *police*, and *policy*. Citizens of the polis took part in debates on public issues.

The kings of the Bronze Age were overthrown by small groups of noble families, who ruled as an **aristocracy**. Under the aristocracy, the armies of the city-states grew larger. It became the duty of a citizen to serve in the army of his polis. These citizen soldiers were called hoplites. With their iron spears and shields, they stood side by side to form the most formidable fighting machine of their time, the **phalanx** (illustration, page 101). As farmers and artisans acquired weapons and military training, they rose in revolt against the aristocracy.

The citizen armies were led by men called **tyrants**, often nobles who had feuded with other aristocrats.



The decline of Athenian power also led to a new attitude of questioning among its thinkers, or *philosophers*. One of the greatest of these philosophers was Socrates. Socrates forced Athenians to examine their beliefs about democracy, patriotism, and religion. Although some considered Socrates the wisest man in Athens, many citizens thought the old man dangerous. In 399 B.C., he was found guilty of "corrupting the youth of Athens" and failing to revere "the gods that the state recognizes." Socrates was sentenced to death. Although his friends offered to help him escape, he calmly drank the poison that killed him.

Much of what we know of Socrates comes from his student Plato, who wrote down the conversations of Socrates as he remembered them. Plato also developed his own ideas about government and philosophy. His most famous work, *The Republic*, describes what he considered an ideal society, ruled by a philosopher-king.

Plato's most famous student was a young man named Aristotle, who studied with him for twenty years. Aristotle was curious about every branch of knowledge. Even more important than the knowledge he collected, however, was his method of organizing and testing ideas. Aristotle's system of logic marked the beginning of the development of scientific thought.

### **Alexander's conquests spread Greek culture.**

Aristotle also had a famous student, young Alexander of Macedon, a kingdom to the north of Greece. Alexander's father, Philip II, had conquered and united all of Greece, including Athens. In 336 B.C., as Philip prepared to invade the Persian empire, he was assassinated.

Alexander was only 20 when he became king of Macedon, but he was already a seasoned military commander. Two years after his father's death, in 334 B.C., Alexander led his troops across the Dardanelles into Asia. They marched for eight years and covered 20,000 miles, conquering everything in their path. By the time he died of a fever in 323 B.C., Alexander had conquered Asia Minor, the east coast of the Mediterranean, Egypt, the Persian empire, and the lands of the Indus River valley (map, page 116).

Alexander did not simply wage war. Everywhere he went, he established colonies and institutions to spread Greek culture. Even though his generals divided his empire after his death, Greek officials continued to develop and spread Greek culture, known as Hellenism, throughout the lands Alexander had conquered.

Hellenism brought Athenian ideas about art, architecture, philosophy, and science to the Asian world. It also absorbed the influences of the Jewish,

Egyptian, Persian, and Indian cultures and sought to preserve them. Hellenistic influences and respect for learning and observation led to the scientific advances of Euclid (YOO-klid), who organized the findings of Greek geometry, and Archimedes (AHR-kih-MEE-deez), who discovered the laws controlling the motions of levers, inclined planes, pulleys, screws, wedges, and wheels. The achievements of Hellenistic civilization became a resource to the growth of later civilizations.

### **Chapter Review**

**Define** epic, arete, polis, aristocracy, phalanx, tyrant, colony, democracy, tragedy

**Identify** Minoans, Mycenaeans, Homer, Sparta, Athens, Code of Lycurgus, Solon, Delian League, Pericles, Aeschylus, Sophocles, Peloponnesian War, Aristophanes, Socrates, Plato, Aristotle, Alexander the Great, Hellenism, Euclid, Archimedes

### **Connecting Past and Present**

The Olympic Games that began in 776 B.C. continued for about a thousand years but were discontinued at the end of the 4th century A.D. In 1896, the games were revived in Athens. Since then, they have been held every four years, except during world wars, and each time in a different country.

Women were allowed to compete starting in 1912, and the winter series began in 1924. The modern Olympics continue the tradition of competing for glory rather than for prize money. At times, individual countries have boycotted the events, and the games have occasionally been the scene of international tensions. Nonetheless, the Olympic games have provided a continuing example of international cooperation.

## Chapter 7

29 B.C.—A.D. 476

# The Roman Empire

The Roman emperor Augustus set up a political system that outlived him and maintained peace in the Roman empire for more than 200 years. The Romans not only spread the wisdom and art of Greece throughout their empire but also developed an architecture, philosophy, and literature of their own. The political unity of the Roman empire aided the spread and adoption of Christianity. Gradually, however, imperial rule weakened, until internal weakness and barbarian invasions destroyed the empire.

### ***Augustus's rule began the Pax Romana.***

The period between 27 B.C. and A.D. 180 is known as the Pax (the Latin word for peace) Romana because it was a time of peace and prosperity within the Roman empire. Augustus laid the foundation for the Pax Romana by encouraging trade and creating a system of government that survived for centuries. He also began a program of road construction to improve transportation and bind his empire together. By A.D. 100, there were 50,000 miles of major roads and 200,000 miles of secondary roads linking the cities of the empire.

Augustus also established an efficient **civil service** of salaried, experienced workers who took care of Rome's grain supply, road repairs, postal service, and other government functions. Although senators retained their titles, the real work was performed by plebians and even slaves. Because the civil service offered freedmen (former slaves) a rare opportunity to advance, they tended to be loyal and hard-working.

One problem that neither Augustus nor the emperors who followed him ever solved was the question of succession. Rome had no established method of choosing a new emperor. Thus, the death of an emperor sometimes led to civil war and assassination as different groups struggled for power.

The emperors who followed Augustus varied in their abilities. Some were intelligent and able, others were corrupt, cruel, and even insane. Nonetheless, the empire continued to function because of the systems Augustus had established (map, page 144).

### ***Romans extended Greek culture.***

The Romans were proud of their ability to rule. In the fields of art, architecture, literature, and philosophy, however, they acknowledged Greek leadership. Educated Romans learned Greek; Roman emperors and wealthy citizens copied Greek architecture. The blend that resulted, known as Greco-Roman culture, spread throughout the Roman empire.

The old Roman religion had lost much of its appeal by the time of the empire. In its place, Greek philosophies, as well as religions from Asia and Egypt, gained followers. Epicurus of Athens (342–270 B.C.) taught that happiness could be found by freeing the body from pain and the mind from fear. Often, wealthy Romans misread his teachings and used them to justify their excesses. Another philosophy was Stoicism, developed by Zeno, a Greek who lived from 336–263 B.C. Stoicism encouraged virtue, duty, and endurance. The Stoics had great influence in Rome.

Latin writers were inspired by Homer and other Greeks. Among the most important Roman works were Livy's history of Rome, a patriotic account of the city's history from its founding to the rule of Augustus, and Virgil's *Aeneid*, an epic poem that traces the origins of Rome back to Aeneas, one of the warriors in Homer's *Iliad*. Not all Romans praised the empire. Some writers, including Juvenal, a noted poet, produced works that mocked the foolish and wicked ways of society. Rome also developed great works of architecture (illustrations, pages 142 and 148).

One of the teachings of the Stoics was that laws should be reasonable and just. Over time, influenced by the philosophy of Stoicism, Roman judges established a standard of fairness for Roman law. That standard endured after the fall of the empire and formed the basis of later European law.

### ***Christianity spread through the empire.***

The people of the Roman empire followed many different religions. Of these groups, the Jews alone were monotheists. The area of Syria and Palestine fell under Roman influence around 65 B.C. At first the

Romans allowed the Jewish kingdom to remain independent. In A.D. 6, however, Rome made the Jewish kingdom the province of Judea.

Jewish monotheism led to conflicts with the polytheistic Roman rulers. Although usually tolerated, many Jews fiercely opposed Roman rule. It took the Roman legions from A.D. 66 to 73 to crush rebellions by Jews known as Zealots. In A.D. 130, Jews rose against the emperor Hadrian's orders that Jerusalem be rebuilt as a Roman colony. A half million Jews died before the revolt was put down. Although that war ended the Jewish political state for almost 2,000 years, the Jewish religion itself endured.

Another religion that would challenge the might of the empire arose in Judea. Jesus, a Jew and a Roman subject, was born about the time that Rome took over Judea. Roman historians mention very little about Jesus; most of the information about his life is found in the Gospels of the New Testament.

According to the Gospels, Jesus was born in Bethlehem, near Jerusalem, and grew up in Nazareth. When he was about thirty, he began his work as a wandering prophet and teacher. With him were 12 followers, or disciples. After three years of this ministry, Jesus was arrested. Because he had described the coming of the kingdom of God in his teachings, Jesus was charged with blasphemy and with plotting to be king. Pontius Pilate, the Roman governor, sentenced him to death by crucifixion, a common form of execution in the Roman empire.

According to Christian doctrine, one of Jesus's followers, Mary Magdalene, visited his tomb two days after his burial and found his body gone. Over the next 40 days, several of his disciples believed that Jesus appeared to them. They continued his teachings about the kingdom of God, repentance for sin, salvation, and love for others. They believed that Jesus was the messiah, or savior, whom God had promised the Jewish people.

The man who did the most to spread Christianity through the Roman empire was a Jew known as Saul. A powerful religious experience led Saul to embrace Christianity, change his name to Paul, and devote himself to spreading Jesus' teachings.

The peace and cultural unity of the Pax Romana were ideal for the spread of this new religion. Its message of love for God and one another appealed especially to the poor. As a Roman citizen, Paul traveled freely within the empire. He spent 13 years (A.D. 45-58) establishing churches. Paul's letters, or epistles, written to congregations with which he worked, form a large part of the New Testament.

The apostle Peter served as the first **bishop**, or official who supervised a number of churches in the region, at Rome. Many Christians believed that Jesus

had chosen Peter as the "rock" on which the Christian church would be built. For that reason and because Peter died in Rome, later bishops of Rome claimed to outrank bishops of other regions. Eventually they established, in the western empire, the office of **pope**, or father of the Christian Church. Christians in the eastern empire, however, never accepted this Petrine doctrine asserting the pope's authority.

As Christianity spread, Roman rulers began to oppose it. Christians refused to recognize Roman gods or to accept the divinity of Roman emperors. This apparent disrespect led some emperors to order persecution of Christians. Persecution increased as the Pax Romana ended and the power of Rome declined. Yet Christianity grew even in the face of persecution. By A.D. 200, about 10 percent of the people in the empire were Christians (map, page 153).

### ***Rome's empire declined and fell.***

Historians generally agree that the decline and fall of the Roman empire began after the end of the Pax Romana. During the era known as the "crisis of the third century," from A.D. 200-300, Rome was beset by many problems, both within the empire and from the outside.

**Economic decay** The widespread trade (map, page 155) that meant prosperity for Rome declined as barbarians on the Danube frontier and pirates on the Mediterranean raided it. In addition, wealthy Romans had developed a taste for luxuries from China, India, and Arabia that drained the empire's stores of gold and silver. To meet its debts, the government minted coins that contained less and less silver, which drove prices up. For example, in the second century a peck of wheat sold for half a denarius, the coin of Rome. By the end of the third century, the price had risen to a hundred denarii. Such an increase in prices is called **inflation**.

**Military decay** A more serious problem facing the empire was a growing lack of loyalty to the state. At one time, Romans had been willing to die for their republic. In the later centuries of the empire, however, they were indifferent. Roman soldiers now fought strictly for money. The government also hired barbarians, who accepted less pay, but whose loyalty was uncertain.

**Political loyalty** Political office had become a burden rather than an honor because officials were required to pay for circuses and public baths. Furthermore, tax collectors were required to make up any shortfall in revenues for their district out of their own pockets. Despite these problems, the empire survived for another 200 years. It was saved by two men who rank among Rome's greatest emperors, Diocletian and Constantine.

### Important Roman Emperors and Their Contributions

<b>Augustus</b> (27 B.C.— A.D. 14)	Began Pax Romana; established civil service; began building program of roads and monuments; created system of government.
<b>Diocletian</b> (A.D. 254–305)	Halted decline of empire; secured empire's borders; stabilized economy; restored traditional religions; divided empire into east and west.
<b>Constantine</b> (A.D. 324–337)	Converted to Christianity and made Christianity approved religion; moved empire's capital to Constantinople; laid foundation of Byzantine empire.

Diocletian, a military leader and the son of a slave, took power in A.D. 284. He took bold steps to reform the empire. These included doubling the size of its armies, fixing wages and prices to stop inflation, persecuting Christians to restore faith in traditional Roman gods, and creating an atmosphere of splendor to restore respect for the emperor.

To make administration of the huge empire easier, Diocletian divided it into an eastern, Greek-speaking portion and a western, Latin-speaking segment. Diocletian took charge of the wealthier eastern portion and named another ruler for the west.

The retirement of Diocletian led to civil war as four rivals competed for power. One of them, a young commander named Constantine, prayed for divine help just before a crucial battle. Constantine had a vision of a cross of light bearing the inscription "In this sign, conquer." After leading his troops to victory, Constantine converted to Christianity.

As emperor, Constantine—in the famous Edict of Milan—transformed Christianity from an outlawed sect into a government-approved religion. Eventually Constantine won control of the eastern empire. He moved the empire's capital from Rome to the Greek city of Byzantium, in what is now Turkey. Byzantium later became known as Constantinople.

The final phase of Rome's downfall, between A.D. 376 and 476, resulted from a series of attacks by Germanic tribes, and finally, by a group of Asiatic nomads called the Huns (map, page 158). Led by the fierce Attila, the Huns sacked 70 cities in the eastern empire and advanced on Rome. In A.D. 452, Leo I—the first truly powerful pope—met with Attila and convinced him to abandon his plan of attack. By A.D. 455, however, Germanic tribes controlled the western provinces. The last Roman emperor was a 14-year-old boy who lost his throne, in A.D. 476, to a barbarian general named Odoacer.

The western half of the Roman empire thus ceased to exist as a political entity. Its cultural influence, however, persisted throughout Europe for centuries. The Christian Church, based in Rome, became the chief civilizing force in western Europe. The Church's ceremonies and institutions would help preserve the Latin language, Roman literature, and learning through the times of turmoil that lay ahead. The eastern half of the empire, which came to be called the Byzantine empire, survived and flourished for another thousand years.

### Chapter Review

**Define** civil service, bishop, pope, inflation

**Identify** Augustus, Pax Romana, Greco-Roman culture, Epicurus, Zeno, Judea, Jesus, Paul, Peter, crisis of the third century, Diocletian, Constantine, Byzantium, Constantinople, Byzantine Empire

### Connecting Past and Present

Every Roman emperor tried to leave his mark on Rome through buildings and monuments. Romans thus made great contributions to architecture. Using cement, they developed new forms such as the dome and the round arch.

Roman architecture has had great influence on American building styles. Many government buildings in Washington, D.C., and in state capitals use domes and round arches—as well as columns, porticos, and other features of Greek architecture to evoke grandeur, stability, and the rule of law. Roman influence is also seen in many modern stadiums, which are based on the design of the Roman Colosseum (illustration, page 140).

# UNIT ONE: THE FOUNDATIONAL ERA, 3000 BCE - 600 CE

River valley civilizations (Egypt, Indus Valley, Mesopotamia, China) →  
rise of classical civilizations (Greece, Rome, Persia, Qin/Han China, Maurya/Gupta India)

## Overview

Nomadic humans slowly migrate across the earth hunting and foraging for food. The development of farming and herding around 8000 BCE was revolutionary. With a more dependable food supply villages grew into cities, people specialize in jobs, powerful states emerge, and people develop the first writing systems. Trade expanded spreading new goods and ideas more rapidly than before. By 600 BCE, Mesopotamia, India, Egypt, China, Mesoamerica, and the Andes had civilizations that would provide the core of later civilizations in their regions. Over time, those civilizations grew into large regional civilizations (empires and city-states) in China, India, Mediterranean, the Middle East, East Africa, and Mesoamerica. These civilizations are differed from the ones before them in many ways. Rulers consolidated their power and grew their influence as they expanded their borders. With this expansion, empires came into contact with each other, which spread cultural diffusion and led to a blending of cultures and sometimes conflict. The introduction of iron, prior to this time period, coupled with larger militaries all civilizations expanded to some degree. Religions became increasingly important, and rulers often utilized those religions to strengthen their power. Religions, such as Confucianism, Buddhism, Hinduism, and Christianity, had huge impacts on the government of the region – whether uniting it as the 'glue' (like in Asia) or causing division (like in the Roman Empire).

## Really, really know this:

For the foundational river valley civilizations, know the laws, language, literature, religion, and art. Be able to compare/contrast PIECES themes across the region studied. For the stronger civilizations, understand that any civilizations reached their "golden age" during this time period – their height of power, influence, art, etc. However, a lot of these civilizations fell due to similar reasons. As empires grow and expand, they experience conflict with nearby empires. New cultures are developing, and people identify themselves by where they are from.

## Learning Objectives. Students should be able to...

### POLITICAL STRUCTURES

- Explain and compare how rulers constructed and maintained different forms of governance
- Analyze how state formation and expansion were influenced by various forms of economic organization, such as agrarian and pastoral economies
- Analyze how the functions and institutions of how governments have changed over time

### INNOVATION AND TECHNOLOGY

- Explain how early humans used tools and technologies to establish communities

### ENVIRONMENTAL INTERACTION

- Explain and compare how hunter-forager, pastoralist, and settled agricultural societies adapted to and affected their environments over time
- Explain how environmental factors influenced human migrations and settlements

### CULTURAL CHARACTERISTICS

- Explain how cross-cultural interactions resulted in the diffusion of technologies and scientific knowledge
- Explain how economic, religious, and political elites defined and sponsored art and architecture
- Compare the origins, principal beliefs, and practices of the major world religions and belief systems
- Explain how religious belief systems developed an spread as a result of expanding communication and exchange networks

### ECONOMIC SYSTEMS

- Evaluate the relative economic advantages and disadvantages of foraging, pastoralism, and agriculture
- Assess the economic strategies of different types of states and empires

### SOCIAL STRUCTURES

- Analyze the development of continuities and changes in gender hierarchies including patriarchy
- Assess how the development of specialized labor systems interacted with the development of social hierarchies

## Major themes

*Political-* first civilizations, diverse "governments," conquest and wars in Mesopotamia, Pharaohs in Egypt, small city-states continue to grow into small empires, Empires (Persian, Greek, Roman, Qin and Han, Mauryan and Gupta), city-states, wars over territorial expansion, invasions by nomadic peoples, how the empires rules, fall of the empires

*Innovation and technology-* stone tools to bronze tools to iron tools, weaponry, engineering and monumental architecture, road systems

*Environmental interaction-* Neolithic revolution and environmental degradation, pastoralism, first civilizations' effect on the environment, how the environment shapes settlement patterns in river valleys, Greek geography and settlement over the Mediterranean, Africa's environmental limitations, growth in long-distance trade and rise in the importance of nomadic peoples

*Cultural characteristics-* belief systems emerge, civilizations show connection to religion in politics, cultural diffusion, writing and art, China: legalism, Confucianism, Daoism, Buddhism, Vedas and Hinduism in India, Hellenism, Christianity develops in the Roman Empire, Jewish diaspora, cultural diffusion and spread of religions along trade routes

*Economic systems-* hunt/gath technology and economics, agrarian economy, pastoral economy, nomads help trade, Mesopotamia as a crossroads, importance of roads and traders

*Social structures-* egalitarianism to patriarchal societies, gender roles change due to Neolithic Revolution, class system emerges due to job specialization, pastoral societies, Confucianism and scholar gentry in China, caste system in India, class and citizenship in Athens and then Rome, slavery is growing in Rome, patriarchy, stateless societies in West Africa (the Sudan)

## Key Terms

### RIVER VALLEY CIVILIZATIONS

Neolithic Revolution, pastoralism, domestication, stratification, specialization, city-state, Hammurabi's Code, cultural diffusion; cuneiform, papyrus, Fertile Crescent, Mesopotamia, patriarchy, pharaoh, pictographs, ziggurat

### CLASSICAL CIVILIZATIONS

Greece: polytheism, polis, Alexander the Great, Hellenism/Hellenistic synthesis, Persian Wars, governmental styles (monarchy, aristocracy, oligarchy, democracy); syncretism, Peloponnesian War

Persia: In comparison with Greece, Persian Wars, Royal Roads, Satraps, Cyrus, Xerxes, Darius, cultural tolerance, Kings Eyes and Ears

Rome: Senate, rise of Roman Republic, Twelve Tables, transition to Rome Empire, Julius Caesar, Augustus Caesar, aqueducts, roads, Pax Romana, rise of factors of decline, Constantine, Diocletia,; patrician/plebeian, triumvirate, Punic Wars

Qin/Han China: Shi Huangdi, filial piety, dynastic cycle, Warring States period, Mandate of Heaven, Middle Kingdom (ethnocentrism), Silk Roads, civil service exams, scholar gentry (shi), Great Wall, rise of bureaucracy, Terraçotta Army, Wu Di

### RELIGIONS AND BELIEF SYSTEMS

Judaism, Jesus of Nazareth, Christianity, Zoroastrianism, Siddhartha Gautama, the Buddha, nirvana, samsara, karma, Four Noble Truths, Hinduism, moksha, caste system, Legalism, Confucianism, Daoism, Eightfold Path, vedas

## Essential Questions

1. What were the effects of the Neolithic Revolution?
2. What social, political, environmental, cultural, economic, and technological developments occurred with the rise of civilization?
3. Compare and contrast the river valley civilizations in terms of their political structure, religious beliefs, social class and gender roles, and economic systems.
4. What are the social and cultural impacts of Eastern belief systems (Buddhism, Hinduism, Confucianism, Daoism, Legalism)?
5. What are the social and cultural impacts of monotheistic belief systems (Christianity, Judaism, Zoroastrianism)?
6. What methods did classical era empires (Greece, Rome, Persia, Maurya/Gupta, Qin/Han, Maya, Olmec, Chavin) use to construct their empires?
7. What were the major PIECES themes from classical civilizations?
8. What common factors lead to decline of classical civilizations?
9. Why are nomadic societies important in world history?
10. How did the role of women differ from empire to empire?
11. How did art, literature, politics, and religion/philosophy represent the values of societies during this time in history?
12. Examine the increasing cultural unity and contact within and between empires.

*Use the space below to answer questions, take notes, or draw pictures that will help you remember what you learned this unit!*