

World History - Adapted 9th Grade

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Contents

Sumer - 2000 BCE	4
Judaism and Abraham - 2000 BCE	5
Babylon and Hammurabi - 1790 BCE	5
Iron Weapons: Hittites and Assyrians 1400 BCE to 600 BCE	6
The Persians 600 BCE	7
Egypt of the Nile 3100 BCE to 1100 BCE	8
Ghana and the Sahara trade - Gold and Salt - 800 AD	9
Islam, Mali and Mansa Musa: 1300 AD	10
Songhai: Sonni Ali and Askia Muhammed 1450 AD	10
Unit 2 Exam	11
Unit 3 Exam	12
<i>African Summative Assessment - Songhai</i>	13
India 600 BC - 550 AD (about 1100 years)	14
The Middle Kingdom: China 2000 BC - 220 AD: From Shang to Han	17
<i>Some dates to remember</i>	17
<i>Geography and Ancient China's Civilization (Map p. 1005)</i>	17
<i>Han Science, Technology and Medicine 200 BC - 200 AD</i>	17

<i>Silk and the Silk Road</i>	18
<i>The Shang, Zhou, Qin and Han Dynasties</i>	19
<i>Philosophies of China: Mandate of Heaven, Daoism, Legalism, Confucianism</i>	20
Han Dynasty Project	21
<i>Boats: fishing and trade</i>	21
<i>Soccer in the Han Dynasty</i>	21
Ancient Greece: 1400BC to 350BC	22
<i>Before the Golden Age: 1750 BC to 800 BC</i>	22
<i>The Golden Age of Greece: 800 BC - 350 BC</i>	23
<i>Sparta</i>	23
<i>Athens 500 BC - 400 BC</i>	23
<i>The Hellenistic Age: 350 BC - 150 BC</i>	24
<i>Socrates, Plato and Aristotle (beliefs)</i>	24
<i>Cultural Contributions to Western civilization (government, education, society)</i>	24
<i>How does culture and community influence thinking (Athens, Sparta)</i>	25
Ancient Rome: 500 BC to 500 AD	26
<i>Key Ideas</i>	26
<i>Geography</i>	26
<i>Major Achievements of Ancient Rome</i>	27
<i>The Growth of Roman Christianity</i>	27
<i>Why did the people of ancient Italy (Rome) build a lasting empire?</i>	28
<i>Why did the Roman Empire Decay and Fall?</i>	28
<i>How was Rome like other civilizations of its time?</i>	29

<i>How did Rome change the world?</i>	29
The Pre-Invasion Americas 1400 BC to 1570 AD	30
<i>Human Settlement, Isolation, Invasion and Diseases</i>	30
<i>Maya, Aztec and Inca: Geography</i>	30
<i>Maya, Aztec and Inca - Compared</i>	30

Sumer - 2000 BCE

A city-state is a place like our town but long ago.

The cities of Sumer were between two rivers, the Tigris and the Euphrates. We call this land **Mesopotamia**.

In old days people lived along rivers. Water from the river helped grow things.

The people of Sumer had laws and traditions and religion. Law, tradition and religion are the “social classes”.

Sumer had kings at the top. They had priests too. They were powerful.

In the middle of the society were people who made things. They are called artisans. The things they made could be pretty. There were also people who sold things, called merchants.

At the bottom of the society were the people who grew food. At the very bottom were slaves, they had no choice.

When the cities of Sumer started women could be rulers. Later they had less power. Their status fell over time.

The Sumerians prayed to many gods. Their gods were like the Greek Gods, like Zeus and Apollo. Their gods ate and drank and got angry and had children.

The Sumerians built homes for their gods. They built a pyramid (pointy) building. We call them **Ziggurats**. At the top was a room for the god.

Sumerians thought when they died they went under the ground, and lived in the dark.

Sumerians invented writing. Maybe earlier cities people did that too, but we don't have their writing. Their writing looked like pictures. We call it **cuneiform**.

The Sumerians also invented lots of math, even some algebra. They made calendars. They studied the night sky. They used wheeled carts to move things.

The Sumerians invented the idea of the hour and the minute. They said 1 hour would have 60 minutes.

Judaism and Abraham - 2000 BCE

Abraham lived in the city of Ur between the time of Sumer and the time of Babylon.

He started a religion called Judaism. The Sumerians had many gods, but Abraham said there was only one god.

These are some special things about Judaism compared to many religions of the time.

- Only one god (monotheism). Human kings were not gods, they had to obey god.
- God was everywhere, not limited to a location or region.
- Religious stories were written down. These written stories are called Torah.
- The Jewish god was only for Jewish people. They were chosen.

Babylon and Hammurabi - 1790 BCE

Babylon was a city state near Sumer.

It was ruled by a king called Hammurabi. His armies took over (conquered) Sumer. Babylon became a nation.

He made artisans carve the laws of his people onto a stone. We call this “**The Code of Hammurabi**”.

The Code of Hammurabi told the people of the kingdom how to act.

One section was about criminal law. It said how they should punish bad actions.

Another section was about civil law. It said how families should behave and how to divide up property when a father died.

Iron Weapons: Hittites and Assyrians 1400 BCE to 600 BCE

Until this time weapons were made from metals of bronze and copper. These metals are soft. The **Hittites** discovered how to **use iron to make weapons**. Iron is stronger than copper and bronze.



The Hittites lived east of the Tigris and Euphrates rivers (east of Mesopotamia) in an area with a lot of iron. With their iron weapons they conquered Mesopotamia and other lands.

The Assyrians lived on the Tigris river. They learned how to make iron weapons from the Hittites. They loved to fight and kill.

The Assyrians conquered many people. They took over from the Hittites.

They learned from the people they conquered. They became less cruel.

King Assurbanipol of the Assyrians created **a great library** at Nineveh.

The Persians 600 BCE

Mesopotamia had many wars and empires over more than 1,000 years. Then came the Persians.

The Persians brought many inventions in government. Most of all they **invented using coins as money**. Before this time people “bartered” (traded) things. They had a *barter economy*. After this time people traded coins for things. They had a *money economy*.

Darius was a famous ruler of the Persians. During his time the Persians began using coins and having **governors** and collecting **taxes** and building **roads**. Darius made **laws** for everyone. The Persians developed standard ways to weigh and measure things.

The Persians were Monotheists -- they had only one god. They invented ideas of Heaven and Hell and judgment by a god.

Egypt of the Nile 3100 BCE to 1100 BCE

The Nile is a river in Africa. It flows from Ethiopia north to the Mediterranean sea. The north end runs through a great desert. That is what we call the land of Egypt.

The Nile floods every year. When it floods it leaves mud (silt) behind. The silt is good for farming.

Egypt was created around 3100 BCE when King Menes conquered the people who lived on the Nile. He used the Nile to move along his very long and narrow kingdom in the great desert.

Egyptian Kings were men but they said they were gods. Egyptians prayed to them. We call those Kings **Pharaohs**.

Pharaohs had ministers who ruled the land. We call them **Viziers**.

Viziers ran departments like tax, farming and irrigation. They told **Scribes** what to do. Scribes told the Egyptian people what to do.

Irrigation is taking water from a lake or river and using it to farm. Because the Egyptians lived along a river in the desert they needed irrigation to live. It was the most important thing in Egypt

The Egyptian people developed technologies of building and water control. They built pyramids for the dead bodies and treasures of their Pharaohs. They built large channels to carry water from the Nile to farms. We call these irrigation channels. They built dikes to channel water and dams to create lakes and hold water. They stored water from the rainy season to use in the dry season.

Ghana and the Sahara trade - Gold and Salt - 800 AD

Ghana is a country in Africa. It is in the western part of Africa.

In this map there are circles around Mesopotamia (Sumer, Tigris, Euphrates), Egypt and Ghana. The Sahara Desert is between Egypt and Ghana. The Sahara has been getting bigger over the past 4,000 years.

One thousand years ago the people who lived between the Niger and Senegal rivers formed a kingdom called Ghana.

Remember that the people who lived between the Tigris and Euphrates created kingdoms like Sumer and people who lived on the Nile created Egypt. Rivers are important for ancient civilizations and modern too. We live on the Mississippi.

The King of Ghana controlled trade in Salt and Gold.

Humans need some salt to be healthy. In the ancient world Salt had to be mined from the earth; it was very important. Salt comes from sea water. There used to be sea water in the Sahara, when it dried out it left salt behind.

Men dug gold from pits in the earth. Women washed out gold dust. Dust was put in feather quills to hide it. It was traded to North Africa (Morocco) and across the water to Spain (see map above). Camels were used to trade across part of the Sahara.

Islam, Mali and Mansa Musa: 1300 AD

The religion of Islam started in the lands between Egypt and Mesopotamia around 700 AD. It is based on the ideas of a man called Mohammed.

Islam spread across Africa including Ghana and Mali.

People who follow the religion of Islam are called Muslims.

By 1300 AD Mali was very strong. It took over Ghana.

Mansa means King in the language of Mali.

Mansa Musa conquered neighbor states and put good laws in place. He attracted many writers and students to Mali.

Timbuktu is a city in Mali. It became a center of Islamic (Muslim) teaching.

Songhai: Sonni Ali and Askia Muhammed 1450 AD

Songhai took over from Mali. It was on the Niger river.

Sonni Ali was a king of Songhai. He was not a Muslim. He made Songhai bigger and took over the lands of Mali.

Aski Mohamed took over from Sonni Ali. He was a Muslim. He formed a true government with departments like farming, army and treasury (money). He converted his people to Islam.

Unit 2 Exam

1. Sumer and many other ancient cities start near which things:
 - a. Rivers that bring water and soil that are good for growing things.
 - b. Mountains that bring shade.
 - c. Deserts that are dry.
2. Which of these social classes were a part of Sumer?
 - a. Software developers
 - b. Artisans
 - c. Senators
 - d. Scientists
3. What technology was developed in Sumer?
 - a. The telescope
 - b. The calendar
 - c. The computer
 - d. Paper
4. What people first used iron weapons?
 - a. The Sumerians
 - b. The Babylonians
 - c. The Hittites
5. Which religion had only one God?
 - a. Sumerian
 - b. Babylonian
 - c. Judaism

Unit 3 Exam

West Africa 1000 AD and Mesopotamia 1000 BC: What do they have in common?

1. What amount of time separates the Songhai Kingdom of West Africa (1000 AD) and the Hittite Kingdoms of Mesopotamia (1000 BC)?
 - a. 5,000 years
 - b. 300 years
 - c. 2,000 years
 - d. 30 years
2. Civilizations of Mesopotamia and civilizations of West Africa both started near:
 - a. Mountains
 - b. Deserts
 - c. Oceans
 - d. Rivers
3. What were Hittite and Songhai weapons made of?
 - a. Bronze
 - b. Stone
 - c. Wood
 - d. Iron
4. Where was Gold important for trade?
 - a. Sumeria
 - b. Songhai
 - c. Babylon
5. The Persians used money. Did the West African civilizations use money too?
 - a. Yes
 - b. No
6. Which civilizations had religious leaders?
 - a. Persian
 - b. Mali
 - c. Ghana
 - d. Egyptian
 - e. All of the above
7. Which civilizations had leaders elected by citizens?
 - a. Persia
 - b. Hittite
 - c. Songhai
 - d. Sumeria
 - e. None of them

African Summative Assessment - Songhai

Introduction

Songhai was a civilization located in _____. It started in the year _____. It ended in the year _____

Body

People settled in the area of Songhai because ... This was the same reason people settled in Mesopotamia.

The natural resources available to the people of Songhai included ... Sumeria had some of the these, including

Songhai was run by a The people had jobs like

The religion of Songhai was ... The religion of ancient Israel was ... Both religions were monotheist/polytheist.

In Egypt people built In Songhai people built

In Sumer people wrote using ... in the Sumerian language. In Songhai they wrote using the language.

Conclusion

Songhai had some things in common with countries like Sumeria and Mesopotamia. They included

India 600 BC - 550 AD (about 1100 years)

Geography

In the northwest and northeast of India giant mountains capture snow and block invaders. The snow melts and makes rivers. The rivers bring water for growing food to the north.

The Deccan Plateau (flat area) is high up, so the rivers don't get to it. It is dry. Few live there.

The coasts of India had water for food, fish, and trade.

The Guptas: 320BC - 550 AD

For most of its history India was ruled by the Gupta kings. They started the Caste system. They were usually good rulers. Their religion was **Hinduism**. It was a religion of many, many local gods.

The Caste System of the Guptas

Indian religion and culture were very close. Together they divided all **Hindu** people into groups called **Castes**. (During this time almost all Indians were Hindu.)

Some Castes were based on jobs. Some were based on skin color, language, or history.

Castes had strict divisions. People could only marry someone in the same caste. Children had the same castes as their parents ("hereditary").

High caste people had more money and special rules and good education and nicer jobs. The highest caste was and is called Brahmin.

Low caste people were poor and had smelly or hard jobs and no education. The lowest caste is Untouchable. They had a terrible life.

Some people claim that the caste system made India stay the same for a long time, and it helped avoid wars inside India. There is no way to know if this is true or not.

The Gupta rule ended 1,500 years ago, but Hindus in India still have Castes and they still control many lives. The Caste system has been very persistent.

Comparison: Castes in 500 AD India and Classes in America 2011

In India of 500 AD there was one very dominant religion (Hinduism). Religion and culture divided people into Castes.

In America of 2011 there are many religions, but Christianity is dominant. Christianity does not have the idea of a Caste or Class. In traditional Christian teaching the poor are often said to be blessed, but rich people have to be extra good to earn God's approval.

Christian and Hindu religions have very **different** ideas about Class and Caste.

Although the religious ideas are very different the cultures are more **similar**. Both India of 500 AD and America of 2011 have something like Castes. In America we call them Classes. Class in America is mostly based on money. Poor people are Lower Class. Rich people are Upper Class. Everyone else is Middle Class.

Someone born poor in America will usually stay poor (Lower Class). Someone born rich will usually stay rich (Upper Class). Most Americans marry within their class; poor marry poor and rich marry rich. This is **similar** to Hindu Castes.

Indians could never change their Caste. Americans can change, most often middle class people can become poor. This is **different**.

Modern American and ancient Indian rule is very **different**. Rulers in old India were always Brahmin. In American many presidents start out Lower Class. Both Presidents Clinton and Obama started life very poor.

In ancient India Castes started out based on history and skin color and language. In America Class membership is often related to skin color and history (ethnicity). Historically American slaves were **similar** to Hindu Untouchables.

Ancient India: Study Guide Exam

1. Which of these things were common to Buddhism and Hinduism?
 - a. One God
 - b. Reincarnation
 - c. Caste system

2. Why did Hindus believe that a person was reincarnated as an untouchable?
 - a. Bad luck
 - b. Because they were good in a past life. (Good past life Karma)
 - c. Because they were bad in a past life. (Bad past life Karma)

3. What is the name of the river that was important for India
 - a. The Mississippi river
 - b. The Euphrates river
 - c. The Indus river

4. Where does the water for the Indus River come from?
 - a. The Himalayan mountains
 - b. The sea
 - c. The Rocky Mountains

5. What is Karma?
 - a. Actions that will affect your reincarnation.
 - b. Good luck
 - c. A disease

The Middle Kingdom: China 2000 BC - 220 AD: From Shang to Han

Some dates to remember

- 2000 BC: early Chinese writing
- 1650 BC: Shang dynasty
- 600 BC: Confucious
- 200 BC: Shi Huangdi - the Cruel First Emperor
- 200 BC: Han Dynasty starts
- 0: Buddhism
- 220 AD: End of Han Dynasty

Geography and Ancient China's Civilization (Map p. 1005)

Ancient China was very isolated. They were cut off from much of the world.

To the North the land is cold and very dry. The Gobi desert is there. Very few people live there even today.

To the East is Ocean.

To the Southeast is thick Jungle blocking the way to southeast asia.

To the West and Southwest are mountains and desert and the high **Tibetan Plateau** blocking the way to India and the Middle East. The Tibetan Plateau is called the roof of the world.

In India the the Indus River runs north to south downhill from the Deccan Plateau. In **China** the **Yangzi**, Wei and Huan He rivers run west to east downhill from the Tibetan Plateau. The rivers would flood in the spring when snow melted. The flooding left fertile soil, but it also destroyed villages.

Han Science, Technology and Medicine 200 BC - 200 AD

Han scientists made better calendars and clocks by observing stars. They learned to measure earthquakes.

Han physicians experimented with medicines from plants. They invented acupuncture, the idea that needles under the skin would cure disease. (This doesn't work, but at least it's not harmful.)

Han craftsman had advanced technologies before the Romans. They made paper from wood pulp and invented the rudder for boats, fishing reels, stirrups on horses, wheelbarrows and suspension bridges.

Silk and the Silk Road

Silk is a textile made from silkworm cocoons (a kind of moth larva, like a caterpillar). Silk was developed in China around 3,500 BC. By the time of the Han dynasty China had learned to make beautiful silk cloth. Other countries would pay a lot for this silk, but since China was cut off from the world it was hard to trade silk.

Especially the West and Southwest of China are mountains and desert and the high **Tibetan Plateau** blocking the way to India and the Middle East.

During the Han Dynasty many caravans learned how to cross these deserts and mountains. We call the paths they took the “**silk road**” because these traders took tons of silk to Europe, the Middle East and India. They traveled along rivers and around the sides of great deserts and through great mountains. They brought back new foods, glass, furs and fabrics.



The Shang, Zhou, Qin and Han Dynasties

Dynasty	Period	Significance
Shang	1650-1027 BC	Early Chinese civilization, a lot like city-states of Sumer. Merchants and artisans in cities. Many gods. Worship of ancestor spirits.
Zhou	1027 - @220 BC	"Mandate of Heaven". Emperor is near gods. Gods punish bad rulers with bad luck like Flood, Disease, War and Earthquake. Feudalism , many rulers who serve King. First Books . Daoism . Early Confucius.
Qin	221 BC - 206 BC	Very short dynasty. Legalism - cruel and strict rules. All of China united with one First Emperor. Emperor is Cruel. Great Wall . One kind of money. One kind of writing. Burned books .
Han	206 BC - 220 AD	Emperors are better. University. Roads. Economy better. Made China bigger. Silk Road . Confucianism very strong. Civil Service with exams. First Golden Age of China.

Philosophies of China: Mandate of Heaven, Daoism, Legalism, Confucianism

	Mandate of Heaven	Daoism	Legalism	Confucianism
Dynasty	Zhou	Zhou	Qin	Han
Teacher of the philosophy	Unknown	Laozi	Han Fei	Confucious
Basic ideas	Good rulers have good luck. Bad rules have bad luck - flood, disease, war, earthquake.	Balance in all things, but also many different local religions and beliefs. Worship of ancestors	Obey ruler. Many rules, harsh punishment. Peasants are stupid.	Harmony through rules of five relationships: father/son, elder to younger brother, husband to wife, ruler to subject, friend to friend. Obey authority. Men rule over women. Duties (obey parent) and Obligations (care for parent).
Influence on Government	Rulers tried to be good.	No influence on government.	Emperor makes laws. Cruel First Emperor.	Han Dynasty followed Confucian rules. Han Civil Service based on Confucian stories.
Writings	<i>None</i>	<i>The Way of Virtue</i>	<i>The Han Feizi</i> (writings of Han Fei)	<i>Analects of Confucious</i>

Han Dynasty Project

Boats: fishing and trade

[Interesting Facts & Information: Ancient China Ships](#)

<http://www.kwintessential.co.uk/articles/china/ancient-china-ships/2414>

“The famous ancient ship known as a “junk” was also developed in China during the Han Dynasty from roughly the third century BCE until the third century CE. By the end of the Han Dynasty, junks were used on the ocean, and in subsequent dynasties saw the development of the junk into a vessel for long ocean voyages...

Soccer in the Han Dynasty

[Sports and Games of Old China](#)

http://www.chinaculture.org/chineseway/2007-11/09/content_121606.htm

soccer, was first played in China in the Han Dynasty (206 BC –AD 220). Then, as now, the actual ball was made of leather, and inflated with hair and other soft fillings rather than air. ... it was played by both men and women. This is attested by Han Dynasty historical records and images on bricks. The sport’s emphasis at that time was on individual rather than team skills.

[Cuju, Ancestor of Soccer](#)

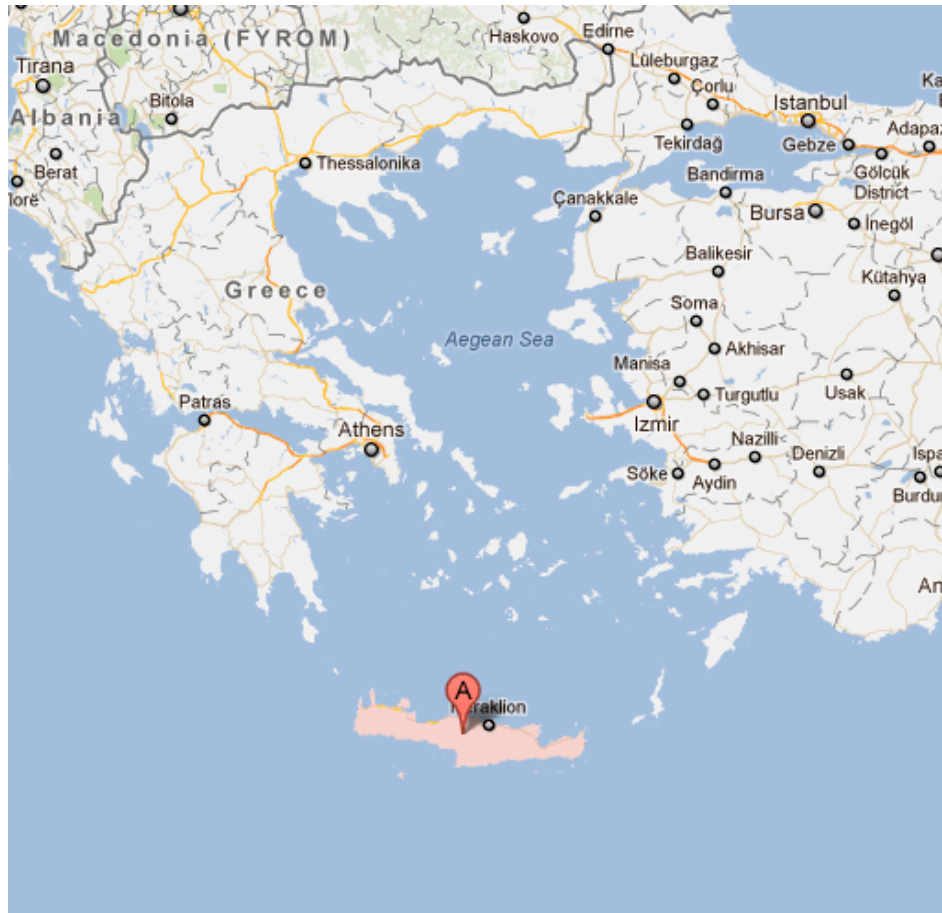
http://cul.chinese.cn/en/article/2011-03/25/content_238798.htm

The game of cuju was first mentioned in the Zhan Guo Ce (under State of Qi's section) and later in the Sima Qian's Shiji (under Su Qin's biography), written during the Han Dynasty. Some claim that the Yellow Emperor invented the game for military training purposes, while others place its emergence during China's Warring States Period (476-221 BC). In any case, it certainly existed during this period. A competitive form of cuju was used as fitness training for military cavaliers, while other forms were played for entertainment in wealthy cities like Linzi.

During the Han Dynasty (206 BC-AD 220), the popularity of cuju spread from the army to the royal courts and upper classes. It is said that the Han emperor Wu Di enjoyed the sport. At the same time, cuju games were standardized and rules were established. Football matches were often held inside the imperial palace. A type of court called ju chang was built especially for cuju matches, which had six crescent-shaped goal posts at each end.

Ancient Greece: 1400BC to 350BC

Greece today is a country on the north side of the Mediterranean sea. It is at the eastern end of Europe. The pink island in this picture is Crete, a land south of Greece. The Aegean sea is between Turkey and Greece and has many islands.



Before the Golden Age: 1750 BC to 800 BC

From 1750 BC to 800 BC several peoples lived and wrote stories in the region of Aegean sea. Homer was a poet who lived then. He is said to have written two famous poems, the Iliad and Odyssey.

Because Greece is very mountainous, and because there are many islands, people lived in many small cities. The ancient Greeks were very good sailors and they settled from Spain to Egypt.

The Golden Age of Greece: 800 BC - 350 BC

Greece started with Kings and Queens (Monarchy). Then trade and technology (iron) made merchants and soldiers more powerful. Greece was ruled by **oligarchs** (rich people).

Greece came to be dominated by two cities: Sparta and Athens.

Both Sparta and Athens spoke Greek and they both worshipped the same gods - Zeus, Apollo, Ares, Athena and others. Both Sparta and Athens depended on the work of slaves.

Sparta

Sparta was run by warriors. It made money by conquering land and taking tribute and using the labor of slaves.

Sparta had two kings and an assembly of Spartan males over 30 ("citizens"). Spartan men lived together in barracks from the age of 7 to 30.

Spartan women had to obey their husbands and give up their sons. Because the men were often at war they had more freedom than most women prior to the modern era. They could inherit property.

Athens 500 BC - 400 BC

Athens was first run by rich merchants and warriors (oligarchs) but over time it became a limited democracy. Athens made money by trading and by using the labor of slaves.

Free males with money could vote. Around 500 BC all male citizens over 30 were members of the Assembly. A special Council of 500 was chosen by lot (chance) and suggested laws to the Assembly.

Women and girls in Athens had a difficult life. They mostly stayed home. They did not go to school.

Athenian boys went to school. Learning and school were very important in Athens. Speaking in public was very important too.

Athens had several great leaders like Solon, Pisistratus and Cleisthenes.

After Athens and Sparta joined together to defeat Persia, Athens became very powerful. Pericles was a great leader around 450 BC. Pericles believed all male citizens should be in the assembly, even poor people. During the time of Pericles Athens had many buildings and universities.

Around 400 BC Sparta and Persia conquered Athens. Athens was always influential, but it was never so powerful again.

The Hellenistic Age: 350 BC - 150 BC

Greece was conquered by Alexander of Macedonia around 340 BC. Alexander created a great empire, but after he died it mostly fought for 200 years. Greece still had a lot of teachers and thinkers, but around 150 BC Rome grew in power.

Socrates, Plato and Aristotle (beliefs)

Socrates, Plato and Aristotle were great thinkers of Greece. Socrates taught Plato and Plato taught Aristotle. We call them **philosophers**.

Socrates lived until around 400 BC. He asked questions that made people think hard around the world. He made some people angry. When he was old they said he offended the gods. He was sentenced to die by drinking Hemlock (poison).

Plato taught about government and wrote many books. He created a school called the Academy. He liked logic, thinking carefully.

Plato did not like democracy. He thought the smartest people should rule, people like him. Although he thought men were mostly better than women, he thought some women were smart and could be Philosophers.

Aristotle was a student of Plato. He thought people should live by the “golden mean”. They should balance everything. He set up the Lyceum to study all knowledge. He and his students wrote books about politics, logic, biology, theater, art and many topics.

Cultural Contributions to Western civilization (government, education, society)

Greece was extremely influential to the civilization of Europe and from Europe to the modern Americas and related nations (“the west”).

The first universities in the 1500s were based on the teachings of Aristotle. Ideas of government came from Greece, including ideas about oligarchy, democracy and the duties of Kings. America’s founders were very influenced by Greek ideas of Democracy.

The discipline and military culture of Sparta has influenced armies and military leaders over the past 2000 years.

Greece created the Olympic games, which we still play.

Greece created the idea of citizens as being important for the health of the city or nation.

Greek sculpture was used as the example of best work in the western world. Greek architecture has always been imitated.

Stories with lessons and morals, called Dramas, came from the Greeks and have been popular in the west.

Greek mathematics and thinking about ethics and philosophy are still important today. It took over a thousand years to move much beyond Greek thinking in these areas.

Greek scholars also invented History - telling stories about the past. Much of what we know about the ancient world came from them.

How does culture and community influence thinking (Athens, Sparta)

The people living in Athens and Sparta spoke the same language and believed in the same Gods (Zeus, Athena, etc). They had very different ideas. Their ideas came from the city where they were born. Their culture and community gave them ideas on how to live, what was good, what people should do.

Athens and Sparta were extremely different. That tells us culture is a very powerful influence.

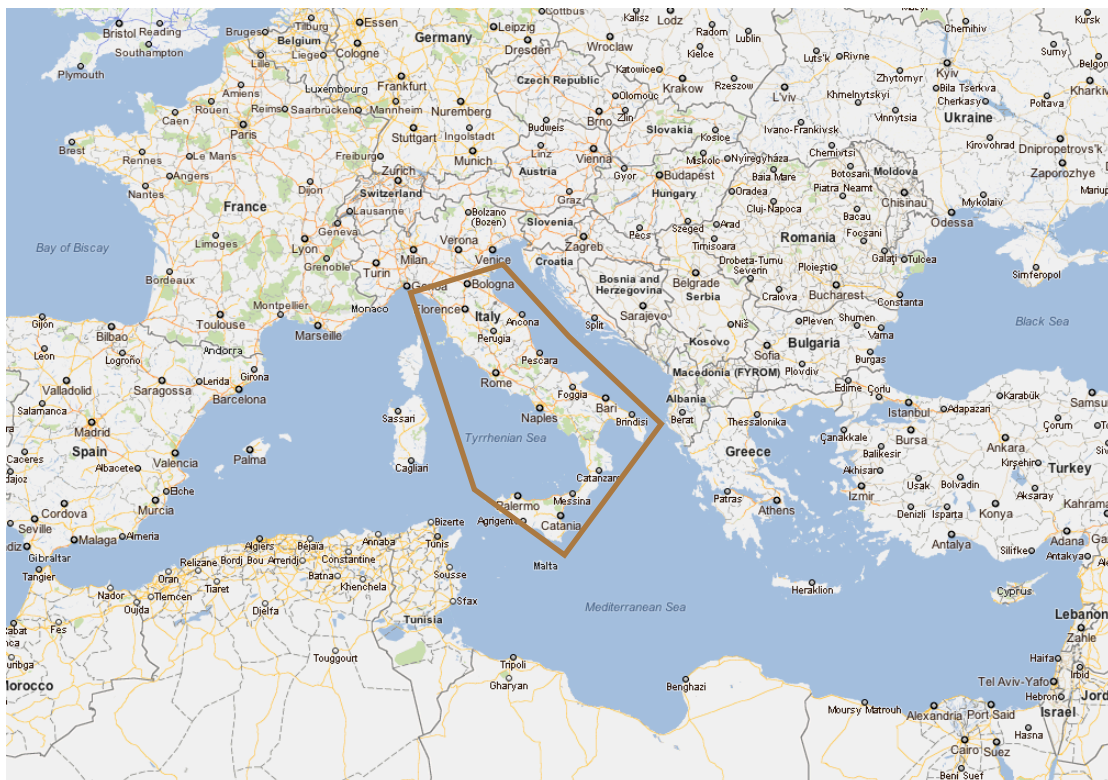
Ancient Rome: 500 BC to 500 AD

Key Ideas

- Rome was and is a city in a region we call the Italian Peninsula.
- Long ago the people of the city of Rome controlled many lands. We call all of this 'The Roman Empire'.
- Rome is still around today! It is the capitol of modern Italy.
- Christianity started in Rome
- Today's Europe was very influenced by Rome's Empire
- The Romans took over from the Greeks. Rome became powerful as Greece was getting weaker.
- We divide Roman history into 3 parts:
 - **Republic:** 500 BC to about 0 AD. The best part of Roman history. Good government, healthy culture.
 - **Empire:** 0 AD to 200 AD. Rome is very powerful, ruled by **dictators** (Emperors). Rome depends more and more on **slavery**, stops developing new ideas.
 - **Decline:** 200 AD to 500 AD. Rome is powerful but troubled and falling apart.

Geography

Rome's Empire included everything around the Mediterranean sea and then all of modern France and the southern part of modern England. Rome was the center of the Empire, it is in the brown box below. Today we call that land **Italy**.



Major Achievements of Ancient Rome

Rome had a very great impact on the history of Europe and the Mediterranean.

Rome learned a lot from the Greeks. When Rome conquered Greece it did not destroy Greek knowledge and culture. Rome admired the Greeks. They preserved Greek knowledge and spread it around. They made Greeks Roman citizens and helped Greek scientists and doctors.

Rome had many great writers. Rome developed the Stoic philosophy.

Romans developed their own style of Art and Buildings (architecture) and learned how to make big and strong bridges and buildings and roads. Romans invented ways to carry water into Roman cities and how to get rid of human urine and stool (plumbing). This meant Roman cities could grow large with less disease.

Romans learned to make very good maps, and to avoid the spread of diseases.

Rome developed a strong system of laws. Roman laws are the basis of American, European, and other legal systems today.

The Roman-Jewish religion of Christianity spread all over the world and continues today.

The Growth of Roman Christianity

Christianity started in a Roman land called Judea, the land of the Jewish people. It started as a Jewish sect (cult) based on the idea of a Savior or Messiah called Jesus Christ born around the year 0 AD. Our calendar is based on the year of Jesus Christ birth.

Christianity grew because it allowed non-Jews to join. Christians were supposed to protect one another and when it developed there was a lot fighting and danger. So it was safer to become Christian.

Christians believed it was important for rich and powerful people to help poor and weak people. Even slaves could become Christian. There were a lot of poor people in the Roman empire after 100 AD so Christianity grew quickly.

Christianity also took some ideas from Roman Stoicism, so many powerful Stoics liked it.

Why did the people of ancient Italy (Rome) build a lasting empire?

An Empire is a large area with many languages and cultures controlled by a single nation for many years. Rome controlled one of the largest and most long lasting Empires in human history.

There were several things about of Rome's geography, neighbors and culture that helped them build a big empire.

Geography: The Italian Peninsula (land of ancient Rome) is a long narrow region of land surrounded on 3 sides by the Mediterranean with a mountainous area in the North. It is protected from invasion. In the peninsula there is good land for growing food. The peninsula is easier to travel across than Greece.

Neighbors: The people of Rome were the Latins. They came to the Italian Peninsula around 800 BC. They learned a lot from the Etruscans who were their before. They learned how to write and they learned Etruscan engineering. They also learned a lot of things from the Greeks.

Government: The Romans invented a system of government that worked well for hundreds of years. Even if a powerful ruler died, the nation of Rome would continue. Their system balanced the power of the rich and the power of the average person.

Culture: Roman women were still limited by male power, but they could contribute more to society than Greek women. Roman society made better use of the talent of women. Unlike Greek girls Roman girls learned to read and write. Even poor Romans learned to read and write.

Leadership: When Rome conquered a country they let the people live and manage their affairs. The people could become Roman citizens. They learned the Roman language. Rome took taxes but protected them.

Why did the Roman Empire Decay and Fall?

After about 0 AD Rome was ruled by dictators (Emperors). This form of government has problems. People got to be Emperor by military power or friends or family, not because they were good at governing. Good Emperors were replaced by Bad Emperors. Emperors could do what they wanted, nobody could prevent bad choices.

Emperors took money and gave it to their friends and family. They used more and more slavery.

Rome had more poor people and more slaves. Instead of improving things and trying new ideas they used more slaves. Rome needed more money and slaves to keep going, so Rome conquered more lands. Even as Rome got bigger it was getting socially weaker. Rome depended on slaves now, but slaves did not like Rome.

At the same time human populations were getting bigger around the world and the world's climate was also changing. It changed a lot between 250 and 500 AD, sometimes hotter, sometimes drier, sometimes colder. There were some years with good weather and good harvests, then years with bad years and bad harvests. During bad years lots of people would move around looking for better lands.

Growing numbers and changing weather meant lots of people were forced to move from the North and East of Italy, looking for land and food and a place to live. They were constantly invading the Italian Peninsula even as Rome was getting weaker.

In the Italian Peninsula more migration and more population and less government meant it was easier for diseases to spread. Huge plagues, like the Black Death, attacked Rome.

How was Rome like other civilizations of its time?

Like other civilizations Rome had written laws that lasted a long time. It had rules for governing. People organized into classes of strong and weak and Rome had slaves.

Like other civilizations Rome had writing and its own style of art and building. Rome built roads and bridges and managed water and food and human waste.

Like all civilizations, from Sumer to Greek, Rome learned from its neighbors. It adopted technologies like writing and agriculture and using iron from other civilizations. Rome was very good at learning from others, and very good at managing other civilizations.

How did Rome change the world?

Rome spread many ideas from the East and the West around its empire. Those ideas and inventions went to Europe and to the Middle East. Europe then passed these ideas to the New World and to Europe's "colonies" and conquests. Even China has been influenced by Roman ideas.

Christianity grew from the Roman Empire to become one of the world's most common religions.

The ideas of Roman government and engineering and law spread around the world.

Rome spread many Greek and Mediterranean ideas around the world.

The Roman Calendar has been widely accepted.

The Pre-Invasion Americas 1400 BC to 1570 AD

Human Settlement, Isolation, Invasion and Diseases

Pre-humans (hominids) evolved in Africa but long ago spread throughout Africa, Europe and Asia (“Old World”). Humans like us developed about 100,000 years ago and spread around the Old World. They could not travel to Australia or to the Americas. They did not have boats that could cross Ocean waters.

From 13,000 to 60,000 years ago the earth was colder and water levels were lower. Humans could walk from Asian (modern Siberia) across to America (modern Alaska). We think humans came to America many times over that period. They spread across the continent and eliminated all large animals and competing predators.

After humans had hunted all the large animals they learned to grow crops from 8,500 to 2,500 BC.

When the climate warmed up the ocean rose. America was mostly cut off from Europe, Africa and Asia for about 13,000 years -- though Vikings and other peoples still visited by boat in small numbers.

Then, around 1500 AD, Europeans learned to cross the Ocean. They came in large numbers. Europeans carried smallpox and many other diseases that were common in Europe. Europeans were resistant to these diseases, but the people of the Americas were not. Most of the people in the Americas, from the very north to the very south, died of these great plagues.

Maya, Aztec and Inca: Geography

There were many cultures in the Americas, but we know most about three we call Maya, Aztec and Inca.

The Maya and Aztecs lived in the the southern part of modern Mexico and south into Central America.

The Incans lived along the coast of South America, west of the great Andes Mountains in modern Peru and Argentina.

Maya, Aztec and Inca - Compared

	Maya	Aztec	Inca
Years	300 AD - 900 AD	1200 AD - 1521 AD	1400 AD - 1535 AD

	Maya	Aztec	Inca
Location (modern)	Southern Mexico and Guatemala	Central Mexico, modern Mexico City	Peru (from Ecuador to Chile)
Important Cities	Tikal (Guatemala today)	Tenochtitlan (modern Mexico City)	Cuzco, Peru
Geography	Rain forest, tropical climate. Lots of water.	High flat lands surrounded by volcano. Mild weather. Tenochtitlan was island surrounded by marsh and water.	Narrow west coastal plain is desert except for rivers. High Andes Mountains and high plateaus with extreme weather. Eastern rainforest and Amazon river. Desert and high mountain along the Andes mountains.
Agriculture	Raised fields, drains to clear water. Maize (corn)	Corn, squash, beans.	Corn, squash, beans, cotton, potatoes (700 kinds!). Use Llama.
Government	City states with rules.	Empire with one ruler.	God-King (Sapa Inca) like Egyptian Pharaoh. Many city-communes with local ruler.
Social Levels	City ruler, nobles, priests, farmers, slaves	Emperor, nobles, priests, farmers, slaves.	Nobles, local rulers, priests, farmers, slaves
Jobs	Noble, farmer, priest, stone work, slave	Farmer, priest, noble, warrior, stone work, slave	God-king, nobles, local chieftains, officials, farmer, army, metal work, mining, pottery, textiles, slave.

	Maya	Aztec	Inca
Culture	Human sacrifice (murder for gods), worship gods, architecture and stone carving	continuous war and a lot of human sacrifice, worship gods, architecture and stone carving	Gold symbol of God-King. Great runners on roads. Organized communes (Allyus), arranged marriages. Worshipped many gods as well as God-King. Textile and pottery art. Some human sacrifice.
Technology and learning	Pyramids, stone work, water management, writing, bark books, calendars, astronomy, arithmetic.	Chinampas - artificial islands for growing food. Buildings, pyramids and cities. Stone-work. Calendars and astronomy. Writing. Medicines for fever and wounds.	Calculated using knotted strings (quipu). Some people think this was also a written language. Otherwise no written language known. Built great roads and bridges across 12,000 miles of desert and mountain; advanced building skills. Metalworking: copper, tin, bronze, silver, gold. From other cultures got irrigation, terracing, pottery, textiles. Medicine.

	Maya	Aztec	Inca
Collapse / Down-fall	Not known. Over-population? Ecological damage?	Hatred of neighbors, European diseases, Spanish invasion	European diseases, Spanish invasion.