

Chapter 1: The Earliest Human Societies: 1-6 Chapter Review
Book Title: World Civilizations
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1-6 Chapter Review

1-6a Summary

The prehistory of the human race is immeasurably longer than the short period (5000 years or so) of which we have historical knowledge. During the last 75,000 years of the prehistoric period, men and women became physically and mentally indistinguishable from ourselves and spread across the earth. Modern languages probably also appeared around this same time. Developing agriculture and livestock breeding to supplement hunting and foraging, humans slowly attained more advanced stages of development in the later part of the Neolithic Age, around 3000 B.C.E. Urban life was now possible, a system of government and record keeping evolved, and weapons and tools of metal were invented. Of equal significance, regional specializations in food and toolmaking (broadly speaking), along with new means of travel by boats, carts, and pack animals, opened the door for cross-regional trade and cultural exchange.

In the next chapters we examine four of the earliest known centers of civilization one by one and consider the reasons why each became a center. The similarities and contrasts among these civilizations gave each a particular character that would last for thousands of years and, in some cases, until the present day.

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