



## CHAPTER 5

# THE RISE OF RIVER VALLEY CIVILIZATIONS



**TEKS  
COVERED IN  
CHAPTER 5**

- **History 1(A)** Identify major causes and describe the major effects of the ... development of agriculture and the development of the river valley civilizations.
- **History 2** The student understands how early civilizations developed from 8000 B.C. to 500 B.C.
  - **History 2(A)** Summarize the impact of the development of farming (Neolithic Revolution) on the creation of river valley civilizations.
  - **History 2(B)** Identify the characteristics of civilization.
- **Geography 16(B)** Analyze the influence of human and physical geographic factors on major events in world history, including the development of river valley civilizations....
- **Economics 17** The student understands the impact of the Neolithic Revolutions on humanity.
  - **Economics 17(A)** Identify important changes in human life caused by the Neolithic Revolution....
  - **Economics 17(B)** Summarize the role of economics in driving political changes as related to the Neolithic Revolution.
- **Government 19(A)** Identify the characteristics of monarchies and theocracies as forms of government in early civilizations.
- **Government 19(B)** Identify the characteristics of ... theocracy.
- **Government 20(B)** Identify the impact of political and legal ideas contained in the Hammurabi Code, [and] the Jewish Ten Commandments....
- **Culture 23(A)** Describe the historical origins, central ideas, and spread of major religious and philosophical traditions, including Judaism ... and the development of monotheism.
- **Culture 24(A)** Describe the changing roles of women, children, and families during major eras of world history.
- **Science, Technology, and Society 27(A)** Identify the origin and diffusion of major ideas in mathematics, science, and technology that occurred in river valley civilizations....

In this chapter, you will learn about the rise of the first civilizations — ancient cultures that still influence us today.

## ESSENTIAL QUESTIONS

- What was the Neolithic Revolution?
- What factors led to the rise of the first civilizations?
- What were the accomplishments of the early river valley civilizations?



## SOCIAL STUDIES TERMINOLOGY IN THIS CHAPTER

■ Culture	■ Pharaoh	■ Theocracy
■ Neolithic Revolution	■ Hieroglyphics	■ Monarchy
■ Civilization	■ Cuneiform	■ Monotheism
■ Mesopotamia	■ Indus River	■ Ten Commandments
■ Nile River	■ Huang He	■ Code of Hammurabi

## — IMPORTANT IDEAS —

- A. The earliest humans survived by **hunting** and **gathering** their food. They used **tools** of wood, bone, and stone. They also learned to make **fire**.
- B. About 10,000 years ago, people in the Middle East developed the first agriculture and domesticated animals during the **Neolithic Revolution**.
- C. A **civilization** is a form of human culture in which some people live in cities, have complex social institutions, use some form of writing, and are skilled at using science and technology.
- D. The first **civilizations** arose in fertile **river valleys**, where favorable geographic conditions allowed farmers to grow a surplus of food.
- E. The Sumerians in **Mesopotamia** invented the wheel, sailboat and cuneiform writing. The **Egyptians** developed an advanced civilization along the banks of the **Nile**. They built large stone pyramids for the afterlife of their ruler — the pharaoh — and developed a form of writing known as **hieroglyphics**.
- F. Other early civilizations developed along the **Indus River** on the Indian subcontinent and along the **Huang He** (*Yellow River*) in China.
- G. The earliest civilizations were theocracies and monarchies. In a **theocracy**, religious leaders govern; in a **monarchy**, a hereditary ruler heads the government.
- H. **Judaism**, the religion of the ancient Hebrews (*Jews*), was the first religion to worship only one God.

## EARLY HUMAN SOCIETY

**Anthropologists** study the origins, customs, and beliefs of humankind. Most anthropologists now believe the **Great Rift Valley** in East Africa was the birthplace of humankind. Many scientists believe that human beings as we know them today — **homo sapiens** — first appeared sometime between 400,000 and 200,000 years ago, during the last Ice Age.



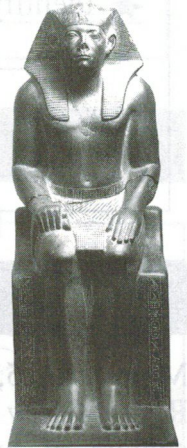
## EGYPT (3200 B.C.–500 B.C.)

Egypt is located in Northeast Africa. The world's longest river, the **Nile**, runs through it. Each year, the Nile floods the lands along its banks, depositing fertile soil. With bright sunshine, a long growing season, rich soil, and an ample supply of fresh water, Egyptian farmers were able to grow large amounts of food. Farmers along the Nile were able to support a large number of craftsmen, warriors, priests, and nobles. Ease of communication along the river encouraged the development of a highly centralized government.

**Government and Society.** The most powerful person in ancient Egypt was the **pharaoh** (*king*). The pharaoh governed Egypt as an absolute ruler. The pharaoh owned all the land, commanded the army, made laws, controlled irrigation and grain supplies, and defended Egypt from foreigners. Egyptians considered the pharaoh to be a god. Egypt was a **monarchy**, a system of government in which political power is inherited. Each pharaoh inherited absolute power from his father.

Next in the social order below the pharaoh came the priests and nobles. Then came Egypt's warriors, scribes, merchants and craftsmen. At the bottom of society were peasants and slaves. They spent their time farming, herding cattle, and working on building projects for the pharaohs.

**Religion.** The ancient Egyptians believed the body should be preserved after death to participate in the afterlife. When pharaohs died, their bodies were embalmed and buried in a special room under a large triangular stone tomb known as a **pyramid**. Here they were surrounded with gold, jewels, and other precious objects for use in the afterlife, which Egyptians imagined as similar to life before death. Archaeologists have used these artifacts to learn a great deal about ancient Egypt.



Pharaoh  
Sesostois III,  
(c. 1860 B.C.)

### EGYPTIAN ACCOMPLISHMENTS

**Medicine.** Egyptians developed knowledge of the human body through **embalming** (*preserving*). They performed surgical operations, such as setting fractures.

**Hieroglyphics.** Ancient Egyptians developed one of the earliest forms of writing, based on picture symbols. Hieroglyphics appeared on temples, pyramids and on scrolls of reed paper, known as papyrus.

**Building and Art.** Egyptian architects and engineers built magnificent pyramids, palaces, and temples of stone. They decorated their buildings with paintings and sculptures.



Hieroglyphic writing from a tomb.

**Geometry and Astronomy.** Egyptians developed geometry to build projects such as pyramids. By observing the stars, they developed a calendar based on 365 days.



## APPLYING WHAT YOU HAVE LEARNED

- ★ Identify one way in which Egyptian and Mesopotamian societies were similar.

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- ★ Identify one way in which Egyptian and Mesopotamian societies differed.

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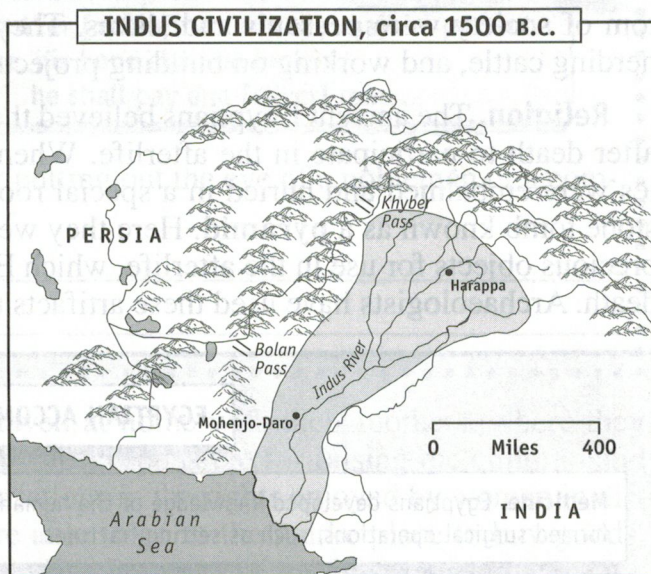
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## INDIA

More than 5,000 years ago, the **Indus River Valley** became another of the first centers of human civilization. In this region, as in Egypt and Mesopotamia, a river deposited rich soil over the neighboring plain during its annual flood.

**Agriculture and Building.** Farmers grew barley, wheat, dates and melons. Food surpluses allowed people to build large cities like Harrappa and Mohenjo-Daro. Each of these cities had more than 30,000 people. More than 1,000 cities and settlements belonging to the Indus River Valley civilization have already been excavated. The artifacts found in these settlements suggest a technologically advanced urban culture. Dockyards, granaries, warehouses, brick platforms and protective walls were present in many of their cities. They were also among the first “urban planners,” with almost all their houses connected to public sewers and a water supply. These people, known as the *Harrappans*, were also the first people known to make cotton cloth.

**Trade and Collapse.** Trade was an important part of the Harrappan economy. Many small clay seals, probably used for trading purposes, have been discovered by archaeologists. They have also found kilns for making pottery and evidence of the use of metals. The Harappans developed their own form of writing, although scholars are still unable to decipher it. No one knows exactly why this civilization collapsed, but its end occurred suddenly.





APPLYING WHAT YOU HAVE LEARNED

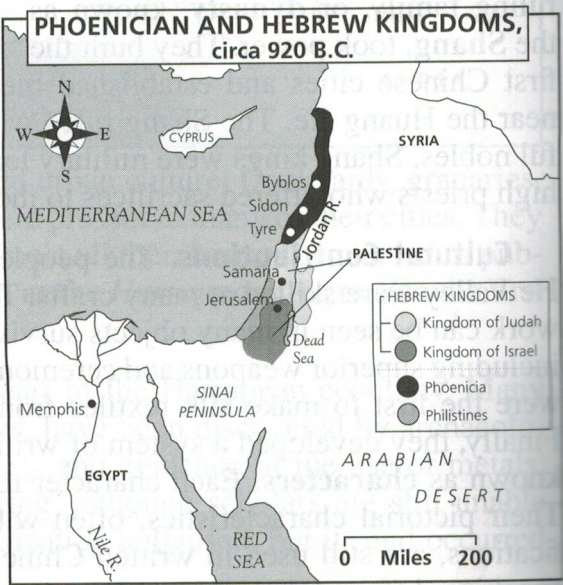
Complete the chart below.

Civilization	Location	Agriculture	Government	Contributions
Mesopotamia				
Egypt				
Indus River Valley				
China				

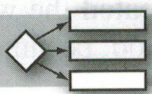
THE ANCIENT HEBREWS

The ancient **Hebrews**, or **Israelites**, lived south of Phoenicia in the area occupied by present-day Israel, Lebanon, and Jordan. Because of their location, the Hebrews were deeply influenced by the civilizations of both Mesopotamia and Egypt. According to tradition, the forefather of the Hebrews, Abraham, grew up in Mesopotamia in the city of Ur. Later, Abraham moved to Israel.

Unlike other ancient peoples, the Hebrews did not believe in many gods. Instead, they believed in one universal God, who was both just and all-powerful. This new religion was called **Judaism**. Jews did not believe that God had human characteristics or the head or body of an animal, like the gods and goddesses of Mesopotamia and Egypt.







# LEARNING WITH GRAPHIC ORGANIZERS



Complete the graphic organizer below. For each ancient civilization, identify its location. Then describe some of its characteristics, such as its form of government or religious beliefs. Finally, list some of its accomplishments or cultural contributions.

Mesopotamia	Egypt
Location: _____	Location: _____
Characteristics: _____	Characteristics: _____
_____	_____
Achievements: _____	Achievements: _____
_____	_____
_____	_____

THE FIRST CIVILIZATIONS

India	China	Hebrews
Location: _____	Location: _____	Location: _____
_____	_____	_____
Characteristics: _____	Characteristics: _____	Characteristics: _____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
Achievements: _____	Achievements: _____	Achievements: _____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____



# CHAPTER STUDY CARDS

## Culture / Civilization

- ★ **Culture.** A people's way of life — their foods, clothing, customs and beliefs. Culture is a form of learned behavior that is passed from one generation to the next.
- ★ **Civilization.** Advanced form of society in which some people live in cities, have complex institutions, use some form of writing, and are skilled in science and technology

## River Valley Civilizations

The first civilizations developed along rivers with fertile soil from periodic floods. Here, farmers were able to grow a surplus of food, allowing the rise of civilization.

- ★ **Mesopotamia.** The region between the Tigris and Euphrates Rivers; invented the sailboat, irrigation, the wheel, calendar, and bronze.
- ★ **Egypt.** Developed along the Nile River in North Africa; Egyptian society was ruled by a powerful pharaoh; built pyramids.
- ★ **India.** The Indus River deposited rich soil over the neighboring plain.
- ★ **China.** China's first civilization emerged in the fertile plains along the Huang He.

## Neolithic Revolution

The **Neolithic Revolution** occurred in the Middle East 10,000 years ago. People saw they could obtain food by planting seeds.

- ★ **Food Surpluses.** People began to change from hunters and gatherers to producers of food.
- ★ **Domestication of Animals.** People learned to domesticate animals such as goats, sheep, and cattle.
- ★ **Settlements.** People no longer had to wander in search of food and could now establish settlements with permanent homes.

## Judaism

**Judaism** was the religion of the ancient Hebrews. It began in the ancient lands now known as Israel. **Moses** led Jews out of Egyptian slavery.

- ★ Judaism is the first religion to teach **monotheism** — the belief in one God.
- ★ **Old Testament.** History of Jewish people is told in the first books of the Bible, known as the Old Testament.
- ★ **Ten Commandments.** Established a moral code of conduct: emphasizes living justly; belief in one God; honoring one's parents, not killing or stealing.