



CHAPTER 1

BEFORE HISTORY

Before you get started: Let the AP themes be your guide to help you determine importance in this and every chapter to come.

1. Interaction between humans and the environment
2. Development and interaction of cultures
3. State-building, expansion, and conflict
4. Creation, expansion, and interaction of economic systems
5. Development and transformation of social structures

After finishing each chapter summary, you should be able to apply the information to each of these themes, which govern the curricular focus and will be addressed in the questions on the AP Exam.

One of the most challenging aspects of this course is the vocabulary. Learning history is like learning a foreign language. You must memorize, see, hear, practice, and apply the words frequently. We have bold-faced the most important terms. Sometimes it helps to know their origins. In this chapter, *paleo* is Greek for “old” and *lithic* refers to stone; thus the paleolithic was the Old Stone Age. Likewise, *neo* in neolithic means “new” as in New Stone Age, when there was a change in tools and lifestyles. Only a limited amount from this period may appear on the test; nevertheless, it is important to note the period as a baseline for comparison with the following one.

THE EVOLUTION OF *HOMO SAPIENS*

The Hominids **(Theme #1: Human-environment Interaction)**

Between four and one million years ago, the earliest hominids appeared in east Africa. Archaeologists named them *australopithecines*. They were quite small, appear to have walked upright, and fashioned hand tools of stone. Around one million years ago, they vanished and the genus *Homo* arose. *Homo erectus* had bigger brains and fashioned more sophisticated tools. They also used fire to cook food, as defense, and to keep warm. These people lived in small bands and hunted large animals, so it is presumed that they had high intelligence and good language skills.

Homo Sapiens **(Theme #1: Human-environment Interaction)**

About two hundred thousand years ago, *Homo sapiens* (“consciously thinking man”) supplanted *Homo erectus*. The brain was very large and particularly well developed in the areas that control consciousness and reflective thinking. The adaptability of *Homo sapiens* to different environmental settings prompted the **migration** of early humans to the temperate zones of all continents and later allowed habitation of the coldest regions, because they could make their own clothing and shelters. Between sixty and fifteen thousand years ago, people traveled along land bridges that existed between continents due to a global cooling period. It is believed that during this period, individuals and family units moved from southeast Asia to Australia and from northeast Asia to the Americas. Even more sophisticated tools were made and caves and huts were used as dwellings. They hunted very large mammals and it is speculated that they may have had an influence in the disappearance of several species. They competed very effectively with other species, likely due to their intelligence.



Part I: The Early Complex Societies, 3500 to 500 B.C.E.

PALEOLITHIC SOCIETY

The paleolithic period begins with the first hominids and ends about twelve thousand years ago. Its principle feature was **hunting and gathering**.

Economy and Society of Hunting and Gathering Peoples (Themes #4: Economic systems; #5: Social structures)

Paleolithic societies depended on foraging to feed themselves. Successful hunting and gathering depended upon manmade tools and sophisticated language abilities for the cooperative hunting of large animals. Tools to kill animals and prepare the meat and skins for clothing were fashioned of stone and bone. From cave paintings it is apparent that men hunted while women augmented their diets by collecting seeds and fruits. Since the lifestyle required a **nomadic life**, bands typically had thirty to fifty members. A paleolithic society had little wealth and therefore probably had relative social equality among its members.

Paleolithic Culture (Theme #2: Development and Interaction of cultures)

The earliest sites of modern humans, so-called Neandertals, contain evidence of reflective thinking about the nature of human existence and the world around them. Archaeologists have found abundant evidence of culture at ancient settlements and gravesites in Europe dating from two hundred thousand to thirty-five thousand years ago. The artifacts found at these sites indicate **elaborate burial practices** with flowers and possessions scattered around the individual. On the basis of the burial practices, archaeologists have suggested a belief in an afterlife, but it is also possible that the Neandertals simply wanted to honor their dead. Later the Cro-Magnon, physically identical to modern humans, also left art for scholars to contemplate in the settlement sites and along rock faces and cave walls. Some clay statues, known as **Venus figurines**, have been found that exhibit prominent sexual features. Anthropologists believe this indicates an interest in fertility. The Cro-Magnon people invented bows and arrows, spear-throwers, and harpoons, and they adorned themselves with elaborate jewelry. Rock and cave paintings found around the world provide some insight into paleolithic hunting practices. These paintings were done with ground pigments made from many natural substances that were applied to rock with moss, frayed twigs, and brushes made from hair.

Although not mentioned in the textbook, one must note that there have been isolated populations in parts of the world that have persisted in the paleolithic lifestyle well into the twentieth century. Anthropologists have studied many of these societies and passed on the information to archaeologists to help determine how ancient peoples might have lived.

THE NEOLITHIC ERA AND THE TRANSITION TO AGRICULTURE

The **neolithic period** lasted from about twelve thousand years ago to six thousand years ago and is characterized by the appearance of agriculture and larger settlements.

The Origins of Agriculture (Themes #1: Human-environment interaction; #4: Economic systems)

As humans looked to ensure a more steady food supply, it seems probable that women began to collect seeds and grow plants. The earliest evidence of agriculture, the cultivation of wheat, appears in sites in the Middle East around 9000 B.C.E. Somewhat later, inhabitants of the southeast border of the Sahara began domesticating cattle, sheep, and sorghum. Between 8000 and 6000 B.C.E., west Africans began to grow yams, okra, and black-eyed peas. Rice cultivation in southern China began as early as 6000 B.C.E. with soybeans and millet soon afterward in northern China. Chickens and pigs appear to have been domesticated during this time as well. Two thousand years later, the Mesoamericans learned to grow maize and





Chapter 1: Before History

the Andes people began to grow potatoes. The early Americans had hunted many large species to extinction so only llamas, alpacas, and guinea pigs were domesticated by the people of the Andes.

This brings up the question of **independent invention** and **cultural diffusion**. Earlier historians believed that there could only be one site of origin for any invention or idea. When it appeared in another region, historians assumed that it had been borrowed from an earlier or neighboring culture. However, as there appear to be many sites for the primary origin of agriculture, they now recognize the independent origin of many cultural traits. Cultural diffusion, or the exchange of ideas, does appear to be what occurred when wheat domesticated in the Middle East was adopted by the Chinese around 3000 B.C.E., or when rice cultivation moved to the Indian subcontinent from China around 1500 B.C.E. However, this is secondary to the independent origin of agricultural techniques with different plants.

Early methods of agriculture such as “**slash-and-burn**” techniques resulted in the expansion of peoples into new regions as the fertility of previous sites began to decline. Ironically, neolithic agriculture required more work than paleolithic hunting and gathering even though the food source became fairly reliable and abundant. Furthermore, long-distance migrations of humans slowed down as they settled around grain fields.

Early Agricultural Society (Themes #1: Human-environment interaction; and #4: Economic systems)

Once people had settled into sustained agricultural communities with an expanding food supply, the human population began to increase, from fourteen million in 3000 B.C.E. to 100 million by 500 B.C.E. The earliest agricultural settlement sites are **Jericho** in present-day Israel (8000 B.C.E.) and **Çatal Hüyük** in present-day Turkey (7000 B.C.E.). These villages soon became towns with as many as eight thousand individuals engaged in activities in support of and outside of agriculture. There is evidence of **pottery**, basketry, **textiles**, leather goods, and jewelry making at the Çatal Hüyük site. Pottery was enormously useful for storage as it did not deteriorate as fast as baskets. However, the Middle East was not the earliest site for pottery. One site in Japan may have produced pottery as early as 10,000 B.C.E. Copper **metallurgy** appears in the Middle East by 6000 B.C.E. Domesticated animals provided food and clothing, but during the neolithic period, women began to spin and weave cloth from animal fur. The differences in numbers and quality of artifacts at house sites in Çatal Hüyük has led archaeologists to theorize that **wealth and social distinctions** began to appear during this period.

Neolithic Culture (Theme #2 Development and Interaction of Cultures)

The early farmers began to gain expertise about the natural processes of the earth and the universe. As they gained more knowledge of the seasons and astronomical movements, they began to develop rudimentary calendars. The new knowledge of the natural world affected religion as well. Basic religious values seem to have continued with the earlier fertility worship but they added an interest in the life cycle and the idea of regenerated life as seen in their fields. Thousands of sculptures of gods and goddesses have been found. It is believed that many deities were associated with birth and death whereas other gods and goddesses were associated with animals.

The Origins of Urban Life (Themes #1: Human-environment interaction; #4: Economic Systems; #5: Social structures)

Demographics, Social Structure, and Trade)

As some settlements thrived due to environmental advantages, they grew into cities that had political and economic prominence over the surrounding region. More complex social and economic relationships appeared as **professional classes** emerged who spent no time at all on agriculture. Priests, political managers, and artists could focus on their work without concern for basic subsistence. Cities affected whole regions as well as their near neighbors. Marketplaces in cities attracted long-distance traders. The in-





Part I: The Early Complex Societies, 3500 to 500 B.C.E.

creased need to feed the growing populations required military and political control over ever-larger areas. Eventually, their cultural conditions were extended to the new areas as well. Cities arose independently in river valleys like the **Tigris-Euphrates** region of modern day Iraq, the **Nile River** in Egypt, the **Yellow River** valley of northern China, and the **Indus River** valley of northwest India.

Finished reading the chapter? Be sure you can . . .

- Give two or three examples of the human response to climate and geography.
- Describe major migrations in early human history.
- Differentiate between the paleolithic and neolithic eras.
- Describe the agricultural transition.
- Give examples that illustrate the difference between independent origin and cultural diffusion.

Chapter Multiple Choice Questions

1. What specifically separates early neolithic lifestyles from paleolithic lifestyles?
 - a. use of meat
 - b. use of shelters
 - c. use of clothing
 - d. use of fire
 - e. use of plants
2. What was the chief reason that people settled into agricultural communities?
 - a. They wanted to reduce the amount of work to obtain food.
 - b. They needed to stop nomadic migrations.
 - c. They wanted to be assured of a more regular food source.
 - d. It allowed more families to live together.
 - e. They could build better shelters for protection from the elements.
3. With regard to the origin of specific agricultural practices, it can be said that agriculture
 - a. occurred independently in different regions throughout the world.
 - b. was passed from one group to another throughout the world.
 - c. developed at the same time in different regions.
 - d. was a side effect of intensified trade relationships in cities.
 - e. was shared by the originators when they migrated to distant regions.
4. Although most neolithic peoples domesticated animals for food and clothing, one region never developed a tradition of herding. Which region was this?
 - a. Europe
 - b. Africa
 - c. east Asia
 - d. south Asia
 - e. North America
5. Which crop did NOT originate in the region indicated?
 - a. wheat – southwest Asia
 - b. bananas – southeast Asia
 - c. sorghum – south Asia
 - d. rice – southern China
 - e. maize – central Americas



Chapter 1: Before History

6. What made pottery the earliest craft associated with the neolithic period?
 - a. Clay was easily available in the Middle East.
 - b. Storage baskets had many drawbacks.
 - c. They could be used for irrigation as well.
 - d. There had been little need to store food in earlier societies.
 - e. Pots could be artistic as well as functional.

7. Historians presume that women played the catalyst role in specific areas of neolithic life. The two areas were
 - a. herding and cooking.
 - b. pottery and religion.
 - c. agriculture and textiles.
 - d. jewelry making and painting.
 - e. social distinctions and education.

8. The first evidence of social stratification appears in
 - a. cave paintings.
 - b. house sites and graves.
 - c. sculpture.
 - d. early writings.
 - e. stories in current communities.

9. Which metal was the earliest to be successfully mined and fashioned into tools?
 - a. iron
 - b. bronze
 - c. tin
 - d. copper
 - e. gold

10. The most successful neolithic farming communities began to increase their trade and subsequently
 - a. merged peacefully with neighboring communities.
 - b. conquered their neighbors creating large kingdoms.
 - c. attracted more people.
 - d. fell prey to outside conquerors.
 - e. practiced more trade than agriculture.

Comprehensive Multiple Choice Questions

1. Which of the following most accurately describes the development of professions?
 - a. Nomads settled into permanent communities and needed technology produced by professionals immediately.
 - b. Since settled peoples require pots to store grain, they allowed members to become potters as soon as they harvested the first crop.
 - c. Migratory peoples brought their priests with them. Once they settled down, the priests were exempt from farming.
 - d. Nomads began to farm and settle into communities. Professions developed as the community could release some members from farm labor.
 - e. Neolithic potters found sources of clay in the Middle East. They settled into farming communities to provide the farmers with storage containers.





Part I: The Early Complex Societies, 3500 to 500 B.C.E.

2. An important issue that is debated by historians relates to cultural borrowing or independent origin. In which of the following areas is diffusion the most likely process?
 - a. the development of professions
 - b. a specific crop found in two places
 - c. the idea of class structure
 - d. the role of women in society
 - e. the way in which people harvest crops
3. The interaction between people and the environment led to similar adoptions of housing, clothing, and agriculture, but what area of a neolithic society would be LEAST affected by the natural world?
 - a. religion
 - b. childrearing
 - c. tools
 - d. social status
 - e. wealth

Primary Source Questions

A Note on Primary Sources: On the AP Exam, there can be primary sources in the multiple choice section as well as the document-based question. Not all documents will be written, so it is useful to examine the textbook's illustrations and maps closely. It will be helpful to learn to recognize art from different regions.

1. **Examine the two cave paintings on pages 18-19 of your textbook.**
 - a. What do the captions say about gender roles? Could there have been any exceptions?
 - b. Describe who might have drawn them (point of view).
 - c. Do these paintings indicate anything about specific crops or animals?
 - d. What else do they indicate about the culture?
2. **Turn to the pottery vessel from Haçilar in Anatolia on page 25 of your textbook.**
 - a. Describe the vessel.
 - b. Who might have made it? A man? A woman? A professional? An off-duty farmer?
 - c. What does it say about work, values, and technological advances?
3. **Refer to Map 1.3, Origins and Early Spread of Agriculture, on pages 20–21 of your textbook.**
 - a. Where were the following crops first planted? Millet, potatoes, yams, wheat, peanuts, tomatoes, citrus fruits.
 - b. Which regions had no domesticated animals but developed crops?
 - c. Which continents did not develop any crops or domesticated animals?

Chapter Multiple Choice Answers

1. **e:** Historians associate the neolithic period with the early stages of agriculture. (p. 19)
2. **c:** The growth of edible crops and domesticated animals ensured a more regular food supply. (p. 19)
3. **a:** Agriculture emerged independently in different regions from 9000 B.C.E. to 3000 B.C.E. (p. 20)
4. **e:** The people of the Americas had hunted all large animals to extinction except in the Andes where llamas were raised. (p. 21)
5. **c:** Sorghum originated in Africa, then spread to south Asia. (p. 22)





Chapter 1: Before History

6. **e:** Paleolithic peoples did not need to store food for long periods, and in nomadic life, pots were too heavy to carry around. (p. 24)
7. **c:** It is believed that women began to nurture plants and also were responsible for the spinning and weaving of animal fibers. (pp. 19, 25)
8. **b:** At Catal Hüyük, differences in wealth and social status are seen in the quality of house decorations and items in graves. (p. 25)
9. **d:** Soft and malleable even when cold, copper tools are found in many neolithic sites. (p. 25)
10. **c:** Cities developed gradually as towns with the best locations attracted more people. (p. 27)

Comprehensive Multiple Choice Answers

1. **d:** Hunters and gatherers must settle down before they can grow enough food to allow any member of society to be exempt from agriculture. (pp. 24, 25)
2. **b:** Food crops such as rice to India and wheat to China were probably diffused through trade. People must develop their own tools to harvest each specific crop. The role of women generally developed within a single society while class structure and specialized labor occur almost simultaneously. (p. 21)
3. **b:** Nursing and watching over youngsters occurred whether women were engaged in crafts or farming. It was only affected by availability of food. Religion was directly influenced by seasonal changes of the natural world. Tools had to be fashioned from whatever resources were available, such as stone, bone, wood, and metal. Social status was connected to wealth which was derived from the accumulation of farming resources by one individual or family. These properties would be affected by proximity to water, natural fertility of the soil, and availability of rain. (p. 25)

Primary Source Answers

1. Women planted crops and men herded animals. It is possible that young children helped out in either area regardless of gender. From what we understand about early neolithic societies, it is likely that these were drawn by members of the society who had some time on their hands but did not necessarily dedicate their time to art. The animals appear to be cattle, but the crops are indistinguishable. Obviously, these occupations are community activities, not sole occupations. Neither group wears many clothes. Some of the herders are sitting, so it appears that the cattle are very tame and that tending the crops is much more labor-intensive. Thus women have harder jobs than men. (p. 18-19)
2. This is a pot that has been fashioned into the shape of an animal. Both women and men have been known to be potters but it is not possible to tell the gender of the potter. The sophistication of the design indicates that most likely a professional with practiced skills fashioned the pot. In this neolithic society, labor has become specialized, animals are favored as design motifs, and people are wealthy enough to afford to replace pottery since the head and neck of this vessel would be prone to breakage. (p. 25)
3. a. east Asia, Andean South America, southwest Asia, Amazon River valley, North America, southeast Asia
b. North America and southeast Asia
c. Europe and Australia
(pp. 20–21)