

2.1 Nomadic Hunter-Gatherers



When you're hungry, you probably raid the fridge or head for the store. When Paleolithic people were hungry, they tracked down an animal, killed it with their handmade weapons, and then cooked it over a fire they had to carefully start and keep going. That's what it took to survive every day.

MAIN IDEA

Paleolithic people were constantly on the move to find food.

MOVING WITH THE SEASONS

The Paleolithic world had no farms or stores, but it did have a rich variety of foods. People just had to search them out. During the Paleolithic Age, humans lived as hunter-gatherers. A **hunter-gatherer** hunts animals and gathers wild plants to eat. These tasks were made easier and safer by the fact that early humans worked together and shared the jobs.

Most hunter-gatherer groups were small—around 30 people. The men hunted, often herding large animals into traps or over cliffs. Meanwhile, the women and young children gathered fruits and nuts. Scientists have learned a great deal about hunter-gatherers by studying the body and belongings of a later hunter known as the Iceman, seen at right.

Because the animal herds moved with the seasons, so did the groups hunting them. People who move from place to place like this are called **nomads**. Nomadic hunter-gatherers traveled light. They carried all their possessions with them, including stone tools and clothing.

As hunter-gatherers traveled in areas outside of Africa, they learned to adapt to their new environments—especially the cold. They made needles that enabled them to sew warm clothes out of animal skins. Caves offered the best protection from the worst winter weather. However, people also made shelters of wood, bone, and animal skins, which provided temporary camps.

FOLLOWING THE HERDS mt

Nomadic hunter-gatherers followed herds of megafauna as the animals moved from place to place. The herds migrated with the seasons and entered new environments created by the changeable Ice Age climate. For example, the Beringia land bridge allowed herds of woolly mammoths to cross into North America, with hunter-gatherers following close behind.

It wasn't easy to kill an animal as big as a woolly mammoth. It took intelligence, teamwork, and special tools. Paleolithic people developed deadly new weapons, including barbed harpoons, spear-throwers, and bows and arrows. These weapons allowed them to kill from a distance, which made the task safer and more efficient. The rewards were also great. A woolly mammoth could feed the group for months.

As humans spread around the world, various human groups competed for resources. Conflict would have been most common during cold periods when food and shelter were scarce. It's likely that in warmer periods of plentiful food, human groups interacted more happily, sharing their technology and culture. This interaction helped spread new ideas and paved the way for a remarkable new stage in human development.

THE ICEMAN



The Iceman lived around 3300 B.C. More than 5,000 years later, hikers found his frozen body in the Alps in Europe. His clothing, his tools, and even the contents of his stomach have helped scientists understand how prehistoric people lived. The graphic here offers some clues as to how he might have died.

1

The Iceman perches on a cliff. He tests the copper blade of his ax and the flint points of his dagger with satisfaction. They're razor sharp. He searches below for his prey. With any luck, he'll bring goat meat back to his community tonight.

2

Suddenly an arrow pierces the Iceman's shoulder. Another hunter has shot him from behind. The Iceman falls off the cliff into the snowbank below.

3

Desperately the Iceman rises and struggles to fight off his attacker, but he's too weak. He falls back down but manages to crawl into a cave in the ice. As the Iceman dies, snow begins to fall. Snow and ice will hide him from view for the next 5,000 years.

REVIEW & ASSESS

- 1. READING CHECK** Why were Paleolithic people constantly moving from place to place?
- 2. INTEGRATE VISUALS** What words would you use to describe hunter-gatherers such as the Iceman?
- 3. ANALYZE CAUSE AND EFFECT** What impact did the changing climate have on hunter-gatherers?



2.2

The Beginnings of Domestication



A pet poodle might lick your hand and follow you everywhere, but dogs weren't always man's best friend. All dogs are descended from wolves. Humans transformed some of these wild animals into loyal helpers, which marked a major breakthrough in learning to control their environment.

MAIN IDEA

Early humans took control of their environment by raising useful plants and taming animals.



Critical Viewing Young nomadic girls corral sheep for milking in northeastern Afghanistan. What details in the photo tell you that the animals have been domesticated?

mt CHANGING CLIMATE

Around 14,000 years ago, Earth grew warmer, and the ice sheets melted. These changes raised sea levels, created freshwater lakes, and increased global rainfall. Large areas of land became covered with water. As a result, land bridges disappeared, and coastal waters formed that were full of fish. Animals moved, adapted, or died as their habitats, or environments, changed.

These environmental changes also began to transform the ways that hunter-gatherers lived in some areas. The warmer, wetter climate encouraged the development of forests and grasslands and resulted in longer growing seasons. These conditions proved to be perfect for the growth of grasses. In time, people learned to raise other plants

and animals, making them useful to humans. This development, called **domestication**, led to the beginning of farming.

TAMING PLANTS AND ANIMALS mt

Hunter-gatherers had grown plants to increase their productivity long before the ice began to melt. Now the improved climate made growing plants even easier. After scattering seeds in wet ground, hunter-gatherers knew they could return and harvest the plants the following year. Some foods, especially grains from cereals such as wheat and barley, could be stored to feed people and animals year-round.

At about the same time, humans began to tame animals. The earliest domesticated animals were dogs. All around the world, wild wolf pups were caught and bred for

hunting and protection. Other animals were domesticated for food: first sheep and goats, then pigs and cattle. As well as providing meat, milk, and wool, some domesticated animals could carry heavy loads and pull carts.

Although most humans remained nomadic, the warmer climate provided certain areas with such abundant resources that some hunter-gatherer groups decided to settle

down. For example, areas around estuaries made perfect places to live. An estuary is formed where a river feeds into the ocean. The combination of fresh water, salt water, and land provided people with a year-round supply of food. Settling down to live permanently in such places would bring about a great change that allowed humans to make their next big leap forward.

REVIEW & ASSESS

- 1. READING CHECK** How did humans use the plants and animals they domesticated?
- 2. ANALYZE CAUSE AND EFFECT** How did the warmer climate and increased rainfall in some places affect people's ability to grow plants for food?
- 3. FORM OPINIONS** What do you think were some of the advantages of the settled life over the nomadic one?

2.3

The Agricultural Revolution



Video Chat ▶ If you wanted to grow some crops, you'd probably look for a warm place with a reliable supply of water and soil full of nutrients. Thousands of years ago, a number of river valleys satisfied all of these conditions. They were at the heart of an important change in the way people lived.

MAIN IDEA

Humans settled down and farmed along river valleys and developed new farm tools and methods.



mt FERTILE RIVER VALLEYS



THE SICKLE

The sickle, which developed during the Neolithic Age, was crucial to harvesting certain grains. The tool was so important that in some places, people made sickles all the same size so that the tools could be repaired easily and quickly.

Imagine that a great change took place all over the world and transformed forever the way people lived. That is exactly what happened when farming largely replaced hunting and gathering. The slow shift to growing food began around 10,000 B.C. and ended around 8000 B.C. By then, many people had discovered that they could live year-round on what they farmed, rather than on what they found.

This shift in the way people lived is called the agricultural revolution. **Agriculture** is the practice of growing plants and rearing animals for food. The

shift to agriculture also ushered in a new period known as the **Neolithic Age**, which began somewhere between 10,000 B.C. and 8000 B.C. In the early stages of this period, people began to build farming villages.

Many of the earliest farming villages were in an area called the **Fertile Crescent**. This region stretches from the Persian Gulf to the Mediterranean Sea. It includes the fertile, flat floodplains along the Tigris and Euphrates rivers in Southwest Asia. **Fertile** soil encourages the growth of crops and plants. The region provided a steady food supply. People were able to settle down and enjoy a much more comfortable lifestyle.

mt NEW FARM TOOLS AND METHODS

Even so, farming was very hard work. To make it easier, Neolithic people developed specialized tools. They fashioned hoes for digging the soil and plows for preparing the land to plant seeds. They also made curved sickles that cut through the stalks of grain and millstones that ground the grain into flour.

Farmers used domesticated animals to make their new tools more efficient. For example, they tied cattle to the plows and led the

animals up and down the rows. In addition to helping turn over the soil, the cattle left behind manure that fertilized the land.

Neolithic people also developed new technology for the home. They made clay pots and hardened them in kilns, or ovens. The kilns could also be used to heat and melt the metal from rocks—a process called smelting. The liquid metal was then cast in molds to create metal tools, which eventually began to replace stone tools. The Stone Age had come to a close.

REVIEW & ASSESS

- 1. READING CHECK** What new farm tools did humans develop during the agricultural revolution?
- 2. INTERPRET MAPS** Along with what geographic feature had most agriculture developed by 5000 B.C.?
- 3. DRAW CONCLUSIONS** In what ways was the agricultural revolution an important breakthrough in human history?

2.2

Traits of Civilization



You might hear the word *civilization* a lot, but do you understand what it means?

All civilizations, whether past or present, have certain things in common. So, what is a civilization?

MAIN IDEA

A civilization is a complex society that is defined by five key traits.

mt

Cultural hearths prepared the way for the next development in human history: civilization. Ancient cultures around the world transformed into complex civilizations at about the same time, and they had five traits, or characteristics, in common: cities, complex institutions, specialized workers, record keeping, and improved technology.

mt

CITIES

The first civilizations were born in **cities**. More than just large population centers, early cities were political, economic, and cultural centers for the surrounding areas. Cities often contained monumental architecture usually dedicated to religion or government. The city's heart was its trading center, where farmers and merchants met to conduct business. **Trade**, or the exchange of goods, allowed some civilizations to grow very rich. Some merchants traveled long distances to trade goods with other groups. Over time, they established trade routes, which helped spread ideas and practices.

COMPLEX INSTITUTIONS mt

As cities developed, complex institutions such as government and organized religion emerged as ways to manage resources and populations. **Government**, or an organization set up to make and enforce rules in a society, provided leadership and laws. Organized religion bound communities together through shared beliefs.

SPECIALIZED WORKERS mt

Food surpluses made possible by the agricultural revolution led to settled communities and to another key characteristic of civilizations: **specialized workers**. Specialized workers performed jobs other than farming. Some people specialized in pottery, metalworking, weaving, or toolmaking. Others became government officials, priests, teachers, soldiers, or merchants.

RECORD KEEPING mt

As societies developed, they had to manage information. **Record keeping**, or organizing and storing information, became an important job. Specialized workers called **scribes** recorded business transactions, important events, customs, traditions, and laws. The first writing systems used pictographs that looked like the things they represented, such as wavy lines for water. Eventually, complex writing systems helped people record important information and abstract ideas. As writing developed, so did calendar keeping.

IMPROVED TECHNOLOGY mt

The fifth key characteristic civilizations have in common is improved technology. As cultures became more complex, people developed new tools and techniques to solve problems and survive. Advances in technology included metalworking methods, inventions such as the wheel and the plow, and tools to create everyday items, such as the potter's wheel.

FIVE TRAITS OF CIVILIZATION



COMPLEX INSTITUTIONS

SPECIALIZED WORKERS

RECORD KEEPING

CITIES

IMPROVED TECHNOLOGY



Giant's Tower, a temple in Malta, demonstrates evidence of complex institutions.



REVIEW & ASSESS

- 1. READING CHECK** What key traits, or characteristics, define civilizations around the world?
- 2. DRAW CONCLUSIONS** In what ways were cities essential to the development of civilizations?
- 3. ANALYZE CAUSE AND EFFECT** What is the connection between food surpluses and specialized workers?