

Civilization

Civilizations are complex societies that first grew from the development of cities after the Neolithic Revolution (*Agricultural Revolution*) that brought far reaching changes to human life resulting from the beginning of farming.

Most scholars agree that there are 8 features of a civilization.

Eight Characteristics of a Civilization

1. Advanced Cities



As farmers settled in the fertile river valley, they began to grow surplus or extra food. This extra food increased the population of the settlement that led to the formation of cities.

A city is a large group of people who live together in a specific space. A city is usually a center for trade, and city dwellers create goods that can be traded along with services for the city.

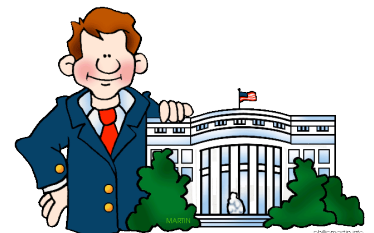


2. Organized Central Government

Definition: *a government with rules and way of voting or control*

Explanation: The growing population of cities made government or a system of ruling necessary. Leaders emerged to maintain order and establish laws. Governments began to oversee the business or running and maintaining the cities. All civilizations have a system of government to direct people's behavior and make life orderly. They also make and enforce laws, collect taxes, and protect its citizens.

Examples:



3. Complex Religions

Definition: *a set of spiritual beliefs, values, and practices*

Explanation: Religious leaders would conduct elaborate ceremonies to appease the gods and insure a bountiful harvest. Floods and droughts were blamed on the gods' anger so rituals were conducted in the temples.

Examples:

4. Job Specialization

Definition: *specific jobs with requirements or specialties*

Explanation: As cities grew, so did the need for specialized workers. No longer could individuals do all the work. Food surplus provided for the need for specialized skills from workers. Specialization helped workers refine their skills and specialize on one specific task.

Examples:



5. Social Classes

Definition: *a broad group in society having common economic, cultural, or political status/ Distinguished from other groups by such things as wealth, property, and rights*

Explanation: As jobs became specialized so did the status and need for certain individuals. For instance, the need for a knowledgeable and educated religious leader was more RESPECTED than an unskilled worker. Herders were NEEDED and RESPECTED for the food while masons were needed for building.

Examples:

6. Writing

Definition: *to trace or form (characters, letters, words, etc.) on the surface of some material, as with a pen, pencil, or other instrument*

Explanation: Records were needed to keep account on trade goods and food storage. Writing was needed because the information became too great.

Examples:

7. Art and Architecture

Definition: *the arts and artwork of a thing, place, time, person, etc.; human creations intended to express beauty and convey messages*

Architecture: the buildings and style or architecture of a thing, place, time, person, etc.

Explanation: All civilizations have a highly developed culture including the arts. Arts include creative forms of expression such as painting, architecture, literature, and music.

Examples:



8. Public Works

Definition: *structures, as roads, dams, or post offices, paid for by government funds for public use.*

Explanation: The government would order these, although costly to aid and benefit the community.

Examples: