

**COMPETENCY 1.0 ANCIENT WORLD CIVILIZATIONS**

**Skill 1.1 Analyze the influence of various factors on the development of ancient civilizations.**

**Emergence of Human Civilization 10,000 – 5,000 BCE**

By 7000 BCE farming was the primary means of subsistence in Western Asia, while hunting and gathering predominated elsewhere. Over the next 5000 years, farming became established independently in other areas. This agricultural revolution had monumental impact on the lives of humans:

- farming could support much larger populations
- sizes of settlements became increasingly larger
- larger communities generated new needs and new opportunities that gave rise to new activities
- trade in raw materials and finished goods developed between communities
- cooperation became normalized through communal efforts

Some people were able to develop craft skills, to engage in long-distance trade, and to experiment with technology such as pottery kilns, metallurgy, and irrigation. Communities established permanent villages with material goods and equipment, which led to the beginnings of social differentiation. Various regions developed a dependence on different staple crops. Animals were domesticated, and selective breeding began to enhance useful traits. Permanent dwellings were produced. Communities created identifying symbols and rituals, including burial customs. Communal living, however, also exposed people to disease and epidemics.

Between 7000 and 5000 BCE, communities in west Asia and southeastern Europe discovered independently that metals could be extracted from rock by heating. The first metals used were copper, gold and lead. Tools made of these soft metals could not compete with flint and stone for durability. Copper and gold came to be used for decorative items.

Americas: Cultivation of potatoes, squash and beans began to supplement hunting and gathering. In about 8500 – evidence in the Andes of harvesting grains and vegetables; 8000 – evidence of use of grindstones; 7500 – earliest known cemetery in North America; 5500 – squash, avocados, and chiles are staples in the Central American diet.

Europe: 7000 – Farming reached southeast Europe, spreading west along the Mediterranean and north into central and northwest Europe; new strains of cereals were developed in northern Europe; cattle and pigs replaced goats as the main domestic animals; 5000 – cereal farming villages arose in western Europe; 5400 – farming spread to central Europe; fishing supplemented hunting-gathering in northern Europe; farming villages in southern Anatolia traded flint, obsidian, timber, shells and copper.

West Asia: Earliest farmers settle in a fertile arc of land from the Persian Gulf to the eastern Mediterranean; 9000 – wheat was harvested in Mesopotamia; 8000 – large-seeded grains were cultivated at Jericho; 7000 – villages of mud-brick houses were built in Anatolia and central Mesopotamia; goats were main domesticated animal; 6000 – craftsmen smelted copper and lead; painted pottery developed in northern Mesopotamia; 5500 – irrigation was used by farmers of southern Mesopotamia.

East Asia: 7000 – Agriculture developed in northern China; grain was kept in storage pits, and pigs and dogs were domesticated; 6000 – rice was cultivated in lowlands of Yangtze Delta; 5000 – jade was imported into northern Manchuria from Central Asia or Siberia.

South and Southeast Asia: 7000 – Drainage and cultivation were practiced in New Guinea; 6000 – pottery appeared as grave goods indicating trade with central Asia; first pottery was produced in southeast Asia; 5000 – cultivation of wheat and barley developed in northern India, and rice was cultivated south of Ganges Valley; 2000 – farming was established in the region.

Africa: 9000 – Hunter-gatherers move into the Sahara as ice age ended; 8000 – Saharan rock art; 7000 – wavy-line pottery produced; 6500 – cattle domesticated in northern Africa; 6000 – Sahara became arid again, and people departed; cultivation of wheat and barley spread to the Nile Valley from the Middle East.

**Also refer to Skill 1.2.**

**Skill 1.2 Demonstrate knowledge of individuals, events, and issues that shaped the development of ancient civilizations.**

Prehistory is defined as the period of man's achievements before the development of writing. In the Stone Age cultures, there were three different periods: the **Lower Paleolithic Period**, characterized by the use of crude tools; the **Upper Paleolithic Period**, exhibiting a greater variety of better-made tools and implements, the wearing of clothing, a highly organized group life, and blossoming skills in art; and the **Neolithic Period**, characterized by domesticated animals, food production, the crafts of knitting, spinning, and weaving cloth, starting fires through friction, building houses rather than living in caves, developing institutions including the family, religion, and a form of government or the origin of the state.

Ancient civilizations were those cultures that developed to a greater degree and were considered advanced. These included the following eleven with their major accomplishments.

**Egypt** made numerous significant contributions including construction of the great pyramids; development of hieroglyphic writing; preservation of bodies after death; making paper from papyrus; contributions to developments in arithmetic and geometry; the invention of the method of counting in groups of 1-10 (the decimal system); completion of a solar calendar; and to the laying of the foundation for science and astronomy.

The ancient civilization of the **Sumerians** invented the wheel; developed irrigation through use of canals, dikes, and devices for raising water; devised the system of cuneiform writing; learned to divide time; and built large boats for trade. The Babylonians devised the **Code of Hammurabi**, a system of laws.

The ancient **Assyrians** created complex societies and developed the fundamentals of human civilization: agriculture, kilns, smelting, and the first king to go beyond the city-state.

The **Hebrews, another** ancient Semitic people, occupied Canaan and are considered to be the ancestors of the Israelites. They migrated from Ur about 2000 BCE. The Israelites were first known to develop monotheism, one God.

The **Minoans** devised a system of writing, using symbols to represent syllables in words. They built palaces with multiple levels containing many rooms, water and sewage systems with flush toilets, bathtubs, hot and cold running water, and bright paintings on the walls.

The **Mycenaeans** changed the Minoan writing system to suit their own language and used symbols to represent syllables; the Mycenaeans destroyed the famous Troy, and then largely disappeared.

The **Phoenicians** were sea traders well known for their manufacturing skills in glass and metals and the development of a widely used purple dye. They became proficient enough in the skill of navigation that they were able to sail by the stars at night. They devised an alphabet using symbols to represent single sounds, which was an extension of the Egyptian writing system.

In **India**, the birthplace of Siddhartha Ghandi, the caste system was developed; the principle of zero in mathematics was discovered; and the major religion of Hinduism was founded.

**China** began building the Great Wall to protect the northern border; practiced crop rotation and terrace farming; established the silk industry; and developed caravan routes across Central Asia for extensive trade. They increased proficiency in rice cultivation and developed a written language based on drawings or pictographs .

**Persians** developed an alphabet; contributed the religions/philosophies of **Zoroastrianism, Mithraism, and Gnosticism**; and allowed conquered peoples to retain their own customs, laws, and religions. Persia is Iran.

**Greece**, built on the foundations laid by the Egyptians, Phoenicians, Minoans, and Mycenaeans, contributed the Greek alphabet (derived from the Phoenician letters), which formed the basis for the Roman alphabet and our present-day alphabet. Extensive trading and colonization resulted in the spread of the Greek civilization. The Greek love of sports, with emphasis on a sound body, led to the tradition of the Olympic Games. Greece developed a series of independent, strong city-states. The Greeks influenced the Western traditions of drama, epic, and lyric poetry. Greek fables and myths centered on the many gods and goddesses, and were later adopted by the Roman culture. Science, astronomy, medicine, mathematics, philosophy, art, architecture, the practice of recording historical events, and inventing democracy are significant contributions.

Plato (427-347 B.C.) who studied under Socrates and Aristotle (384-322 B.C.) who studied under Plato both contributed to the field of political science since both believed that political order would result in the greatest stability. They were driven by idea of a first cause or the "Prime Mover," but their conclusions were different. Aristotle is considered to be "the father of political science" because of his development of systems of political order the true development, a scientific system to study justice and political order. Plato founded one of the first schools.

Eratosthenes (276 BC - 194 BC) calculated the circumference of the earth, and the difference between calculations nowadays and his referring to the distance of the earth to the sun is only one percent.

Homer, the Greek poet, is considered to be the founder of geography because of all the geographical details in his works *The Illiad* and *The Odessey*.

The conquests of Alexander the Great spread Greek ideas to the areas he conquered and brought to the Greek world many ideas from Asia, including the value of ideas, wisdom, curiosity, and the desire to learn as much about the world as possible.

**Alexander** (400 BCE) was a Macedonian who was tutored by the Greek philosopher Aristotle, and became one of the greatest conquerors in history. Alexander was the son of Philip II of Macedon, who had united the various city-states of Greece into one kingdom. Upon Philip's death, these states again sought independence but were conquered and reunited by Alexander. Alexander expanded his empire to the east and south, reaching as far as Egypt and India. At its peak, Alexander's empire covered most of the known world.

As Alexander conquered and moved through foreign regions, he increased his forces by absorbing foreign officers and soldiers into his own army. He also encouraged his own soldiers to marry into local populations. This policy of inclusion and expansion had the effect of bringing Greek culture to the east with its ideals of learning and inquiry. Alexander founded the city of **Alexandria** in Egypt, which became a major center of learning. Alexander, affected by Persian culture after conquering a part of that region, for a time took to wearing Persian-style clothing and adopting some of their customs, which made him unpopular with some Greeks.

Alexander died mysteriously in 323 BC at the age of 33, after a sudden illness. He left no heir, and his empire was split into four kingdoms. His reputation did not die, however, and Greek culture in general--and Alexander in particular--served as the inspiration for the Roman leaders who would eventually recreate much of his empire in the following centuries.

In **India**, Hinduism was a continuing influence along with the rise of Buddhism. The Ganges River, which is 1,560 miles long and runs northeast through India across the plains to the Bay of Bengal in Bangladesh is considered to be the most sacred river in India according to the Hindus. Industry and commerce developed along with extensive trading with the Near East. Outstanding advances in the fields of science and medicine were made, along with early advances in navigation and maritime enterprises.

**China** is considered by some historians to be the oldest, uninterrupted civilization in the world and was in existence around the same time as the ancient civilizations founded in **Egypt**, **Mesopotamia**, and the **Indus Valley**. The Chinese studied nature and weather; stressed the importance of education, family, and a strong central government; were influenced by Buddhism, Confucianism, and Taoism which each emphasize harmony between man and nature; and invented among other things gunpowder, modern paper, printing, and the magnetic compass.

**Japan** imported rice cultivation from the Korean peninsula. As Japan became a unified state, it began to import weapons and other manufactured items from China. Japan adopted a law code similar to China, and as Japanese used, accepted, and copied Chinese art, law, architecture, dress, and writing, the Japanese formed their own unique culture. The Japanese incorporated the religion of Buddhism.

The civilizations in **Africa** south of the Sahara developed the refining and use of iron, especially for farm implements and later for weapons. Trading was overland using camels and also took place at important seaports. The Arab culture was extremely influential, as was their later contact with Indians, Christian Nubians, and Persians. Their trading activities were probably the most important factor in the spread of and assimilation of different ideas and stimulation of cultural growth.

The **Vikings** spread their ideas and knowledge of trade routes and sailing first by conquest and later through trade.

In other parts of the world were the **Byzantine (the eastern, Greek-speaking Roman empire)** and **Saracenic** (the common Greek name for Arabs was Saracens) civilizations, both dominated by religion (Christian Orthodox and Islam respectively). Contributions of the Byzantines included writing religious literature and preserving the Greek language. The Byzantine Empire prevented Islamic Saracen expansion into Europe for centuries after the fall of the western Roman Empire.

The **Byzantines** (Christians) made important contributions in art and the preservation of Greek and Roman achievements including architecture (especially in Eastern Europe and Russia), the Code of Justinian, and Roman law. The major contributions of the Saracens were in the areas of science and philosophy, including accomplishments in astronomy, mathematics, physics, chemistry, medicine, literature, art, agriculture, trade and manufacturing. These advances had a marked influence on the Renaissance period of European history.

**Ghana Empire (Wagadou)** occupied an area that is now known as Northern Senegal and Southern Mauritania. There is no absolute certainty regarding the origin of this empire. Oral history dates the rise of the empire to the seventh century BCE. Many believe the nomads who were herding animals on the fringes of the desert posed a threat to the early Soninke people, who were an agricultural community. In times of drought, it is believed the nomads raided the agricultural villages for water and places to pasture their herds. For protection, these farming communities formed a loose confederation that eventually became the empire of ancient Ghana, which prospered on sub-Saharan trade, gold, salt, and camels playing a major role.

**Skill 1.3 Understand major political, economic, and cultural developments in the civilizations of Africa, the Mediterranean basin, Mesoamerica, Andean South America, Middle and Near East, and Asia.**

Rome was one of the early cities on the Italian peninsula conquered by the Etruscans, who ruled over Rome until 509 BCE when the Roman Republic overthrew the monarchy. The Etruscans had absorbed and modified Greek civilization. Such elements of Greek culture as writing, certain religious practices, and engineering skills were passed on to the Roman peoples during their rule.

The period prior to the establishment of the Republic remains a mystery to modern historians. The following has been reconstructed: Rome was composed of three tribes, each divided into clans. Clans were composed of groups of families. There was a division into a class of nobles and the class of commoners very early.

The nobles, called **patricians** (fathers) appear to have been the privileged class that functioned as an advisory council to the king and had certain political rights. There was no protective function in the government, and thus there was no army. Protection of the citizenry was the responsibility of the father of the family, who was also the priest of the religious cult of the home.

The father was also a patron to commoner clients. In exchange for services to the family, these clients were given political and legal protection. The family unit, then, was composed of the family itself, free clients, and slaves (once wars of conquest began).

The early kings were elected by the nobles and ruled with supreme power in legal matters and in time of war. The kings were advised by the council, or Senate, which was composed of 30 senators (ten from each tribe).

The religion of the early Romans was animistic—they believed that a spirit/soul inhabited everyone and everything. These were not personified or anthropomorphic until just prior to the birth of the Republic. The religion absorbed a number of Greek and Etruscan elements. The household religion was devoted to household gods, called *lares* and *penates*. They were believed to protect the household. Ancestors were worshiped, and their death masks were maintained in an in-house chapel.

The primary factors that led to the overthrow of the last king and the establishment of the Roman Republic appear to be: (1) a desire to be free of the Etruscans; (2) a desire to put an end to the tyranny of the last king; and (3) the kind of political evolution that occurred elsewhere as the noble classes wanted to cast aside the control of the monarch and establish an aristocratic form of government.

The factors that enabled Rome to conquer Italy were:

- Geographical location in the center of the peninsula with no mountain barriers
- A sturdy citizen army and superior military tactics
- The disunity of their enemies
- The use of a superior form of imperialism, by which military veterans settled in conquered areas, providing structure and guidance that allowed self-government to local peoples
- A highly disciplined family structure with a very powerful father
- A superior form of government—the republic

The structure of the early Republic was clearly aristocratic. The nobles subjugated the commoners and dominated both the consuls and the Senate. In 450 BC a written law gave new rights to the common people: the right to popular assembly; the creation of *tribunes* to protect the rights of all citizens; the creation of special new officials (judges and treasury officials) who were to make government fairer and more efficient. By 287 BCE, the *Hortensian law* allowed nobles and commoners to intermarry and permitted commoners to hold public offices.

Approximately the next 275 years were employed with expansion. This involved numerous wars of conquest. By 100 BCE Rome controlled most of the Hellenistic world. This rapid conquest was one of the factors in the decline of the Republic. The republic did not have the infrastructure to absorb the conquered people. In addition, there was political decay, vast economic and social change, and military failure. In politics, the Senate refused to grant rights to the mass of the populace. A civil war erupted between rival factions. And, lacking adequate infrastructure, Rome was unable to provide good government to conquered territories. Heavy taxation of these territories, oppression by the government, and corrupt resident government officials led to decay.

Critical social and economic changes included: the ruin of small farmers by importing slaves from conquered areas, a vast migration of the poor to the city of Rome, a failure to encourage and invest in industry and trade, the dissatisfaction of the new business class, and a general decline in morale among all classes of citizens. At the same time, the republic experienced a vast slave uprising in Southern Italy and faced the first attacks from Germanic invaders.

The end of the Republic was marked by two significant power struggles. The first was the grasp of power by the *First Triumvirate* in 59 BCE. The Triumvirate consisted of Caesar, Pompey, and Crassus. Caesar eliminated Pompey and attempted to establish a dictatorship. Caesar made many reforms, including reducing the power of the Senate, but he was killed in the Senate in 44 BCE.

The following year experienced the rise of the *Second Triumvirate*, composed of Octavian, Mark Antony, and Lepidus. Octavian (later called Augustus) emerged victorious from the ensuing power struggle and became ruler of Rome in 31 BCE. Octavian (Augustus) established a “disguised monarchy” in which he appeared to share power with the Senate but withholding most power. He established the boundaries of Rome on the Rhine and Danube rivers, improved government, and extended citizenship rights to all Roman soldiers. The power of the emperor was gradually enlarged by his successors. The height of the empire was achieved under “the five good emperors”—Nerva, Trajan, Hadrian, Antoninus Pius, and Marcus Aurelius.

The major contributions of the Roman Empire are:

- Peace and prosperity (the *Pax Romana*)
- The codification of Roman law
- A unified empire that allowed much self-government to component city-states
- The introduction of the idea of separation of powers and popular sovereignty
- The development of the “science” of public administration
- Formalized methods of tax collection
- Construction of an extensive civil service program
- Tolerance and the granting of citizenship rights to all inhabitants
- Engineering and construction of excellent roads, bridges, aqueducts and sanitation systems
- Construction of massive buildings—coliseums, public baths, basilicas
- Architectural innovations in the use of vaults and arches
- Preservation of Greek artistic techniques
- Development of education
- Refinement of rhetoric
- Literature: Cicero, Caesar, Lucretius, Virgil, Juvenal, Livy, Plutarch
- Extension of philosophy in the Greek tradition