Paleolithic Era -- 2.5 million - 12,000 BCE

- Human species: existed for 2.5 million years.
- Hominids: members of the family of humans (includes *Homo Sapiens Sapiens*).
- Cave art (ex: Lascaux, France).
  - Estimated to be 16,000 years old.
  - Over 2,000 paintings in Lascaux cave: animals, human figures and abstract signs.
- Why is it so significant that prehistoric peoples began creating art?
Migration of Humans

- Humans gradually migrated from their origins in East Africa to Eurasia, Oceania, and the Americas.
- Humans adapted to each new area, but had limited contact with groups, even in their same area.

Ancient Wall built by early European Trumpkinids
Characteristics of Paleolithic Age

• Simple tool use (but wide range of rocks and sticks) for hunting and warfare
• Use of controlled fire
  • Aided hunting, protected against predators, provided heat shelters
• Population distribution all over the world (extremely slow)
• Population growth (also extremely slow)
  • Estimated to be at 1.5 million humans by 100,000 years ago
• Emergence of speech
  • Homo erectus (100,000 years ago) began to transmit oral speech
Hunter-gatherers

• Over 99% of human existence has relied on hunting and gathering

• People depended on naturally-growing foods and migrating animal herds; these foods and animals are tied to the seasons.

• A hunter-gatherer migrated from place to place throughout the year to gather food they could find and hunt animals they could find → this lifestyle is called nomadic ("nomads")

• Social equality: men hunt, women gather
Problems with hunting and gathering

- Population growth is small overall
  - Gathering nuts and berries cannot support large populations
- Giving birth could be dangerous for women
- Nursing is a natural form of birth control
- Women had to care for infants, which took time away to do other chores
- Labor-intensive and dangerous lifestyle
  - Had to roam widely for food
  - Had to stalk and kill prey
1. Where did the human species originate from?
2. What are most “sites” of humans located by?
Mesolithic age -- 12,000 – 8,000 BCE

- Human ability to fashion stone tools and other implements improved
  - Sharpen and shape stones
  - Create log rafts, pots, baskets
- Domesticated more animals
- 10,000 BCE - Climate gradually warms & humans first discover agriculture
- Population growth accelerated
  - Increase in conflict and war
The Neolithic Revolution is the transition from hunting and gathering to agricultural settlement.

- First instance of agriculture was likely 10,000 BCE

Major developments:
- Invention of agriculture (reliable food supply)
- Increased population growth
- Sophisticated social and cultural institutions (creation of cities, classes)
- Gender inequality (men labor, women become domestic)
Invention of Agriculture

• Humans deliberately planned to harvest plants, grains and vegetables for later harvest.
• People began domesticating (raising for food) animals (pigs, sheep, goats, cattle).
  • An alternative to agriculture was pastoralism: Limited migration to allow for animals to always have ample food; very few possessions; interacted with multiple groups
• Metal tools were developed for planting and harvesting; communities had to work collaboratively
• Slash-and-burn Agriculture: used to clear more land to make it suitable for plants and animals by creating crop fields and pastures → led to land erosion and overgrazing
Where did farming initially develop?

• As early as 10,000 BCE but was not widely used until 6,000 BCE
• Originated in the “Fertile Crescent” between the Tigris and Euphrates rivers (Ancient Mesopotamia).
• Agriculture will emerge independently 1,000-1,500 years later in China, India, Mesoamerica, and Peru
1. Where are the core areas of agriculture?
2. Where did agriculture originate from?
Quick Review

• Discuss with your partner
• What is the major difference between the Paleolithic Era and the Neolithic Era?
• What were some of the problems with hunting and gathering?
What is a civilization?

• A city society distinguished by 1) reliance on sedentary agriculture
• 2) ability to produce food surpluses
• 3) specialization of labor
• 4) existence of non-farming elites
• 5) long-distance trading relationships
• 6) social stratification
Early Civilizations

• Civilizations that were powerful had control over land and resources
  • Hittites in Anatolia discovered and improved iron smelting techniques to make iron weapons and tools (more effective than bronze)

• Agriculture began to transform human societies
  • Led to advanced farming tools → made labor easier, and diminished the need for many farmers → people can find other occupations
  • Increases in trade: pottery; plows; woven textiles; metallurgy; wheels
  • Elite groups accumulate more wealth

• Pastoral nomads disseminated new weapons (composite bows, iron weapons) and modes of transportation (chariots, saddles)
Four Eurasian River Valley Civilizations

1) Ancient Egypt in the Nile River Valley
2) Mesopotamia in the Tigris-Euphrates River Valley
3) Mohenjo-Daro and Harappa in the Indus River Valley
4) Shang Dynasty in the Huang He or Yellow River Valley

Other River Valley civilizations: Olmecs in Mesoamerica; Chavin in Andean South America
Mesopotamia—“land between the rivers”

- Civilization that developed between the Tigris and Euphrates rivers.
- Developed independently from any other civilizations.
- Home to many groups: Sumerians, Assyrians, Akkadians, Babylonians
- Early Achievements: Writing (cuneiform); formal law codes (Hammurabi’s Law Code); irrigation; architecture (ziggurats); trade
Sumerians (3500-2000 BCE)

- Irrigated crops (barley, dates and sesame seeds)
- Abundance of food led to steady population growth
- Built canals, dykes, levees, dams, water/drainage systems
- Developed cuneiform
- Invented the wheel
- Developed ziggurats (temples)
- Developed a trade system, including bartering
- Could not unite lower Mesopotamia
Writing in Mesopotamia

• Cuneiform: “wedge shaped”
• Used different pictures to represent objects, geometric shapes to represent sounds
• Up to 2,000 symbols
• Scribes - trained writers
• *The Epic of Gilgamesh* is an epic poem originating from this period and is one of the earliest known literary writings.
Babylonians -- 1830-1500 BCE and 650-500 BCE

- Reunited Mesopotamia in 1830 BCE
- King Hammurabi
  - Conquered Akkad and Assyria
  - Established a law code
  - Built defensive walls
  - Improved irrigation
  - Considered to have divine support
- Economy based on wool, agriculture, and trade (woven goods)
Hammurabi’s Code

- 1772 BCE: King Hammurabi of Babylon developed a law code
  - Written on stone and displayed in the city center.
- 282 laws: specific to social status and gender of the offender
  - Punishments were to fit the crime (eye for an eye).
  - Revealed social hierarchies
  - Government has control over people
Irrigation in Mesopotamia

• Irrigation canals to bring water from the Tigris and Euphrates to crops.
  • Qanat system: gravity-based irrigation that used gently sloping troughs to capture water and direct it to fields
• Constructed levees, which held back flood waters from the rivers; the Tigris and Euphrates were unpredictable and powerful.
• Irrigation made Mesopotamian civilization possible.
Qanat System
Religion and Architecture in Mesopotamia

- Ziggurats, or religious temples, were developed in Mesopotamia. They were stepped to bring visitors closer to the heavens.
- Mesopotamians had complex religious beliefs, which included polytheism.
- Polytheistic religion with over 3,600 gods and goddesses
- Kings ruled by divine right
- Each city-state had a god/goddess
- Kings and priests acted on behalf of the gods
Quick Review—Discuss with your partner

• What does writing help civilizations accomplish?

• How would Mesopotamians have described their gods?
Egypt--3100-1200 BCE

• Known as “gift of the Nile” because it is at the end of the Nile River’s flow from Lake Victoria (Uganda).

• The Nile River flows north, to the Mediterranean Sea.
  • Therefore, “Upper Egypt” is in the south and “Lower Egypt” is in the north.

• Each September, the Nile floods, which turns the Nile Valley into a marsh.
  • After the water retreats, soil is fertile and crops grow very well.

• The Nile also produced other natural resources (reeds, copper, stone, clay)
History of Egyptian Civilization

- Political organization began as small states ruled by local kings.
- Breaks into Upper and Lower kingdoms
- Eventually, Egypt become a large and unified political body.
- Egyptian history is organized into 30 dynasties falling into three longer periods:
  - Old Kingdom
  - Middle Kingdom
  - New Kingdom
Old Kingdom--2700-2200 BCE

- King Menes, founder of the first Egyptian dynasty, united the upper and lower Egyptian kingdoms in 3100 BCE
- Old Kingdom includes 3rd-6th dynasties
- Egypt was ruled by a strong government and pharaoh until priests and other officials demanded more power
- 11th-12th dynasties
- Changes were made to the government so that the pharaoh did not have complete power
- First and only female pharaoh (Hatshepsut)
New Kingdom--1570-1075 BCE

• 18th, 19th, and 20th dynasties
• The Egyptians conquered several civilizations: Nubians in the south and Syrians in the northeast.
• Slavery was used among elite.
• 1353-1336: Amarna Period
• At the end of the New Kingdom, there was a power-struggle between government officials. The empire was divided into smaller states.
  • Smaller states were weak and invaders took over Egypt
Social Classes in Egypt

- **3 social classes**
  - King and high-ranking officials (priests, scribes, noblemen who had positions in court)
  - Lower level officials, local leaders and priests, professionals, soldiers, artisans and well-off farmers
  - Peasants (the vast majority of people)

- **Two writing systems**: Hieroglyphics & Cursive script

- Egyptians wrote on papyrus (made from reeds) and carved into stone.
Egyptian Beliefs

• Pharaohs (kings of Egypt) were considered to be gods living on earth.

• Egyptians were polytheistic, except for brief monotheism during the Amarna Period
  • Akhenaten

• Animistic gods; positive view of nature and Nile

• The Book of the Dead explained what happens after Egyptians died and called for mummification.
  • Allowed for detailed knowledge of the human body
Egyptian achievements

• Mathematic advancements
  • Used mathematical operations: +, -, x, ÷
  • Fractions, volume, surface area, decimals
  • 24-hour day

• Art and architecture
  • Granite to carve statues
  • Pyramids and Sphinx
  • Used paint to create colorful hieroglyphics and paintings

• Egyptian gods and goddesses influenced other religions
Quick Review—With your partner

• How is the Nile different from the Tigris and Euphrates? How did this affect religious views?
• What were some Egyptian cultural achievements?
Indus River Valley Civilizations

• Two large cities emerged around 2,500 BCE: Harappa and Mohenjo Daro.

• Harappan writing has never been deciphered; their civilization isn’t well known. Thus, archaeological discoveries are crucial.
Harappa and Mohenjo-Daro

• Evidence has suggested:
  • Cities were part of a unified and organized government
  • No social classes
    • No remains of temples or palaces
  • No evidence of an organized military
    • But, cities had fortifications, and people used bronze knives, spears, and arrowheads.
  • Cities traded with Mesopotamia, and Mesopotamian irrigation systems were adopted.
    • Crops found: wheat, barley, peas, melon, sesame
Huang He River Valley Civilization (Yellow River)
Shang Dynasty--(Yellow River valley)

• People settled on the Yellow River by 3,000 BCE.
  • Had discovered pottery, wheels, farms and silk, but had not discovered writing or how to use metals
• If Xia Dynasty existed, began around 2070 BCE – potentially mythical
• Highly developed social classes: kings, nobles, commoners and slaves.
• Developed in considerable isolation: develop agriculture on their own
• Organized state with irrigation
• Skilled horseback riders; used bronze, iron
Shang Dynasty--(Yellow River valley)

- Used ideographic symbols: pictographic characters grouped together to create new concepts.
- People lived in simple mud houses.
- The Shang Dynasty was the first documented rule in China (Xia had no written records).
- Invasions caused a temporary decline in civilization.
Mediterranean Cultures

• Phoenicians:
  • alphabet of 22 letters, which helped to create the Greek and Latin alphabets

• Jews:
  • Settled near Mesopotamia
  • First civilization to believe in and sustain the idea of monotheism
  • Codified in the Torah (Hebrew Bible); revealed influence of Mesopotamian law/culture
  • Diasporic communities → result of Assyrian, Babylonian invasions

• Most river valley civilizations declined after 1200 BCE, due to nomadic invasions and internal warring.
Quick Review with your partner

• What are the Four River Valley Civilizations?
• Name a development from each civilization.
• What caused the decline of these River Valley communities?