Period I: TECHNOLOGICAL & ENVIRONMENTAL TRANSFORMATIONS (to c. 6000 BCE)

Human Origins and the Peopling of the Globe (Chapter 1)

The scientific community traces human origins to East Africa, due to archaeological discoveries. Early humans typically lived in bands and tribes of 20-50 people, based on kinship ties. Early humans were hunter-gatherers. As populations grew and competition for resources intensified, groups spread out into new areas. Over thousands of years, humans spread and settled in all directions throughout Africa, into Eurasia, Australia to the Americas. From Siberia, humans walked across the Bering Strait on a frozen land bridge made possible by the Ice Age. From modern-day Alaska, humans slowly expanded southward eventually reaching the southern tip of South America.

Key Concept 1.1: Big Geography and the Peopling of the Earth

* Humans used fire in new ways: to aid hunting and foraging, to protect against predators and to adapt to cold environments.
* Humans developed a wider range of tools specially adapted to different environments from tropics to tundra.
* Religion was mostly animistic.
* Economic structures focused on small kingship groups of hunting-foraging bands that could make what they needed to survive. However, not all groups were self-sufficient; they exchanged people, ideas and goods.

The Neolithic Revolution and Its Effects (Chapter 2)

By approximately 8000 BCE, humans had discovered how to domesticate plants and animals. Farming produced regular food and animal dung, yes POOP, fertilized the plants leading to agricultural surplus. These two discoveries allowed humans to settle down and live a “sedentary lifestyle.” Agricultural surplus (more food) allowed some people to specialize in jobs that helped society develop more sophisticated technology and religious beliefs. Job specialization led to trade. Because some jobs were more valuable to society, some individuals became wealthier than others, leading to socio-economic class divisions. More people living in one place also created the need for laws and political rule. Wealthy elite horded metal (first bronze, then iron) and used armies of men with weapons to take control over society. To summarize, farming and dung led to complex political and social organization, aka civilization!

Key Concept 1.2: The Neolithic Revolution and Early Agricultural Societies

**Neolithic Revolution led to new and more complex economic and social systems**

* Possibly as a response to climate change, permanent agricultural villages emerged first in the lands of the eastern Mediterranean. Agriculture emerged at different times in Mesopotamia, the Nile River Valley and Sub-Saharan Africa, the Indus River Valley, the Yellow River or Huange He Valley, Papua New Guinea, Mesoamerica and the Andes.
* Pastoralism developed at various sites in the grasslands of Afro-Eurasia.
* Differing crops or animals were domesticated in the various core regions, depending on available local flora and fauna.
* Agricultural communities had to work cooperatively to clear land and create the water control systems needed for crop production.
* These agricultural practices drastically impacted environmental diversity. Pastoralists also affected the environment by grazing large numbers of animals on fragile grasslands, leading to erosion when overgrazed.

**Agriculture and Pastoralism began to change human societies**

* Pastoralism and agriculture led to more reliable and abundant food supplies, which increased the population.
* Surpluses of food and other goods led to specialization of labor, including new classes of artisans and warrior, and the development of elites.
* Technological innovations led to improvements in agricultural production, trade and transportation, including pottery, plows, woven textiles, metallurgy, wheels and wheeled vehicles.
* In both pastoralist and agrarian societies, elite groups accumulated wealth, created more hierarchical social structures and promoting patriarchal forms of social organization.

Ancient Civilizations and Their Connections (Chapter 3)

From about 5000 years ago urban societies developed. Farming and complex society developed in five regions of the world: Mesopotamia in West Asia, Egypt in North Africa, Harappa in India, Shang in China, and Olmec in Mesoamerica. Many achievements of these early societies had lasting impact. Alphabets, systems of writing, mathematics, technology/tools, religious/cultural beliefs, architectural monuments, and systems of rule influenced later civilizations. Organized monarchies with bureaucracies were developed. Polytheism was the order of the day with gods usually related to local geography. People in India worshipped many gods, with Hindu ideology blending Aryan and Dravidian beliefs. In China polytheism was combined with the veneration of ancestors. The polytheistic Hebrews of ancient Mesopotamia transitioned to become the first monotheists.

Key Concept 1.3: Development and Interactions of Early Agricultural, Pastoral and Urban Societies

**Core Foundational civilizations developed in a variety of geographical and environmental settings where agriculture flourished.**

* Mesopotamia in the Tigris and Euphrates River Valleys
* Egypt in the Nile River Valley
* Mohenjo-Daro and Harappa in the Indus River Valley
* Shang in the Yellow or Huang He Valley
* Olmecs in Mesoamerica
* Chavin in Andean South America

**The first states emerged within core civilizations.**

* States were powerful new systems of rule that mobilized surplus labor and resources over large areas. Early states were often led by a ruler whose source of power was believed to be divine or had divine support, and were supported by the religious hierarchy and professional warriors.
* As states grew and competed for land and resources, the more favorably situated—including the Hittites, who had access to iron—had greater access to resources, produced more surplus food and experienced growing populations. These states were able to undertake territorial expansion and conquer surrounding states.
* Early regions of state expansion or empire building were Mesopotamia, Babylonians, Sumerians, Egypt and Nubia.
* Pastoralists were often the developers and disseminators of new weapons (such as chariots or horseback riding) that transformed warfare in agrarian civilizations.

**Culture played a significant role in unifying states through laws, language, literature, religion, myths and monumental art.**

* Early civilizations developed monumental architecture and urban planning (such as ziggurats, pyramids, temples, defensive walls, streets and roads, or sewage and water systems).
* Elites, both political and religious, promoted arts and artisanship (such as sculpture, paintings, wall decorations or elaborate weavings).
* Systems of record keeping (such as cuneiform, hieroglyphs, pictographs, alphabets or quipu) arose independently in all early civilizations.
* Literature was also a reflection of culture (such as the “Epic of Gilgamesh,” *Rig Veda* or *Book of the Dead*).
* New religious beliefs developed in this period continued to have strong influences in later periods, including the Vedic religion, Hebrew monotheism and Zoroastrianism.
* Trade expanded throughout this period, with civilizations exchanging goods, cultural ideas and technology. Trade expanded from local to regional and trans-regional, including between Egypt and Nubia and between Mesopotamia and the Indus River Valley.
* Social and gender hierarchies intensified as states expanded and cities multiplied.