
Key Terms and Concepts

Period 1: Technological and Environmental Transformations, Beginnings to c. 600 BCE

1. Hunting-Foraging Bands

Before the development of agriculture, nomadic peoples around the world lived in small groups that were often related to each other. They hunted game and collected wild or undomesticated plants for food. These people are also known as hunter-gatherer groups. Technology included bows and arrows, Clovis points (large stone arrowheads) and spears. While those tools may not sound much like technology to us, in their day, those tools were vital in assisting humans in the hunt. The very survival of hunting-foraging bands depended on finding adequate food supplies from wild game and plants. Most of the individuals in these groups practiced a form of religion called *animism*. See details below.

2. Neolithic Revolutions

First in the Middle East around 8000 BCE and later in other regions (see River Valley Civilizations below), hunter-foragers settled in areas with a steady water supply and good soil, planted seeds in the ground on purpose—agriculture—and lived in permanent buildings in villages. In the Neolithic Revolutions, irrigation of crops was developed and animals, such as dogs, cats, cattle, and horses, were domesticated to aid with hunting, transportation, and agriculture, and/or function as a food supply. One result of closer contact with animals was increased exchanges of diseases to and from people.

3. River Valley Civilizations

The River Valley Civilizations are those first places where Neolithic Revolutions occurred. Mesopotamia in the Middle East (“Mesopotamia” means “between the rivers”); the Nile Valley in North Africa (the Egyptians); the Indus River Valley in South Asia; and the Shang in the Yellow, or Huang He, River Valley in East Asia were among the earliest known river valleys where agriculture first began. The classic definition of “civilization” means “a city” and these early civilizations also built the first buildings made of stone or brick, and placed them together to form the villages, which developed into cities. See Urbanization below.

4. Pastoralism

While some people were settling into cities, others raised domesticated animals but did not develop agriculture, so they remained on the move. They were known as *pastoralists*. In moving with their herds, they spread information about other groups and developments in technology. Call them “agents of change.” Pastoralists emerged in parts of Africa, Europe, and Asia around the same time as the Neolithic Revolution. One example of a pastoral group that is still functioning in the twenty-first century are the Mongols of East Asia.

5. Urbanization

Small villages in River Valley Civilizations often grew into larger cities, and those cities became important centers of government, trade, and religion. Urban areas saw the development of specialization of jobs, such as scribes or merchants; social levels, such as elites and slaves; and gender roles, such as expectations that men would usually be government leaders and members of the military and women would usually engage in domestic functions like cooking, sewing, and child-rearing. Counting and writing systems began in cities as a means of keeping records of stored food and other goods. One of the first writing systems was *cuneiform* from Mesopotamia. Religious temples like Ziggurats in Mesopotamia are examples of monumental architecture that developed in early cities. Some examples of early cities in Eurasia are Sumer in Mesopotamia, Catal Huyuk in Turkey, and Mohenjo Daro and Harappa in South Asia’s Indus River Valley. In

the Americas, the Olmec civilization developed cities in Mesoamerica by 1600 BCE, and the Chavin civilization, along the coast of modern-day Peru, built urban centers by 900 BCE.

6. Early Empires

Over time, more cities developed in the River Valley Civilizations and were united under a ruler, or king, who claimed his power was derived from the gods. The Babylonians in Mesopotamia were one early empire that conquered rival cities by force and put them under one code of law. A very important example of a written early law code was the Code of Hammurabi, from Babylon, about 1750 BCE. The Egyptians in North Africa established a large and long-lasting empire that, at its peak, stretched along the Nile River from modern Sudan to the Mediterranean coast, west into modern Libya and northeast into modern Lebanon.

7. Animism/Polytheism

The earliest-known form of religion, *animism*, sees gods in nature (worshipping the sun, for example). It was popular among hunting-foraging bands. Polytheism ("many gods") differs from animism in that gods in polytheism have specific names and duties. The Greek god Apollo, for example, was the god "in charge" of the sun.

8. Monotheism

Monotheism is the belief in one god. The Hebrews of Southwest Asia practiced one of the earliest known monotheistic religions, Judaism. This feature set them apart from their neighbors and made them unique in early history. Another early monotheistic faith, from Persia in Central Asia, was Zoroastrianism.

Period 2: Organization and Reorganization of Human Societies, c. 600 BCE to c. 600 CE

9. Classical Era

Historians have labeled the years c. 600 BCE to c. 600 CE the Classical Era. During this period classical empires such as the

Greek and Roman civilizations in the Mediterranean region, the Han Dynasty in East Asia, and the Maurya and Gupta empires in South Asia rose in political, social, and economic power, and then fell. Other important classical civilizations of this era include the Persians in Central Asia and the Mayans in Mesoamerica.

10. Hinduism

The earliest known organized religion, with written codes of the faith and a class of religious leaders (priests), Hinduism was centered in South Asia. Its beliefs were influenced by Indo-European groups who migrated into the region from western areas near the Caspian Sea. Hindu teachings supported the caste system that greatly influenced the political and social structure of South Asia.

11. Buddhism

A “reform” of Hinduism was begun by Prince Siddhartha Gautama c. 500 BCE, who became the Buddha (“Enlightened One”). Unlike Hinduism, Buddhism supported spiritual equality and missionary activity. Buddhism spread far from its origins in South Asia into Southeast and East Asia along trade routes.

12. Confucianism

Based on the teachings of Kong Fuzi (Confucius) in China, c. 500 BCE. He established clearly defined codes of behavior, and gender and family duties. Confucius’s teachings were a philosophy, not a religion dedicated to a deity. Over time, however, Neo-Confucianism emerged, which included aspects of Buddhism and Daoism, and promised eternal reward for faithfulness to Confucius’s teachings.

13. Christianity

Like Buddhism was to Hinduism, Christianity was a reform of an existing religion, Judaism. Jesus taught eternal salvation through the belief that he was the Jewish Messiah, sent by God to save humanity from eternal punishment. Jesus named his disciple Peter as his first successor; this act represents one political difference with Islam’s hierarchy (see No. 25 below). Over time, missionaries

spread Jesus' gospel ("good news") throughout the Roman Empire and beyond. Christianity, Buddhism, and Islam spread globally and are the religions with the most followers today.

14. Han Empire

East Asia's Han Empire existed around the same time as the Roman Empire. In fact, they traded with each other. The Han was one of the largest empires of the classical era and, in terms of technology, was far ahead of other civilizations of the same era.

15. Mandate of Heaven

The Mandate of Heaven reflected the belief that the emperor in China would stay in power as long as the heavens were satisfied with his rule. If the emperor's family line (a dynasty) died out or was overthrown, it was a sign that the emperor had lost his mandate. Although many dynasties rose and fell in China over the centuries, the Mandate of Heaven was a continuity that added stability to society.

16. Chinese Examination System

The Chinese examination system was a political feature of Chinese empires beginning with the Han dynasty and lasting until the early twentieth century. Scholar-bureaucrats took state-sponsored exams in order to become government scribes and serve in other capacities to help emperors run the affairs of state. In this system, it was possible—but rare—for even low-born citizens to rise to political prominence.

17. Mediterranean Civilizations

"Mediterranean Civilizations" is a term used in AP World History to describe the classical Greek and Roman civilizations. The Romans borrowed so much of their political, social, and economic culture from the Greeks that, from a global perspective, historians find it convenient to combine the two.

18. Hellenism

In the fourth century BCE, Alexander the Great conquered the Persian Empire and put his social and political Greek stamp on

his short-lived empire, which stretched from Egypt to India. “Hellenistic” culture is a blend of Greek and local styles. One example of Hellenistic art is a Buddha statue made in unmistakable Greek style, with lifelike features and flowing robes.

19. Maurya/Gupta Empires

These classical empires in South Asia were geographically extensive and powerful empires. The Mauryan Empire existed from c. 320 to c. 185 BCE; the Gupta Empire lasted from c. 320 CE to c. 550 CE. Another later powerful South Asian empire was the Mughal (see 46 below). These empires were exceptions to the trend of political fragmentation in South Asian history. During most of its existence, India had many regional leaders, not one unified empire, as these others were.

20. Bantu Migrations

The Bantu migrations are the most-often cited sub-Saharan event in Africa that occurred over much of the Classical era. Beginning in central Africa c. 1000 BCE to c. 500 CE, Bantu-speaking peoples migrated south and east over many centuries, spreading a common language base and metal-working technology.

21. The Silk Roads

A must-know trade route, the Silk Roads connected East Asia to northern India and central Asia and, indirectly, to the Mediterranean region, West Africa, and northern Europe. Silk, tea, spices, horses, and technology were carried westward along camel and horse caravan routes. Chinese goods and technology made their way into southwest Asia, Africa, and Europe along these routes.

22. Indian Ocean Trade Network

Connected to the Silk Roads, the Indian Ocean trade network was just as important, but with routes over water. African, Arab, Jewish, and Chinese, both Muslim and Christian, merchants carried religion (especially Buddhism and Islam) and exchanged silver, cotton, spices, and many other items across the Indian Ocean.

23. Fall of Classical Empires

Beginning c. 200 CE, all three major classical empires declined and fell. First to go was the Han Dynasty in China (c. 220 CE), followed by the western Roman Empire (476 CE) and finally the Gupta Empire in India in the mid-sixth century CE. All three fell from internal pressures, such as peasant revolts, and external pressures, such as invading nomads and imported diseases.

**Period 3: Regional and Transregional Interactions,
c. 600 CE to c. 1450****24. Trans-Saharan Trade**

Trade of goods, people, and faith across North Africa's Sahara desert peaked from the eighth century CE to the 1500s. Camels were the main mode of transportation. Gold, salt, animal hides, and slaves were among the main items transported out of Africa to points east and north. Muslim merchants imported camels into the region; they also brought along their faith in Islam, which spread rapidly into North and West Africa. Three important West African trade centers along these trade routes were Djenne, Gao, and Timbuktu.

25. Islam

First preached in Arabia in the seventh century CE by the prophet Muhammad, a merchant who preached monotheism. Islam ("submission") united multiple polytheistic Arab tribes into a common faith. By the mid-700s, it had spread rapidly via trade routes out of southwest Asia across North Africa to Spain and eastward into northern India and Central Asia. Muslim merchants carried Islam into Southeast and East Asia.

26. Caliphate

Unlike Christianity, Islam had no clear rules of succession after Muhammad. Culturally, Islam united many peoples, but politically, it fragmented into regional states called *caliphates*, each led by a caliph. The AP World History exam asks more questions

about the Abbasid caliphate than the Umayyad or Fatamid caliphates.

27. Crusades

A series of Christian versus Muslim military campaigns for the “holy land” in Southwest Asia and for parts of the Byzantine empire. The major Crusades occurred sporadically from 1100 to 1300. Politically, European Christians failed to permanently regain much land, but culturally they reacquired much knowledge through contact with Muslims, including the reintroduction of Greek and Roman learning into Europe, which in turn sparked the Renaissance.

28. Dar-al Islam

Basically, Dar-al Islam is “everywhere Islam is” across Afro-Eurasia. In the era c. 600–1450, this term described the territory extending from Spain and Northwest Africa all the way to South and Southeast Asia. Dar-al Islam was not a unified political empire but a large region where Islamic faith and culture was dominant.

29. Diffusion of Religions

In the era c. 600–c. 1450, three religions spread far outside their places of origin: Christianity, Buddhism, and Islam. Buddhism and Christianity were spread by missionary monks. Conversions to Christianity and Islam were also done by “sword mission,” meaning by force. Like Buddhism, Islam was also spread peacefully by merchants along trade routes.

30. Byzantine Empire

Although the western Roman Empire fell in 476 CE, the eastern portion, headquartered in Constantinople, continued for another thousand years. (Byzantine comes from the original name of Constantinople, *Byzantium*.) This empire had major economic, social, and political influence over southern and eastern Europe, the Eastern Mediterranean, and Southwest Asia.

31. Tang and Song Dynasties

The Tang and Song dynasties were two of the most famous dynasties in all of Chinese history, not just in the era c. 600–c. 1450. Under the Tang and Song dynasties, China had the world's largest population, the most advanced technology, and the most splendid cities. (How to remember them? “Drink some Tang and sing a Song.”)

32. Sinification

Think of “sinification” as the “Chinese-ification” of Japan, Korea, and Southeast Asia. China was such a powerful neighbor; it was inevitable that nearby countries would follow its political, social, and economic examples.

33. Mongols

“Agents of change” or “an unstoppable tide of horror”—both definitions are right. Mongol forces invaded south China and rode west all the way into Russia and Southwest Asia in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries. After brutal conquest, they established a *Pax Mongolica*: peace and trade throughout their territories.

34. Black Death

The Black Death is probably history's most infamous disease. Historians believe it may have originated along the trade routes near the Black Sea. It spread east and west during the age of the Mongol conquests, killing millions. For example, in the mid-fourteenth century, the Black Death wiped out as much as one-third of the population of western Europe.

35. Mayan States

The Mayan States were centered in Mesoamerica (southern Mexico and parts of Central America). Like the Egyptians, the Mayan civilization featured pyramids, large cities, a written language, and a complex society. Its height was during the American classical era of 250–900 CE. Tikal was an important Mayan city.

land, and Holland, these explorers initiated the first truly global contacts and ushered in the rise of European influence around the world.

41. Columbian Exchange

Columbus's expeditions to the Americas triggered exchanges of plants, animals, technology, and diseases on a worldwide level. This term is a key definition in the global scope of AP World History.

42. Atlantic World

The Atlantic World encompasses the people, politics, religions, goods, and ideas that crossed back and forth over the Atlantic after Columbus's journeys connected Europe, Africa, and North and South America. This term is especially important in the years c. 1450–c. 1900.

43. Mercantilism

Europe's new worldwide power because of the Columbian Exchange included mercantilism as an example of economic nationalism. Under mercantilist policies, nations developed colonies in the Americas and Asia and used them to provide raw materials such as sugar, furs, silver, and lumber. These products were then processed and sold by companies from the owner (mercantilist) nation all over the world. Each mercantilist nation competed with the others to amass and keep as many colonies as it could as a sign of economic and political power.

44. Atlantic Slave Trade

European mercantilists needed many laborers to work on the large sugar plantations of the Caribbean. These laborers were found mainly in West Africa, and millions were seized and shipped across the Atlantic in the so-called *middle passage*. As a result, great demographic changes occurred in both Africa and the New World.

45. Encomienda System

The encomienda system was a Spanish practice that was used in Spain's American colonies and in the Philippines. Spanish settlers

were granted tracts of land and were permitted to use the native people already living on that land as indentured servants.

46. Mughal Empire

The Mughal Empire was a Muslim empire in South Asia that lasted from the mid-sixteenth to the mid-nineteenth centuries. One of its famous leaders was Akbar. Religious tolerance was one of its features. The Taj Mahal was built during the Mughal reign. Mughal leaders claimed to be descended from the Mongols, which is where the name “Mughal” comes from.

47. Syncretism in Religions

A “world-class” religion must be flexible enough to adapt to local customs as it spreads. Many examples of a world-class religion exist: when Buddhism spread into Southeast Asia, the Buddha became a god-like provider of eternal salvation; as Islam spread into parts of South Asia, it adopted some Hindu features and turned toward mysticism with Sufism; some forms of Christianity in the New World adopted traditional gods and made them part of the pantheon of saints.

48. Printing Press

Developed in China c. 500 CE, printing technology moved along trade routes, arriving in Germany by the fifteenth century, where it spread rapidly into many other areas of Europe. The short structure of Western alphabets was a great benefit in printing. In contrast, the Chinese written language contained thousands of word characters, making printing more challenging.

49. Ottoman Empire

A Muslim empire that expanded from Southwest Asia into parts of North Africa and Eastern Europe, the Ottoman Empire began in the thirteenth century and lasted until the early twentieth century. Ottoman Turks ruled this large empire. The Ottoman Empire was an important political, social, and economic conduit for Western Europe, Africa, and East Asia for many centuries.

**Period 5: Industrialization and Global Integration,
c. 1750 to c. 1900**

50. Industrialization

The Industrial Revolution began in England in the mid-eighteenth century and was a major part of the West's enormous social changes and economic and political expansions in the nineteenth century. It marks the shift from slow hand-made to rapid machine-made production. Industrialization spread to Russia, South and East Asia, and North and South America by the end of the nineteenth century.

51. Enlightenment

Like the Industrial Revolution, the Enlightenment was a western European development in this era that had tremendous effects on a global scale. Having its foundations in scientific study and intellectual reason, its basic tenets included individual rights such as freedom of speech and participation in government. It greatly influenced the American and French Revolutions, which in turn inspired political revolutions around the world.

52. Capitalism

An offshoot of the Enlightenment and strongly attached to the Industrial Revolution, capitalism is an economic system based on individual economic development. Private investors use their money (capital) to invest in potentially profitable activities. Adam Smith was an important English proponent of capitalism. The industrialized nations of the early twenty-first century hang their economic hats on capitalism to varying degrees.

53. Marxism

In the mid-nineteenth century, Karl Marx proposed an alternative to capitalism in an attempt to close the gap between the rich and poor in industrial western Europe and one day, he hoped, the world. In Marxism, the many poor unite and overthrow the few rich, and establish a political and economic system where the government controls production and labor to the benefit of all.

54. Nationalism

Belief that a group of people with similar cultural backgrounds rightly belong together in one nation. It became popular in western Europe in the nineteenth century and spread globally, leading to many wars for independence, most notably in Latin America.

55. Age of Revolutions

During the mid-nineteenth-century “Age of Isms” in western Europe (see Nos. 52 through 54), many revolutions seeking political and social change occurred, inspired by the ideas of the Enlightenment and the French Revolution. In Latin America, most countries successfully revolted against European political control in this era.

56. Imperialism

In the nineteenth century, western Europe’s economic and industrial power made it the world’s strongest political force, and its nations accumulated colonies all over the world. Russia, Japan, and the United States also participated. A famous quotation that reflects the national pride that accompanied imperialist expansion was, “The sun never sets on the British Empire.” At its peak, Britain claimed colonies in half of Africa and much of South and Southeast Asia.

57. Social Darwinism

Connected to strong nationalist ideas, Europe’s political and industrial superiority led to the belief that it was socially and morally superior to the peoples it conquered. Charles Darwin’s “survival of the fittest” scientific theory in the animal world was applied to non-European peoples around the globe.

58. Resistance to Western Hegemony

Local resistance to European imperialism was widespread. Examples include the following: The Chinese government attempted to stop England’s importation of opium; anti-colonial rebellions broke out in Africa; and in India, the National Congress promoted self-rule.

59. Meiji Restoration

In an attempt to compete with the West's industrial and political power, Japan embarked upon the Meiji Restoration, reorganizing its government in the late nineteenth century. The emperor's power was reestablished, and Japan purposefully westernized its industrial base and even its society.

60. Nineteenth-Century Migrations

The Industrial Revolution included improvements in transportation that made ocean travel safer and cheaper. Pushed by revolutions and poor living conditions, and pulled by stories of opportunities, millions of people, especially Europeans but also South and East Asians, migrated to North and South America in the nineteenth century.

61. Indentured Servitude

Part of the nineteenth-century migrations was a result of the end of slavery in areas under Western control. Thousands of South Asians migrated to South Africa and the Caribbean as agricultural indentured servants. East Asians were also employed as indentured servants in the Americas.

62. Open Door Policy

At the beginning of the twentieth century, the United States flexed its new global muscles by proposing that the United States, Japan, and the European powers share open access to trade with China, and the other powers accepted the U.S. plan. The weak government in China was unable to resist the economic and political influence of these nations. The Open Door Policy is widely regarded as a sign of the "arrival" of the United States in global affairs.

63. "Second" Industrial Revolution

The "first" Industrial Revolution involved the mechanization of agriculture and textiles, but in the last half of the nineteenth century, its focus changed to innovations in electricity (telephone and radio), chemistry (fertilizers), transportation (cars and airplanes), and steel (skyscrapers and modern weapons). These

developments continued to influence the rapid social and economic changes in the West into the twentieth century.

Period 6: Accelerating Global Change and Realignment, c. 1900 to the Present

64. The World Wars

The first-half of the twentieth century saw two enormous wars among the “Great Powers” of Europe, Asia, and the United States. These wars were caused in part by massive military production made possible by the Industrial Revolution and by global competition for territories during the Age of Imperialism. In an AP World History context, World Wars I and II can be seen as one long, global war with a 20-year break between the two. The results of the wars were the decline of western Europe and the rise of the power of the United States and Soviet Union in the second half of the twentieth century.

65. The Great Depression

Between the two World Wars, a global economic disaster struck the industrialized nations around the world. By the end of World War I, the United States had the world’s largest economy; when it failed in the late 1920s, the economies of much of the rest of the world, which were already reeling from the effects of World War I, were severely affected. Two major results were authoritarian governments (see No. 66) and World War II.

66. Authoritarianism

One result of the catastrophe of World War I was a rejection of democratic forms of government in parts of Europe and Asia, namely, Germany, Italy, Russia, and Japan. Single-party rule led by a strongman with dictatorial powers was thought to be a more efficient system than democracy. Communism and fascism were the best-known examples of such governmental systems. The growing military aggression of the fascist governments was a cause of World War II.

67. Communism

Communism was originally proposed by Karl Marx from Germany in the mid-nineteenth century and put in place by Vladimir Lenin in Russia in the early twentieth century. In this economic and political system of socialism, the government (the state) attempts to direct the economy and to provide services for all. Authoritarianism was often the method of rule in communist systems. Communism spread around the globe in the twentieth century and competed directly with capitalist societies.

68. Decolonization

A major global development after World War II was Europe's process of getting rid of its colonial empires around the world. Colonies in South Asia, Southeast Asia, and Africa regained their independence, but they often faced many significant social, economic, and political challenges.

69. Partition

The largest British colony, India partitioned itself, or split up, along religious lines when it gained independence in 1947, forming India (with a Hindu majority) and Pakistan. In 1971, East Pakistan separated from Pakistan to become Bangladesh (both with Muslim majorities). For many decades afterward, Pakistan and India were major rivals in the region of South Asia.

70. Cold War

The dominant global conflict after World War II, the Cold War was conducted between the United States (and its allies) and the Soviet Union (and its allies). The aim for each side was to keep the other from increasing its political and economic influence around the world. It was called the Cold War because the two sides did everything to prepare for a real hot war (with real weapons), except actually fight each other directly. Massive accumulation of nuclear and other forms of weapons threatened mutually assured destruction, but when the Soviet Union fell apart in the late twentieth century, the Cold War ended.

71. Multinational or Transnational Corporation

A multinational or transnational corporation does business in more than one country. The British and Dutch East India companies of the eighteenth century were early examples, but it was after World War II in the twentieth century that this business model became common. Exxon Mobil, Toyota, and General Electric are prominent examples of multinational and/or transnational corporations.

72. Pacific Rim

In the second half of the twentieth century, strong economies developed on both sides of the Pacific. Although the United States was a major economic power in the region, the term usually refers to the economies based in nations such as China, Japan, Australia, South Korea, and Singapore.

73. Chinese Revolutions

In the early twentieth century, a revolution in China against the emperor led to a limited democracy. After World War II, communists led by Mao Zedong overthrew that government. Vast social, political, and economic changes resulted. Until the late twentieth century, communist China was relatively isolated from global economic involvement, but after Mao's death, China opened its economic system to allow capitalist development, and its economy boomed.

74. Apartheid

Apartheid was a political and social policy in South Africa in the mid-twentieth century that separated whites and blacks and that granted the white minority many rights that the black majority was denied. The apartheid policy was reversed in the late twentieth century after decades of global pressure, and majority rule was established.

75. Feminism

Although its roots extended back to the Enlightenment (see No. 51 above), feminism was largely a twentieth-century movement dedicated to increasing the political, social, and economic rights

of women. It began in Western democracies and expanded to include much of the world by century's end. Counterexamples persisted in parts of the Middle East, Africa, and Asia.

76. Globalization

"Globalization" describes the "shrinking world" that resulted from increased economic and communications connections. While the term *could* be applied to world systems after Columbus's voyages (see No. 41 above) or to the Age of Imperialism (see No. 56 above), it became especially popular in the late twentieth century. Not everyone was content with the process of globalization.

77. Historiography

The AP World History exam defines historiography as "historical interpretation." Historiography is the study of the study of history—or the different ways that historians interpret the past at different times. This is important to an AP World History student because developing the skills to find a point of view and to discern multiple historical perspectives is a vital part of the course and the exam. See Chapter 22 for insights into developing these important AP World History skills.

78. Periodization

Periodization is an important AP World History term that describes possible alternatives to "turning point dates" that historians mark in World History. For example, the Neolithic Revolution, which in AP World History is marked at c. 8000 BCE, occurred earlier in the Middle East than in the Americas. The Classical Era is said to have ended by 600 CE, but the Han Dynasty and the Western Roman Empire fell long before that date. See Chapter 23 for more information.