

“Civilization” Case Studies: Does each society constitute “civilization? Why?

1. The people of this society, located near a river valley, lived in cities of several thousand people. They relied on crops like barley, domesticated cows and lambs, and traded with other regions nearby and far away. They made a few innovations to make their lives easier, including irrigation channels (for water), basic algebra, a written script for records (and later literature), a 12 month calendar, ships, and the wheel. They were also known for their bronze sculptures and reliefs (plaques). They worshiped many gods at large temples run by priests, and each city had its own temple and provided certain resources or commodities. These temples also served as administrative centers where resources (like crops) were collected, stored, and distributed or offered to the gods. A lugal (king) ruled over each city and created legal codes, and the kings were said to have descended from heaven. Scribes and priests were considered to be part of the bureaucracy and were very important and wealthy, while craftsmen and peasants were below them. At the bottom of the social system were slaves, often taken as prisoners of war.
2. The people of this society, located on the steppes (grasslands), lived in large, circular tents called yurts that could be easily assembled and disassembled. They were organized into tribes, and relationships were largely based on kinship and clans, with seniority determining one's rank. They were pastoral nomads, herding livestock throughout the steppes. They were fierce warriors known for their skills on horseback and in archery, and they often traded with other societies or, when necessary, raided them. They worshiped a sky god and followed an animistic religion that stressed the importance of certain spirits and shamans. They did not have any written records.
3. The people of this society, located along a large river, lived in a centralized kingdom of cities headed by a king who was a representative of the gods and who acted as an intermediary (go between) between the gods and the people. Some cities served as major religious and political centers. The people worshiped a number of different gods in temples with priests acting on the king's behalf. Temples also served as collection centers for grains and other forms of wealth which were offered to the gods or redistributed. The afterlife was considered particularly important, and one had to be deemed worthy of having his spirit live on. The people of this society also mastered shipbuilding, large scale architecture, and mathematics. They also created a writing system based on symbols, used for both records and later for literature. Most people were farmers, and priests and scribes were the elites, below the king. Slaves mainly served as indentured servants and could even earn their freedom. They traded with far away societies and relied on irrigation for farming. Livestock, especially cattle, was central to their society, and formed the basis for many taxes.
4. The people of this society, located in the steppes, lived in confederations of tribes that banded together for common defense. They mostly raised and herded livestock, but some also farmed millet. They lived semi-nomadic lives, traveling long distances at times, and they were incredibly accomplished horsemen and well-trained warriors and archers known to use a particular type of bronze arrows dipped in poison. They were also skilled metalworkers, particularly with bronze and gold, creating weapons, tools and elaborate jewelry. They forged alliances (sometimes using force) with settled peoples, providing military protection and animal products in exchange for agricultural and other goods. Their power and military strength allowed them to dominate trade across long distances and act as important go-betweens in highly profitable trade between settled societies. They worshiped male and female deities and had a professional class of priests, but most people were herders and warriors. Archaeologists have not found any written records.
5. The people of this society, located on flat lands near a large river, lived in connected groups of villages and towns linked by trade networks and organized into chiefdoms and reliant on maize

farming. They constructed large, earthen pyramids with temples, burial chambers, and sometimes elite houses at the top. Religious temples seem to be intended for the worship of the sun god. The homes of workers and other commoners surrounded the temple complexes. Some of the larger settlements had protective walls as well and had more influence or power over the smaller settlements. Chiefs and priests held both religious and political power, with craftsmen, laborers, and farmers below them. They practiced elaborate burial rituals and buried elites with grave goods like elaborate pottery, statues, and decorated shells. Some towns had large copper workshops that produced ceramics, jewelry, and ritual goods. Many of the towns also seemed to observe the summer and winter solstices as part of their rituals. Archaeologists have not found any written records.

6. The people of this society, located along a large river, lived in a collection of several cities along the river valley. The people farmed barley and raised cattle, pigs, and goats. They were also engaged in significant long distance overland and maritime trade networks. They were skilled in pottery, statues, bronze metalworking, jewelry and other crafts. Cities were laid out in well planned and organized grid patterns and featured irrigation and sewage and drainage systems. They also used a standard system of measurement and kept large storehouses for surplus food. Houses were more or less identical and all had access to sewage and drainage. Most people in the cities were traders and artisans. They used a written symbol script engraved on seals, mostly to keep record of trade. They practiced ritual burials, but no differences have been found among the burials of individuals.
7. The people of this society, located in a vast desert area, were organized in clans of family groups led by a chief. They typically lived in goatskin tents and moved seasonally with herds of cattle, sheep, and goats, with cattle being the most important. There were nobles, priests, warriors, craftsmen and slaves in each clan, and the nobles of the clan elect the chief. Warriors kept herds of donkeys, sheep and goats, while only nobles owned camels. Warriors also paid tribute to nobles. The craftsmen were a separate class and specialized in making jewelry, camel saddles, and leather goods. Slaves were acquired during slave raids or as war captives, and the people of this society controlled important trade routes and camel caravans that linked settled societies across the desert. They were respected as accomplished warriors who carried swords and bows and arrows. They did not have a written language and instead passed down oral histories and traditions.
8. The people of this society, located along a major river, lived in walled cities overseen by a king and his officials. Most people were rice farmers, but there were also classes of landowning and military elites, artisans, and servants or slaves. Kings got their authority and the right to rule from the gods and sometimes performed important rituals. The people believed in ancestor worship and animism (the belief that all things have special spirits). People, including kings, went to priests to call upon the gods or ancestors for guidance. The priests wrote questions on bones or shells, heated them until they cracked, and then interpreted what those cracks meant in response to the questions. These oracle bones contained a large amount of information and provided archaeologists with a record of this society's early writing system. Wealthy people were buried in tombs with valuable goods (and sometimes human sacrifices). Cities had bronze foundries where they made bronze weapons, tools, and elaborate pottery and vessels (containers like pots, bowls, and jugs). This society also traded with societies in coastal regions.
9. This society, located in a region with fertile soil, consists of structured communities, often constructing mounds. They have a rigid, hierarchical caste system and rely on herding and agriculture. They have a symbolic language system based on signals. At the top of society are fierce warriors, and they are known to attack other societies for food, territory, and, at times, slaves. Their communities are run by a queen, and resources are collected at a central mound, brought by workers who also serve the queen.