

Social Studies

History

Prehistory

Prehistory is the period of human history before writing was developed. The three major periods of prehistory are:

- Lower Paleolithic—Humans used crude tools.
- Upper Paleolithic—Humans began to develop a wider variety of tools. These tools were better made and more specialized. They also began to wear clothes, organize in groups with definite social structures, and to practice art. Most lived in caves during this time period.
- Neolithic—Social structures became even more complex, including growth of a sense of family and the ideas of religion and government. Humans learned to domesticate animals and produce crops, build houses, start fires with friction tools, and to knit, spin and weave.

Human development from the Lower Paleolithic to the Iron Age

Human development has been divided into several phases:

- Lower Paleolithic or Early Stone Age, beginning two to three million years ago—early humans used tools like needles, hatchets, awls, and cutting tools.
- Middle Paleolithic or Middle Stone Age, beginning approximately 300,000 B.C.E.—sophisticated stone tools were developed, along with hunting, gathering, and ritual practices.
- Upper Paleolithic or Late Stone Age, beginning approximately 40,000 B.C.E.—including the Mesolithic and Neolithic eras, textiles and pottery are developed. Humans of this era discovered the wheel, began to practice agriculture, made polished tools, and had some domesticated animals.
- Bronze Age, beginning in approximately 3,000 B.C.E.—metals are discovered and the first civilizations emerge as humans become more technologically advanced.
- Iron Age, beginning in 1,200 to 1,000 B.C.E.—metal tools replace stone tools as humans develop knowledge of smelting.

Civilizations

Civilizations are defined as having the following characteristics:

- Use of metal to make weapons and tools
- Written language
- A defined territorial state
- A calendar

The earliest civilizations developed in river valleys where reliable, fertile land was easily found, including:

- The Nile River Valley in Egypt
- Mesopotamia
- The Indus Valley
- Hwang Ho in China

The very earliest civilizations developed in the Tigris-Euphrates valley in Mesopotamia, which is now part of Iraq, and in Egypt's Nile valley. These civilizations arose between 5,000 and 3,000 B.C.E. The area where these civilizations grew is known as the Fertile Crescent. Geography and the availability of water made large-scale human habitation possible.

Importance of rivers and water

The earliest civilizations are also referred to as fluvial civilizations because they were founded near rivers. Rivers and the water they provide were vital to these early groupings, offering:

- Water for drinking, cultivating crops, and caring for domesticated animals
- A gathering place for wild animals that could be hunted
- Rich soil deposits as a result of regular flooding

Irrigation techniques helped direct water where it was most needed, to sustain herds of domestic animals and to nourish crops of increasing size and quality.

Fertile Crescent

James Breasted, an archeologist from the University of Chicago, popularized the term "Fertile Crescent" to describe the area in the Near East where the earliest civilizations arose. The region includes modern day Iraq, Syria, Lebanon, Israel, Palestine, and Jordan. It is bordered on the south by the Syrian and Arabian Deserts, the west by the Mediterranean Sea, and to the north and east by the Taurus and Zagros Mountains respectively. This area not only provided the raw materials for the development of increasingly advanced civilizations, but also saw waves of migration and invasion, leading to the earliest wars and genocides as groups conquered and absorbed each other's cultures and inhabitants.

Egyptian, Sumerian, Babylonian, and Assyrian cultures

The Egyptians were one of the most advanced ancient cultures, having developed construction methods to build the great pyramids, as well as a form of writing known as hieroglyphics. Their religion was highly developed and complex, and included advanced techniques for the preservation of bodies after death. They also made paper by processing papyrus, a plant commonly found along the Nile, invented the decimal system, devised a solar calendar, and advanced overall knowledge of mathematics.

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The Sumerians were the first to invent the wheel, and also brought irrigation systems into use. Their cuneiform writing was simpler than Egyptian hieroglyphs, and they developed the timekeeping system we still use today.

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The Babylonians are best known for the Code of Hammurabi, an advanced law code.

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The Assyrians developed horse-drawn chariots and an organized military.

Hebrew, Persian, Minoan, and Mycenaean cultures

The Hebrew or ancient Israelite culture developed the monotheistic religion that eventually developed into modern Judaism and Christianity.

The Persians were conquerors, but those they conquered were allowed to keep their own laws, customs, and religious traditions rather than being forced to accept those of their conquerors. They also developed an alphabet and practiced Zoroastrianism and Mithraism, religions that have influenced modern religious practice.

The Minoans used a syllabic writing system and built large, colorful palaces. These ornate buildings included sewage systems, running water, bathtubs, and even flushing toilets. Their script, known as Linear A, has yet to be deciphered.

The Mycenaean practiced a religion that grew into the Greek pantheon, worshipping Zeus and other Olympian gods. They developed Linear B, a writing system used to write the earliest known form of Greek.

Phoenicians and early culture in India and ancient China

Skilled seafarers and navigators, the Phoenicians used the stars to navigate their ships at night. They developed a purple dye that was in great demand in the ancient world, and worked with glass and metals. They also devised a phonetic alphabet, using symbols to represent individual sounds rather than whole words or syllables.

In the Indus Valley, an urban civilization arose in what is now India. These ancient humans developed the concept of zero in mathematics, practiced an early form of the Hindu religion, and developed the caste system which is still prevalent in India today. Archeologists are still uncovering information about this highly developed ancient civilization.

In ancient China, human civilization developed along the Yangtze River. These people produced silk, grew millet, and made pottery, including Longshan black pottery.

Civilizations of Mesopotamia

The major civilizations of Mesopotamia, in what is now called the Middle East, were:

- Sumerians
- Amorites
- Hittites
- Assyrians
- Chaldeans
- Persians

These cultures controlled different areas of Mesopotamia during various time periods, but were similar in that they were autocratic: a single ruler served as the head of the government and often was the main religious ruler as well. These rulers were often tyrannical, militaristic leaders who controlled all aspects of life, including law, trade, and religious activity. Portions of the legacies of

these civilizations remain in cultures today. These include mythologies, religious systems, mathematical innovations and even elements of various languages.

Influences of ancient Indian civilization

The civilizations of ancient India gave rise to both Hinduism and Buddhism, major world religions that have influenced countries far from their place of origin. Practices such as yoga, increasingly popular in the West, can trace their roots to these earliest Indian civilizations, and the poses are still formally referred to by Sanskrit names. Literature from ancient India includes the *Mahabharata* containing the *Bhagavad Gita*, the *Ramayana*, *Arthashastra*, and the *Vedas*, a collection of sacred texts. Indo-European languages, including English, find their beginnings in these ancient cultures. Ancient Indo-Aryan languages such as Sanskrit are still used in some formal Hindu practices.

Earliest civilizations in China

Many historians believe Chinese civilization is the oldest uninterrupted civilization in the world. The Neolithic age in China goes back to 10,000 B.C.E., with agriculture in China beginning as early as 5,000 B.C.E. Their system of writing dates to 1,500 B.C.E. The Yellow River served as the center for the earliest Chinese settlements. In Ningxia, in northwest China, there are carvings on cliffs that date back to the Paleolithic Period, indicating the extreme antiquity of Chinese culture. Literature from ancient China includes Confucius' *Analects*, the *Tao Te Ching*, and a variety of poetry.

Ancient American cultures

Less is known of ancient American civilizations since less was left behind. Some of the more well-known cultures include:

- The Norte Chico civilization in Peru, an agricultural society of up to 30 individual communities, existed over 5,000 years ago. This culture is also known as the Caral-Supe civilization, and is the oldest known civilization in the Americas.
- The Anasazi, or Ancestral Pueblo People, lived in what is now the southwestern United States. Emerging about 1200 B.C.E., the Anasazi built complex adobe dwellings and were the forerunners of later Pueblo Indian cultures.
- The Maya emerged in southern Mexico and northern Central America as early as 2,600 B.C.E. They developed a written language and a complex calendar.

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Mycenaean civilization

In contrast to the Minoans, whom they displaced, the Mycenaeans relied more on conquest than on trade. Mycenaean states included Sparta, Athens, and Corinth. The history of this civilization, including the Trojan War, was recorded by the Greek poet, Homer. His work was largely considered mythical until archeologists discovered evidence of the city of Troy in Hisarlik, Turkey. Archeologists continue to add to the body of information about this ancient culture, translating documents written in Linear B, a script derived from the Minoan Linear A. It is theorized that the

Mycenaean civilization was eventually destroyed in either a Dorian invasion or an attack by Greek invaders from the north.

Dorian invasion

A Dorian invasion does not refer to an invasion by a particular group of people, but rather is a hypothetical theory to explain the end of the Mycenaean civilization and the growth of classical Greece. Ancient tradition refers to these events as “the return of the Heracleidae,” or the sons (descendents) of Hercules. Archeologists and historians still do not know exactly who conquered the Mycenaeans, but it is believed to have occurred around 1200 B.C.E., contemporaneous with the destruction of the Hittite civilization in what is now modern Turkey. The Hittites speak of an attack by people of the Aegean Sea, or the “Sea People.” Only Athens was left intact.

Spartans and Athenians

Both powerful city-states, Sparta and Athens fought each other in the Peloponnesian War (431-404 B.C.E.). Despite their proximity, the Spartans and the Athenians nurtured contrasting cultures:

- The Spartans, located in Peloponnesus, were ruled by an oligarchic military state. They practiced farming, disallowed trade for Spartan citizens, and valued military arts and strict discipline. They emerged as the strongest military force in the area, and maintained this status for many years. In one memorable encounter, a small group of Spartans held off a huge army of Persians at Thermopylae.
- The Athenians were centered in Attica, where the land was rocky and unsuitable for farming. Like the Spartans, they descended from invaders who spoke Greek. Their government was very different from Sparta's; it was in Athens that democracy was created by Cleisthenes of Athens in 508 B.C.E. Athenians excelled in art, theater, architecture, and philosophy.

Contributions of ancient Greece

Ancient Greece made numerous major contributions to cultural development, including:

- Theater—Aristophanes and other Greek playwrights laid the groundwork for modern theatrical performance.
- Alphabet—the Greek alphabet, derived from the Phoenician alphabet, developed into the Roman alphabet, and then into our modern-day alphabet.
- Geometry—Pythagoras and Euclid pioneered much of the system of geometry still taught today. Archimedes made various mathematical discoveries, including calculating a very accurate value of pi.
- Historical writing—much of ancient history doubles as mythology or religious texts. Herodotus and Thucydides made use of research and interpretation to record historical events.
- Philosophy—Socrates, Plato, and Aristotle served as the fathers of Western philosophy. Their work is still required reading for philosophy students.

Alexander the Great

Born to Philip II of Macedon and tutored by Aristotle, Alexander the Great is considered one of the greatest conquerors in history. He conquered Egypt, the Achaemenid/Persian Empire, a powerful empire founded by Cyrus the Great that spanned three continents, and he traveled as far as India and the Iberian Peninsula. Though Alexander died from malaria at age 32, his conquering efforts

spread Greek culture into the east. This cultural diffusion left a greater mark on history than did his empire, which fell apart due to internal conflict not long after his death. Trade between the East and West increased, as did an exchange of ideas and beliefs that influenced both regions greatly. The Hellenistic traditions his conquest spread were prevalent in Byzantine culture until as late as the 15th century.

Hittite Empire

The Hittites were centered in what is now Turkey, but their empire extended into Palestine and Syria. They conquered the Babylonian civilization, but adopted their religion, laws, and literature. Overall, the Hittites tended to tolerate other religions, unlike many other contemporary cultures, and absorbed foreign gods into their own belief systems rather than forcing their religion onto peoples they conquered. The Hittite Empire reached its peak in 1600-1200 B.C.E. After a war with Egypt, which weakened them severely, they were eventually conquered by the Assyrians.

Persian Wars

The Persian Empire, ruled by Cyrus the Great, encompassed an area from the Black Sea to Afghanistan, and beyond into Central Asia. After the death of Cyrus, Darius I became king in 522 B.C.E. The empire reached its zenith during his reign and Darius attempted to conquer Greece as well. From 499-449 B.C.E., the Greeks and Persians fought in the Persian Wars. The Peace of Callias brought an end to the fighting, after the Greeks were able to repel the invasion.

Battles of the Persian Wars included:

- The Battle of Marathon—heavily outnumbered Greek forces managed to achieve victory.
- The Battle of Thermopylae—a small band of Spartans held off a throng of Persian troops for several days before Persia defeated the Greeks and captured an evacuated Athens.
- The Battle of Salamis—this was a naval battle that again saw outnumbered Greeks achieving victory.
- The Battle of Plataea—this was another Greek victory, but one in which they outnumbered the Persians. This ended the invasion of Greece.

Chinese dynasties

In China, history was divided into a series of dynasties. The most famous of these, the Han dynasty, existed from 206 B.C.E. to 220 CE. Accomplishments of the Chinese Empires included:

- Building the Great Wall of China
- Numerous inventions, including paper, paper money, printing, and gunpowder
- High level of artistic development
- Silk production

The Chinese dynasties were comparable to Rome as far as their artistic and intellectual accomplishments, as well as the size and scope of their influence.

Roman Republic and Empire

Rome began humbly, in a single town that grew out of Etruscan settlements and traditions, founded, according to legend, by twin brothers Romulus and Remus, who were raised by wolves. Romulus killed Remus, and from his legacy grew Rome. A thousand years later, the Roman Empire covered a significant portion of the known world, from what is now Scotland, across Europe, and into the Middle East. Hellenization, or the spread of Greek culture throughout the world, served as

an inspiration and a model for the spread of Roman culture. Rome brought in belief systems of conquered peoples as well as their technological and scientific accomplishments, melding the disparate parts into a Roman core. Rome began as a republic ruled by consuls, but after the assassination of Julius Caesar, it became an empire led by emperors. Rome's overall government was autocratic, but local officials came from the provinces where they lived. This limited administrative system was probably a major factor in the long life of the empire.

Byzantine Empire

In the early fourth century, the Roman Empire split, with the eastern portion becoming the Eastern Empire, or the Byzantine Empire. In 330 CE, Constantine founded the city of Constantinople, which became the center of the Byzantine Empire. Its major influences came from Mesopotamia and Persia, in contrast to the Western Empire, which maintained traditions more closely linked to Greece and Carthage. Byzantium's position gave it an advantage over invaders from the west and the east, as well as control over trade from both regions. It protected the Western empire from invasion from the Persians and the Ottomans, and practiced a more centralized rule than in the West. The Byzantines were famous for lavish art and architecture, as well as the Code of Justinian, which collected Roman law into a clear system. The Byzantine Empire finally fell to the Ottomans in 1453.

Nicene Creed

The Byzantine Empire was Christian-based but incorporated Greek language, philosophy and literature and drew its law and government policies from Rome. However, there was as yet no unified doctrine of Christianity, as it was a relatively new religion that had spread rapidly and without a great deal of organization. In 325, the First Council of Nicaea addressed this issue. From this conference came the Nicene Creed, addressing the Trinity and other basic Christian beliefs. The Council of Chalcedon in 451 further defined the view of the Trinity.

Fall of the Western Roman Empire

Germanic tribes, including the Visigoths, Ostrogoths, Vandals, Saxons and Franks, controlled most of Europe. The Roman Empire faced major opposition on that front. The increasing size of the empire also made it harder to manage, leading to dissatisfaction throughout the empire as Roman government became less efficient. Germanic tribes refused to adhere to the Nicene Creed, instead following Arianism, which led the Roman Catholic Church to declare them heretics. The Franks proved a powerful military force in their defeat of the Muslims in 732. In 768, Charlemagne became king of the Franks. These tribes waged several wars against Rome, including the invasion of Britannia by the Angles and Saxons. Far-flung Rome lost control over this area of its Empire, and eventually Rome itself was invaded.

Iconoclasm and conflict between Roman Catholic and Eastern Orthodox churches

Emperor Leo III ordered the destruction of all icons throughout the Byzantine Empire. Images of Jesus were replaced with crosses, and images of Jesus, Mary or other religious figures were considered blasphemy on grounds of idolatry. Pope Gregory II, called a synod to discuss the issue. The synod declared that the images were not heretical, and that strong disciplinary measures would result for anyone who destroyed them. Leo's response was an attempt to kill Pope Gregory, but this plan ended in failure.

Tenth century events in the West and the East

In Europe, the years 500-1000 CE are largely known as the Dark Ages. In the tenth century, numerous Viking invasions disrupted societies that had been more settled under Roman rule. Vikings settled in Northern France, eventually becoming the Normans. By the eleventh century, Europe would rise again into the High Middle Ages with the beginning of the Crusades.

In China, wars also raged. This led the Chinese to make use of gunpowder for the first time in warfare.

In the Americas, the Mayan Empire was winding down while the Toltec became more prominent. Pueblo Indian culture was also at its zenith.

In the East, the Muslims and the Byzantine Empire were experiencing a significant period of growth and development.

European feudalism in the Middle Ages

A major element of the social and economic life of Europe, feudalism developed as a way to ensure European rulers would have the wherewithal to quickly raise an army when necessary. Vassals swore loyalty and promised to provide military service for lords, who in return offered a fief, or a parcel of land, for them to use to generate their livelihood. Vassals could work the land themselves, have it worked by peasants or serfs—workers who had few rights and were little more than slaves—or grant the fief to someone else. The king legally owned all the land, but in return promised to protect the vassals from invasion and war. Vassals returned a certain percentage of their income to the lords, who in turn passed a portion of their income on to the king. A similar practice was manorialism, in which the feudal system was applied to a self-contained manor. These manors were often owned by the lords who ran them, but were usually included in the same system of loyalty and promises of protection that drove feudalism.

Influence of the Roman Catholic Church

The Roman Catholic Church extended significant influence both politically and economically throughout medieval society. The church supplied education, as there were no established schools or universities. To a large extent, the church had filled a power void left by various invasions throughout the former Roman Empire, leading it to exercise a role that was far more political than religious. Kings were heavily influenced by the Pope and other church officials, and churches controlled large amounts of land throughout Europe.

Black Death

The Black Death, believed to be bubonic plague, most likely came to Europe on fleas carried by rats on sailing vessels. The plague killed more than a third of the entire population of Europe and effectively ended feudalism as a political system. Many who had formerly served as peasants or serfs found different work, as a demand for skilled labor grew. Nation-states grew in power, and in the face of the pandemic, many began to turn away from faith in God and toward the ideals of ancient Greece and Rome for government and other beliefs.

Crusades

The Crusades began in the eleventh century and continued into the fifteenth. The major goal of these various military ventures was to slow the progression of Muslim forces into Europe and to expel them from the Holy Land, where they had taken control of Jerusalem and Palestine. Alexius I, the Byzantine emperor, called for help from Pope Urban II when Palestine was taken. In 1095, the Pope, hoping to reunite Eastern and Western Christianity, encouraged all Christians to help the cause. Amidst great bloodshed, this Crusade recaptured Jerusalem, but over the next centuries, Jerusalem and other areas of the Holy Land changed hands numerous times. The Second Crusade (1147-1149) consisted of an unsuccessful attempt to retake Damascus. The Third Crusade, under Pope Gregory VIII, attempted to recapture Jerusalem, but failed. The Fourth Crusade, under Pope Innocent III, attempted to come into the Holy Land via Egypt. The Crusades led to greater power for the Pope and the Catholic Church in general and also opened numerous trading and cultural routes between Europe and the East.

Islam

Born in 570 CE, Muhammad began preaching around 613, leading his followers in a new religion called Islam, which means "submission to God's will." Before this time, the Arabian Peninsula was inhabited largely by Bedouins, nomads who battled amongst each other and lived in tribal organizations. But by the time Muhammad died in 632, most of Arabia had become Muslim to some extent.

Muhammad conquered Mecca, where a temple called the Kaaba had long served as a center of the nomadic religions. He declared this temple the most sacred of Islam, and Mecca as the holy city. His writings became the Koran, or Qur'an, divine revelations he said had been delivered to him by the angel Gabriel.

Muhammad's teachings gave the formerly tribal Arabian people a sense of unity that had not existed in the area before. After his death, the converted Muslims of Arabia conquered a vast territory, creating an empire and bringing advances in literature, technology, science and art as Europe was declining under the scourge of the Black Death. Literature from this period includes the *Arabian Nights* and the *Rubaiyat* of Omar Khayyam. Later in its development, Islam split into two factions, the Shiite and the Sunni Muslims. Conflict continues today between these groups.

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Ottoman Empire

By 1400, the Ottomans had grown in power in Anatolia and had begun attempts to take Constantinople. In 1453 they finally conquered the Byzantine capital and renamed it Istanbul. The Ottoman Empire's major strength, much like Rome before it, lay in its ability to unite widely disparate people through religious tolerance. This tolerance, which stemmed from the idea that Muslims, Christians, and Jews were fundamentally related and could coexist, enabled the Ottomans

to develop a widely varied culture. They also believed in just laws and just government, with government centered in a monarch, known as the sultan.

Renaissance

Renaissance literally means "rebirth." After the darkness of the Dark Ages and the Black Plague, interest rose again in the beliefs and politics of ancient Greece and Rome. Art, literature, music, science, and philosophy all burgeoned during the Renaissance.

Many of the ideas of the Renaissance began in Florence, Italy, in the fourteenth century, spurred by the Medici family. Education for the upper classes expanded to include law, math, reading, writing, and classical Greek and Roman works. As the Renaissance progressed, the world was presented through art and literature in a realistic way that had never been explored before. This realism drove culture to new heights.

Artists, authors and scientists

Artists of the Renaissance included Leonardo da Vinci, also an inventor, Michelangelo, also an architect, and others who focused on realism in their work. In literature, major contributions came from humanist authors like Petrarch, Erasmus, Sir Thomas More, and Boccaccio, who believed man should focus on reality rather than on the ethereal. Shakespeare, Cervantes and Dante followed in their footsteps, and their works found a wide audience thanks to Gutenberg's development of the printing press.

Scientific developments of the Renaissance included the work of Copernicus, Galileo and Kepler, who challenged the geocentric philosophies of the day by proving that the earth was not the center of the solar system.

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Reformation

The Reformation consisted of both the Protestant and the Catholic Reformation. The Protestant Reformation rose in Germany when Martin Luther protested abuses of the Catholic Church. John Calvin led the movement in Switzerland, while in England King Henry VIII made use of the Reformation's ideas to further his own political goals. The Catholic Reformation, or Counter-Reformation, occurred in response to the Protestant movement, leading to various changes in the Catholic Church. Some provided wider tolerance of different religious viewpoints, but others actually increased the persecution of those deemed to be heretics.

From a religious standpoint, the Reformation occurred due to abuses by the Catholic Church such as indulgences and dispensations, religious offices being offered up for sale, and an increasingly dissolute clergy. Politically, the Reformation was driven by increased power of various ruling monarchs, who wished to take all power to themselves rather than allowing power to remain with the church. They also had begun to chafe at papal taxes and the church's increasing wealth. The ideas of the Protestant Revolution removed power from the Catholic Church and the Pope himself, playing nicely into the hands of those monarchs, such as Henry VIII, who wanted out from under the church's control.

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Scientific Revolution

In addition to holding power in the political realm, church doctrine also governed scientific belief. During the Scientific Revolution, astronomers and other scientists began to amass evidence that challenged the church's scientific doctrines. Major figures of the Scientific Revolution included:

- Nicolaus Copernicus—wrote *On the Revolutions of the Celestial Spheres*, arguing that the earth revolved around the sun
- Tycho Brahe—catalogued astronomical observations
- Johannes Kepler—developed laws of planetary motion
- Galileo Galilei—defended the heliocentric theories of Copernicus and Kepler, discovered four moons of Jupiter, and died under house arrest by the church, charged with heresy
- Isaac Newton—discovered gravity, studied optics, calculus and physics, and believed the workings of nature could be studied and proven through observation

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Enlightenment

During the Enlightenment, philosophers and scientists began to rely more and more on observation to support their ideas, rather than building on past beliefs, particularly those held by the church. A focus on ethics and logic drove their work. Major philosophers of the Enlightenment included:

- Rene Descartes—he famously wrote, "I think, therefore I am." He believed strongly in logic and rules of observation.
- David Hume—he pioneered empiricism and skepticism, believing that truth could only be found through direct experience, and that what others said to be true was always suspect.
- Immanuel Kant—he believed in self-examination and observation, and that the root of morality lay within human beings.
- Jean-Jacques Rousseau—he developed the idea of the social contract, that government existed by the agreement of the people, and that the government was obligated to protect the people and their basic rights. His ideas influenced John Locke and Thomas Jefferson.

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American Revolution and French Revolution

Both the American and French Revolution came about as a protest against the excesses and overly controlling nature of their respective monarchs. In America, the British colonies had been left mostly to self-govern until the British monarchs began to increase control, spurring the colonies to revolt. In France, the nobility's excesses had led to increasingly difficult economic conditions, with inflation, heavy taxation and food shortages creating great burdens on the lower classes. Both revolutions led to the development of republics to replace the monarchies that were displaced. However, the French Revolution eventually led to the rise of the dictator Napoleon Bonaparte, while the American Revolution produced a working republic from the beginning.

In 1789, King Louis XVI, faced with a huge national debt, convened parliament. The Third Estate, or Commons, a division of the French parliament, then claimed power, and the king's resistance led to the storming of the Bastille, the royal prison. The people established a constitutional monarchy. When King Louis XVI and Marie Antoinette attempted to leave the country, they were executed on the guillotine. From 1793 to 1794, Robespierre and extreme radicals, the Jacobins, instituted a Reign of Terror, executing tens of thousands of nobles as well as anyone considered an enemy of the Revolution. Robespierre was then executed, as well, and the Directory came into power, leading to a temporary return to bourgeois values. This governing body proved incompetent and corrupt, allowing Napoleon Bonaparte to come to power in 1799, first as a dictator, then as emperor. While the French Revolution threw off the power of a corrupt monarchy, its immediate results were likely not what the original perpetrators of the revolt had intended.

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Russian Revolution of 1905

In Russia, rule lay in the hands of the Czars, and the overall structure was feudalistic. Beneath the Czars was a group of rich nobles, landowners whose lands were worked by peasants and serfs. The Russo-Japanese War (1904-1905) made conditions much worse for the lower classes. When peasants demonstrated outside the Czar's Winter Palace, the palace guard fired upon the crowd. The demonstration had been organized by a trade union leader, and after the violent response, many unions as well as political parties blossomed and began to lead numerous strikes. When the economy ground to a halt, Czar Nicholas II signed a document known as the October Manifesto, which established a constitutional monarchy and gave legislative power to parliament. However, he violated the Manifesto shortly thereafter, disbanding parliament and ignoring the civil liberties granted by the Manifesto. This eventually led to the Bolshevik Revolution.

Bolshevik Revolution of 1917

Throughout its modern history, Russia had lagged behind other countries in development. The continued existence of a feudal system, combined with harsh conditions and the overall size of the country, led to massive food shortages and increasingly harsh conditions for the majority of the population. The tyrannical rule of the Czars only made this worse, as did repeated losses in various military conflicts. Increasing poverty, decreasing supplies, and the Czar's violation of the October

Manifesto which had given some political power and civil rights to the people finally came to a head with the Bolshevik Revolution.

Major events

A workers' strike in Petrograd in 1917 set the revolutionary wheels in motion when the army sided with the workers. While parliament set up a provisional government made up of nobles, the workers and military joined to form their own governmental system known as soviets, which consisted of local councils elected by the people. The ensuing chaos opened the doors for formerly exiled leaders Vladimir Lenin, Joseph Stalin and Leon Trotsky to move in and gain popular support as well as the support of the Red Guard. Overthrowing parliament, they took power, creating a communist state in Russia. This development led to the spread of communism throughout Eastern Europe and elsewhere, greatly affecting diplomatic policies throughout the world for several decades.

Industrial Revolution

The Industrial Revolution began in Great Britain, bringing coal- and steam-powered machinery into widespread use. Industry began a period of rapid growth with these developments. Goods that had previously been produced in small workshops or even in homes were produced more efficiently and in much larger quantities in factories. Where society had been largely agrarian-based, the focus swiftly shifted to an industrial outlook. As electricity and internal combustion engines replaced coal and steam as energy sources, even more drastic and rapid changes occurred. Western European countries in particular turned to colonialism, taking control of portions of Africa and Asia to ensure access to the raw materials needed to produce factory goods. Specialized labor became very much in demand, and businesses grew rapidly, creating monopolies, increasing world trade, and developing large urban centers. Even agriculture changed fundamentally as the Industrial Revolution led to a second Agricultural Revolution with the addition of new technology to advance agricultural production.

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First and second phases

The first phase of the Industrial Revolution took place from roughly 1750 to 1830. The textile industry experienced major changes as more and more elements of the process became mechanized. Mining benefited from the steam engine. Transportation became easier and more widely available as waterways were improved and the railroad came into prominence. In the second phase, from 1830 to 1910, industries further improved in efficiency and new industries were introduced as photography, various chemical processes, and electricity became more widely available to produce new goods or new, improved versions of old goods. Petroleum and hydroelectricity became major sources of power. During this time, the Industrial Revolution spread out of Western Europe and into the US and Japan.

Political, social and economic side effects

The Industrial Revolution led to widespread education, a wider franchise, and the development of mass communication in the political arena. Economically, conflicts arose between companies and their employees, as struggles for fair treatment and fair wages increased. Unions gained power and became more active. Government regulation over industries increased, but at the same time, growing businesses fought for the right to free enterprise. In the social sphere, populations increased and began to concentrate around centers of industry. Cities became larger and more

densely populated. Scientific advancements led to more efficient agriculture, greater supply of goods, and increased knowledge of medicine and sanitation, leading to better overall health.

Nationalism in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries

Nationalism, put simply, is a strong belief in, identification with, and allegiance to a particular nation and people. Nationalistic belief unified various areas that had previously seen themselves as fragmented, which led to patriotism and, in some cases, imperialism. As nationalism grew, individual nations sought to grow, bringing in other, smaller states that shared similar characteristics such as language and cultural beliefs. Unfortunately, a major side effect of these growing nationalistic beliefs was often conflict and outright war.

In Europe, imperialism led countries to spread their influence into Africa and Asia. Africa was eventually divided among several European countries that wanted the raw materials. Asia also came under European control, with the exception of China, Japan and Siam (now Thailand). In the US, Manifest Destiny became the rallying cry as the country expanded west. Italy and Germany formed larger nations from a variety of smaller states.

➤ **Review Video:** [Nationalism](#)

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World War I

Europe

WWI began in 1914 with the assassination of Archduke Franz Ferdinand, heir to the throne of Austria-Hungary, by a Serbian national. This led to a conflict between Austria-Hungary and Serbia that quickly escalated into the First World War. Europe split into the Allies—Britain, France, and Russia, and later Italy, Japan, and the US, against the Central Powers—Austria-Hungary, Germany, the Ottoman Empire, and Bulgaria. As the war spread, countries beyond Europe became involved. The war left Europe deeply in debt, and particularly devastated the German economy. The ensuing Great Depression made matters worse, and economic devastation opened the door for communist, fascist, and socialist governments to gain power.

Trench warfare

Fighting during WWI largely took place in a series of trenches built along the Eastern and Western Fronts. These trenches added up to more than 24,000 miles. This produced fronts that stretched over 400 miles, from the coast of Belgium to the border of Switzerland. The Allies made use of straightforward open-air trenches with a front line, supporting lines, and communications lines. By contrast, the German trenches sometimes included well-equipped underground living quarters.

➤ **Review Video:** [World War I](#)

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Communism and Socialism

At their roots, socialism and communism both focus on public ownership and distribution of goods and services. However, communism works toward revolution by drawing on what it sees to be inevitable class antagonism, eventually overthrowing the upper classes and the systems of capitalism. Socialism makes use of democratic procedures, building on the existing order. This was

particularly true of the utopian socialists, who saw industrial capitalism as oppressive, not allowing workers to prosper. While socialism struggled between the World Wars, communism took hold, especially in Eastern Europe. After WWII, democratic socialism became more common. Later, capitalism took a stronger hold again, and today most industrialized countries in the western world function under an economy that mixes elements of capitalism and socialism.

➤ **Review Video: Socialism**

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Rise of the Nazi party

The Great Depression had a particularly devastating effect on Germany's economy, especially after the US was no longer able to supply reconstruction loans to help the country regain its footing. With unemployment rising rapidly, dissatisfaction with the government grew. Fascist and Communist parties rose, promising change and improvement.

Led by Adolf Hitler, the fascist Nazi Party eventually gained power in Parliament based on these promises and the votes of desperate German workers. When Hitler became Chancellor, he launched numerous expansionist policies, violating the peace treaties that had ended WWI. His military buildup and conquering of neighboring countries sparked the aggression that soon led to WWII.

Blitzkrieg

The blitzkrieg, or "lightning war," consisted of fast, powerful surprise attacks that disrupted communications, made it difficult if not impossible for the victims to retaliate, and demoralized Germany's foes. The "blitz," or the aerial bombing of England in 1940, was one example, with bombings occurring in London and other cities 57 nights in a row. The Battle of Britain in 1940 also brought intense raids by Germany's air force, the Luftwaffe, mostly targeting ports and British air force bases. Eventually, Britain's Royal Air Force blocked the Luftwaffe, ending Germany's hopes for conquering Britain.

Battle of the Bulge

Following the D-Day Invasion, Allied forces gained considerable ground and began a major campaign to push through Europe. In December of 1944, Hitler launched a counteroffensive, attempting to retake Antwerp, an important port. The ensuing battle became the largest land battle on the war's Western Front, and was known as the Battle of the Ardennes, or the Battle of the Bulge. The battle lasted from December 16, 1944 to January 25, 1945. The Germans pushed forward, making inroads into Allied lines, but in the end the Allies brought the advance to a halt. The Germans were pushed back, with massive losses on both sides. However, those losses proved crippling to the German army.

Holocaust

As Germany sank deeper and deeper into dire economic straits, the tendency was to look for a person or group of people to blame for the problems of the country. With distrust of the Jewish people already ingrained, it was easy for German authorities to set up the Jews as scapegoats for Germany's problems. Under the rule of Hitler and the Nazi party, the "Final Solution" for the supposed Jewish problem was devised. Millions of Jews, as well as Gypsies, homosexuals, communists, Catholics, the mentally ill and others, simply named as criminals, were transported to

concentration camps during the course of the war. At least six million were slaughtered in death camps such as Auschwitz, where horrible conditions and torture of prisoners were commonplace. The Allies were aware of rumors of mass slaughter throughout the war, but many discounted the reports. Only when troops went in to liberate the prisoners was the true horror of the concentration camps brought to light. The Holocaust resulted in massive loss of human life, but also in the loss and destruction of cultures. Because the genocide focused on specific ethnic groups, many traditions, histories, knowledge, and other cultural elements were lost, particularly among the Jewish and Gypsy populations. After World War II, the United Nations recognized genocide as a "crime against humanity." The UN passed the Universal Declaration of Human Rights in 1948 in order to further specify what rights the organization protected. Nazi war criminals faced justice during the Nuremberg Trials. These individuals, rather than their governments, were held accountable for war crimes.

➤ **Review Video: [The Holocaust](#)**

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Cold War

With millions of military and civilian deaths and over 12 million persons displaced, WWII left large regions of Europe and Asia in disarray. Communist governments moved in with promises of renewed prosperity and economic stability. The Soviet Union backed communist regimes in much of Eastern Europe. In China, Mao Zedong led communist forces in the overthrow of the Chinese Nationalist Party and instituted a communist government in 1949. While the new communist governments restored a measure of stability to much of Eastern Europe, it brought its own problems, with dictatorial governments and an oppressive police force. The spread of communism also led to several years of tension between communist countries and the democratic west, as the west fought to slow the spread of oppressive regimes throughout the world. With both sides in possession of nuclear weapons, tensions rose. Each side feared the other would resort to nuclear attack. This standoff lasted until 1989, when the Berlin Wall fell. The Soviet Union was dissolved two years later.

United Nations

The United Nations (UN) came into being toward the end of World War II. A successor to the less-than-successful League of Nations formed after World War I, the UN built and improved on those ideas. Since its inception, the UN has worked to bring the countries of the world together for diplomatic solutions to international problems, including sanctions and other restrictions. It has also initiated military action, calling for peacekeeping troops from member countries to move against countries violating UN policies. The Korean War was the first example of UN involvement in an international conflict.

Decolonization

A rise of nationalism among European colonies led to many of them declaring independence. India and Pakistan became independent of Britain in 1947, and numerous African and Asian colonies declared independence as well. This period of decolonization lasted into the 1960s. Some colonies moved successfully into independence but many, especially in Africa and Asia, struggled to create stable governments and economies, and suffered from ethnic and religious conflicts, some of which continue today.

Korean War

In 1910, Japan annexed Korea and maintained this control until 1945. After WWII, Soviet and US troops occupied Korea, with the Soviet Union controlling North Korea and the US controlling South Korea. In 1947, the UN ordered elections in Korea to unify the country but the Soviet Union refused to allow them to take place in North Korea, instead setting up a communist government. In 1950, the US withdrew troops, and the North Korean troops moved to invade South Korea. The Korean War was the first war in which the UN—or any international organization—played a major role. The US, Australia, Canada, France, Netherlands, Great Britain, Turkey, China, USSR and other countries sent troops at various times, for both sides, throughout the war. In 1953, the war ended in a truce, but no peace agreement was ever achieved, and Korea remains divided.

Vietnam War and involvement of France

Vietnam had previously been part of a French colony called French Indochina. The Vietnam War began with the First Indochina War from 1946-1954, in which France battled with the Democratic Republic of Vietnam, ruled by Ho Chi Minh.

In 1954, a siege at Dien Bien Phu ended in a Vietnamese victory. Vietnam was then divided into North and South, much like Korea. Communist forces controlled the North and the South was controlled by South Vietnamese forces, supported by the US. Conflict ensued, leading to another war. US troops eventually led the fight, in support of South Vietnam. The war became a major political issue in the US, with many citizens protesting American involvement. In 1975, South Vietnam surrendered, and Vietnam became the Socialist Republic of Vietnam.

Globalism

In the modern era, globalism has emerged as a popular political ideology. Globalism is based in the idea that all people and all nations are interdependent. Each nation is dependent on one or more other nations for production of and markets for goods, and for income generation. Today's ease of international travel and communication, including technological advances such as the airplane, has heightened this sense of interdependence. The global economy, and the general idea of globalism, has shaped many economic and political choices since the beginning of the twentieth century. Many of today's issues, including environmental awareness, economic struggles, and continued warfare, often require the cooperation of many countries if they are to be dealt with effectively.

Effects of globalization

Countries worldwide often seek the same resources, leading to high demand, particularly for nonrenewable resources. This can result in heavy fluctuations in price. One major example is the demand for petroleum products such as oil and natural gas. Increased travel and communication make it possible to deal with diseases in remote locations; however, this also allows diseases to be spread via travelers. A major factor contributing to increased globalization over the past few decades has been the Internet. By allowing instantaneous communication with anyone nearly anywhere on the globe, the Internet has led to interaction between far-flung individuals and countries, and an ever increasing awareness of events all over the world.

Middle East in international relations and economics

The location on the globe, with ease of access to Europe and Asia, and its preponderance of oil deposits, makes the Middle Eastern countries crucial in many international issues, both diplomatic and economic. Because of its central location, the Middle East has been a hotbed for violence since before the beginning of recorded history. Conflicts over land, resources, and religious and political power continue in the area today, spurred by conflict over control of the area's vast oil fields as well as over territories that have been disputed for thousands of years.

➤ **Review Video:** [Globalization: The Middle East](#)
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Genocide

The three major occurrences of genocide in modern history other than the Holocaust are:

- Armenian genocide—from 1914 to 1918, the Young Turks, heirs to the Ottoman Empire, slaughtered between 800,000 and 1.5 million Armenians. This constituted approximately half of the Armenian population at the time.
- Russian purges under Stalin—scholars have attributed deaths between 3 and 60 million, both directly and indirectly, to the policies and edicts of Joseph Stalin's regime. The deaths took place from 1921 to 1953, when Stalin died. In recent years, many scholars have settled on a number of deaths near 20 million but this is still disputed today.
- Rwandan genocide—in 1994, hundreds of thousands of Tutsi, as well as Hutu who sympathized with them, were slaughtered during the Rwandan Civil War. The UN did not act or authorize intervention during these atrocities.

Native American settlement in New York State

Prehistoric times until 1500

Experts estimate that the first humans came to New York State around 10,000 BCE. Ancestors of the Iroquois migrated from Appalachia to New York around 800 AD. A group of indigenous peoples known as the Point Peninsula Complex, who apparently migrated from Canada to New England and New York State, were the ancestors of New York's Algonquian Indians. Two distinct cultures—speaking Iroquois and Algonquian languages, respectively—had developed by around 1100 AD; European explorers would meet these groups when they arrived several centuries later. Around the 1400s, the Iroquois League's five nations had established a strong confederacy controlling land throughout New York and into Pennsylvania and the Great Lakes region. Mohawk tribes grew maize in the Mohawk River lowlands; subsequently, the Dutch settlers of Schenectady bought this territory and took over the cornfields. To the west, Iroquois tribes also grew crops in tree orchards (New York State is known for its apples) and fields.

Pre-colonial times and times of early European exploration

Multiple nations, tribes, languages, and political affiliations, and an elaborate, complex native economy combining hunting, gathering, farming, and manufacturing, characterized New York's Native Americans. Members of the Iroquois nation exchanged animal pelts with European colonists for manufactured goods, and came to dominate the fur trade throughout the territory. Other Native American tribes living in New York State more often were absorbed into the Iroquois confederacy, assimilated into Euro-American culture, or destroyed by European newcomers. Because they were

located between areas settled by the French and the English, respectively, and also along major native trade routes of the northeastern U.S., Iroquois tribes and European settlers arriving from Holland, France, and Great Britain became reciprocally and intensely involved in interacting with one another. The tribes of the Algonquians tended to live along the Atlantic coastline or the local rivers and/or streams, and were not as unified among tribes as the Iroquois. However, both Native American nations were long established and had developed advanced cultural systems, whose sophistication the European settlers did not appreciate or understand.

European exploration of New York State

Pre-colonial period of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries

Italian explorer Giovanni da Verrazzano, serving the French monarchy, explored North America's Atlantic coast between Newfoundland and the Carolinas, including Narragansett Bay and New York Harbor, in 1524. Entering New York Bay through the strait now named for him, the Verrazzano Narrows, he described the "vast" coastline, deep delta, and the "beautiful lake" of the northern bay, teeming with Native American boats. Verrazzano landed on Manhattan's tip, and possibly on Long Island's farthest point, and was then forced northward by a storm toward Martha's Vineyard. Esteban Gomez, a Portuguese ship captain sponsored by Spain's Charles I to seek a northern passage to the Spice Islands, sailed north from Cuba to Nova Scotia in 1525, entering New York Harbor and the Hudson River. French explorer Jacques Cartier sailed from the Atlantic Ocean up the Saint Lawrence River to Montreal, becoming the first European to map and describe that river, a northern boundary of New York State. Samuel de Champlain was the first to map Lake Champlain, part of New York State's eastern border, in 1609.

Exploration and settlement events

Dutch and British colonial period

An estuary of the Hudson River (which sixteenth-century explorer Gomez had named the "San Antonio River") had been discovered in 1524 by Verrazzano while he was exploring the region for France. In 1540, New France traders had built a chateau on Castle Island, near today's Albany; however, they abandoned it the following year because of flooding. In 1609, English explorer Henry Hudson, working for the Dutch East India Company, reached the same Hudson River estuary that Verrazzano had earlier. He then sailed upriver for 10 days to the Albany area, trading with Native Americans for furs en route. This trip established Dutch claims to the area's land and, after a trading post was set up at Albany in 1614, to the fur trade that then thrived there. Also in 1614, Hendrick Corstiaensen led Dutch settlers in reconstructing the French chateau abandoned in 1541, naming it Fort Nassau; this became North America's first Dutch settlement. Floods destroyed it in 1617, and subsequently it was permanently abandoned after the construction of nearby Fort Orange in 1623.

Seventeenth and eighteenth centuries

Dutch colonists in the seventeenth century established New Netherland, which included New York State (along with New Jersey, Delaware, Connecticut, and small areas of Rhode Island and Pennsylvania). During the Dutch and English colonial period, these two colonizing nations competed for New World territory. In 1664, the British conquered New Netherland through a surprise attack. Historians believe local residents offered minimal resistance to the lenient surrender terms the British offered. England's King James II was both Duke of York and Duke of Albany; New Netherland city and colony were both renamed New York, and Beverwijck renamed Albany. Eighteenth-century elite colonists developed large manors, including Rensselaerswyck, Cortlandt, Livingston, and Phillipsburg along the Hudson River; these occupied over half of New York's undeveloped land. Hudson Valley and Long Island farming, plus Port of New York artisanship

and trade—including supplying lumber and bread to Britain’s Caribbean sugar cane colonies—bolstered the Province of New York’s economy and population; the latter expanded more than nine times, from 18,067 in 1698 to 168,007 in 1771.

New York State’s role in the American Revolutionary War

New York’s part in the American Revolution was pivotal. Colonial reactions against the British government’s 1765 Stamp Act, which compounded New York’s depression following a failed 1760 invasion of Canada, were particularly intense there, approaching revolt and putting the New York Sons of Liberty (separate from the Boston group) in the state’s political spotlight. The Port of New York and the state’s central location made it a strategic necessity for control of the American colonies. Britain amassed the biggest fleet of the century there; at one time, off Staten Island they had 30,000 British Navy and Army troops anchored. General Howe drove General George Washington and his troops out of New York City in 1776; however, this backfired when Howe tried to advance into New Jersey, losing most of his New York City holdings by 1777. General Gates’ winning the Battle of Saratoga in late 1777 is considered a turning point in the war: without it, America would have lost the whole Hudson-Champlain corridor, separating New England from the other colonies and dividing America.

Developments in New York

End of the American Revolution until it became a U.S. state

By the end of the American Revolution, counties east of Lake Champlain became Vermont; New York’s western borders, settled by 1786, clearly defined the state’s boundaries. Hoping to repel encroaching American settlers, many Iroquois supported the English; many were war casualties, while some survivors accompanied the British into exile. Those left lived on 12 reservations, reduced by 1826 to eight, which all lasted into the twenty-first century. New York adopted its state constitution in 1777, highly influencing the 1787 U.S. constitution. Controversy over the federal constitution resulted in the formation of the Federalists, who favored national government and control (with many living in or near New York City), and Antifederalists who opposed them (with many living in northern and western New York. Federalist leader, author of the first *Federalist Papers* essay, and signer of the U.S. Constitution Alexander Hamilton was from New York. New York City became the nation’s capital in 1785, continuing thus intermittently until 1790. From New York’s 1788 statehood until 1797, its legislature repeatedly relocated the state capital among New York City, Albany, Kingston, and Poughkeepsie, finally making Albany the permanent capital.

First half of the nineteenth century

During the early 1800s, New York emerged as a center for advances in the transportation industry. Robert Fulton started a steamboat line between New York City and Albany in 1807; this was the first such successful enterprise. Pioneers migrating westward from New York City to Buffalo and into the Michigan Territory traveled on the New York State turnpikes, making Albany the travelers’ hub and the turnpike center of the state. When the Erie Canal opened in 1825, it connected the Atlantic Ocean to the Great Lakes area. This linked regions within the state, gave New York City a huge economic hinterland, and reciprocally gave inland New York State farms a ready market for their agricultural products. These developments transformed western New York from a frontier to a settled region, as well as furthered and cemented economic domination by the state. Most cities and all counties were incorporated by then; today, the state’s is similarly organized. America’s first successful, regularly scheduled, steam-powered railroad service was initiated by the Mohawk and Hudson Railroad in 1831.

Economic, social, and related developments during the first half of the nineteenth century

New York State's noteworthy progress in the transportation industry, including steamboats, steam-powered railroad trains, and its turnpike system, enabled rapid settlement of fertile land in the Mohawk and Genesee River Valleys and the Niagara Frontier during the first half of the nineteenth century. Buffalo, which borders Niagara Falls and Canada, and Rochester, on the southern border of Lake Ontario, both became boom towns. Yankees, i.e., settlers of the New England states who were mostly descended from the British, migrated in large proportions to the central and western regions of New York State. This caused some social, cultural, and political conflicts with Yorkers, i.e., established residents who were mostly descended from Dutch, German, and Scottish settlers. Over 15 percent of New York State's population had been born in New England as of 1850. During this period, the western region of New York State experienced the most rapid growth. New York had developed into a state that included seven of the 30 biggest cities in the country by 1840.

Social and political developments from the 1800s through the 1850s

The nineteenth-century Progressive movement found a center in western New York State, where progressive activists supported abolition, women's suffrage, and temperance. During the Second Great Awakening's religious fervor, Joseph Smith wrote the Book of Mormon and founded the Mormon church in western New York. Some cities like Rochester included homes on the Underground Railroad, helping escaped slaves to freedom. New York towns founded educational academies, including girls' schools. In 1840, the state legislature passed laws protecting African-Americans' rights from Southern slave hunters, guaranteeing state jury trials to determine slave status and promising state aid to recover free African-Americans kidnapped into slavery. (This experience was chronicled by Solomon Northup of Saratoga Springs, NY, later home of Skidmore College, in his memoir *Twelve Years a Slave*, adapted into the award-winning 2013 movie.) Governor Seward signed an 1841 law repealing the nine-month waiting period for slaves brought into New York by owners to be deemed free, so New York considered all slaves entering the state freed immediately. He also signed legislation to provide public education to all children.

Cultural development during the first half of the nineteenth century

Cultural development flourished in New York State from the 1800s to the 1850s. For example, in literature, Washington Irving, writing under the pen name of Diedrich Knickerbocker, published his satire entitled *A History of New York*. He went on to write the short stories "Rip Van Winkle" (1819) and "The Legend of Sleepy Hollow" (1820), both based on Hudson Valley life and townspeople. Irving's stories, combining elements of the supernatural and fantasy with local folklore and history, are among the earliest American fiction to remain popular throughout the years and today. Irving's Tarrytown home, Sunnyside, was restored, opened to public visits in 1947, designated a National Historic Landmark in 1962, included in the U.S. National Register of Historic Places, and today hosts guided tours by docents wearing period costumes. In art, Thomas Cole showcased dramatic Hudson Valley landscapes, founding the Hudson River School in the 1830s. In sports, the New York Knickerbockers ("Knicks") were among the first baseball teams formed in the 1840s. Saratoga Race Course opened in 1847. Cooperstown's National Baseball Hall of Fame opened in 1939.

Economic and political positions relative to the onset of the Civil War

In the mid-1800s, New York had strong connections to the Deep South because its upstate textile mills manufactured cotton products—half of antebellum New York's exports were related to cotton—and through mutual trade and travel with the South through the Port of New York.

Southern businessmen had developed favorite restaurants and hotels in New York City because they traveled there so often. Therefore, the idea of war was counterproductive to state business interests. When Republican Abraham Lincoln was elected in 1860, New York Democrats were concerned about potential outcomes; the mayor advocated secession from the Union. However, by the Battle of Fort Sumter in 1861, citizens put aside political disagreements, promptly providing troops and supplies requested by Lincoln. New York outnumbered any other Northern state in its hundreds of thousands who enlisted and fought in the Civil War. New York State was not the site of any battles; however, it was the target of some Confederate plots to burn different cities there and mount an invasion into the state from Canada.

Political, cultural, and social effects of the Civil War and the Emancipation Proclamation

President Lincoln's Emancipation Proclamation in January 1863 freed all remaining slaves in all states that had seceded from the Union before the Civil War and still opposed it during wartime. Two months later, the federal government amended the draft law to supply more troops to the war effort, mandating that all unmarried citizens up to age 45 and all male citizens aged 20-35 were eligible to be drafted. The law also stipulated eligible citizens who could pay \$300, or could afford to hire substitutes to serve in their places, were exempt. At that time, immigrants and ethnic Irish residents made up the majority of white working-class citizens in New York. Many immigrants and those with immigrant ancestors resented being conscripted instead of others who could pay their way out of serving; anti-war newspapers attacked the legislation; and Democratic leaders stirred white working-class fears of competition from floods of Southern freed slaves. Two days after the first draft lottery, widespread rioting ensued for five days. Consequently, many African-Americans permanently departed from Manhattan and moved to Brooklyn or elsewhere.

Patterns of immigration to New York State

Beginning in the 1840s when refugees escaping the Irish potato famine immigrated to the U.S., most often arriving in New York, immigration to the state became more prevalent. It is estimated that over 8 million people came through America's first immigration station, Castle Clinton (AKA Fort Clinton) in Battery Park, the public park facing New York Harbor on the southern end of Manhattan, between the years 1855 and 1890. During the earlier part of this wave of immigration, most of the new arrivals hailed from Ireland and Germany. In 1892, Ellis Island opened in Upper New York Bay in the Port of New York (and New Jersey), becoming America's busiest immigrant station from 1892 to 1954. During the period from 1880 to 1920, the majority of new arrivals were German Jews, Eastern European Jews, Polish, many Italian, and other eastern and southern Europeans. This influx expanded New York City's population to outnumber London's as the world's most populous city by 1925. France's 1886 centennial gift to America, the Statue of Liberty, came to symbolize hope for these new Americans-to-be.

Knights of Labor

The flourishing of industry following the Civil War provided increased incentive for workers to organize, which they had begun doing during the 1820s. Trade unions limited work hours through political influence by 1867. As one example of postwar labor organizing, the Knights of Labor (KOL), founded in 1869, acquired 28,000 members in its New York City chapter by 1880; increased to 60,000 by 1882; had 100,000 members by 1884; and grew to include almost 800,000 members by 1886, constituting 20 percent of all workers. As America's largest 1880s labor organization, the KOL demanded eight-hour workdays, opposed anarchy and socialism, championed the ideals of republicanism on which the U.S. was founded, and promoted uplifting the working class culturally

and socially. It sometimes negotiated with employers as a labor union, but its weak organization prevented its coping with accusations of violence (e.g., riots), ineffectiveness, etc. Moreover, by 1887, the majority of members left, joining groups more specific to their interests, whereas the KOL confronted a wider variety of issues. The Panic of 1893 rendered the KOL irrelevant.

New York State's industrial growth

New York agriculture peaked after the Civil War; dairy farming supplanted crop farming, with the Mohawk Valley prominent in making cheese. New York had over 241,000 farms by 1881, and the New York Harbor area became the world's first oyster center until the early 1900s. New York further increased domination of the banking and financial industries during postwar decades. State manufacturing grew substantially, including Eastman Kodak's 1888 foundation in Rochester, General Electric (GE)'s 1892 foundation in Schenectady (with co-founder Thomas Edison), and the Endicott-Johnson Shoe Company's 1899 foundation in the Triple Cities (Binghamton, Johnson City, and Endicott). After using waterpower to provide electricity was demonstrated for the first time in England in 1878, the first hydroelectric power station was built near the American side of Niagara Falls in New York State and began generating electrical power in 1881. The United States and Canada combined had a total of 45 hydroelectric power stations by 1886; by 1889, the United States alone had 200 such stations in operation.

Status of politics from the 1850s through 1900

Although New York State citizens had clashed politically before the Civil War, they put their differences aside during wartime to support the Union and president. Following the war, New York State did not change much politically through the rest of the century. Democrats dominated New York City and its surrounding metropolitan area downstate, while Republicans and abolitionists predominated in upstate New York (e.g., Rochester, Buffalo, Syracuse, Binghamton, Utica, etc.). "Boss" William Tweed, elected to the House of Representatives in 1852 and to the New York County Board of Supervisors in 1858, became leader of the political machine Tammany Hall that year and promoted it first in the city, then the state during the 1860s; Tammany Hall's influence continued into the 1930s. In spite of Democratic control within the city, Republicans managed to gain state legislature control by 1894 through influencing the redistricting process. The success of the two main political parties in New York has been reflected nationally, with Democrats winning 20, and Republicans 19, of the 39 presidential elections from 1856 to 2010.

Political, social, economic, and scientific developments

Late nineteenth-early twentieth centuries

New York City's five boroughs (Manhattan, the Bronx, Brooklyn, Queens, and Staten Island), along with all village, town, and city governments they included, had had their county governments dissolved and had been consolidated into a single city in 1898. New York State had achieved the status of being the United States of America's most populous and prosperous state by 1900. In 1913, New York City's Woolworth Building was the world's tallest building; in 1930, the 40 Wall Street building broke that record; later in the same year, the Chrysler Building attained that status; in 1931, the Empire State Building succeeded it as the world's tallest; and the World Trade Center gained the title from 1972 to 1974. Consequently, the skyscraper became an emblem associated with New York City. The state of New York was already being served by more than a dozen major railroads by the turn of the century; and new interurban electric railway networks started emerging around Rochester, Syracuse, and other cities in the state during the early twentieth century.

During the late 1890s, New York State's Republican Governor Theodore Roosevelt, statesman Charles Evans Hughes (who would later become governor), and other reform Republicans collaborated with statesman Al Smith (also to be governor four times) and other Democrats in promoting the Progressive reform movement. These members of both parties united to fight monopolies and trusts, particularly in the insurance business as well as other industries; and to decrease waste, increase efficiency, and imbue politics with more democracy. However, as a party, the rest of the Democrats paid more attention to how labor unions and their working-class, ethnic party base could benefit from progressivism and the reforms it achieved. The Manhattan political machine Tammany Hall and other Democratic institutions were against suffrage for women, anticipating their control over male voter groups would be weakened by adding female voters. However, some Tammany Hall leaders' wives and daughters worked to promote suffrage, influencing Tammany men to treat the issue neutrally; this enabled New York State's referendum on women's suffrage to pass in 1917.

Economic, political, and social events during 1920s and early 1930s

In 1920-21, economic deflation caused a depression that affected New York State severely but was of short duration. Thereafter, as throughout the country and the world, New York's economy boomed during the Roaring Twenties, particularly in the big cities. However, urbanization caused agricultural neglect as rural residents moved to cities; farmers suffered economically. Consequently, the decade's urban prosperity came to a sudden halt in 1929 when Wall Street's stock market crashed, ushering in the Great Depression. When Franklin Delano Roosevelt was elected governor of New York in 1928, the state unemployment rate was at least 25 percent. FDR created the Temporary Emergency Relief Agency in 1931, the country's first work relief program, which influenced the Federal Emergency Relief Administration's formation. FDR's offers to nationalize his state relief programs through his New Deal helped get him elected president in 1932. That year, Lake Placid hosted the III Olympic Winter Games. In 1934, in response to the realized need for regulating the stock market, the Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC) was established.

Affect of the Great Depression and the New Deal on New York City

The 1929 stock market crash precipitated the Great Depression. In New York City, the Empire State Building had recently been built. The loss of business resulted in a lack of tenant rentals; for years, it was nicknamed the "Empty State Building." Many blamed the Depression on President Herbert Hoover; in city parks, homeless people created shantytowns, which became nicknamed "Hooverville." Franklin Delano Roosevelt, the New York State Governor elected president in 1932, enacted the New Deal to help the country recover economically, with many programs including the Public Works Administration (PWA) and the Works Progress Administration (WPA). Large-scale building projects included the expansion of the Brooklyn Navy Yard and new schools, public housing, bridges, highways, etc. Despite the Depression, New York City's subway systems dramatically expanded in 1929 and again in 1939. The NYC-owned Independent Subway System merged with the formerly privately owned Brooklyn-Manhattan Transit and Interborough Rapid Transit subway companies. Combined with expansion, this contributed to the New York City subway system's current status as a major mode of transportation.

Social and cultural changes in New York City before World War II

For many years, New York City had already been a major United States city whose population included a large proportion of immigrants. Beginning in the late 1930s, many scientists, artists, musicians, and other intellectuals emigrated from Europe to the United States for better opportunities, particularly to New York City. George Washington had been inaugurated as the new nation's first president in Federal Hall, the City Hall of New York City, in 1789. One way that the city observed the 150th anniversary of President Washington's inauguration was by holding the 1939 New York World's Fair. Originally, this occasion had been associated with the Great Depression's finally being over, accompanied by a peak in optimistic attitudes buoyed by technological advances. However, the beginning of World War II in Europe in 1939 tempered the enthusiasm of citizens of America, New York State, and New York City as the threat of war presaged America's entry into it in 1941. For example, the city changed the World's Fair theme from "Building the World of Tomorrow" to "For Peace and Freedom."

Affect of World War II on the economy of New York City

U.S. cities whose economies depended largely on heavy industries like Detroit, Chicago, Pittsburgh, and Los Angeles experienced the greatest economic boosts by supplying industrial products to the war effort. In New York City, wartime production also supported the economy, but not as significantly as in the more industrial cities. The New York City apparel industry, centered in Manhattan's Garment District, manufactured military uniforms, while machine shops manufactured war materiel. The Brooklyn (U.S.) Navy Yard, expanded for the war effort, produced more warships to supply the U.S. Navy. The war had little effect on New York City's large printing industry. New York's port facilities shipped soldiers and supplies to Europe to support its Allies. During the war, 25 percent of America's exports were managed by the Port of New York. By the time the war ended, the Brooklyn Navy Yard had become the largest shipyard in the world, employing 75,000. New York City was the only major world city not damaged by war; hence, by the 1945 peace, it had become a predominant city of the world.

Economic and social results of World War II

As New York had the biggest state population in the country during World War II, it had provided the greatest resources, manufacturing 11 percent of all military armaments produced in the United States during wartime. The state also lost 31,215 citizens as casualties of the war. New York was affected not only economically, but also socially by World War II. In 1941, New York State Governor Herbert H. Lehman established the Committee on Discrimination in Employment to address discriminatory labor practices. Governor Thomas E. Dewey further addressed this issue, banning employment discrimination by signing the Ives-Quinn Bill into law in 1945. The G.I. Bill of 1944 had enabled soldiers returning from the war to enroll in colleges and universities by subsidizing their tuition, making higher education affordable for them. While this made them more employable, it also overloaded the private universities and colleges, which could not accommodate so many new applicants. In response to this greatly increased demand for education, Governor Dewey established the public State University of New York (SUNY) system in 1948.

Economic and social changes occurring after World War II

The state of New York had undergone its last great industrial era during the World War II years, when its industries supplied munitions for the national defense. Once the war was over, the focus of New York State's economy moved away from the reduced defense industry and toward the

production not of goods but of services instead. Whereas many women, African-Americans, and other members of minority groups had first entered the industrial workforce to fill the vacancies left by men departing their jobs to become soldiers, those who survived their military service and came home displaced those minority workers in disproportionate numbers. Attempting to find non-unionized employees who would work for lower wages, as well as lower tax rates, businesses relocated west and south; many industrial workers followed these jobs as they moved. The growing middle class caused Long Island and other suburbs to develop, while affordable middle-class housing became available in Levittown and similar planned communities. This decentralizing process was fueled by automotive development.

Developments in the population, transportation, politics, and economy

Despite the postwar Baby Boom, New York's big cities ceased expanding around 1950; from 1950 to 2000, Buffalo lost half its population. New York City would grow again during the 1980s. Due to workers migrating and fewer immigrants arriving, the New York State population first fell from 1970 to 1980, becoming smaller than those of California and Texas. The state's third wave of transportation projects took the form of highway construction: most outstanding was Governor Thomas E. Dewey's New York State Thruway, modeled after Germany's Autobahn and first of its kind in the U.S. At its conception, 90 percent of the population was within 30 miles of it. The 427-mile, \$600 million Thruway opened in 1956. As it advantaged upstate New York disproportionately, New York City Democrats disparaged the "enemy of schools" and "Dewey's Ditch." Governor Nelson Rockefeller altered state politics from 1959 to 1973. Initially liberal, he became increasingly conservative, aggressively quelling the Attica Prison riot, passing draconian drug laws, and restricting SUNY's expansion. Excessive 1970s projects, including Albany's Mall and New York City's World Trade Center, threatened state bankruptcy, averted by greater state budget oversight.

Shifts in political power between the two major parties in New York State

Following Nelson Rockefeller's Republican governorship from 1959 to 1973, Democrats returned to state power by 1974; governors Hugh Carey and Mario Cuomo maintained Democratic control of New York State for 20 years. Later in the twentieth century, Democrats like New York City Mayor Ed Koch from 1978 to 1989 and U.S. Senator from New York Daniel Patrick Moynihan from 1977 to 2001 were less liberal and more moderate. Meanwhile, New York State Republicans aligned more with the national Republican Party, which was more conservative. Senator Alfonse D'Amato, elected in 1980, Mayor Rudolph Giuliani, elected in 1993, and Governor George Pataki, elected in 1994, strengthened the political power of Republicans in New York; still, New York continued to be among the most liberal of U.S. states. The last Republican president to carry New York State was Ronald Reagan in 1984; however, New York City had another Republican mayor, Michael Bloomberg, for three terms from 2002 to 2013. Bloomberg had been a Democrat until 2001, and became an independent in 2007. He was succeeded by Bill de Blasio, the first Democratic New York City mayor since 1993.

Economic, social, and cultural developments from the twentieth to twenty-first century

Excepting New York City, other cities in New York State continued shrinking in the late 2000s until young professionals were attracted there by the high technology and telecommunications industries. Polaroid and other industrial companies declined, while entrepreneurs started numerous smaller businesses. New York City's urban development supplanted decay and police changes lowered crime rates, contributing to continuing growth and an accompanying cultural surge; preeminence in fashion, trendiness, and hip-hop music and culture stimulated immigration

there and statewide. New York City was a news center, home to *The New York Times* and the *Wall Street Journal* (two of three nationally read newspapers), two of three major cable news networks, and the major broadcast news networks. Through a combination of factors, including competition from other cities eliminated by the savings and loan crisis, investment banking innovations, stock market gains, and expanded banking, Wall Street and New York City also gained additional preeminence in the financial services industry. Upstate cities like Rochester and Corning developed high-tech industry while others dwindled; farms continued to decrease in number; and suburbs grew in area more than population. New York began the millennium economically strong overall.

Political characteristic of New York State government at the turn of the twenty-first century

Beginning the twenty-first century, over 90 percent of New York State Legislature incumbent representatives were reelected; only one incumbent in each house lost in 2002. Analysts found politicians lacking competition less willing to cooperate across parties. In the worst attack on American soil ever, Al-Qaeda terrorists hijacked four passenger jet airplanes on September 11, 2001, crashing two into the World Trade Center's twin towers in New York City, killing nearly 3,000. One crashed into the Pentagon in Virginia; passengers on the fourth plane fought the hijackers, preventing the plane from reaching Washington, D.C., but crashing it in a Pennsylvania field, killing all of its occupants. In the following weeks, thousands of New York City residents volunteered, expanding city forces searching the World Trade Center site for survivors and remains. By 2006 the first skyscraper, 7 World Trade Center, had been rebuilt; the National September 11 Memorial was dedicated and opened in 2011; and in 2014, the National September 11 Museum was dedicated and opened, and the One World Trade Center skyscraper also opened.

Geography

Geography

Geography literally means the study of the earth. Geographers study physical characteristics of the earth as well as man-made borders and boundaries. They also study the distribution of life on the planet, such as where certain species of animals can be found or how different forms of life interact. Major elements of the study of geography include:

- Locations
- Regional characteristics
- Spatial relations
- Natural and manmade forces that change elements of the earth

These elements are studied from regional, topical, physical and human perspectives. Geography also focuses on the origins of the earth as well as the history and backgrounds of different human populations.

Physical and cultural geography

Physical geography is the study of the physical characteristics of the earth: how they relate to each other, how they were formed, and how they develop. These characteristics include climate, land, and water, and also how they affect human population in various areas. Different landforms in combination with various climates and other conditions determine characteristics of various cultures.

Cultural geography is the study of how the various aspects of physical geography affect individual cultures. Cultural geography also compares various cultures: how their lifestyles and customs are affected by their geographical location, climate, and other factors, and how they interact with their environment.

Divisions of geographical study

The four divisions of geographical study and tools used are:

- Topical—the study of a single feature of the earth or one specific human activity that occurs world-wide.
- Physical—the various physical features of the earth, how they are created, the forces that change them, and how they are related to each other and to various human activities.
- Regional—specific characteristics of individual places and regions.
- Human—how human activity affects the environment. This includes study of political, historical, social, and cultural activities.

Tools used in geographical study include special research methods like mapping, field studies, statistics, interviews, mathematics, and use of various scientific instruments.

Ancient geographers

The following are three important ancient geographers and their contributions to the study of geography:

- Eratosthenes lived in ancient Greek times, and mathematically calculated the circumference of the earth and the tilt of the earth's axis. He also created the first map of the world.
- Strabo wrote a description of the ancient world called *Geographica* in seventeen volumes.
- Ptolemy, primarily an astronomer, was also an experienced mapmaker. He wrote a treatise entitled *Geography*, which was used by Christopher Columbus in his travels.

Weather and climate

Weather and climate are physical systems that affect geography. Though they deal with similar information, the way this information is measured and compiled is different.

Weather involves daily conditions in the atmosphere that affect temperature, precipitation (rain, snow, hail, or sleet), wind speed, air pressure, and other factors. Weather focuses on the short-term—what the conditions will be today, tomorrow, or over the next few days.

In contrast, climate aggregates information about daily and seasonal weather conditions in a region over a long period of time. The climate takes into account average monthly and yearly temperatures, average precipitation over long periods of time, and the growing season of an area. Climates are classified according to latitude, or how close they lie to the earth's equator. The three major divisions are:

- Low Latitudes, lying from 0 to approximately 23.5 degrees latitude
- Middle Latitudes, found from approximately 23.5 to 66.5 degrees
- High Latitudes, found from approximately 66.5 degrees to the poles

Rainforests, savannas, and deserts occur in low latitudes:

- Rainforest climates, near the equator, experience high average temperatures and humidity, as well as relatively high rainfall.
- Savannas are found on either side of the rainforest region. Mostly grasslands, they typically experience dry winters and wet summers.
- Beyond the savannas lie the desert regions, with hot, dry climates, sparse rainfall, and temperature fluctuations of up to fifty degrees from day to night.

The climate regions found in the middle latitudes are:

- Mediterranean—the Mediterranean climate occurs between 30 and 40 degrees latitude, both north and south, on the western coasts of continents. Characteristics include a year-long growing season, hot, dry summers followed by mild winters, and sparse rainfall that occurs mostly during the winter months.
- Humid-subtropical—humid-subtropical regions are located on southeastern coastal areas. Winds that blow in over warm ocean currents produce long summers, mild winters, and a long growing season. These areas are highly productive, and support a larger part of the earth's population than any other climate.
- Humid-continental—the humid continental climate produces the familiar four seasons typical of a good portion of the US. Some of the most productive farmlands in the world lie in these climates. Winters are cold, summers are hot and humid.
- Marine—marine climates are found near water or on islands. Ocean winds help make these areas mild and rainy. Summers are cooler than humid-subtropical summers, but winters also bring milder temperatures due to the warmth of the ocean winds.
- Steppe—steppe climates, or prairie climates, are found far inland on large continents. Summers are hot and winters are cold, but rainfall is sparser than in continental climates.
- Desert—desert climates occur where steppe climates receive even less rainfall. Examples include the Gobi desert in Asia as well as desert areas of Australia and the southwestern US.

The high latitudes consist of two major climate areas, the tundra and taiga:

- Tundra means “marshy plain.” Ground is frozen throughout long, cold winters, but there is little snowfall. During the short summers, it becomes wet and marshy. Tundras are not amenable to crops, but many plants and animals have adapted to the conditions.
- Taigas lie south of tundra regions, and include the largest forest areas in the world, as well as swamps and marshes. Large mineral deposits exist here, as well as many animals valued for their fur. In the winter, taiga regions are colder than the tundra, and summers are hotter. The growing season is short.

A vertical climate exists in high mountain ranges. Increasing elevation leads to varying temperatures, growing conditions, types of vegetation and animals, and occurrence of human habitation, often encompassing elements of various other climate regions.

➤ **Review Video: [Weather and Climate](#)**

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Factors that affect climate

Because the earth is tilted, its rotation brings about changes in seasons. Regions closer to the equator, and those nearest the poles, experience very little change in seasonal temperatures. Mid-range latitudes are most likely to experience distinct seasons. Large bodies of water also affect

climate. Ocean currents and wind patterns can change the climate for an area that lies in typically cold latitude, such as England, to a much more temperate climate. Mountains can affect both short-term weather and long-term climates. Some deserts occur because precipitation is stopped by the wall of a mountain range.

Over time, established climate patterns can shift and change. While the issue is hotly debated, it has been theorized that human activity has also led to climate change.

Human systems

Human systems affect geography in the way in which they settle, form groups that grow into large-scale habitations, and even create permanent changes in the landscape. Geographers study movements of people, how they distribute goods among each other and to other settlements or cultures, and how ideas grow and spread. Migrations, wars, forced relocations, and trade can all spread cultural ideas, language, goods and other practices to wide-spread areas. Some major migrations or the conquering of one people by another have significantly changed cultures throughout history. In addition, human systems can lead to various conflicts or alliances to control access to and the use of natural resources.

North America

North America consists of 23 countries, including (in decreasing population order) the United States of America, Mexico, Canada, Guatemala, Cuba, Haiti, and the Dominican Republic. The US and Canada support similarly diverse cultures, as both were formed from groups of native races as well as large numbers of immigrants. Many North American cultures come from a mixture of indigenous and colonial European influences. Agriculture is important to North American countries, while service industries and technology also play a large part in the economy. On average, North America supports a high standard of living and a high level of development and supports trade with countries throughout the world.

South America

Including Brazil (largest in area and population), Colombia, Argentina, Venezuela, Peru, and 10 more countries or territories, South America is largely defined by its prevailing languages. The majority of countries in South America speak Spanish or Portuguese. Most of South America has experienced a similar history, having been originally dominated by Native cultures, conquered by European nations. The countries of South America have since gained independence, but there is a wide disparity between various countries' economic and political factors. Most South American countries rely on only one or two exports, usually agricultural, with suitable lands often controlled by rich families. Most societies in South America feature major separations between classes, both economically and socially. Challenges faced by developing South American countries include geographical limitations, economic issues, and sustainable development, including the need to preserve the existing rainforests.

Europe

Europe contains a wide variety of cultures, ethnic groups, physical geographical features, climates, and resources, all of which have influenced the distribution of its varied population. Europe in general is industrialized and developed, with cultural differences giving each individual country its own unique characteristics. Greek and Roman influences played a major role in European culture, as did Christianity. European countries spread their beliefs and cultural elements throughout the world by means of migration and colonization. They have had a significant influence on nearly every other continent in the world. While Western Europe has been largely democratic, Eastern

Europe functioned under communist rule for many years. The recent formation of the European Union (EU) has increased stability and positive diplomatic relations among European nations. Like other industrialized regions, Europe is now focusing on various environmental issues.

Russia

After numerous conflicts, Russia became a Communist state, known as the USSR. With the collapse of the USSR in 1991, the country has struggled in its transition to a market-driven economy. Attempts to build a workable system have led to the destruction of natural resources as well as problems with nuclear power, including accidents such as Chernobyl. To complete the transition to a market economy, Russia needs to improve its transportation and communication systems, and find a way to more efficiently use its natural resources.

The population of Russia is not distributed evenly, with three quarters of the population living west of the Ural Mountains. The people of Russia encompass over a hundred different ethnic groups. Over eighty percent of the population is ethnically Russian, and Russian is the official language of the country.

North Africa and Southwest and Central Asia

The largely desert climate of these areas has led most population centers to rise around sources of water, such as the Nile River. This area is the home of the earliest known civilizations and the origin of Christianity, Judaism, and Islam. After serving as the site of huge, independent civilizations in ancient times, North Africa and Southwest and Central Asia were largely parceled out as European colonies during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. The beginning of the twentieth century saw many of these countries gain their independence. Islam has served as a unifying force for large portions of these areas, and many of the inhabitants speak Arabic. In spite of the arid climate, agriculture is a large business, but the most valuable resource is oil. Centuries of conflict throughout this area have led to ongoing political problems. These political problems have also contributed to environmental issues.

Sub-Saharan Africa

South of the Sahara Desert, Africa is divided into a number of culturally diverse nations. The inhabitants are unevenly distributed due to geographical limitations that prevent settlement in vast areas. AIDS has become a major plague throughout this part of Africa, killing millions, largely due to restrictive beliefs that prevent education about the disease, as well as abject poverty and unsettled political situations that make it impossible to manage the pandemic. The population of this area of Africa is widely diverse due to extensive migration. Many of the people still rely on subsistence farming for their welfare. Starvation and poverty are rampant due to drought and political instability. Some areas are far more stable than others due to greater availability of resources. These have been able to begin the process of industrialization.

South Asia

South Asia is home to one of the first human civilizations, which grew up in the Indus River Valley. With a great deal of disparity between rural and urban life, South Asia has much to do to improve the quality of life for its lower classes. Two major religions, Hinduism and Buddhism, have their origins in this region. Parts of South Asia, most notably India, were subject to British rule for several decades, and are still working to improve independent governments and social systems. Overall, South Asia is very culturally diverse, with a wide mix of religions and languages throughout. Many individuals are farmers, but a growing number have found prosperity in the spread of high-tech industries. Industrialization is growing in South Asia, but continues to face environmental, social, religious and economic challenges.

East Asia

Governments in East Asia are varied, ranging from communist to democratic governments, with some governments that mix both approaches. Isolationism throughout the area limited the countries' contact with other nations until the early twentieth century. The unevenly distributed population of East Asia consists of over one and a half billion people with widely diverse ethnic backgrounds, religions and languages. More residents live in urban areas than in rural areas, creating shortages of farm workers at times. Japan, Taiwan and South Korea are overall more urban, while China and Mongolia are more rural. Japan stands as the most industrial country of East Asia. Some areas of East Asia are suffering from major environmental issues. Japan has dealt with many of these problems and now has some of the strictest environmental laws in the world.

Southeast Asia

Much of Southeast Asia was colonized by European countries during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, with the exception of Siam, now known as Thailand. All Southeast Asian countries are now independent, but the twentieth century saw numerous conflicts between communist and democratic forces.

Southeast Asia has been heavily influenced by both Buddhist and Muslim religions. Industrialization is growing, with the population moving in large numbers from rural to urban areas. Some have moved to avoid conflict, oppression, and poverty.

Natural disasters, including volcanoes, typhoons, and flash flooding, are fairly common in Southeast Asia, creating extensive economic damage and societal disruption.

The South Pacific

South Pacific cultures originally migrated from Southeast Asia, creating hunter-gatherer or sometimes settled agricultural communities. European countries moved in during later centuries, seeking the plentiful natural resources of the area. Today, some South Pacific islands remain under the control of foreign governments, and culture in these areas mixes modern, industrialized society with indigenous culture. Population is unevenly distributed, largely due to the inhabitability of many parts of the South Pacific, such as the extremely hot desert areas of Australia. Agriculture still drives much of the economy, with tourism growing. Antarctica remains the only continent not claimed by a single country. There are no permanent human habitations in Antarctica, but scientists and explorers visit the area on a temporary basis.

Human-environment interaction

Geography also studies the ways people interact with, use, and change their environment. The effects, reasons, and consequences of these changes are studied, as are the ways the environment limits or influences human behavior. This kind of study can help determine the best course of action when a nation or group of people are considering making changes to the environment, such as building a dam or removing natural landscape to build or expand roads. Study of the consequences can help determine if these actions are manageable and how long-term, detrimental results can be mitigated.

Physical geography and climate

North America

The largest amount of North America is the US and Canada, which have a similar distribution of geographical features, mountain ranges in both east and west, stretches of fertile plains through the center, and lakes and waterways. Both areas were shaped by glaciers, which also deposited highly fertile soil. Because they are so large, Canada and the US experience several varieties of climate, including continental climates with four seasons in median areas, tropical climates in the southern part of the US, and arctic climates in the far north. The remaining area of North America is comprised primarily of islands, including the Caribbean Isles and Greenland.

South America

South America contains a wide variety of geographical features including high mountains such as the Andes, wide plains, and high altitude plateaus. The region contains numerous natural resources, but many of them have remained unused due to various obstacles, including political issues, geographic barriers, and lack of sufficient economic power. Climate zones in South America are largely tropical, with rainforests and savannas, but vertical climate zones and grasslands also exist in places.

Europe

Europe spans a wide area with a variety of climate zones. In the east and south are mountain ranges, while the north is dominated by a plains region. The long coastline and the island nature of some countries, such as Britain, mean the climate is often warmer than other lands at similar latitudes, as the area is warmed by ocean currents. Many areas of western Europe have a moderate climate, while areas of the south are dominated by the classic Mediterranean climate. Europe carries a high level of natural resources. Numerous waterways help connect the inner regions with the coastal areas. Much of Europe is industrialized, and agriculture has been developed for thousands of years.

Russia

Russia's area encompasses part of Asia and Europe. From the standpoint of square footage alone, Russia is the largest country in the world. Due to its size, Russia encompasses a wide variety of climatic regions, including plains, plateaus, mountains, and tundra.

Russia's climate can be quite harsh, with rivers that are frozen most of the year, making transportation of the country's rich natural resources more difficult. Siberia, in northern Russia, is dominated by permafrost. Native peoples in this area still follow a hunting and gathering lifestyle, living in portable yurts and subsisting largely on herds of reindeer or caribou. Other areas include taiga with extensive, dense woods in north central Russia and more temperate steppes and grasslands in the southwest.

North Africa and Southwest and Central Asia

This area of the world is complex in its geographical structure and climate, incorporating seas, peninsulas, rivers, mountains, and numerous other features. Earthquakes are common, with tectonic plates in the area remaining active. Much of the world's oil lies in this area. The tendency of the large rivers of North Africa, especially the Nile, to follow a set pattern of drought and extreme fertility, led people to settle there from prehistoric times. As technology has advanced, people have tamed this river, making its activity more predictable and the land around it more productive. The extremely arid nature of many other parts of this area has also led to human intervention such as irrigation to increase agricultural production.

Sub-Saharan Africa

South of the Sahara Desert, the high elevations and other geographical characteristics have made it very difficult for human travel or settlement to occur. The geography of the area is dominated by a series of plateaus. There are also mountain ranges and a large rift valley in the eastern part of the continent. Contrasting the wide desert areas, Sub-Saharan Africa contains numerous lakes, rivers, and world-famous waterfalls. The area has tropical climates, including rainforests, savannas, steppes, and desert areas. The main natural resources are minerals, including gems and water.

South Asia

The longest alluvial plain, a plain caused by shifting floodplains of major rivers and river systems over time, exists in South Asia. South Asia boasts three major river systems in the Ganges, Indus, and Brahmaputra. It also has large deposits of minerals, including iron ore that is in great demand internationally. South Asia holds mountains, plains, plateaus, and numerous islands. The climates range from tropical to highlands and desert areas. South Asia also experiences monsoon winds that cause a long rainy season. Variations in climate, elevation and human activity influence agricultural production.

East Asia

East Asia includes North and South Korea, Mongolia, China, Japan, and Taiwan. Mineral resources are plentiful but not evenly distributed throughout. The coastlines are long, and while the population is large, farmlands are sparse. As a result, the surrounding oceans have become a major source of sustenance. East Asia is large enough to also encompass several climate regions. Ocean currents provide milder climates to coastal areas, while monsoons provide the majority of the rainfall for the region. Typhoons are somewhat common, as are earthquakes, volcanoes and tsunamis. The latter occur because of the tectonic plates that meet beneath the continent and remain somewhat active.

Southeast Asia

Southeast Asia lies largely on the equator, and roughly half of the countries of the region are island nations. These countries include Indonesia, the Philippines, Vietnam, Thailand, Myanmar, and Malaysia (which is partially on the mainland and partially an island country). The island nations of Southeast Asia feature mountains that are considered part of the Ring of Fire, an area where tectonic plates remain active, leading to extensive volcanic activity as well as earthquakes and tsunamis. Southeast Asia boasts many rivers as well as abundant natural resources, including gems, fossil fuels and minerals. There are basically two seasons—wet and dry. The wet season arrives with the monsoons. In general, Southeast Asia consists of tropical rainforest climates, but there are some mountain areas and tropical savannas.

Australia, Oceania and Antarctica

In the far southern hemisphere of the globe, Australia and Oceania present their own climatic combinations. Australia, the only island on earth that is also a continent, has extensive deserts as well as mountains and lowlands. The economy is driven by agriculture, including ranches and farms, and minerals. While the steppes bordering extremely arid inland areas are suitable for livestock, only the coastal areas receive sufficient rainfall for crops without using irrigation. Oceania refers to over 10,000 Pacific islands created by volcanic activity. Most of these have tropical climates with wet and dry seasons. New Zealand, Australia's nearest neighbor, boasts rich forests as well as mountain ranges and relatively moderate temperatures, including rainfall throughout the year. Antarctica is covered with ice. Its major resource consists of scientific

information. It supports some wildlife, such as penguins, and little vegetation, mostly mosses or lichens.

Plate tectonics

According to the geological theory of plate tectonics, the earth's crust is made up of ten major and several minor tectonic plates. These plates are the solid areas of the crust. They float on top of the earth's mantle, which is made up of molten rock. Because the plates float on this liquid component of the earth's crust, they move, creating major changes in the earth's surface. These changes can happen very slowly over a long time period, such as in continental drift, or rapidly, such as when earthquakes occur. Interaction between the different continental plates can create mountain ranges, volcanic activity, major earthquakes, and deep rifts.

Plate tectonics defines three types of plate boundaries, determined by the way in which the edges of the plates interact. These plate boundaries are:

- **Convergent boundaries**—the bordering plates move toward one another. When they collide directly, this is known as continental collision, which can create very large, high mountain ranges such as the Himalayas and the Andes. If one plate slides under the other, this is called subduction. Subduction can lead to intense volcanic activity. One example is the Ring of Fire that lies along the northern Pacific coastlines.
- **Divergent boundaries**—plates move away from each other. This movement leads to rifts such as the Mid-Atlantic Ridge and east Africa's Great Rift Valley.
- **Transform boundaries**—plate boundaries slide in opposite directions against each other. Intense pressure builds up along transform boundaries as the plates grind along each other's edges, leading to earthquakes. Many major fault lines, including the San Andreas Fault, lie along transform boundaries.

➤ **Review Video:** [Plate Tectonics](#)

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Erosion, weathering, transportation and deposition

Erosion involves movement of any loose material on the earth's surface. This can include soil, sand, or rock fragments. These loose fragments can be displaced by natural forces such as wind, water, ice, plant cover, and human factors. Mechanical erosion occurs due to natural forces. Chemical erosion occurs as a result of human intervention and activities. Weathering occurs when atmospheric elements affect the earth's surface. Water, heat, ice, and pressure all lead to weathering. Transportation refers to loose material being moved by wind, water or ice. Glacial movement, for example, carries everything from pebbles to boulders, sometimes over long distances. Deposition is the result of transportation. When material is transported, it is eventually deposited, and builds up to create formations like moraines and sand dunes.

Effects of human interaction and conflict on geographical boundaries

Human societies and their interaction have led to divisions of territories into countries and various other subdivisions. While these divisions are at their root artificial, they are important to geographers in the discussion of interactions of various populations.

Geographical divisions often occur through conflict between different human populations.

The reasons behind these divisions include:

- Control of resources
- Control of important trade routes
- Control of populations

Conflict often occurs due to religious, political, language, or race differences. Natural resources are finite and so often lead to conflict over how they are distributed among populations.

State sovereignty

State sovereignty recognizes the division of geographical areas into areas controlled by various governments or groups of people. These groups control not only the territory, but also all its natural resources and the inhabitants of the area. The entire planet Earth is divided into political or administratively sovereign areas recognized to be controlled by a particular government with the exception of the continent of Antarctica.

Alliances

Alliances form between different countries based on similar interests, political goals, cultural values, or military issues. Six existing international alliances include:

- North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO)
- Common Market
- European Union (EU)
- United Nations (UN)
- Caribbean Community
- Council of Arab Economic Unity

In addition, very large companies and multi-national corporations can create alliances and various kinds of competition based on the need to control resources, production, and the overall marketplace.

Agricultural revolution

The agricultural revolution began approximately six thousand years ago when the plow was invented in Mesopotamia. Using a plow drawn by animals, people were able to cultivate crops in large quantities rather than gathering available seeds and grains and planting them by hand. Because large-scale agriculture was labor intensive, this led to the development of stable communities where people gathered to make farming possible. As stable farming communities replaced groups of nomadic hunter-gatherers, human society underwent profound changes. Societies became dependent on limited numbers of crops as well as subject to the vagaries of weather. Trading livestock and surplus agricultural output led to the growth of large-scale commerce and trade routes.

Modification of surrounding environments by human populations

The agricultural revolution led human societies to begin changing their surroundings in order to accommodate their needs for shelter and room to cultivate food and to provide for domestic animals. Clearing ground for crops, redirecting waterways for irrigation purposes, and building permanent settlements all create major changes in the environment. Large-scale agriculture can lead to loose topsoil and damaging erosion. Building large cities leads to degraded air quality, water

pollution from energy consumption, and many other side effects that can severely damage the environment. Recently, many countries have taken action by passing laws to reduce human impact on the environment and reduce the potentially damaging side effects. This is called environmental policy.

Ecology

Ecology is the study of the way living creatures interact with their environment. Biogeography explores the way physical features of the earth affect living creatures. Ecology bases its studies on three different levels of the environment:

- Ecosystem—this is a specific physical environment and all the organisms that live there.
- Biome—this is a group of ecosystems, usually consisting of a large area with similar flora and fauna as well as similar climate and soil. Examples of biomes include deserts, tropical rain forests, taigas, and tundra.
- Habitat—this is an area in which a specific species usually lives. The habitat includes the necessary soil, water, and resources for that particular species, as well as predators and other species that compete for the same resources.

Interactions between species

Different interactions occur among species and members of single species within a habitat. These interactions fall into three categories:

- Competition — competition occurs when different animals, either of the same species or of different species, compete for the same resources. Robins can compete with other robins for available food, but other insectivores also compete for these same resources.
- Predation— predation occurs when one species depends on the other species for food, such as a fox who subsists on small mammals.
- Symbiosis — symbiosis occurs when two different species exist in the same environment without negatively affecting each other. Some symbiotic relationships are beneficial to one or both organisms without harm occurring to either.

Ability to adapt

If a species is relocated from one habitat to another, it must adapt in order to survive. Some species are more capable of adapting than others. Those that cannot adapt will not survive. There are different ways a creature can adapt, including behavior modification as well as structure or physiological changes. Adaptation is also vital if an organism's environment changes around it. Although the creature has not been relocated, it finds itself in a new environment that requires changes in order to survive. The more readily an organism can adapt, the more likely it is to survive. The almost infinite ability of humans to adapt is a major reason why they are able to survive in almost any habitat in any area of the world.

Biodiversity

Biodiversity refers to the variety of habitats that exist on the planet, as well as the variety of organisms that can exist within these habitats. A greater level of biodiversity makes it more likely that an individual habitat will flourish along with the species that depend upon it. Changes in habitat, including climate change, human intervention, or other factors, can reduce biodiversity by causing the extinction of certain species.

Anthropology, Psychology, and Sociology

Sociology

Sociology is a scientific discipline that focuses on the study of societies. Human societies are made up of institutions, groups, and finally individuals. How all these levels of organization interact is the major interest of sociologists. The way individuals organize themselves, how they interact with each other, and the attitudes and beliefs different groups develop, all define those groups' cultural backgrounds. Groups of people in the same geographical area often develop similar organizational structures, beliefs and attitudes.

The five major study areas covered by sociology are:

- Population studies: These studies involve observing social patterns of groups of people who live in the same area.
- Social behaviors: Sociology studies how general behaviors change over time, as well as attitudes such as morale, need for conformity, and other elements of social interaction.
- Cultural influences: Influences of culture on social groups include art, religion, language, and overall knowledge and learning.
- Social change: Ways societies change over time. This includes major events such as wars and revolutions, or the way technology changes how people interact.
- Social institutions: Large groups of people organized to fit specific niches in society, such as churches, hospitals, government, businesses and schools. These organizations change over time and according to the overall needs and beliefs of an individual society.

Gathering and testing data

The three major methods of gathering data for sociological studies are:

- Surveys—gathering information via direct questioning of members of the social group being studied.
- Controlled experiments—performing experiments that change an element of society.
- Field observations—living among members of a particular group or culture and observing how they interact and how they live their everyday lives.

Socialization within cultures

Individuals learn how to function within a specific culture, group or society via a process called socialization. Social contact with other human beings is vitally important to early development so that children can grow up to function in society as expected.

During the early years, children receive socialization from their families, siblings, peers, schoolmates, and from exposure to mass media, when applicable. Observing the behavior of others and adapting it to their own use helps children learn to interact with others. This process continues throughout life as individuals learn to adapt to various situations and interact with new groups.

Social groups and social interaction

Social groups are defined based on how they come into being, how they develop, and how they interact with wider society. The five major classifications are:

- Primary groups—focused on members' need for support.
- Secondary groups—form around the need to complete a task.

- Reference groups—help form an individual's identity.
- In-groups and out-groups—oppose each other or exclude members of other groups.
- Social networks—provide multiple links to an often large number of other individuals.

Five main forms of social interaction help define social groups:

- Cooperation
- Coercion
- Conflict
- Conformity
- Social exchange

All of these elements can bring a group into existence, break it apart, or transform it.

Social institutions

Six major social institutions that characterize and meet the needs of any society are:

- Family—the basic unit of any society and the most important social institution in all sociological study.
- Education—in many societies, the values and norms of culture are communicated through institutionalized education as well as via the family.
- Political institutions—political institutions in a society determine the distribution of power.
- Economic institutions—these institutions determine distribution of wealth.
- Religion—provides mores and beliefs that help unify a culture. Unfortunately many religions also function in an in-group/out-group capacity.
- Sport—reflects values of society, promotes unity, and provides an outlet for aggression

Cultural change and cultural traits

Three major processes bring about the majority of changes in a culture:

- Discovery—finding things that already exist, such as fire, a major cultural transformer.
- Invention—Creating new equipment, machinery, etc. that changes the way tasks are accomplished.
- Diffusion—borrowing elements from other cultures.

Over 70 traits have been identified that are found in nearly every culture to some level. These traits can be divided into five categories that determine the basic structure, mores, norms, and other characteristics of a culture.

- Arts
- Language
- Environment
- Recreation
- Economy
- Institution
- Beliefs

Race and ethnicity relationships

In general, relationships within cultures involving race and ethnicity are defined by either assimilation or conflict. Assimilation can involve:

- Anglo-conformity—immigrants and racial minorities conform to the expectations of Anglo-American society, whether by choice, necessity or force.
- Cultural pluralism—acceptance of varieties of racial and ethnic groups.
- Accommodation—mutual adaptation between majority and minority groups.
- Melting pot—the mixing together of various ethnic groups will bring about a new cultural group.

Patterns of conflict include:

- Population transfer—one group is required or forced to leave by another group.
- Subjugation—one group exercises control over the other.
- Genocide—one group slaughters another.

Gender and age discrimination

In spite of legislation, education, and other attempts to bring about a higher level of equality, discrimination still exists against women and the elderly, particularly as involves law, politics and economic standing. Discrimination against women is particularly profound in most developing countries. It is believed that increasing the standing of women in a society is a major element in increasing the overall livelihood of that society.

While some societies value the elderly for their knowledge and experience, others discriminate against older people because of their decreased physical ability and ability to contribute economically. In the US, the poverty level for the elderly still stands at about ten percent. As lifespan increases, all societies must find a way to accommodate the needs of the elderly population.

Auguste Comte

Auguste Comte, a French philosopher, first used the term sociology to describe the study of human organizations and culture. His major theory was positivism. Positivism relies entirely on physical and sensory data to describe and evaluate human experience, completely discounting anything metaphysical. Social behavior, according to Comte, could be measured scientifically, as could major events that occurred in different populations. Comte is considered to be the first sociologist in the Western world.

Emile Durkheim

Through Durkheim's efforts, sociology eventually came to be considered a discipline in major universities. Heavily influenced by Comte's views of positivism, Durkheim felt the larger world was influenced by group beliefs, attitudes and cultural aspects rather than by individuals. He performed in-depth studies on the cause of higher suicide rates among certain social groups. In the course of this study, he discussed anomie, or people affected by larger changes in society, such as unemployment or alienation of social groups.

Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels

According to Marx and Engels, society world-wide could be boiled down to a constant struggle between classes. This socio-economic battle, as explained in *The Communist Manifesto*, would eventually lead to a revolution by the working class, since work itself is a social organization that involves large groups of people.

Herbert Spencer

Herbert Spencer is credited with the idea known as Social Darwinism. Though he and Darwin were technically rivals, Spencer applied Darwin's idea of "survival of the fittest" (though Spencer actually coined that term) to the way society develops. According to Spencer, competition is the major driving force behind the development and changes inherent in human society.

Max Weber

Weber's major thesis stated that the differing religions of East and West led to differences in societal development. Weber believed Protestantism as a religion influenced the development of Capitalism in the West. He also stated that the organization of the state felt violence was a legitimate means of protecting citizenry or enforcing rule. Police action, military action, and violence of individuals against each other in order to protect themselves or property demonstrate the state's propensity to solve problems through violence.

Anthropology

While archeology studies the physical remains of populations, anthropology by contrast studies human culture, its development, and how different cultural groups are similar or different. Anthropologists often engage in direct study of cultures by living among them, observing and participating in everyday activities. This is referred to as "participant observation." Anthropologists also perform cross-cultural and comparative research.

Anthropology can be divided into four major areas of study. Each one addresses a slightly different approach to culture and how it affects human beings, as well as how culture develops over time.

- Archeology—studies materials and physical items left behind by human settlements
- Social-cultural—social-cultural anthropology focuses on cultural standards, beliefs, values and norms
- Biological—biological anthropology studies specific genetic characteristics of different populations
- Linguistics—studies the development of languages over time

Culture

"Culture" refers to all learned human behaviors and behavioral patterns. Culture is made up of:

- Cultural universals—traits shared by all human beings such as language.
- Culture—all traditions that define a society.
- Subculture—groups within a culture that share specific traits.

While culture serves as a survival mechanism by bringing people together in groups and helping individuals identify with each other, it also undergoes frequent and sometimes profound change as groups respond to new technologies, knowledge, or contact with other cultures.

Subsistence patterns

The term subsistence patterns are a reference to ways in which societies obtain the necessities of life such as food and shelter. The subsistence pattern of a society often is directly correlated to its economy, population size, political systems, and overall technological development. Certain subsistence patterns can only support lower levels of societal development, while others can support a much more developed culture.

The four major subsistence patterns are:

- Foraging, or hunter-gatherer
- Pastoralism—herding
- Horticulture—small-scale farming
- Intensive agriculture—large-scale farming

Hunter-gatherer societies by nature are nomadic and do not tend to support highly developed cultures. Intensive agriculture, by contrast, can support a large population to a high subsistence level, allowing for the development of a sophisticated, modern culture.

Religion

Strictly defined, religion consists of a belief system and usually a set of rituals involving worship of a supernatural force or forces that have some effect upon both everyday life and the overall structure and functioning of the world around us. Religion provides meaning and explanation for various life events and profoundly affects a cultures worldviews. Religion provides emotional support for individuals and a sense of community within a group that has shared religious views. Religious organization also provides structured sets of moral norms and motivation to abide by these norms and rules.

Increased secularization, particularly in developed countries, has reduced the role of religion in everyday life, leading individuals to find other systems to fill these basic human needs.

Psychology

Psychology studies human behavior and how the mind works. Some psychologists pursue scientific psychology, while others focus on applied psychology. Psychology correlates human behavior and can make use of this data to predict behavior or determine why a particular behavior has occurred. Psychologists also help work with people who have specific problems with relationships or with how they perceive the world. By observing patterns and recording them in detail, psychologists can apply these patterns to predictions about human behavior in individuals, groups, cultures, and even countries.

Methods of psychological study

Psychological researchers study their discipline in various ways. Based on what they are studying, they generally use one of the following methods.

- Naturalistic observation—much as with sociological study, psychologists observe people and their natural behavior without interfering.
- Survey method—surveys are distributed among a wide range of people and the answers are correlated.

- Case studies—specific individuals or groups are studied in depth over a period of time, sometimes for many years.
- Experimental method—involves experimental and control groups and use of specific experiments to prove or disprove a theory.
- Correlational design—is concerned with relationships between variables, such as whether one factor causes or influences another.

Aristotle

Aristotle is often cited as founding the science of psychology through his overall interest in the working of the human mind. His beliefs stated that the mind was part of the body, while the psyche functioned as a receiver of knowledge. He felt psychology's major focus was to uncover the soul. Later philosophers and scientists built on these ideas to eventually develop the modern science of psychology.

Nativism

Nativism is a theory that states that there is a certain body of knowledge all people are born with. This knowledge requires no learning or experience on the part of the individual. Rene Descartes, a French philosopher, developed this concept. He believed the body and mind affected each other profoundly, largely because they are separate from each other. The physical site of this interaction took place in the pineal gland according to his theory. The pineal gland is a small gland in the brain. Descartes developed several theories in the field of philosophy and psychology that are still studied in modern universities.

Empiricism

Empiricism was in direct opposition to Descartes' theory of nativism. Nativism states that people are born with a certain body of knowledge that they do not have to learn. Empiricism theorizes that all knowledge is acquired through life experience, impressing itself on a mind and brain that are blank at the time of birth. Major proponents of empiricism were Thomas Hobbes, John Locke, David Hume and George Berkeley.

Johannes P. Muller, Hermann L.F. von Helmholtz, William James and William Wundt

Johannes P. Muller and Hermann L.F. von Helmholtz, both German, conducted scientific, organized studies of sensation and perception. As the first psychologists to attempt this kind of study, they showed that it was possible to study actual physical processes that work to produce mental activity.

William James was the founder of the world's first psychology laboratory. William Wundt, also German, published the first experimental psychology journal. Together, James and Wundt helped bring psychology into its own, separating it from philosophy. The method of psychological study called introspection grew out of their work.

Sigmund Freud

An Austrian doctor, Freud developed a number of theories regarding human mental processes and behavior. He believed the subconscious to hold numerous repressed experiences and feelings that drove behavior without the individual being aware of it, and that these subconscious motivators could lead to severe personality problems and disorders. He particularly stressed sexual desire as a

motivating force. He developed the method of psychoanalysis to help discover the hidden impulses driving individual behavior. Freud's psychoanalytic theory proposed three major components to an individual's psychological makeup:

- Id—driven by instinct and basic drives.
- Ego—most conscious and producing self-awareness.
- Superego—strives for perfection and appropriate behavior.

The ego acts as mediator between the id and superego, which function in opposition to each other.

Carl Jung

A student of Freud, Jung eventually developed different theories regarding the workings of the human mind. With an intense interest in both Eastern and Western philosophy, he incorporated ideas from both into his psychological explorations. He developed the theories of extroversion and introversion, as well as proposing the existence of the collective unconscious and the occurrence of synchronicity.

Behaviorism

John B. Watson, an American, developed the idea of behaviorism. In his theory, growth, learning and training would always win out over any possible inborn tendencies. He believed that any person, regardless of origin, could learn to perform any type of art, craft or enterprise with sufficient training and experience.

Ivan Pavlov and B.F. Skinner

Ivan Pavlov and B.F. Skinner both built on the theories of John B. Watson, who developed the idea of behaviorism. This work came about largely as a counter to the growing importance of introspective techniques to psychological study. Believing environment strongly influenced individual behavior, Pavlov and Skinner searched for connections between outside stimuli and behavioral patterns. Pavlov's experiments proved the existence of conditioned response. His most famous experiment conditioned dogs to salivate at the sound of a ringing bell. Skinner went on to build further on these ideas, developing the "Skinner Box," used to develop and study conditioned response in rats.

Gestalt psychology, social psychology, and modern psychology

Gestalt psychology is a theory developed by Max Wertheimer. In Gestalt theory, events are not considered individually, but as part of a larger pattern. Social psychology is the study of how social conditions affect individuals. Modern psychology, as it has developed, combines earlier schools of psychology, including Freudian, Jungian, behaviorism, cognitive, humanistic and stimulus-response theories.

Divisions of the human lifespan

Development psychologists divide the human lifespan into stages, and list certain developmental milestones that generally take place during these stages:

- Infancy and childhood—the most rapid period of human development during which, the child learns to experience its world, relate to other people, and perform tasks necessary to function in its native culture. Debate exists as to what characteristics are inborn and what are learned.

- Adolescence—this period represents the shift from child to adult. Changes are rapid and can involve major physical and emotional shifts.
- Adulthood—individuals take on new responsibilities, become self-sufficient, and often form their own families and other social networks.
- Old age—priorities shift again as children become adults and no longer require support and supervision.

Learning

Psychologists define learning as a permanent change in behavior. They divide types of learning into three basic categories, depending upon on how the behavioral change is acquired.

- Classical conditioning—a learning process in which a specific stimulus is associated with a specific response over time.
- Operant conditioning—a learning process in which behavior is punished or rewarded, leading to a desired long-term behavior.
- Social learning—learning based on observation of others and modeling others' behavior.

These three learning processes work together to produce the wide variety of human behavior.

Social psychology

Social psychology studies the ways in which people interact as well as why and how they decide who to interact with. The ways people react with each other are defined in several ways, including:

- Social perception—how we perceive others and their behavior as we make judgments based on our own experiences and prejudices.
- Personal relationships—close relationships developed among people for various reasons, including the desire to reproduce and form a family unit.
- Group behavior—people gather into groups with similar beliefs, needs, or other characteristics. Sometimes group behavior differs greatly from behavior that would be practiced by individuals alone.
- Attitudes—individual attitudes toward others develop over time based on individual history, experience, knowledge, and other factors. Attitudes can change over time, but some are deeply ingrained and can lead to prejudice.