

The Beginnings of Civilization

Introduction

As early cities grew, many of them grew into what we would call a civilization. What is a civilization? It is a society that has cities, a well-organized government, and workers

with specialized job skills. There were a lot of factors at play as civilizations grew. Some of those factors included

the creation of a

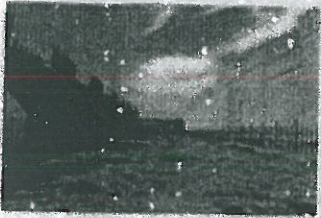
food supply and having a surplus of food to sustain for extended periods of time. In order to do this, the most important elements were water, soil and seeds. These resources were also needed along side labor and tools in order to turn over a food surplus. In order for everything to work, all of these components needed to be well managed and well planned.

Features of Civilizations

There are seven major features of a civilization. The first is **cities**. Cities were an integral part because they served as the centers for religion, government and culture. The second

feature of a civilization was a **well-organized government**. This was important because all of the necessary resources of that city needed to be well-managed in order to function properly. It was also important for a government system to help organize workers for important jobs related to the daily function of that city. It was also necessary for the government to help train a strong army to help defend the citizens from attackers. Many early rulers claimed that they were given their right to rule from the gods, and many of their decisions were based on pleasing or adhering to the gods.

The third feature of a civilization was that of an **established religion**. This is a set of religious beliefs that everyone within that society shares and believes. Most early civilizations were polytheistic and the people believed that many different gods controlled different aspects of their daily lives. Priests would lead different prayers and ceremonies in the hopes that they would make the gods happy and in return would be protected and provided the essentials that they needed.



The fourth feature was **job specialization**. Most of the people in early civilizations were farmers. Priests specialized in religious ceremonies and services that ensured everyone's well-being. Some of the other important jobs were traders, merchants, and skilled craftworkers. Rulers and soldiers helped to protect and keep order. Job specialization allowed for people to develop and utilize important skills to help maintain their civilization.

The fifth feature of a civilization was the development of **social classes**. Social classes are groups of people that occupy different levels within a society. The highest level of most early civilizations was that of a ruler or a priest and they were also the people that had the most power. Those that occupied the middle layers of the social classes were usually farmers, merchants, and skilled workers. Slaves usually occupied the lowest level of social classes within a civilization.

The sixth feature of a civilization was that of a **highly developed culture**. People in early civilizations produced great works of art, music and even literature. They were

responsible for magnificent building projects and studied mathematics, medicine and science to better improve their ways of life.

The seventh and final component of a civilization was a **writing system**. In early civilizations the main purpose of writing was to record numbers that related to the buying and selling of goods. Over time, that changed, and people used writing to also record information.

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