Chapter 1 Summary

Section 1: Understanding Our Past

Prehistory is the time before written history. Archaeologists study artifacts to learn about early humans. In the 1950s the Leakeys found the remains of early hominids in East Africa. Several kinds have been identified.

Section 2: Turning Point: The Neolithic Revolution

The Old Stone Age, or Paleolithic Period, lasted until the Neolithic Revolution, when humans began to domesticate plants and animals, about 10,000 B.C. During the New Stone Age people began to farm and live in villages.

Chapter 1 Summary (continued)

Section 3: Beginnings of Civilization

The first civilizations began in the river valleys. Civilizations shared common traits, including an organized government, job specialization, social classes, art and architecture, public works, writing, and complex religious beliefs.

Objectives

- Learn how scholars study the historical past.
- Find out how anthropologists investigate prehistory.
- Understand how discoveries in Africa and beyond have influenced anthropologists' view of early humans and their ancestors.

Terms and People

- **prehistory** – the period of time before the invention of writing
- **historian** – scholar who studies and writes about the historical past
- **artifact** – an object made by a human, such as clothing, coins, or artwork
- **anthropology** – the study of the origins and development of people and their societies

Terms and People (continued)

- **culture** – the way of life of a society, including its beliefs, values, and practices
- **archaeology** – the study of past people and cultures through their material remains
- **Mary Leakey** and **Louis Leakey** – anthropologists who searched for and located evidence of early hominids in Tanzania's Olduvai Gorge
- **Olduvai Gorge** – canyon in Tanzania, with rock layers dated at 1.7 to 2.1 million years old, where the Leakeys found evidence of early hominids

Terms and People (continued)

- **technology** – the skills and tools that humans use to meet their basic needs and wants
- **Donald Johanson** – the anthropologist who found the bones of a 3-million-year-old hominid skeleton he named "Lucy"

What have scholars learned about the ancestors of humans, and how have they done so?

By 5,000 years ago, people had invented and begun to use writing. This was the beginning of recorded history. However, humans and their ancestors had lived on Earth for millennia before recorded history began.

The time before written history is called **prehistory.**

Historians are scholars who study and write about the historical past.

- They learn by studying **artifacts,** objects made by humans, such as clothing, coins, artwork, or tombstones.
- They rely heavily on written evidence such as tax records or letters.

Historians are like detectives. They evaluate and interpret evidence.

Historians:

- Assess information
- Look for causes
- Explain events

Historians explain the past to help us better understand events today and in the future.

Prehistory is the period before the invention and use of writing.

- **Anthropology** is the study of the origins and development of people and their societies.
- Anthropologists investigate how culture has changed since prehistoric times.
- **Culture** refers to a society's beliefs, values, and practices.

Archaeology is a branch of anthropology that looks at past cultures by studying their material remains.

Archaeologists:

- Study **artifacts**—objects left behind, such as tools, weapons, or jewelry
- Use artifacts to draw conclusions about a society's culture

Archaeologists use two methods to determine the age of artifacts.

Relative Dating	Absolute Dating
Artifact styles change over time.	Bones lose certain chemical elements at a set rate.
Newer artifacts are buried on top of older ones.	The age of wood can be determined.
Associated geologic features can be a clue.	Carbon-14, an element in all previously living things, decays at a set rate.

Archaeologists are assisted by different experts as they analyze artifacts.

- Botanists identify seeds.
- Geologists determine the age of a site.
- Biologists analyze bloodstains on old weapons.

Other experts may include climatologists, chemists, radiologists, zoologists, and aerial photographers.

Before the 1950s anthropologists knew little about early humans and their ancestors.

Prehistoric groups didn't have:

- Cities
- Countries
- Central governments
- Complex inventions

Clues about prehistoric groups were hard to find.

Archaeologists began to uncover ancient footprints, as well as bones and tools, at sites in East Africa.

Beginning in the 1930s, archeologists **Mary and Louis Leakey** began to search Olduvai Gorge, in Tanzania.

- The Leakeys uncovered tools chipped from stone, evidence of human **technology,** between 1.7 and 2.1 million years old.
- In 1959 Mary Leakey found a hominid skull.

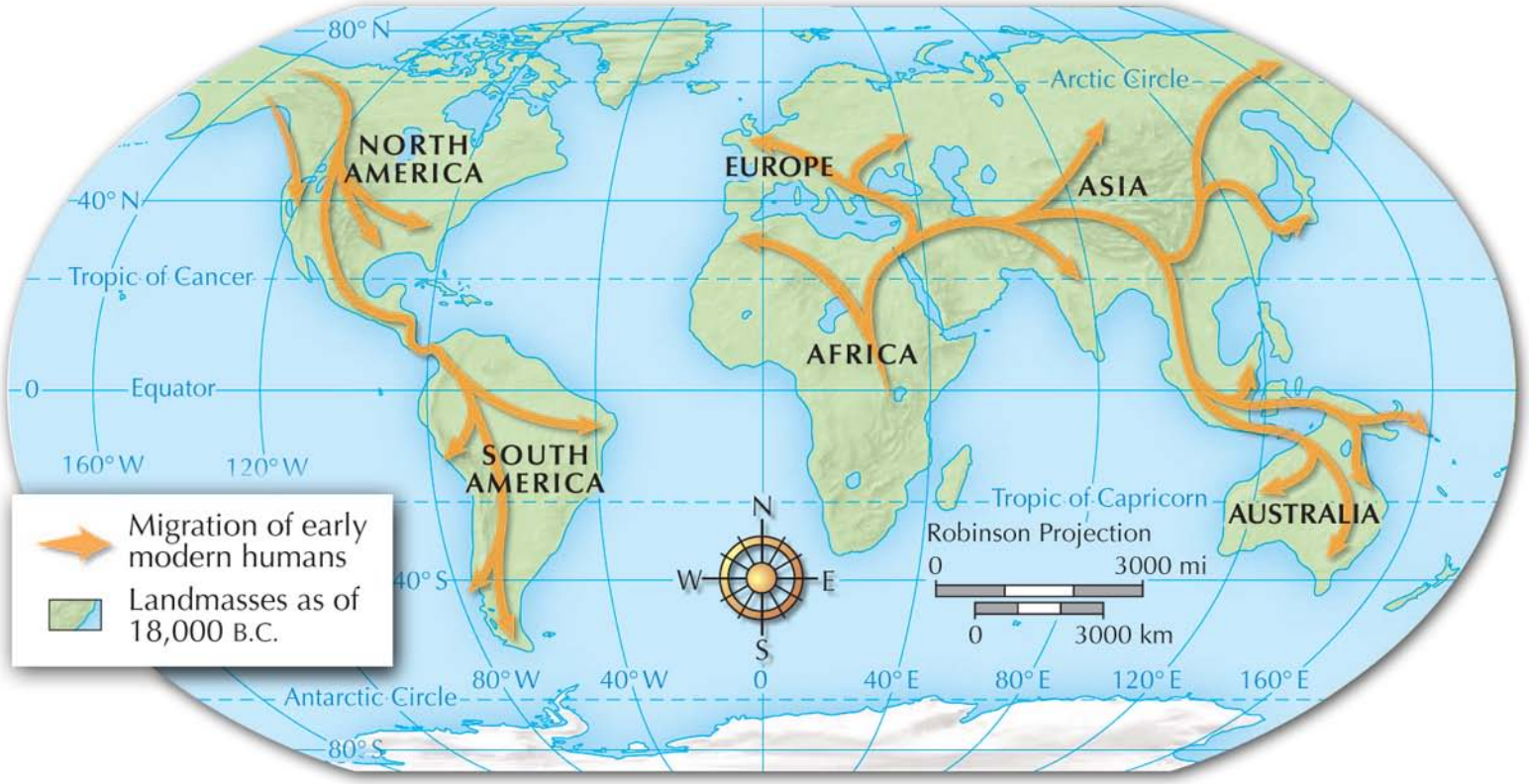
In 1974, **Donald Johanson** found pieces of a 3-million-year-old, 4-foot-tall hominid skeleton he called "Lucy."

- Scientists have since discovered remains and artifacts from several distinct hominid groups.
- The earliest hominids, up to 7 million years old, are called australopithecines.

Later hominids have also been identified.

Homo habilis "Handy man"	2 million years ago; made stone tools for cutting, scraping, and chopping
Homo erectus "Upright man"	2 million years ago, walked fully upright, had a larger brain, used fire and hand axes
Homo sapiens Neanderthals and early modern humans	Appeared 250,000–100,000 years ago. Neanderthals disappeared 50,000–30,000 years ago. Early modern humans, the only surviving hominid, spread around the world.

Early modern humans migrated to all parts of the world.



Objectives

- Describe the skills and beliefs that early modern humans developed during the Old Stone Age.
- Analyze why the beginning of farming is considered the start of the New Stone Age and the Neolithic Revolution.
- Explain how the Neolithic Revolution dramatically changed the way people lived.

Terms and People

- **Old Stone Age** – the era of prehistory from 2 million B.C. to around 10,000 B.C.
- **Paleolithic Period** – the Old Stone Age period
- **New Stone Age** – the period from 10,000 B.C. to the end of prehistory
- **Neolithic Period** – the New Stone Age period
- **nomad** – person who moves from place to place
- **animism** – the belief that spirits and forces reside in animals, objects, or dreams

Terms and People (continued)

- **Neolithic Revolution** – the transition from nomadic life to settled farming
- **domesticate** – to raise plants or animals in a controlled way that makes them best suited for human use
- **Çatalhüyük** – an early Neolithic village (around 7000 B.C.) unearthed in modern-day Turkey
- **Jericho** – walled Neolithic village (around 10,000–9000 B.C.) which exists today as an Israeli-controlled city

How was the introduction of agriculture a turning point in prehistory?

The period from 2 million B.C. to 10,000 B.C. is referred to as the **Paleolithic Period** or **Old Stone Age.**

From 10,000 B.C. to the end of prehistory is referred to as **Neolithic Period** or **New Stone Age.**

During the New Stone Age, new skills and technologies led to dramatic changes in people's lives.

Old Stone Age humans depended heavily on their environment for food and shelter.

- They lived in nomadic bands of 20 to 30 people.
- Men hunted or fished.
- Women and children gathered berries, fruit, nuts, grains, roots, or shellfish.

Early modern humans needed to develop technology and strategies for survival.

- They made tools and weapons from stone, wood, or bone.
- To cook, they used fire.
- They used animals skins for clothing.
- The development of language allowed for cooperation and planning.

Creating tools, such as a stone axe, required patience, skill, and strength.

Using a hard stone, the toolmaker struck flakes off of another stone to create the rough shape.

A piece of bone was used to refine the tool's shape.

A small chisel was used to chip the final flakes off the stone.

Old Stone Age people learned to travel across water. This helped humans to spread to new regions.

- Some traveled by raft or canoe from Southeastern Asia to Australia at least 40,000 years ago.
- They may have stayed for years on some islands.
- They traveled up to 40 miles on the open ocean at a time.

Toward the end of the Old Stone Age a belief in a spiritual world developed.

- 100,000 years ago some groups began carefully burying their dead.
- Tools, weapons, and other goods were provided, indicating belief in an afterlife.
- They probably believed in a world full of spirits and forces residing in animals, objects, and dreams—**animism.**

Cave and rock art portrayed animals they relied on, such as deer, horses, and buffalo.

Some paintings were found deep in caves, perhaps painted in animist religious rituals.

The New Stone Age or Neolithic Period began when people started farming about 12,000 years ago.

- People began **domesticating** plants and animals, raising them for human use.
- Food or skins were more available.
- This **Neolithic Revolution,** the transition from nomadic life to settled farming, brought dramatic changes, such as the first permanent villages.

Farming began at roughly the same time in different areas, but different plants and animals were domesticated in each region.

Western Asia

sheep, goats, pigs, and cattle

China

millet and rice

Southeast Asia

yams

Middle East

barley, chickpeas, peas, lentils, and wheat

West Africa

yams

Central America

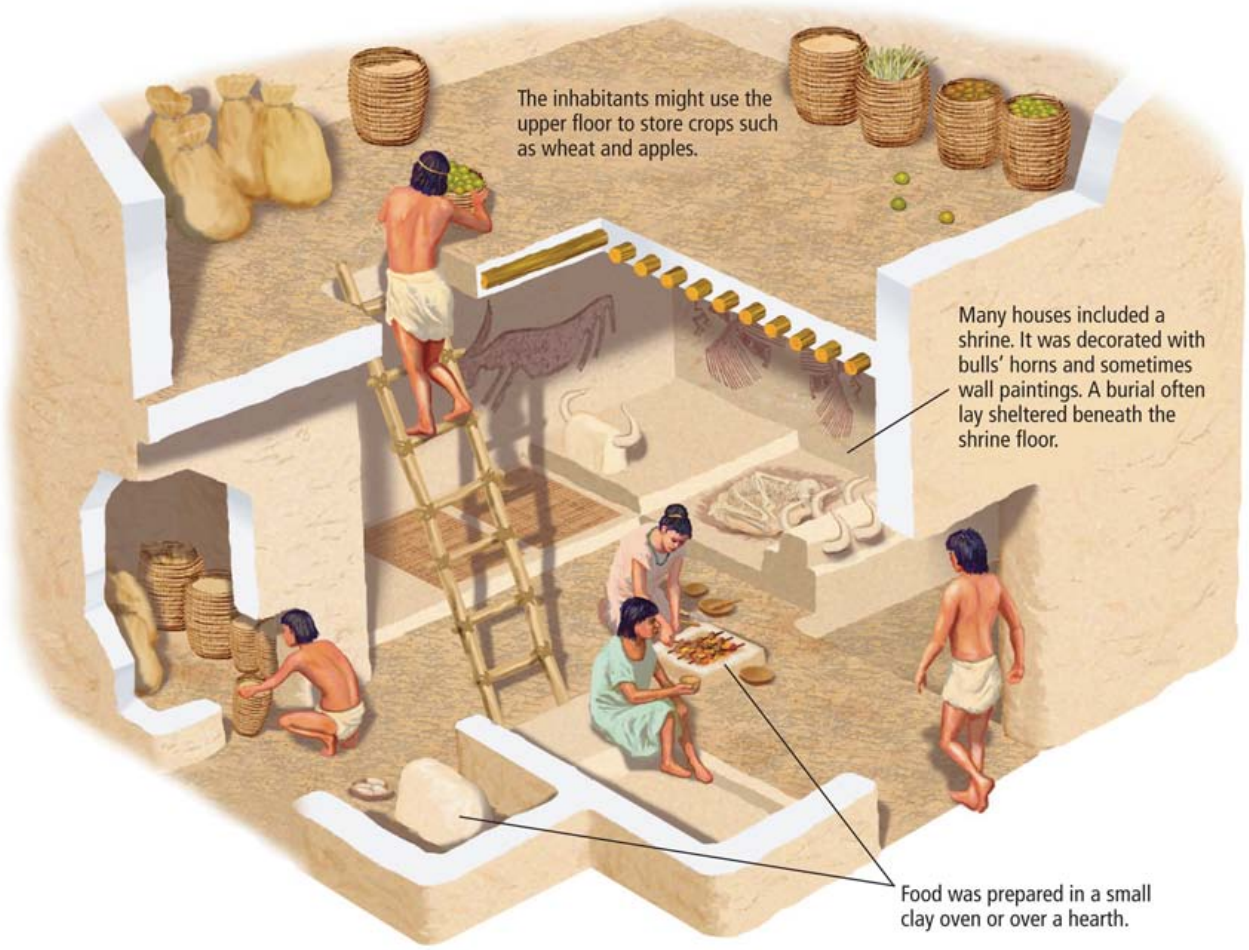
squash

South America

llamas and alpacas

Jericho, which still exists as a city today, was a large, walled village built between 10,000 B.C. and 9000 B.C.

- Several thousand people lived in an area only a few soccer fields in size.
- A surrounding wall suggests there was a government or leader able to organize a large construction project.



Çatalhüyük, an early Neolithic village in modern-day Turkey, may have had 6,500 inhabitants living in rectangular mud-brick homes.

In settled Neolithic farming communities, work was probably divided by gender and age.

- Male family heads formed councils of elders to decide when to plant and harvest.
- When food was scarce, warfare increased, leading to an elite group of male warriors.

Differences in wealth appeared as some accumulated more possessions than others.

Villagers invented new forms of technology.

- Crops needed to be protected and seed measured out for the next harvest.
- Time for planting and harvesting had to be measured, leading to calendars.
- Draft animals such as oxen or water buffalo were needed for work.

Various technologies developed at different rates in different regions.

- More complex tools were created in village workshops.
- Cloth was woven from vegetable fiber or animal hair.
- Clay was used to create pottery for cooking and storage.

Knowledge of some technologies traveled from area to area. Others were invented separately.

The Neolithic Revolution brought dramatic changes to human life.

Dogs were probably first domesticated about 13,000 B.C.

Settled farming led to the establishment of the first villages.

This led to the first cities and civilizations.

Objectives

- Analyze the conditions under which the first cities and civilizations arose.
- Outline the basic features that define civilization.
- Understand the ways in which civilizations have changed over time.

Terms and People

- **surplus** – more than is necessary
- **traditional economy** – an economy that relies on habit, custom, or ritual and tends not to change over time
- **civilization** – a complex, highly organized social order
- **steppe** – sparse, dry grassland
- **polytheistic** – believing in many gods

Terms and People (continued)

- **artisan** – a skilled craftsperson
- **pictograph** – a simple drawing that looks like the object it represents; first step toward writing
- **scribe** – a person specially trained to read and write
- **cultural diffusion** – the spread of ideas, customs, and technologies from one people to another
- **city-state** – political unit that included a city and the surrounding lands and villages
- **empire** – a group of states or territories controlled by one ruler

How did the world's first civilizations arise and develop?

The establishment of farming villages was a huge step in human development. Societies were becoming more organized and technological innovation was becoming increasingly complex.

A major change in human existence soon followed—the development of civilizations.

The earliest civilizations arose near major rivers.

- Rivers provided water for drinking and transportation.
- Animals that came to drink provided food.
- River valleys favored farming.
- Floodwaters brought silt that kept the soil fertile.

Favorable conditions enabled farmers to produce surpluses, more food than was necessary.

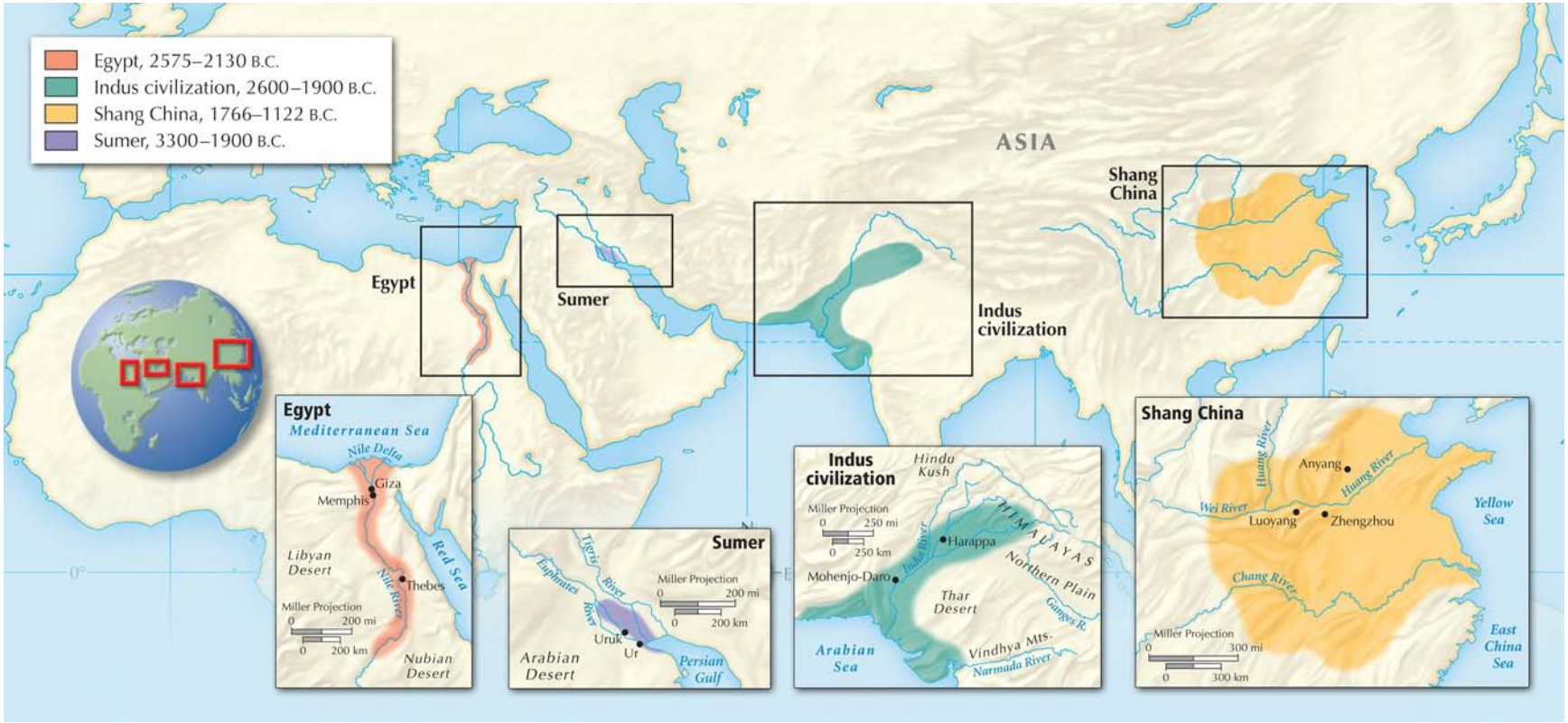
- Surpluses could be stored for future use.
- These surpluses supported a larger population.
- Villages grew into the first cities.

In these cities, some people were able to work at jobs other than farming.

- This was a radical departure from the traditional economies of the Stone Age.
- A **traditional economy** relies on habit, custom, or ritual and tends not to change over time.

The rise of cities is the main feature of the civilizations that arose in river valleys.

The first civilizations arose along the Nile, Tigris and Euphrates, Indus, and Huang Rivers.



The first civilizations in the Americas did not arise in river valleys.

- The Olmec and Maya of Mexico and Central America filled in swamps.
- The Incas emerged in the highlands of Peru, where they farmed on mountainsides.

In addition to cities, historians identify seven basic features of early civilizations.

1. Organized Governments
2. Complex Religions
3. Job Specialization
4. Social Classes
5. Arts and Architecture
6. Public Works
7. Writing

1 Organized Governments

Centralized governments arose to oversee large-scale efforts to benefit people. They:

- coordinated food production and storage
- maintained flood control and irrigation projects
- organized departments, made laws, collected taxes, and defended the city

Priests or warrior kings often claimed power from the gods and passed power from father to son.

2 Complex Religions

Most ancient people were polytheistic—they believed in many gods.

- They appealed to the deities believed to control the forces of nature.
- They sought to gain favor with complex rituals.
- They built temples and made sacrifices.
- Ceremonies required full-time, trained priests.

3 Job Specialization

For the first time, people specialized. Artisans, people skilled in one craft, arose.

- Carving, weaving, and pottery were needed.
- Metalwork became particularly important.
- Weapons and tools were made first from copper and later from more durable bronze.
- Merchants, bricklayers, soldiers, storytellers, and people with other skills were needed.

4 Social Classes

Social organization became more complex; people were ranked according to their job.

- Priests and nobles had top ranks.
- Next came a small class of wealthy merchants and artisans.
- The vast majority were peasant farmers from surrounding villages.
- Slaves often made up the lowest social level.

5 Arts and Architecture

Skills in these areas expressed the talents, beliefs, and values of their creators.

- Large buildings were reminders of the rulers' power.
- Palaces and temples often dominated the landscape.
- They were generally decorated with paintings and statues of gods, goddesses, or the rulers.

6 Public Works

Dams, bridges, roads, defensive walls, and related structures.

7 Writing

Most civilizations developed some form of writing.

- Writing began as **pictographs,** drawings that resemble the object represented.
- As complex writing systems developed, **scribes** were specially trained to read and write.

Several factors caused civilizations to change over time.

Environmental Changes

Dependent on resources such as stone, metals, and lumber.

Climate and geological changes, such as earthquakes, volcanoes, droughts, changes in soil fertility.

Cultural Diffusion

Ideas, customs, and technology spread between cultures.

Migration, trade, and wars can be sources of cultural diffusion.

Several factors caused civilizations to change over time.

Cities grew into city-states.

As rulers conquered territory they incorporated neighboring lands.

Conquered people were forced to provide part of their harvest to the rulers.

The first empires were established.

An **empire** was a group of states and territories conquered by one ruler.

Defeat could be painful but often ended wars.