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What is a characteristic of civilization

Characteristics of Civilization For a society to be considered civilized, it must have the following characteristics: A system of government: controls and regulates some of the members of the society A stable and regular food supply that is not likely to suddenly change Specialization of labor: members of the society perform different jobs and become specialists Different social levels: some members of the society are given higher status than others A highly developed culture including art, architecture, music, literature, science, and writing A religious system, which might include priests and temples.OR, some may use the phrase: GRAPESG – Geography R – Religion A – Art and Architecture P – Politics and Government E – Economics S – Social StructuresThey are the same, just one has a useful acronym. G – Geography: that is not likely to suddenly change.R – Religion: which might include priests and temples.A – Art and Architecture: including art, architecture, music, literature, science, and writingP – Politics and Government: controls and regulates some of the members of the societyE – Economics: members of the society perform different jobs and become specialistsS – Social Structures: some members of the society are given higher status than othersAn interesting video on Geography is available here: Civilization describes a complex way of life characterized by urban areas, shared methods of communication, administrative infrastructure, and division of labor. Educational Resources in Your Inbox Join our community of educators and receive the latest information on National Geographic's resources for you and your students. sign up Slideshare uses cookies to improve functionality and performance, and to provide you with relevant advertising. If you continue browsing the site, you agree to the use of cookies on this website. See our User Agreement and Privacy Policy. Slideshare uses cookies to improve functionality and performance, and to provide you with relevant advertising. If you continue browsing the site, you agree to the use of cookies on this website. See our Privacy Policy and User Agreement for details. The phrase "top characteristics of civilization" refers both to the features of societies that rose to greatness in Mesopotamia, Egypt, the Indus Valley, China's Yellow River, Mesoamerica, the Andes Mountains in South America and others, as well as to the reasons or explanations for the rise of those cultures. Why those cultures became so complex while others faded away is one of the great puzzles that archaeologists and historians have attempted to address many times. The fact that complexity happened is undeniable. In a short 12,000 years, humans who organized and fed themselves as loosely associated bands of hunters and gatherers developed into societies with full-time jobs, political borders, and detente, currency markets and entrenched poverty and wristwatch computers, world banks, and international space stations. How did we do that? While the hows and whys of the evolution of civilizations are up for debate, the characteristics of burgeoning complexity in a prehistoric society are pretty much agreed upon, falling roughly into three groups: Food, Technology, and Politics. First importance is food: if your situation is a relatively safe one, chances are your population will grow and you'll need to feed them. The changes in civilizations regarding food are: the need to produce a stable and reliable source of food for your group, whether by growing crops, called agriculture; and/or by raising animals for milking, plowing or meat, called pastoralism increasing sedentism—advanced food technologies require people to stay close to fields and animals, leading to a reduction in the amount of movement people need or can do: people to settle down in one place for longer periods the ability to quarry and process tin, copper, bronze, gold, silver, iron and other metals into tools to support food production, known as metallurgy the creation of tasks that require people who can dedicate part or all of their time to complete, such as textile or pottery production, jewelry production and referred to as craft specialization enough people to act as a workforce, be craft specialists and require the stable food source, referred to as high population density the rise of urbanism, religious and political centers, and socially heterogeneous, permanent settlements the development of markets, either to meet the demands of urban elites for food and status goods or for common people to enhance the efficiency and/or economic security of their households Technological advances include both social and physical constructions that support a growing population: the presence of large, non-domestic buildings constructed to be shared by the community, such as churches and shrines and plazas and collectively known as monumental architecture a way to communicate information long distances within and outside of the group, known as a writing system the presence of a group level religion, controlled by religious specialists such as shamans or priests a way to know when the seasons will change, by means of a calendar or astronomical observation roads and transportation networks that allowed communities to be connected Finally, political structures seen in complex societies include: the rise of trade or exchange networks, in which communities share goods with one another, leading to the presence of luxury and exotic goods, such as baltic amber), jewelry made from precious metals, obsidian, spondylus shell, and a wide variety of other objects the creation of classes or hierarchical posts and titles with different levels of power within the society called social stratification and ranking an armed military force, to protect the community and/or the leaders from the community some way to collect tribute and taxes (labor, goods or currency), as well as private estates a centralized form of government, to organize all those various things Not all of these characteristics necessarily have to be present for a particular cultural group to be considered a civilization, but all of them are considered evidence of relatively complex societies. The concept of a civilization has a fairly grubby past. The idea of what we consider a civilization grew out of the 18th-century movement known as the Enlightenment, and civilization is a term that is often related to or used interchangeably with 'culture.' These two terms are tied up with linear developmentalism, the now-discredited notion that human societies evolved in a linear fashion. According to that, there was a straight line that societies were supposed to develop along, and ones that deviated were, well, deviant. That idea allowed movements such as kulturkreis in the 1920s to brand societies and ethnic groups as "decadent" or "normal," depending on what stage of the societal evolution line scholars and politicians perceived them to have achieved. The idea was used as an excuse for European imperialism, and it must be said still lingers in some places. American archaeologist Elizabeth Brumfiel (2001) pointed out that the word 'civilization' has two meanings. First, the definition arising from the grubby past is civilization as a generalized state of being, that is to say, a civilization has productive economies, class stratification, and striking intellectual and artistic achievements. That is contrasted by "primitive" or "tribal" societies with modest subsistence economies, egalitarian social relations, and less extravagant arts and sciences. Under this definition, civilization equals progress and cultural superiority, which in turn was used by European elites to legitimize their domination of the working class at home and colonial people abroad. However, civilization also refers to the enduring cultural traditions of specific regions of the world. For literally thousands of years, successive generations of people resided on the Yellow, Indus, Tigris/Euphrates, and Nile rivers outliving the expansion and collapse of individual polities or states. That sort of a civilization is sustained by something other than complexity: there probably is something inherently human about creating an identity based on whatever it is that defines us, and clinging onto that. It is clear that our ancient human ancestors lived a far simpler life than we do. Somehow, in some cases, in some places, at some times, simple societies for one reason or another morphed into more and more complex societies, and some become civilizations. The reasons which have been proposed for this growth in complexity range from a simple model of population pressure—too many mouths to feed, what do we do now?—to the greed for power and wealth from a few individuals to the impacts of climate change—a prolonged drought, a flood, or tsunami, or a depletion of a particular food resource. But single-source explanations are not convincing, and most archaeologists today would agree that any complexity process was gradual, over hundreds or thousands of years, variable over that time and particular for each geographic region. Each decision made in a society to embrace complexity—whether that involved the establishment of kinship rules or food technology—occurred in its own peculiar, and likely largely unplanned, way. The evolution of societies is like human evolution, not linear but branched, messy, full of dead ends and successes not necessarily marked by the best behavior. Al-Azmeh, A. "Concept ." International Encyclopedia of the Social & Behavioral Sciences (Second Edition). Ed. Wright, James D. Oxford: Elsevier, 2015. 719–24. Print.and History of Civilization Brumfiel, E. M. "Archaeology of States and Civilizations." International Encyclopedia of the Social & Behavioral Sciences. Ed. Baltes, Paul B. Oxford: Pergamon, 2001. 14983–88. Print. Covey, R. Alan. 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