

Name: _____ Cohort: _____

Read the passage and answer the questions.

Generally speaking, the Paleolithic Era was from about 3.3 million years ago to about 10,000 years ago. During that time, early humans and their ancestors got their food by hunting animals, fishing, and by gathering fruits, nuts, and other wild plants. Groups were nomadic, traveling with the seasons to find food. They lived in caves or out in the open. Paleolithic art included small sculptures of humans or animals made of clay, stone, or bone, and large paintings on the walls of caves. In addition to making stone tools, Paleolithic people made tools of bones, antlers, and wood.

1. What does **nomadic** mean?

Answer the question in a complete sentence. "Nomadic means _____."

2. How did Paleolithic people get their food?

Answer the question in a complete sentence. "Paleolithic people got their food by _____."

What if you could look into the trash pile of an early human home? What would you find? You could find animal bones, sticks, or stones. You could also find plant seeds. These plant seeds were the key to the Neolithic Revolution.

After they ate plants, humans left behind the seeds. These seeds began to grow. They were the first crops. Little by little, humans learned to control these crops. They learned to plant seeds at the right time. They learned to give them water and sun. They learned to pick them at the right time. They learned to store extra food for the winter.

Over time, humans learned to cultivate better crops. Neolithic humans took the seeds of their best plants. They chose plants that were big and strong. Then they planted those seeds. They did this season after season. Over time, their crops grew bigger and stronger. Little by little, humans learned to farm. This was the “revolutionary” change that gave the Neolithic Revolution its name.

4. What is the central idea of the reading above? “The central idea of this reading is _____.”

Humans did not change all at once. The changes of the Neolithic Revolution took many lifetimes. Afterward, humans did not need to travel to find food. They stayed in one place. They grew food. They built cities. They claimed pieces of land as their own.

Six Characteristics of Civilization

As humans began to settle down into permanent homes during the Neolithic Revolution, they began to develop certain things that historians call **Characteristics of Civilization**. If a group of people have all six of these, they are called a **civilization**. If a people are missing even one of these, they are not considered a civilization. They are instead called a **society**.

The first characteristic of civilization is **cities**. As people began farming, they settled down into permanent homes. They banded together for protection against animals and other groups of people. They also needed a place to store their food, because farming gave them a **surplus** of crops. A surplus means they had extra food. Cities with walls around them provided Neolithic people that safe place for them to store their food.

5. What is the central idea of the reading above? “The central idea of the reading is _____.”

6. Draw a picture to represent the first Characteristic of Civilization

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The second characteristic of civilization is **government**. Before farming, people had no need of a government. They travelled around as nomadic hunter-gatherers in small family units. Now that they had begun living in cities, some people naturally began to take leadership of the larger groups of people in the cities. These people were usually became kings, and they were rich because they had more food than other people did. These kings could call soldiers together to protect the city. These kings and their governments began running the cities and making laws.

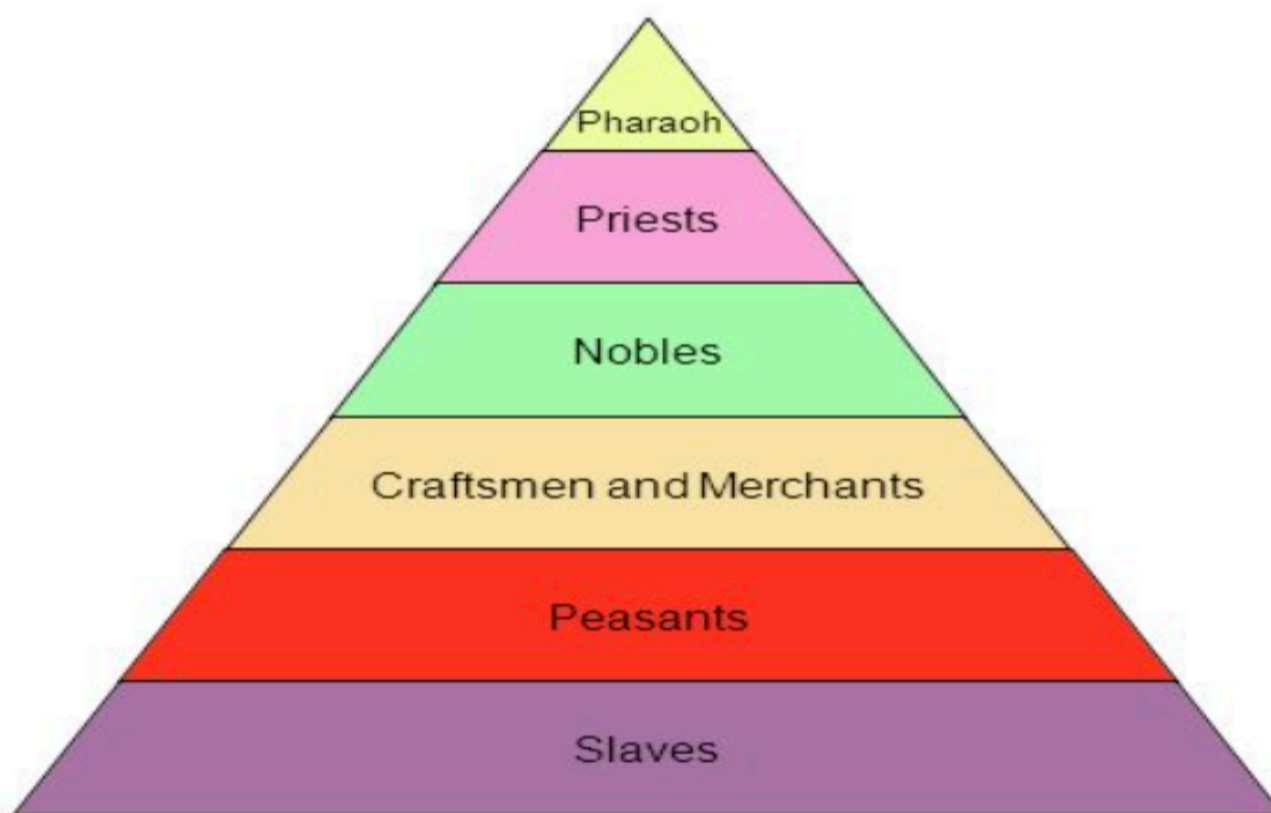
7. What is the central idea of the reading above? “The central idea of the reading is _____.”

8. Draw a picture to represent this characteristic of civilization

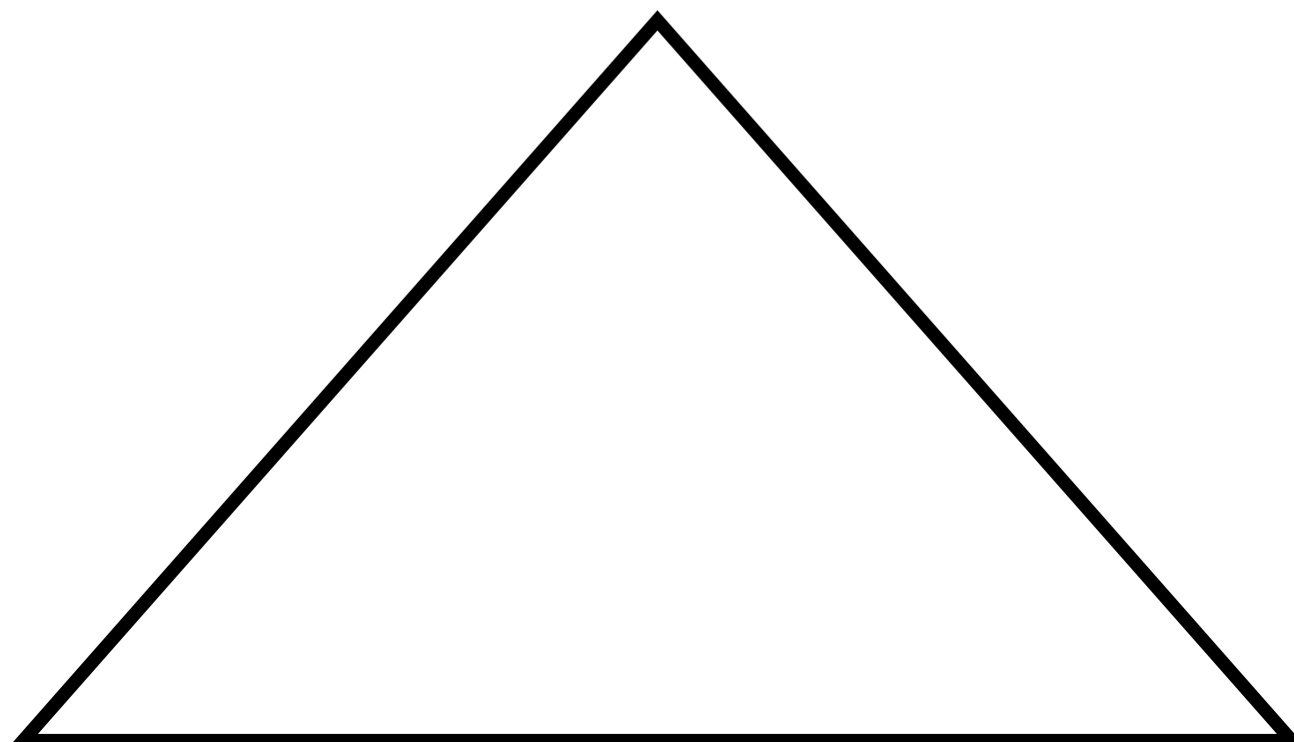
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The third characteristic of civilization is **social structure**. A social structure means that some people are more powerful than other people and have different jobs. Before farming, everyone had the same job. They were hunter-gatherers. As people began to store surplus food in their cities, not everyone needed to be a farmer because there was more than enough food for everyone, so some people started to do different jobs. While most people were still farmers, some people started making weapons, or weaving cloth, or making pottery. There were many other new jobs, too. Since there were many jobs instead of just one, some people became rich, while other people became poor. This was the beginning of the first social structures in history. Now would be the beginning of the haves and the have-nots.

Let's examine the Social Structure of ancient Egypt:



9. Let's show the Social Structure of UPrep Middle School on this Social Pyramid:



The fourth characteristic of civilization is **writing**. Before farming, there was no need to write. After farming began, some people developed writing to keep track of the food surplus in the city. The first people to create writing were probably leaders of the early religions. With their new invention of writing, there would be a record of the amount of food stored in the city. Writing would later change.

10. What are some of the things we use writing for today?

The fifth characteristic of civilization is **religion**. Before farming, there was no organized religion. People believed in spirits that lived in all things in nature, like the river or the rain or the rocks. This belief in nature spirits is called **animism**. After people began settling in cities after the invention of farming, organized religions began to appear. There were now priests that told the people what the gods or goddesses wanted them to do. Early Neolithic people often thought the sun and moon were gods and goddesses, and some worshipped a goddess of the Earth itself. Neolithic people built temples to their gods and goddesses in their cities. With the new priest class telling the people what to believe, organized religion was formed.

11. Why would people believe that sun and the moon were gods?

The sixth characteristic of civilization is **art**. Before farming, there was painted cave art, as well as small carved figures from wood or bone. Music is art too, and archeologists have found bone flutes from the Paleolithic Era. But art changed when people began living in cities during the Neolithic Era. Since there was a surplus of food, people now had time to create art on the walls of their new temples, and they carved big statues to their gods and goddesses. Art is one way we can see what a civilization considers important, and much of the earlier art shows that Neolithic people considered their gods and goddesses very important.

12. What is your favorite kind of art? Why do you like it so much?

13. Draw a picture to represent this characteristic of civilization

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