



Toward Civilization (Prehistory-3000 B.C.)

SECTION 1

UNDERSTANDING OUR PAST

TEXT SUMMARY

Human beings have always been interested in learning about the past. We know that the first people lived more than two million years ago in prehistoric times. **Prehistory** is the time before people invented writing. Prehistoric people had no cities, countries, or organized governments. About 5,000 years ago, some people in different parts of the world invented writing. This event marked the beginning of history.

early people left behind. By studying artifacts, archaeologists learn about the beliefs and actions of our ancestors.

Historians also study how people lived in the past. Like archaeologists, they study things that early people left behind. However, historians pay more attention to written artifacts such as letters and diaries. They use records to explain how events happened.



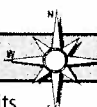
Geography is the study of Earth and its people. Geography and history are linked because geography shows how places influence the way people live. Geographers study what happens when groups of people move from one place to another. They also study the movement of goods and ideas.

THE BIG IDEA

Scientists and historians study the past to see how early people lived.

Archaeology is a science that helps us learn about our past. It is the study of how early people lived. Archaeologists are scientists who study **artifacts**. Artifacts are things, such as tools, weapons, and clothing, that

GRAPHIC SUMMARY: Learning About the Past

	ARCHAEOLOGY 	HISTORY 	GEOGRAPHY 
What is it?	Study of early people by examining things they left behind	Study of what happened and how people lived in the past	Study of Earth, its people and its resources
Who does it?	Archaeologist	Historian	Geographer
What do they do?	Study artifacts, such as tools, weapons, clothing, pottery	Study artifacts, especially written documents	Study where people lived and why they lived there
Why do they do it?	To learn about the beliefs and activities of a group of people	To learn how events happened	To learn how places affect the way people live and how people move from place to place

Archaeologists, geographers, and historians all contribute to our knowledge of the past.

REVIEW QUESTIONS

1. Give an example of how geography affects the way people live.
2. **Chart Skills** What do archaeologists learn from studying artifacts?

TEXT SUMMARY

The earliest people lived during the Old Stone Age. This period is also called the Paleolithic Age. The Old Stone Age began more than two million years ago. Paleolithic people were **nomads**. Nomads moved from place to place, hunting and gathering food. They made simple tools and weapons from stone, bone, or wood. As time passed, they developed a spoken language.

Paleolithic people developed religious beliefs. They thought that the world was filled with spirits. They also believed in life after death. Old Stone Age people buried tools and weapons with their dead so that they had what they needed in the afterlife.

Around 10,000 B.C., people made two very important discoveries. They learned to

plant seeds to grow food. They also learned to tame animals. These discoveries allowed people to stay in one place and to farm.

This change marked the beginning of the New Stone Age, or Neolithic Age. Historians call these discoveries the Neolithic agricultural revolution because they changed the way people lived.

After the Neolithic agricultural revolution, there was more food to eat. With more food, the population increased. People lived together in villages. These villages later led to the development of advanced societies called **civilizations**.

THE BIG IDEA

Old Stone Age people made tools and learned skills to survive. The New Stone Age brought farming and settled communities.

GRAPHIC SUMMARY: The First People

Old Stone Age or Paleolithic Period
(2,500,000 B.C.)

- Very small population
- Nomads
- Hunters and gatherers
- Simple tools and weapons
- First spoken languages
- Discovery of fire
- Cave paintings
- Belief in afterlife
- Women important

New Stone Age or Neolithic Period
(10,000 B.C.)

- Increasing population
- Villages
- Farmers
- Domestic animals
- Calendar and technology
- Personal possessions
- Village headman and council of elders
- Women less important

People of the Old Stone Age and the New Stone Age made many important discoveries.

REVIEW QUESTIONS

1. What two discoveries were made during the Neolithic agricultural revolution?

2. Graph Skills When did people discover fire?

SECTION 3

BEGINNINGS OF CIVILIZATION

TEXT SUMMARY

By about 5,000 years ago, the first civilizations began to develop. Historians have found basic features common to most early civilizations. Some of these features are cities, organized governments, and social classes. (See chart below.)

The most important feature of early civilizations was the rise of cities. The first cities developed as people began to farm along river valleys in the Middle East, Africa, and Asia. These river valleys provided water, **fertile** (rich) soil, and transportation. Farmers

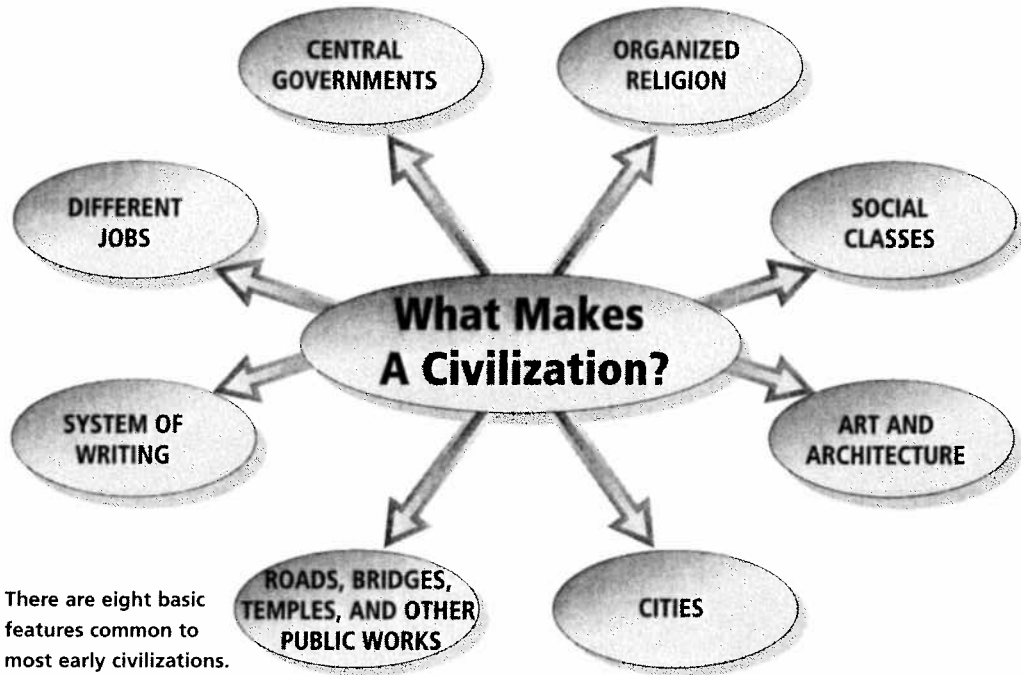
could produce extra food. More food helped the population to grow. As a result, villages slowly grew into cities.

All civilizations change as time passes. Civilizations change when the environment changes. For example, when all the wood in a forest has been cut, people must find new building materials. Civilizations also change through **cultural diffusion**. Cultural diffusion is the sharing of ideas and technology. Cultural diffusion results from war, trade, and the migration of people.

THE BIG IDEA

Civilizations share basic features. Contacts between civilizations brought cultural change.

GRAPHIC SUMMARY: What Makes a Civilization?



REVIEW QUESTIONS

1. When does cultural diffusion happen?

2. **Diagram Skills** Name three features of a civilization.