

AP WORLD HISTORY

QUARTER 1 READING 1: CIVILIZATION

Name: _____

Introduction: The first several chapters of the textbook (and first several class meetings) will focus on studying various societies/cultures in what is sometimes called the CORE areas (Fertile Crescent, India, China and the Mediterranean region). The textbook also discusses the idea of these early civilizations. But what is a civilization? Is it a good “role model” for us in the study of world history? What are some of the positive and negative characteristics of using the “civilization” concept in the study of World History?

Directions: Below you will find three articles about the concept or idea of “Civilization”. Answer the questions/prompts provided in writing, and be prepared to discuss them with your classmates. *In addition, prepare three questions of your own* that you believe would help stimulate additional discussion, based on the reading(s) or even your own ideas.

1. Provide a definition of “civilization” that will work for a student of World History. You may use the articles provided or you may do some research and develop your own thesis.
2. Summarize the Reilly and Lerner articles in one paragraph each.
3. In one paragraph, discuss whether or not “civilization” has been a good thing for humanity based on your reading of and reaction to the Reilly and Lerner articles.
4. What are the implications for us today? Are we “civilized”? Why or why not?
5. Does the use of such a concept (civilization) imply that we are making “progress”? Why or why not?
6. Is there a goal implied when the concept of civilization is used and if so, what is it?

“The Urban Revolution: Origins of Patriarchy”

By Gerda Lerner

(Taken from: “The Creation of Patriarchy”, Oxford University Press, 1986)

. . . In Mesopotamian societies the institutionalization of patriarchy created sharply defined boundaries between women of different classes, although the development of the new gender definitions and of the customs associated with them proceeded unevenly. The state, during the process of the establishment of written law codes, increased the property rights of upper-class women, while it circumscribed their sexual rights and finally totally eroded them. The lifelong dependency of women on fathers and husbands became so firmly established in law and custom as to be considered “natural” and god-given. In the case of lower-class women, their labor power served either their families or those who owned their families’ services. Their sexual and reproductive capacities were commodified, traded, leased, or sold in the interest of male family members. Women of all classes had traditionally been excluded from military power and were, by the turn of the first millennium B.C., excluded from formal education, insofar as it had become institutionalized.

Yet, even then, powerful women in powerful roles lived on in cultic service, in religious representation; and in symbols. There was a considerable time lag between the subordination of women in patriarchal society and the declassing of the goddesses. As we trace below changes in the position of male and female god figures in the pantheon of the gods in a period of over a thousand years, we should

keep in mind that the power of the goddesses and their priestesses in daily life and in popular religion continued in force, even as the supreme goddesses were dethroned. It is remarkable that in societies which had subordinated women economically, educationally, and legally, the spiritual and metaphysical power of goddesses remained active and strong.

We have some indication of what practical religion was like from archaeological artifacts and from temple hymns and prayers. In Mesopotamian societies the feeding of and service to the gods was considered essential to the survival of the community. This service was performed by male and female temple servants. For important decisions of state, in warfare, and for important personal decisions one would consult an oracle or a diviner, who might be either a man or a woman. In personal distress, sickness, or misfortune the afflicted person would seek the help of his or her household-god and, if this was of no avail, would appeal to any one of a number of gods or goddesses who had particular qualities needed to cure the affliction. If the appeal were to a goddess, the sick person also required the intercession and good services of a priestess of the particular goddess. There were, of course, also male gods who could benefit one in case of illness, and these would usually be served by a male priest.

For example, in Babylonia a sick man or woman would approach the Ishtar temple in a spirit of humility on the assumption that the sickness was a result of his or her transgression. The petitioner would bring appropriate offerings: food, a young animal for sacrifice, oil, and wine. For the goddess Ishtar such offerings quite frequently included images of a vulva, the symbol of her fertility, fashioned out of

precious lapis lazuli stone. The afflicted person would prostrate himself before the priestess and recite some appropriate hymns and prayers. A typical prayer contained the following lines:

Gracious Ishtar, who rules over the universe,
Heroic Ishtar, who creates humankind, who walks before the
cattle, who loves the shepherd . . .
You give justice to the distressed, the suffering you give them
justice.
Without you the river will not open,
the river which brings us life will not be closed,
without you the canal will not open,
the canal from which the scattered drink,
will not be closed . . . Ishtar, merciful lady . . .
hear me and grant me mercy.

Mesopotamian men or women, in distress or sickness, humbled themselves before a goddess-figure and her priestly servant. In words reflecting the attitude of slave toward master, they praised and worshiped the goddess's power. Thus, another hymn to Ishtar addresses her as "mistress of the battle field, who- pulls down the mountains"; "Majestic one, lioness among the gods, who conquers the angry gods, strongest among rulers, who leads kings by the lead; you who open the wombs of women . . . mighty Ishtar, how great is your strength!" Heaping praise upon praise, the petitioner continued:

Where you cast your glance, the dead awaken, the sick arise;
The bewildered, beholding your face, find the right way.
I appeal to you, miserable and distraught,
tortured by pain, your servant,
be merciful and hear my prayer! . . .
I await you, my mistress; my soul turns toward you.
I beseech you: Relieve my plight.
Absolve me of my guilt, my wickedness, my sin,
forget my misdeeds, accept my plea!

We should note that the petitioners regarded the goddess as all-powerful. In the symbol of the goddess's vulva, fashioned of precious stone and offered up in her praise, they celebrated the sacredness of female sexuality and its mysterious life-giving force, which included the power to heal. And in the very prayers appealing to the goddess's mercy, they praised her as mistress of the battlefield, more powerful than kings, more powerful than other gods. Their prayers to the gods similarly extolled the god's virtues and listed his powers in superlatives. My point here is that men and women offering such prayers when in distress must have thought of women, just as they thought of men, as capable of metaphysical power and as potential mediators between the gods and human beings. That is a mental image quite different from that of Christians, for example, who in a later time would pray to the Virgin Mary to intercede with God in their behalf. The power of the Virgin lies in her ability to appeal to God's mercy; it derives from her motherhood and the miracle of her immaculate conception. She has no power

for herself, and the very sources of her power to intercede separate her irrevocably from other women. The goddess Ishtar and other goddesses like her had power in their own right. It was the kind of power men had, derived from military exploits and the ability to impose her will on the gods or to influence them. And yet Ishtar was -female, endowed with a sexuality like that of ordinary women. One cannot help but wonder at the contradiction between the power of the goddesses and the increasing societal constraints upon the lives of most women in Ancient Mesopotamia.

Unlike the changes in the social and economic status of women, which have received only tangential and scattered attention in Ancient Mesopotamian studies, the transition from polytheism to monotheism and its attendant shift in emphasis from powerful goddesses to a single male god have been the-subject of a vast literature. The topic has been approached from the vantage point of theology, archaeology, anthropology, and literature. Historical and artistic artifacts have been interpreted with the tools of their respective disciplines; linguistic and philosophical studies have added to the richness of interpretation. With Freud and Jung and Erich Fromm, psychiatry and psychology have been added as analytic tools, focusing our attention on myth, symbols, and archetypes. And recently a number of feminist scholars from various disciplines have discussed the period and the subject from yet another vantage point, one which is critical of patriarchal assumptions.

Such a richness and diversity of sources and interpretations makes it impossible to discuss and critique them all within the confines of this volume. I will therefore focus, as I have done throughout, on a few analytic questions and discuss in detail a few models which, I believe, illustrate larger patterns.

Methodologically, the most problematic question is the relation between changes in society and changes in-religious beliefs and myths. The archaeologist, art historian, and historian can record, document, and observe such changes, but their causes and their meaning cannot be given with any kind of certainty. Different systems of interpretation offer varying answers, none of which is totally satisfying. In the present case it seems to me most important to record and survey the historical evidence and to offer a coherent explanation, which I admit is somewhat speculative. So are all the other explanations including, above all, the patriarchal tradition.

I am assuming that Mesopotamian religion responded to and reflected social conditions in the various societies. Mental constructs can not be created from a void; they always, reflect events and concepts of historic human beings in society. Thus, the existence of an assembly of the gods in "The Epic of Gilgamesh" has been interpreted as dictating the existence of village assemblies in pre-state Mesopotamian society. Similarly, the explanation in the Sumerian Atrahasis myth that the gods created men in order that men might serve them and relieve them of hard work can be regarded as a reflection of social conditions in the Sumerian city-states of the first half of the third millennium

B.C., in which large numbers of people worked on irrigation projects and in agricultural labor centered on the temples. The relation between myth and reality is not usually that direct, but we can assume that no people could invent the concept of an assembly of the gods if they had not at some time experienced and known a like institution on earth. While we cannot say with certainty that certain political and economic changes "caused" changes in religious beliefs and myths, we cannot help but notice a pattern in the changes of religious beliefs in a number of societies, following upon or concurrent with certain societal changes.

My thesis is that, just as the development of plow agriculture, coinciding with increasing militarism, brought major changes in kinship and in gender relations, so did the development of strong kingships and of archaic states bring changes in religious beliefs and symbols. The observable pattern is: first, the demotion of the Mother-Goddess figure and the ascendance and later dominance of her male consort/son; then his merging with a storm-god into a male Creator-God, who heads the pantheon of gods and goddesses. Wherever such changes occur, the power of creation and of fertility is transferred from the Goddess to the God.

The Urban Revolution : Civilization and Class

By Kevin Reilly

(Taken from "The West and the World: A History of Civilization, 2nd ed., 1989)

The full-scale urban revolution occurred not in the rain-watered lands that first turned some villages into cities, but in the potentially more productive river valleys of Mesopotamia around 3500 B.C. Situated along the Tigris and Euphrates rivers, large villages like Eridu, Erech, Lagash, Kish, and later Ur and Babylon built irrigation systems that increased farm production enormously. Settlements like these were able to support five thousand, even ten thousand people, and still allow something like 10 percent of the inhabitants to work full-time at non-farming occupations.

A change of this scale was a revolution, certainly the most important revolution in human living since the invention of agriculture five thousand years earlier. The urban revolution was prepared by a whole series of technological inventions in agricultural society. Between 6000 and 3000 B.C. people not only learned how to harness the power of oxen and the wind with the plow, the wheeled cart; and the sailboat; they also discovered the physical properties of metals, learned how to smelt copper and bronze, and began to work out a calendar based on the movements of the sun. River valleys like those of the Tigris and Euphrates were muddy swamps that had to be drained and irrigated to take advantage of the rich soil deposits. The dry land had literally to be built by teams of organized workers.

Therefore, cities required an organizational revolution that was every bit as important as the technological one. This was accomplished under the direction

of the new class of rulers and managers - probably from the grasslands - who often treated the emerging cities as a conquered province. The work of irrigation itself allowed the rulers ample opportunity to coerce the inhabitants of these new cities. Rain knows no social distinctions. Irrigated water must be controlled and channeled.

It is no wonder then that the first cities gave us our first kings and our first class societies. Almost everywhere that cities spread (or were again invented) after 3000 B.C. - along the Nile of Egypt, on the Indus River in Pakistan, or in Turkey and China, and later in Middle America the king is usually described as the founder of cities. Almost everywhere these kings were able to endow their control with religious sanction. In Egypt and America the king was god. In Mesopotamia a new class of priests carried out the needs of the king's religion of control.

In some cities the new priesthood would appoint the king. In others, the priests were merely his lieutenants. When they were most loyal, their religion served to deify the king. The teachings of the new class of Mesopotamian priests, for instance, were that their god had created the people solely to work for the king and make his life easier. But even when the priesthood attempted to wrest some of the king's power from him, the priests taught the people to accept the divided society, which benefited king and priesthood as providers of a natural god-given order. The priesthood, after all, was responsible for measuring time, bounding space, and predicting seasonal events. The mastery of people was easy for those who controlled time and space. The priesthood was only one of the new classes that insured the respectability of the warrior-chieftain turned king. Other palace intellectuals - scribes (or writers), doctors, magicians, and diviners - also struggled to maintain the king's prestige and manage his kingdom. This new class was rewarded, as were the priests, with leisure, status, and magnificent buildings, all of which further exalted the majesty of the king and his city.

Beneath the king, the priesthood, and the new class of intellectuals [and] managers was another new class charged with maintaining the king's law and order. Soldiers and police were also inventions of the first cities. Like the surrounding city wall, the king's military guard served a double function: they provided defense from outside attack and an obstacle to internal rebellion.

That these were the most important classes of city society can be seen from the physical remains of the first cities. The archeologist's spade has uncovered the monumental buildings of these classes in virtually all of the first cities. The palace, the temple, and the citadel (or fort) are, indeed, the monuments that distinguish cities from villages. Further, the size of these buildings and the permanency of their construction (compared with the small, cheaply built homes of the farmers) attest to the fundamental class divisions of city society.

Civilization: Security and Variety

The most obvious achievements of the first civilizations are the monuments - the pyramids, temples,

palaces, statues, and treasures - that were created for the new ruling class of kings, nobles, priests, and their officials. But civilized life is much more than the capacity to create monuments.

Civilized life is secure life. At the most basic level this means security from the sudden destruction that village communities might suffer. Civilized life gives the feeling of permanence. It offers regularity, stability, order, even routine. Plans can be made. Expectations can be realized. People can be expected to act predictably, according to the rules.

The first cities were able to attain stability with walls that shielded the inhabitants from nomads and armies, with the first codes of law that defined human relationships, with police and officials that enforced the laws, and with institutions that functioned beyond the lives of their particular members. City life offered considerably more permanence and security than village life.

Civilization involves more than security, however. A city that provided only order would be more like a prison than a civilization.

The first cities provided something that the best-ordered villages lacked. They provided far greater variety: more races and ethnic groups were speaking more languages, engaged in more occupations, and living a greater variety of life-styles. The abundance of choice, the opportunities for new sensations, new experiences, knowledge - these have always been the appeals of city life. The opportunities for growth and enrichment were far greater than the possibilities of plow and pasture life.

Security plus variety equals creativity. At least the possibility of a more creative, expressive life was available in the protected, semi-permanent city enclosures that drew, like magnets, foreign traders and diplomats, new ideas about gods and nature, strange foods and customs, and the magicians, ministers, and mercenaries of the king's court. Civilization is the enriched life that this dynamic urban setting permitted and the human creativity and opportunity that it encouraged. At the very least, cities made even the most common slave think and feel a greater range of things than the tightly knit, clanish agricultural village allowed. That was (and still is) the root of innovation and creativity of civilization itself.

The variety of people and the complexity of city life required new and more general means of communication. The villager knew everyone personally. Cities brought together people who often did not even speak the same language. Not only law codes but written language itself became a way to bridge the many gaps of human variety. Cities invented writing so that strangers could communicate, and so that those communications could become permanent remembered publicly, officially recorded. [Writer and philosopher Ralph Waldo] Emerson was right when he said that the city lives by memory, but it was the official memory that enabled the city to carry on its business or religion beyond the lifetime of the village elders. Written symbols that everyone could recognize became the basis of laws, invention, education, taxes, accounting, contracts, and

obligations. In short, writing and records made it possible for each generation to begin on the shoulders of its ancestors. Village life and knowledge often seemed to start from scratch. Thus, cities cultivated not only memory and the past, but hope and the future as well. City civilizations invented not only history and record keeping but also prophecy and social planning.

Writing was one city invention that made more general communication possible. Money was another. Money made it possible to deal with anyone just as an agreed-upon public language did. Unnecessary in the village climate of mutual obligations, money was essential in the city society of strangers. Such general media of communication as writing and money vastly increased the number of things that could be said and thought, bought and sold. As a consequence, city life was more impersonal than village life, but also more dynamic and more exciting.

“A Working Definition of the Term ‘Civilization’ for Introductory Survey Courses”

By Gregory G. Guzman

(Excerpted from: Journal of World History)

...This study will attempt to provide a viable working definition of civilization for classroom use in Western and world civilization courses by discussing some of the basic characteristics or elements necessary for civilization to exist...

The commonly used term civilization is rather difficult to define because it often means different things to those who confront it. There are probably as many definitions as there are authors and books; needless to say, this has led to numerous informed discussions and outright quarrels over what should be included in the term and what aspects should be emphasized. However, most scholars tend to agree on several general characteristics or elements that must be present in some degree or another for civilization to exist.

Urbanization is usually considered to be the most important element of civilization by the majority of scholars. City life is basic to the emergence of civilization; this is indicated by the fact that the Latin word *civitas* (city) is the root from which the English term civilization itself is derived. The beginning of city life represents a fundamental change in human life, practices, and institutions.

With the increasing warmth after the last Ice Age, wild grain was plentiful and easy to harvest. Instead of constantly migrating and searching for food, hunters and gatherers tended to stay in one place and to establish villages and cities. In them, they could store their surplus food while at the same time increase their own personal safety and security. In the process of shifting from hunting and gathering practices, they began to domesticate animals as well as grow and cultivate plants; the animals provided a constant supply of food, milk, and clothing. The transition from a marginal diet and a precarious subsistence life (hit or miss, feast or

famine) to a sedentary and agricultural life meant a consistent and reliable supply of food. Indeed, intensive agriculture led to food surpluses in some places, as people planted and stayed in the same place to harvest the fruit of their labor. Thus mankind began its mastery of nature, of controlling plants and animals for the benefit of humanity.

It is necessary to bear in mind that urbanization was a process rather than a one-time event; it took place slowly and gradually over a long period of time. Group life in agricultural villages and cities developed because it helped people in their ongoing struggle for food, shelter, and protection from enemies: from hostile people; from wild animals, and from imaginary spiritual forces. The new agricultural lifestyle and economy changed mankind's activities and attitudes. Urban dwellers had to plan for the future and make their food stretch from one harvest to the next, they needed new and different tools and implements, and they developed a new morality with virtues that were the attributes of sedentary peoples. The new agricultural lifestyle was one of stationary routine, hard work, and peace; in short; the domestication of plants and animals led directly to the domestication of humanity as well.

Out of necessity all living things congregated near water, and thus the new agricultural economy tied humans more closely to their plants and animals. Early agricultural villages and cities emerged near a fresh water supply, many in fertile river valleys. The seasonal floods replenished the soil and removed the need for continued movement in search of newer and thus more fertile soil. The small agricultural villages were gradually transformed into true cities, as people began to identify their life, prosperity, and future with one geographic location. They frequently fortified the most defensible position for safety and security. The emergence of such a fort or walled city led to close social and personal interaction, as now a larger number of people were living in a smaller place than that in which their hunting and gathering ancestors lived. Sedentary agriculture ensured a reliable food supply, and this, in turn, led to a population increase, as now several people could live off the same area previously needed to support a single hunter-gatherer. Thus population density increased in the fertile river valleys, especially those surrounded by deserts. Since more people were now living in a confined area, individual choices and activities had to be restricted for the well-being of the entire group. Since early agriculture represented a type of planned economy, it required the mobilization of large-scale manpower resources for the massive irrigation projects needed to provide a steady food supply. This illustrates another basic feature of civilization: rules, regulations, and laws.

The rise of political institutions thus became necessary for social order and harmony. The first governments that emerged were usually monarchies. From leading his nomadic followers in military raids, the chieftain became the political leader of his sedentary people and the military defender of the city. Instead of being a wartime leader only, the monarch became the keeper of the peace and the enforcer of law and order. As the urban population grew, society became too large to be governed effectively by

oral customs and traditions. Since all were now living close together in a limited geographic area, specific and exact laws and regulations were necessary, along with the required administrative agencies and bureaucracies to keep track of laws, punishments, fines, records, etc. The emergence of political institutions, royal families, governments, laws, and taxes, meant a loss of individual freedom as the social good of the group or state now took priority over personal preferences. The monarch represented the state; he had the power and authority to make and enforce the rules and regulations necessary for social order and harmony. The king and government planned and directed the large-scale irrigation projects, frequently assigning plots as well as specifying the crops to be grown. The state could and did coerce the people into conformity; in many instances, they now obeyed out of fear rather than out of voluntary compliance. At the top of the political structure, the king led, organized, and protected the city and the state; political institutions were usually laid out in accord with the accepted religious systems.

Organized religious beliefs and institutions represent the third characteristic that must be present for civilization to exist. Religion was very strong in all early civilizations. Most early kings claimed a very close relationship to the gods; if they were not considered divine themselves (as in Egypt and Japan), they claimed to be a favorite, a messenger, a prophet, or some type of direct representative of the gods. Their priestly role gave them the authority to receive, proclaim, and enforce the law coming from the gods; this is especially true of the revealed religions in the ancient Middle East. The king and a professional clergy organized the government and ritual necessary to keep the gods' favor and good will. The new agricultural economy led to the emergence of fertility oriented religious cults, focusing on sunshine, water, and regeneration. These beliefs demanded exact and specific ritual to maintain the vital link between man, nature, and gods and thus to mitigate the powerful and mysterious forces of nature that seemed to hold humanity in their grip. The emerging professional clergy devoted full time to such elaborate ritual performances and ceremonies; they also kept the basic religious beliefs and doctrines pure and untainted. Most of these early civilizations were dominated by the state and by what later became the church. Most were theocracies as the king was usually the chief priest as well; thus one individual led both the religious and political institutions. He led the state according to the dictates of the organized religious beliefs and institutions with the help and approval of the professional clergy. These political and religious institutions, functions, and leaders indicate growing occupational specialization.

Job specialization is the fourth ingredient needed for a working definition of civilization. As the political, religious, and economic systems increased in complexity and sophistication, the individual could not and often did not want to master all aspects of the newly emerging patterns of life. This necessitated a growing interdependence of all people on each other for their basic needs. All were dependent on the king and his army for safety and security,

on the professional clergy for divine- favor and blessing, on the farmer for food, and on the- craftspersons for agricultural tools and weapons. Increasing complexity and sophistication of the economy and society meant that individuals could not master all jobs. as could their earlier nomadic ancestors, who were all hunters, warriors, fishermen, food gatherers and makers of their own tools and weapons. From being an independent and universal jack-of-all-trades, the individual shifted to specialization and interdependence on others with the advent of civilization.

The natural outgrowth of job specialization was social ranking, as some jobs and tasks rated above others (i.e., some were considered to have more prestige and glory than others). Once people are ranked socially according to their jobs, all individuals are no longer considered equal. This type of ordering continues today as professional jobs rank above manual labor jobs; salaried white-collar jobs still carry more prestige than do blue-collar hourly wage jobs. Thus the rise of civilization is directly related to the rise of personal inequality. [This is what JJ. Rousseau referred to when he said in *The Social Contract*. "Man is born free, and everywhere he is in chains..". The social and political restraints of civilization deny the individual his or her natural freedom; thus Rousseau advocated a return to nature to regain one's individual freedom and independence.]

It is also during this formative stage that the status and role of women began to differ significantly from that of men; gender roles became much more rigidly defined than in earlier nomadic societies. The biologically larger and stronger males did the physically demanding agricultural work, became soldiers in heavy armor, and emerged as the -leaders of sedentary society, as the kings and priests. The females were relegated to hearth and home and to child rearing and nurturing roles. Most early religions, especially the Middle Eastern revealed religions, tended to be male dominated (i.e., the deity was perceived as a male and only men could be priests and teachers). Organized religion therefore reinforced the emerging trend toward male-dominated societies; it condoned the rigid institutionalization of females in an inferior and somewhat secluded position (legally, socially, and economically as well as religiously).

In these early civilizations, the king and professional clergy were ranked over all others; these two top-rated classes made the decisions for and in the name of the gods and the state. The temple and palace were the two most representative structures of most early civilizations, as they were the buildings most directly equated with the ruling elements, the king and clergy. In many early civilizations, the bulk of the wealth (money, food, servants, creature comforts, etc.) of the society was devoted primarily to royal and religious needs and concerns; all one needs to do is reflect briefly on the temples, pyramids, tombs, and massive buildings of the pharaohs in ancient Egypt to realize the depth and extent of theocratic control.

Public buildings like temples and palaces imply the rise of the visual arts as an expression of the people's beliefs, hopes, and aspirations. The buildings usually include the accompanying statues, paintings, and architectural principles

and designs. Included here are idols to represent the gods, and the great size of the structures to symbolize the power and glory of the state, of the gods, or of their favorites, the ruling king and his professional clergy. The architects and artists themselves represent still another specialized class that was trained and supported at public expense for the cooperative good of the entire society; again, the good of the group, the good of civilization, took precedence over the individual.

A closely related category is a network of public works. This seventh basic characteristic of civilization emerged when technical and urban planners conceived of and implemented walls and fortifications, dikes and dams, irrigation ditches and canals, roads and bridges, granaries and aqueducts, and hanging gardens and pyramids. The king and his government, with the approval and blessing of the clergy, initiated and directed most of these projects. They were designed for the public good, to ensure the safety and security of all, to ensure an adequate food supply, and to represent the immortality of the people and state via tombs and mausoleums.

All of these complex activities and sophisticated interrelationships were made possible by the last major characteristic of civilization - the introduction of writing. Now the discoveries of one generation could be recorded and made available to their descendants. Each generation did not have to start from scratch and re-invent the wheel; each generation could use its energies and abilities to build upon the base of knowledge and information that it had inherited from its ancestors. Complex political and governmental bureaucracies could keep written records of laws, decrees, and administrative strictures. The increasingly complex economic systems were aided by bills of sale, credit vouchers, and inventories. Religious beliefs and practices were written down, clarified, and standardized; this was especially true of the specific rituals and ceremonies that were proscribed to keep the blessing and favor of the gods. Social status and rank, both by birth and by job, could now be recorded and preserved. The mathematical and engineering principles needed for canals and dikes and buildings were all available with figures and diagrams for the next generation, as were all other technical advances and progress. The activities and traditions of civilization became too complex and sophisticated to be transmitted orally with any degree of accuracy. With the advent of writing, human society was no longer at the mercy of frail human memory and changing oral tradition; schools for training scribes also came into being. From aiding human memory and simple record keeping, writing developed into an ongoing means of communication. Thus one generation, could tell future generations why they did certain things; this gave later generations insight into the real motivation of their ancestors. With writing, human society passed from the prehistoric into the historic age, as the discipline of history stresses the period. since the introduction of written records. Thus humanity came into the historic and civilized age at one and the same time, as writing is essential to both the discipline of history and to the existence of civilization:

The eight features or characteristics - urbanization, political institutions, organized religion, job specialization, social ranking, visual arts, public works and writing - are the major ingredients of what is generally meant by the term civilization. It should be clear how all are related, how one feature grew out of and then in turn influenced another. This working definition reveals how humanity progressed from a simple nomadic lifestyle to a very complex and sophisticated religious, political, social, economic, technical, and cultural order. It marks the essentials of the transition from less complicated nomadic individualism to intense group orientation and control. In the process, individuals lost much personal freedom as they were now bound by formal religious, political, and gender rules; were born into specific social classes that often determined their job and occupation; and were responsible to and for others as they in turn became dependent on others for survival. From acting freely and voluntarily by accepting responsibility for their own actions, humans became part of a complex and impersonal society, as ways of life became increasingly rigid and institutionalized. Since all were now living in confined areas, government, out of necessity, became increasingly coercive as it implemented its rules regularly and systematically with fines, jail sentences, and executions. Individual choices and actions had to be restricted and regularized for the good of the entire group.

This working definition of civilization can be summed up very briefly in one simple sentence. Civilization is a complex society with urbanization at the center of political and governmental institutions, an organized system of religious beliefs and practices, job specialization, social class ranking, visual arts and structures and a system of public works; all this sophisticated interaction was made possible by the introduction of writing. Although some aspect of all eight characteristics must be present in some degree or another for civilization to exist, some scholars argue that urbanization and writing are probably the two most important features - the sine qua non of civilization. Those societies that do not possess these eight characteristics are labeled as uncivilized; such less advanced peoples are usually called barbarians. Barbarian leaders like Attila the Hun and the Mongol leader Chingis Khan are frequently cited as the antithesis of what civilized humanity represents.