Cultural Diffusion
The process whereby cultures meet and mix ideas and, subsequently, create new cultures. Cultures typically meet through trade or warfare.

Golden Age
A period when empires are at their peak. Usually marked by extended durations of peace, expanded state wealth due to control of trade, and a flourishing of art, science, and architecture.

Eras

Paleolithic, Ended 8,000 BCE
- Hunters and Gatherers
- Nomadic peoples

Neolithic, 4,000 BCE - 2500 BCE
- Neolithic Revolution; discovery of agriculture and the domestication of animals
- First cities started to come together as advancements in agriculture enabled civilizations to feed more people
- Economy diversifies, labor becomes specialized, trade is initiated

Bronze Age, 2500 BCE - 700 BCE
- First river civilizations: sustained by annual or seasonal flooding, provided means of easy irrigation and transportation
  - Nile
    - Egypt, Africa, pharaohs, pyramids
    - Old Kingdom (2575 BCE - 2130 BCE); Middle Kingdom (1938 BCE - 1630 BCE); New Kingdom (1539 BCE - 1075 BCE)
  - Sumaria (3300 BCE - 2500 BCE)
    - later, Mesopotamia, “The Land Between Two Rivers”
    - Modern day Iraq
    - Hammurabi’s Code, one of the earliest set of legal codes
      - Unifying, by punishments were often harsh (eye for an eye)
  - Indus River Valley
    - Est 3000 BCE - 1500 BCE
    - Modern day Pakistan
    - Cities of Harappa and Mohenjo-Daro
  - Yellow (Huang He) River
    - Eastern China
Empires

Mediterranean Empires

Ancient Greece: fifth century BCE
- Gave us direct democracy, where the people had a direct voice in the government
- Early rational thought, analysis of reality, desire to understand “truth”
  - Great philosophers; Socrates, Plato, Aristotle
- Peaked during Greek Golden Age (460 BCE - 429 BCE)
  - City-state of Athens controlled the region
    - Pericles was one of its great leaders

The empire of Alexander the Great: 336 BCE - 323 BCE
- From Macedonia, a region north of Greece
- His father conquered Athens, and then he added Persia, the Lower Nile, and Palestine, and merged all these regions with Macedonia.
- Brought about the Hellenistic Age, which spread Hellenistic culture throughout the region

Roman Republic: 509 BCE - 31 BCE
- A republic is a government where many or all leaders are chosen (elected) by the people
  - The Roman people elected people to a Senate, which governed on the people’s behalf
    - The US is a republic
  - The Punic Wars, between 264 BCE and 146 BCE: the armies of the Republic defeated the Carthaginians (from modern-day Tunisia), led by Hannibal, and became dominant throughout the entire Mediterranean basin.
    - Hannibal led an army, which included war elephants, across the Alps and invaded Italy, but failed to conquer Rome
- Republic ends due to political infighting and civil wars
- Julius Caesar names himself dictator and tries to save the Republic, but is mistrusted by the Senate and, in 44 BCE, is assassinated.

Roman Empire: 31 BCE - 476 BCE
- Established by Augustus shortly after the death of Caesar
  - Augustus is the first Roman Emperor
- No longer a republic, the Roman Empire is led by a series of Emperors, many of which were elite generals in the Roman army
- The Senate remained, but its power was limited
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- **Pax Romana**: a two hundred year span where the Empire was in relative peace (“pax” means “peace” in the language of the Romans, Latin).
  - This was the Empire’s **Golden Age**
- Infighting, attacks from barbarians, and plague create instability in the Empire
- In CE 284, Rome is split in an effort to save it. It doesn't work.
- CE 476, Rome is sacked by Germanic barbarians, marking the end of the Empire.

**Byzantine Empire: CE 476 - CE 1453**
- Emerged from the fallen Roman Empire
- Capital was **Constantinople**
  - **Constantine** moved the capital there from Rome because it was a better location for controlling trade and the wealth of the empire.
    - CE 324
- Justinian I unified the empire by consolidating old Roman laws and codes into the **Justinian’s Code**
  - CE 527 - 565
- Fell to the Ottomans in CE 1453
  - Much Byzantine culture shifted to Russia and influenced the expansion of Russian culture
  - Some Greek scholars also escaped to the Italian universities and helped spur the Renaissance

**Chinese Dynasties**

Civil service system, invented gunpowder, porcelain

Dynastic cycle

- **Zhou Dynasty; 1122 - 256 BCE**
  - loose confederation of feudal states
  - end of the Dynasty is known as the “Warring States” period
  - Dynasty during which **Confucianism** and **Daoism** began

- **Qin Dynasty; 221 - 206 BCE**
  - Qin **Shi Huangdi**, first to unify China
    - From “Qin” comes China
  - Shi Huangdi employed a legalist philosophy to control the empire
    - **Legalists (legalism)** believe people are incapable of organizing themselves, so strict laws with harsh punishments are need to maintain a civil society
  - Built the Great Wall of China to keep out Mongol invaders

- **Han Dynasty; 202 BCE - CE 220**
  - Han Gaozu reorganizes China from the chaos following the end of the Qin
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- Han Wudi expanded the empire and opened up the trade routes in order to expand influence and wealth
  - These trans-Asian routes later became known as the Silk Roads
- State philosophy became Confucianism from Legalism
- Founded the Chinese civil service that was based on personal merit, not family ties
- Ushered in a Chinese golden age

Song Dynasty; CE 960 - 1279
- Established an orderly Chinese society
- Supported extensive foreign trade, employed paper money
- Eventually destroyed by the Mongols

Ming Dynasty; CE 1368 - 1644
- Recovered China for the Chinese, pushing the Mongols back over the Great Wall and out of China
- Supported great shipping fleets for trade and exploration
  - Zheng He was perhaps their greatest naval hero

Indian Empires
Indian subcontinent was protected from invasion by the Himalayas
Hindu Religion came out of the earliest Indus River Civilizations and merged with philosophies of assimilated cultures (eg: Aryan peoples).

Maurya; 312 - 185 BCE
- Founded when Chandragupta Maurya united the area using conquest, and an efficient bureaucracy noted for effective, but harsh, laws.
- Asoka, Maurya’s grandson, further expanded using brutal methods of conquest, but later converted to Buddhism
  - Through Asoka’s Edicts, he is greatly credited with the early spread of Buddhism

Gupta; CE 320 - 540
- Strong central government
- Established a Golden Age in India

African Kingdoms
Wealth through the trade of gold and salt
Trading centers on the northern arc of the Niger River connected with caravans that crossed the Sahara in order to sell their goods in Mediterranean and Red Sea ports.

Kingdom of Ghana; CE 800 - 1050
- Capital was Kumbi Saleh, located between the Niger and the Senegal Rivers
Kingdom of Mali; CE 1200 - 1450
- Main city was Timbuktu, on the Niger River in Western Africa
- Through cultural diffusion, traders from Arabia introduced Islam
- Controlled gold and salt trade in Africa
- Greatest ruler was Mansa Musa, earned great wealth and power
  - A convert to Islam, based his system of justice on the Quran
  - Spread Islam throughout his region

Kingdom of Songhai; CE 1460 - 1600
- Sonni Ali, an early Songhai king, established the largest West African Empire at the time
- Askia Mohammad made Islam the state religion
  - Expanding on Sonni Ali’s empire

Muslim Caliphates
Umayyad caliphate; CE 661 - 750
- Rapidly expanded the Muslim faith through conquest
  - Empire spanned from Spain to the Indus River, including all of Persia and Arabia
- Quick success because many of the people they conquered were ready to get rid of their masters (the Byzantines or the Persians, for example), and the Umayyads demonstrated tolerance and acceptance of other religions and belief systems, as long and the conquered paid their taxes

Abbasid caliphate; CE 750 - 1258
- Continued Umayyad tradition of tolerance
- Encouraged equality for all Muslims, regardless of class
- Moved the capital to Baghdad
- Oversaw a Golden Age of Islam
- Kingdom ended when the Mongols conquered Baghdad, looted and burnt it to the ground, and killed the last Abbasid caliph

Seljuk Turks
- Invaded and conquered Abbasid lands
- Constant attacks on Constantinople drove Pope Urban II to unify European Kings and go off on the First Crusade (1099).

Ottoman Empire
- Led by Mehmit II, Ottomans conquered Constantinople in CE 1453
- Used the new invention, gunpowder, to conquer their enemies
- Enjoyed a Golden Age under Suleiman the Magnificent or, to his people, Suleiman the Lawgiver.
● Became a massive empire that included Mesopotamia, Northern Africa, Asia Minor (Turkey), Greece and parts of Eastern Europe and Russia.
● Faded from power by the 1700s, but remained a kingdom until World War I.

Mesoamerican Empires
In the Americas
Zero interaction with Europe, Africa and Asia prior to Columbus’ arrival in 1492

Maya Civilization; 900 BCE - CE 300
● Located on the Yucatan Peninsula, modern day Mexico, Guatemala and Belize
● Consisted of city-states loosely bound together by a generally uniform Mayan culture

Aztec Empire: CE 1325 - 1517
● Aztec peoples (nomads) settled in the Valley of Mexico in about CE 1200
● Settled the city of Tenochtitlán
  ○ Expanded agriculture through the use of chinampas, which were essentially gardens that floated on the lake upon which the city was settled

Inca Empire ~CE 1150 - 1525
● Andes Mountains of South America
● To grow crops, they modified their mountain environment using terrace farming
● Built an extensive system of roads and bridges across the Andes

The Mongols
● The scourge of Asia, Persia, Russia and Europe!
● Adapted to their difficult physical environment, the cold, dry Asian steppes
● Use of superior horsemanship and advanced military technology allowed their greatest rule, Genghis Khan, to build one of the largest empires ever to exist, spanning from eastern China to eastern Europe.
● Control of almost the entire length of the Silk Roads allowed them to support and increase in trade and travel between Asian and Europe
● Pax Mongolica
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### Geography

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### Terms

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Belief Systems

Animism
- Traditional beliefs originating with the earliest homo sapiens
- Believe all things and elements possessed certain spirits

Hinduism
- practice good **dharma** (life’s deeds) to reach nirvana
- polytheistic
- possibly the oldest religion covered

Judaism
- monotheistic
- Abraham and Moses are most notable profits
- Jewish diaspora

Buddhism
- Siddhartha Gautama: the Buddha
- Asoka, Indian Prince who spread Buddhism
- Out of Nepal
- Four Noble Truths
  - (1) Life is suffering, (2) Suffering comes from desire, and (3) to eliminate suffering is to eliminate desire. To eliminate desire, (4) follow the 8-Fold Path

Confucianism
- Founded by Confucius
- Believed in social order, social harmony
- Everyone should embrace their role in society
- Became the foundation for the Chinese civil service

Legalism
- Embraced by Qin Shi Huangdi
- Assumed all people were evil, so strict laws and harsh punishments were needed to maintain order

Daoism
- Founded by Lao Tse
- Believed in harmony with nature

Christianity
- Jesus of Nazareth
- monotheistic
- spread by Peter and, mostly, Paul in the first century

Islam
- monotheistic
- founded by Muhammad
- Embraced personal salvation, tolerance
- Spread across northern Africa, Arabia and Persia by Islamic traders