The Nile River Valley Civilization started at the northern most peak of the Nile River at the time of the Neolithic Revolution. This early civilization formed down the lush fields of the Nile River. Protected by the water and desert, the civilization was able to grow into Egypt and surrounding colonies.

**Impact of Geography**

Geography for the Nile River Valley Civilization was very important. The Nile would flood each year starting in July and lasting until November. This flood would provide new, rich soil for the Egyptians and would wash away waste. The seas around the civilization served a barrier against war and disease.

**Economy**

The inhabitants of the Nile River Valley Civilization depended heavily on farming. Close proximity to the Nile allowed easy access to water needed for crops. Seasonal flooding fertilized the land for the next year's crops. Agriculture was essential for survival, growth, and economic success.

**Social Structure**

**King (Pharaoh)**

Had a special status
Female companion also had a special status
Ruler of the land

**Ruling Class**

Related or of high importance of the King

**Craftsman**
Craftsmen make weapons and tools for the people
Work on the decorations for tombs

**Farmers**

Most people of the Nile tribes were farmers that can only be vaguely distinguished by their tombs.

**Marginalized Groups**

Very little known about the people.
Did not live in organized structures
Acted as military

**Slaves**

Little evidence of slavery
Servants were often used and sold.
The Pyramids were built by servants who were paid in beer.

**Buildings/Structures**

Pyramids
Large boats for transport
Rigid structures that held pharaoh at the top, followed by priests, artisans, farmers, and finally slaves.

**People of Interest**

**Menes**

First Dynasty Egyptian King
Possibly found Ancient Rome
Accredited for combining upper and lower Egypt
Produced a 365-day calendar based on astronomy.
Developed early Geometry used for designing fields and canals.
Hieroglyphics were created and carved on to tablets for communication

Religion

Polytheistic religion - Multiple gods

TIGRIS/EUPHRATES RIVER VALLEY CIVILIZATION

Mesopotamia an area geographically located between the Tigris and Euphrates rivers. Mesopotamia means the land between two rivers. Mesopotamia began as urban societies in southern Iraq in 5000 BC, and ends in the 6th century BC.

Impact of Geography

It was the two rivers that became the basis upon which the wealth of the region. There was never a regular supple of water in Mesopotamia but the soil was so enriched over the years by the layers of silt which is material deposited by the two rivers. The valley between the Tigris and the Euphrates River was known as the land "between the rivers" in Greek. An arc of land from the Mediterranean Sea to the Persian Gulf called the Fertile Crescent had rich soil and abundant crops to sustain life in the early civilization. Ancient Mesopotamia consists of current day Assyria, Akkad, and Sumer. The three main independent cities in Southern Mesopotamia were Eridu, Ur, and Urak, these cities had a political and economic over the surrounding countryside.
The Sumerian city-states was based on farming and trade. Industry became an important factor in civilization as well. The people of Mesopotamia were known for their metalwork, woolen textiles, and pottery. Copper, tin, and timber were imported goods exchanged for dried fish, wool, wheat, and metal goods. Around 3000 B.C. the invention of the wheel was created making transportation of good easier and quicker.

### Social Structure

There were three major social groups in the Sumerian city-states. The groups were the nobles, commoners, and the slaves. The Nobles included many of the royal and religious officials. The Commoners worked for palace and temple domain, they also worked as farmers, merchants, and crafts people. More than 90 percent of the people in Mesopotamia were farmers due to the rich soil. The slaves worked in building buildings and also belonged to the palace officials.

### Buildings/Structures

The most famous and important building in the Sumerian city was the temple dedicated to the gods and goddesses of the city. The temple was called a ziggurat and was built atop a massive stepped tower. Housing were built by sun-dried bricks. A small portion of buildings were made by stone or wood.
Characters/Gender Roles

Female slaves:
Often used to weave cloth and grind grains

The Sumerian kings:
Families lived in large palaces and helped rule

Tools/Weapons/Technology

Tools
Saws, Chisels, Hammers, Braces, Bits, Nails, Pins, Rings, Hoes, Glue

Weapons
Arrowheads, Axes, Knives, Lancepoints, Swords, Daggers, Clubs, Armor

Technology
Writing system, Number system, First wheeled vehicles, Irrigation systems, Boats, Calendar

Religion

What they believed:
In Mesopotamia, each town and city was believed to be protected by a god. The Mesopotamians believed that these pyramid temples connected heaven and earth. At first, many religious events were held at the temple but later as priesthood developed, the temple became the center of both religion and learning for the entire community. The gods in Sumerian were called dingir. Their gods and goddesses had supernatural powers. Every single city had its own patron god or goddess who owned everything and everyone in the city. Everyone was expected to sing hymns, say prayers, make sacrifices and bring offerings to
The local temple (ziggurat) for the gods. In Mesopotamia the people looked to religion to answer their questions about life and death, good and evil, and the forces of nature. The Sumerians believed in divine order, that is, everything that occurs is preplanned by the gods. There are four all-powerful gods that created and controlled the universe. An was the god of heaven. Enlil was the air-god, Enki was the water-god. Ninhursag was the mother earth-goddess. Each of these gods created lesser gods who were also important in Mesopotamia...Utu, the sun-god and Nanna was the moon-god.

Writing/Literature

One of the greatest accomplishments of the Sumerian people was the invention of the earliest known system of writing. The Sumerians created written documents by using a triangular-tipped stylus to make wedge-shaped impressions in soft clay. Enuma Elish and Gilgamesh are examples of great religious literature, while the Code of Hammurabi is one of the greatest early examples of juridical literature. People who lived north of the Sumerian city-states also known as Akkadians (Semitic) spoke a Semitic language.

INDUS RIVER VALLEY CIVILIZATION

The Indus River Valley Civilization started about 2500 B.C.E. along the south-western part of the Indus River. The largest city was Mohenjo-Daro, in present day Pakistan, and settlements stretched all along the river.

Impact of Geography

Large Area

Stretches across present day India, Pakistan, Bangladesh, Nepal, Sri Lanka, and Bhutan

Surroundings

Natural borders consisted of mountains and the Arabian Sea,
sheltering the civilization from attack and disease. Water from the river fertilized and irrigated crops. Proximity to the river allowed boats to become a viable transportation option

Economy

Agriculture

The development of widespread irrigation systems allowed the indigenous population to provide food for themselves. Wheat and barley were primary crops, however rye, peas, cotton, and rice were also grown. Domestication of animals also served as an important tool for cultivation and as a source of food.

Trade

The economy depended greatly on trade. Trade was conducted within the civilization as well as with Mesopotamia. Advancement in technology led to carts and early boats that were used as the main method of trade and travel.

Social Structure

Caste system with four main classes

People were born into social classes that could not be changed.

Brahmins (priests and the king)
Kshatriyas (warriors and aristocrats - rulers)
Vaishyas (cultivators, artisans, and merchants)
Shudras (peasants and serfs)

Buildings/Structures

Individual buildings for bathing and using the restroom (had an early "sanitation" system)
Citadels were used for defense
Granaries
The Four Cradles of Civilization: Excerpted from the River Valley Civilization Guide

All houses had access to water and were about the same size
Houses had one or two stories--Most buildings were made of dry bricks--No large monuments or structures

Tools / Weapons / Technology

Tools

Constructed from bronze and possibly copper and iron
Clay was utilized for both art and tool manufacturing
Developed a measuring system and tools for measurement (first, and most precise of the time)

Weapons

Constructed from bronze
Weaponry was not as advanced as it was in the Mesopotamian society
Arrows were crafted
Swords were not developed
Isolated geography negated the need for advanced weaponry

Technology

Large irrigation systems
First civilization in the world to develop precise measurement and weighing equipment
Most technology was used to aid in agriculture
Other trade technologies such as boats and carts were employed to facilitate trade

Religion

Hinduism~1700-1100 B.C.E.
Polytheistic

Buddhism~365 B.C.E.
Monotheistic (Buddha)
Writing / Literature

Vedas - Oldest Scriptures of Hinduism

Writings on prayers
Hymns
Religious Rituals
Philosophies

Gender Roles

Men worked within their designated caste social class
Women were valued because of their ability to produce offspring and nurse
When children were old enough, they adopted their parents' role

YELLOW RIVER VALLEY CIVILIZATION

Around 4000 B.C the Yellow (Hueng He) River valley Civilization began in China. Which was the start of the many Chinese Empires. Many of the ethnic groups and cultures began in this era in China. This history, in which a vast area populated by diverse ethnic groups became, over time, a more or less single culture, began in the Yellow River Valley.
The Four Cradles of Civilization:
Excerpted from the River Valley Civilization Guide

Impact of Geography

The Huang He (yellow) river stretches across China for more than 2,900 miles. It carries its rich yellow silt all the way from Mongolia to the Pacific Ocean. Also the Chang Jiang river or Yangtze river is longer, stretching about 3,400 miles across central China. The two major rivers both merge together to create a great food-producing area. Although China has to major rivers running through it only 10% of its land is fertile and has rich enough soil to grow crops unlike the 19% by the United States. Also another negative is that China is surrounded by mountain ranges and river valleys, which make it hard for people to travel and trade their crops and live stocks, so they have to mostly rely on their food.

Social Structure

The Shang King ruled from the capital city of Anyang. His kingdom was divided into different territories that were ruled by aristocratic warlords(military leaders). Although they were leaders of their land the King had the power to add and remove them whenever he chooses. The Chinese believed in supernatural forces so that they could talk to the Gods and receive help when needed.

Gender Roles

Family is very important for the Chinese culture. The authority of the family belongs to the father. The father always arranges the marriages for his daughters, controls the amount of education received by the children and chooses the career for his sons. The mother occupies a subordinate position in the family and they are unable to own their own property. A typical Chinese family contains a mother, father the sons and the unmarried daughters live in the home together. All the rituals are performed by the males.
The Four Cradles of Civilization:
Excerpted from the River Valley Civilization Guide

Literature

There was a lot of literature back in the civilization time. The Zhon literature was very important to the Chinese people. There was a few different books the "Book of History" is the actual history of the Zhou. Another is the "Book of Change" is the manual of diviners. The "Book of Rites" is the rules of Etiquette and rituals for the aristocrats. Another piece from Zhou is the "Book of Songs." It tells about the condition and early Zhou. Also it is most notable of the classic works. Most of the Zhou writings have been destroyed by the first empire.

Characters

The Three Wise Sage Kings
King Yao: a virtuous ruler bringing harmony to society
King Shun: regulating the four seasons, weights, measures, and units of time
King Yu: rescued China from raging floods of the Yellow River

Economy

The yellow river valley in particular lacked written language for an extensive period. Because of this, documented economics are rare. What is known is that the civilization primarily focused on day to day agriculture, rather than spontaneous growth.

The Silk Road was a major part of the this agricultural purpose in china that helped it grow. People would travel all over the silk road for trading purposes which brought cultural immersion, and agriculture was an immediate profit due to the fertile soil.

Weapons

Iron Metallurgy was used for farming tools, utensils and weapons because of its strength
PALEOLITHIC - NEOLITHIC ERAS

The most important technological development ever to occur in human history was the domestication of plants (agriculture) and animals (pastoralism). Together these developments are called the Neolithic Revolution and they allowed the development of urban centers (towns and, later, cities), trade and most of the other things we consider to be components of "civilization."

Characteristics

With the Neolithic Revolution civilizations now began popping up in unsurprising locations - river valleys. These river valleys provided people with fertile soil due to their floods. These floods, combined with the new-found knowledge of farming and animal domestication, allowed for a stable food supply and so the Neolithic people settled down around these rivers. As these people lived together in one spot civilizations arose, which often shared theses common characteristics:

Advanced Technical Skills

Sometime around 3000 BC, the Neolithic peoples around these river valleys learned how to make and use bronze tools and weapons. This in part allowed these peoples to construct permanent shelters and homes since they no longer were nomads, following their food source and looking for caves as shelter.

Governments

The floods that helped to provide the fertile soil for survival also posed a problem. The floods were sometimes massive and could wipe out an entire village if uncontrolled and farmers needed to get water to their fields during the dry season. As a result an irrigation system (dikes and canals) was necessary to control these waters. The construction of these projects required organization and cooperation among the Neolithic people on a massive scaled. So governments probably developed to direct these projects and to provide rules by which to live.
Division of Labor

As agricultural productivity increased, fewer people were needed to work in the fields producing food (much like the Industrial Revolution of the 18th century in England). These "extra" people who weren't needed to farm could then become artisans, or merchants or traders and production of all sorts was able to increase thereby providing a better standard of living for all.

The Neolithic Revolution

Dependency on Natural Resources

Before: Moved with their food supply
After: Water and good soil for crops

Government

Before: Families (male ruled) evolutionary, from family to village to city.
After: Chief with council.

Economy

Before: No real economy
After: Barter system

Technology

Before: Stone tools
After: Farming, baking and firing pottery, specialized tools, bronze tools and weapons

Religion

Polytheistic - believed in life after death.

Cause and Effect Neolithic Revolution

Two major effects were the development of agriculture, and the domestication of animals. These two changes allowed people to stay in one spot instead of wandering from place to place following their main food source (animals). Somehow Neolithic people learned how to plant and raise crops and keep and raise livestock for food. Now people were put in the situation of living
together permanently and as a result much cooperation was needed for survival and civilizations started to arise.