

# **BELIEF SYSTEMS INFORMATION SHEET**

## **1. Islam**

Islam was started by an Arab merchant from Mecca named Mohammed in the seventh century A.D. The religion quickly spread throughout the Middle East and Africa. As the Muslim Empire grew, so did the Islamic religion.

In Arabic, Islam literally means “to submit to the will of Allah”. Islam is a monotheistic (a religion that worships only 1 god) practiced by over 1.8 billion Muslims around the world. Muslims normally gather in a “Mosque” to practice their faith. If a mosque is not available, a Muslim can pray anywhere as long as he faces east toward the city of Mecca (the city where Mohammed began his religion). The holy writings of the religion are found in a book known as the Koran. All Muslims are expected to follow five basic teachings known as “the five pillars of Islam”.

### **Five Pillars of Islam**

1. **Confession of Faith:** The belief that “there is no God but Allah, and Mohammad his prophet”.
2. **Prayer:** Muslims pray five times a day, facing toward Mecca.
3. **Charity:** Muslims must give to the poor, and support the local Mosque.
4. **Fasting:** During Ramadan, the ninth month of the Muslim calendar, all Muslims must fast during daylight hours.
5. **Pilgrimage:** If financially possible, each Muslim must make a hajj, or holy pilgrimage to the holy city of Mecca at least once in their lifetime.

## **2. Christianity**

Citizens in the Roman Empire practiced a cult-like religion with many superstitious beliefs. This religion involved many complicated ceremonies and it didn't offer the common man a way to speak directly to their gods. Christianity, a religion based on the teaching of Jesus, offered a different approach to religion. The teachings of Christianity are recorded in the Gospels, which means “good news”. The Gospels were published in the New Testament of the Bible, where Christians added Jesus' teachings in addition to the Old Testament. Christianity also developed in the Middle East and is a monotheistic religion.

### **Characteristics of Christianity**

- Christianity was open to anyone. The rich and poor, men and women, slaves, and nobles were all welcome to become Christians.
- Offered an eternal life after death.
- Allowed people the chance to be forgiven for their sins.
- Gave people the chance to directly communicate with God (through prayer)

## **3. Judaism**

Judaism is another monotheistic belief that originated in the Middle East (Israel). Practitioners of this religion are also referred to as Jews. The Ancient Hebrew leader Abraham had once made a promise to worship and obey only one god. In return, this god had promised to protect Abraham and his people. The Hebrew god had power over all beings everywhere. This god was not a physical being, and no physical images were to be made of him.

According to Hebrew belief, a Hebrew named Moses received the Ten Commandments from God at the top of Mount Sinai. These Commandments are a set of laws that have played an important part in the Christian and Jewish religions.



### **THE TEN COMMANDMENTS**

1. I am God, your Lord. Do not have any other gods before (except) me.
2. Do not represent false gods by a statue or picture. Do not bow to such gods or worship them.
3. Do not take the name of God, your Lord, in vein.
4. Remember the Sabbath day and keep it holy. You may work six days but keep the seventh day holy.
5. Honor you father and your mother.
6. Do not murder
7. Do not commit adultery (cheating on your husband or wife).
8. Do not steal.
9. Do not speak false witness against you neighbor (lie).
10. Do not be envious (jealous) of what your neighbor has.

#### 4. Shinto

Shinto or “way of the gods” is a Japanese religious tradition which dates back to the beginning of Japanese history. It is a **polytheistic** belief that describes the very origins of Japan and the Japanese people. It is believed that everything in nature such as a rock, river, or tree holds the presence of a god or kami神, inside of it. In this sense, all parts of nature are sacred to Japanese. Unlike Christianity or Islam, there is no one text containing Shinto religious beliefs, and there is no founder of the religion. However, Shinto can be found in just about every aspect of Japanese life including holidays, marriage and death ceremonies, and the general Japanese attitude towards nature and their environment. Shintoists practice their religion in a Jinja, where they observe their important festivals, holidays, and other cultural events.



#### 5. Confucianism

Confucius was born in 551 BC into a poor but upper class family near Beijing. During his time, the Emperor was weak, and China was in a state of chaos. Confucius wandered China from place to place trying to find a ruler who would put his ideas into practice. His followers put his ideas into a book called the **Analects**. His ideas emphasized that people should follow tradition and be obedient. The most important of his beliefs is Filial Piety- the idea that one should be respectful to their elders and ancestors. In return, their elders would guide and teach them the right way to live. By following these teachings, a person could become **virtuous** or superior, and could successfully lead others, creating a peaceful and happy society.

*“When the individual life is civilized, the family will be in harmony; when the family is in harmony, the state will be in order; and when the state is in order, there will be peace throughout the world.” Confucius*

#### 6. Buddhism



In his search for truth Siddhartha had tried many different approaches; he fasted, discussed philosophy with different religious people, and traveled far across India with no success. Finally, after meditating for 49 days, he was able to achieve a state of spiritual awaking, otherwise known to Buddhists as **enlightenment**.

Buddhism is religion which developed in Northern India near the Himalayas in around the 6<sup>th</sup> century B.C. A young Prince named Siddhartha Guatama was curious about the world outside of his luxurious palace and decided to venture out into the world on his own. Upon seeing the pain and suffering of the world he realized that the only way to true peace and happiness was through leading a life devoted to spiritual growth. This young Prince eventually became known as the Buddha and his teachings act as the cornerstone for 350 million Buddhists today.

Followers of Buddhism adhere to the teachings of the Four Noble Truths which teach that “desire” is the root of all suffering. They also adhere to the teachings of the “Eightfold Path” that emphasize spirituality and doing good deeds for others.

#### 7. Hinduism

Of the 1.2 million people who live in India, most of them practice the religion known as Hinduism. Over thousands of years, Hinduism had assembled the beliefs of various peoples across the Indian subcontinent, forming the widely practiced religion of India today.

For all Hindus, there is only one God; Brahman. However, Hindus use three separate deities to help them understand the concept of Brahman: Brahma, Shiva, and Vishnu. Brahma creates the universe, Shiva maintains the universe, and Vishnu recreates the universe. These three deities form the Hindu Trinity. This does not mean that Hindus are simply *polytheistic*. Just as millions of light rays represent the sun, many Gods represent the God Brahman. Aside from the Hindu Trinity, there are many other deities as well. Each family has their own unique God who they believe guides and protects them. Overall, there are millions of unique Gods in the Hindu religion.

#### The Four Key Hindu Beliefs

##### Dharma

Dharma is the “proper conduct”, or “right way of living” in the Hindu belief. By having good morals and actions, one has good Dharma.

##### Karma

Karma stands for the belief that a person experiences the effects of his or her actions that every act or thought has consequences.

##### Samsara

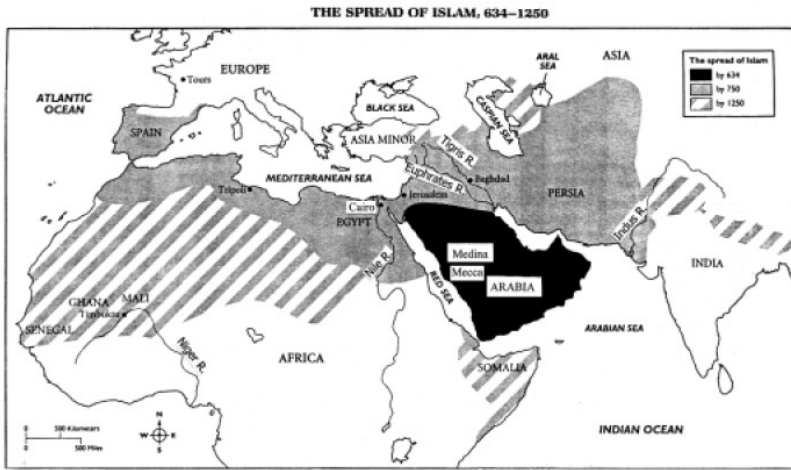
In the Western world, Samsara is commonly known as reincarnation. Samsara represents the cycle of life, death, and rebirth in which a person carries his or her own Karma.

##### Moksha

Like heaven for the Christian, Hindus strive to reach Moksha, or a state of changeless bliss.

# WORLD CIVILIZATIONS

## 1. The Golden Age of Islam



The religion of Islam began in the 7th century AD. It quickly spread throughout the Middle East before moving across North Africa, and into Spain and Sicily. By the 13th century, Islam had spread across India and Southeast Asia. The reasons for the success of Islam, and the expansion of its empire, can be attributed to the strength of the Arab armies, the use of a common language, and fair treatment of conquered peoples. Islamic civilization experienced a golden age under the Abbasid Dynasty, which ruled from the mid 8th century until the mid 13th century. Under the Abbasids, Islamic

culture became a blending of Arab, Persian, Egyptian, and European traditions. The result was an era of stunning intellectual and cultural achievements.

There were many accomplishments, including a great style of architecture (borrowed from the Byzantine Empire), achievements in literature and philosophy. Islamic authors translated works from around the world and commented on them. Islamic scientists and mathematicians invented algebra, studied the movements of stars and planets, and even calculated the circumference of the earth to within a few thousand feet. Islamic doctors were the first to build hospitals and emergency rooms. There were vast trading networks and a system of religious law called the Sharia.

The Golden Age of Islam began to end when Mongol armies conquered formerly Arab Islamic lands and soon, the Western Christian nations were rising in power.

## 2. Meso-American Civilizations

The Mesoamerican civilizations consisted of four main cultures: the Olmec, Maya, Aztec and Incas. The Mayan civilization lasted from 300 CE until 900 CE. Mayans lived in what is now the Yucatan Peninsula of Mexico and much of Central America. Mayans were impressive architects who built large palaces and pyramid shaped temples. Mayan farmers had irrigation systems and traded agricultural products. They had a system of hieroglyphics and an accurate 365 day calendar. They also had an advanced numbering system.

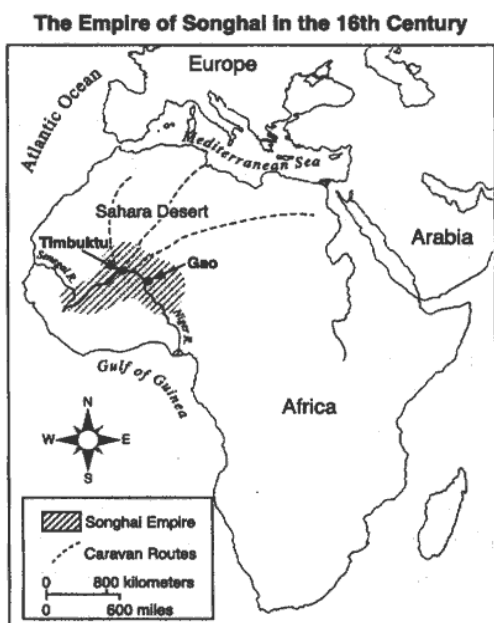
The Aztecs existed from 1200 until the time of European conquest.

They had an empire that included most of Mexico, with a strong central government. Aztecs had an advanced religious system, with temples where human sacrifice took place. Aztec scientists also had an accurate calendar, and had advanced medicine. Aztecs set up schools and kept accurate records of their history. Europeans destroyed and conquered the Aztec Empire in the 16th century.

The Incas conquered a large empire that stretched along the Pacific coast of South America. They had a strong central government and controlled their empire through a great road system, with more than 12,000 miles of roads. They were advanced farmers and used terrace farming to create more land for farming. Their surgeons performed surgery to treat various injuries and kept accurate records with a string system called quipas.



## 3. West African Kingdoms



The African Trading Kingdoms consist of three main cultures, Ghana, Mali, and Songhai, all located in West Africa. All three kingdoms maintained vast trading networks across the Sahara desert and into the Middle East and North Africa. The main export was gold, which made each kingdom wealthy and strong, and provided them with the conditions necessary for cultural and intellectual achievement.

Ghana, Mali, and Songhai were all influenced by Islam to different degrees. In Mali, the emperor Mansa Musa was a famous Islamic leader who increased trade between Mali and the Muslim Empire. They created great art, which was often religious in nature. Religious statues and masks were carved from ivory, wood, and bronze. Africans used both oral and written literary traditions. Histories and folktales were usually passed from generation to generation orally. These stories often contained moral lessons and were used as a teaching device.

During the 1400s, Timbuktu became a center of learning under the leadership of Mali emperor, Mansa Musa. Again, this is the influence of Islam, with Islamic scholars traveling from around the Muslim world to study and teach and the University of Timbuktu.

Ghana, Mali, and Songhai established trade routes that were in use for centuries. Besides gold, these kingdoms transported a number of agricultural products to the Mediterranean and then on to Europe. A negative effect of this interaction was the start of the slave trade.

#### 4. River Valley Civilizations

About 5000 years ago, people stopped being nomads and settled down permanently. These locations were almost always next to rivers and are called river valleys. These included the **Nile River Valley** in Africa, the **Indus River Valley** in India, the **Tigris & Euphrates River Valley** in the Middle East and the **Yellow River Valley** in China.

River valleys were popular places for humans to settle down in because they provided a constant source of fresh water and fertile soil for farming. Most early civilizations depended on rivers for nearly everything.

River valley civilizations almost always started out as small farming or fishing villages and grew to be huge empires. Here, humans created laws, system of writing and education, even forms of government and religion that still affect our lives today.

#### 5. Roman Empire

The Roman Empire was huge, mighty and still influences us today. Around 2000 years ago, the Ancient (very old) Romans settled down in what is now Italy. Their center and capital was the city of Rome (which still exists today). They were highly influenced by the Greek civilization which came before them in around the same area of the world.

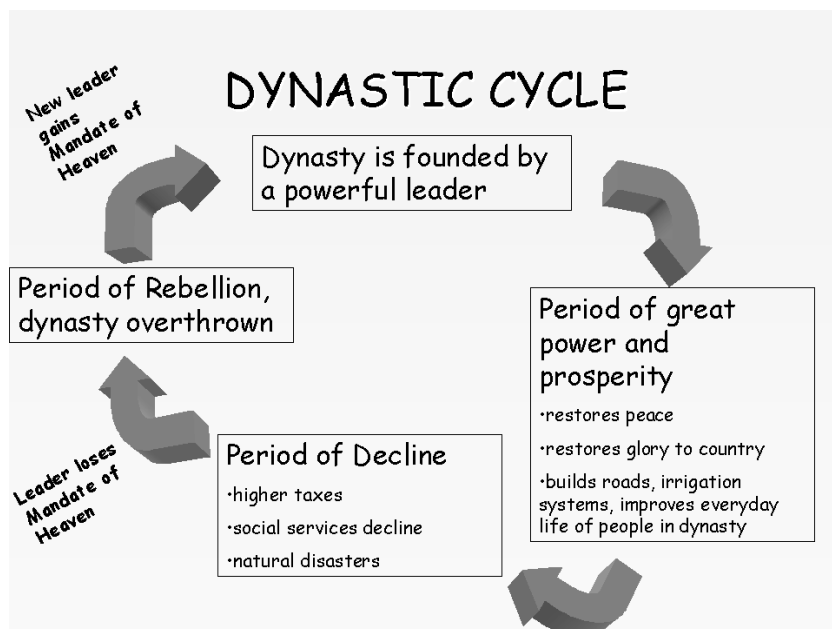
The major accomplishments of the Roman Empire included their mighty military which conquered half of the known world, their legal system, their form of government which is similar to the one that we have today and their many accomplishments in art, music and literature. They also built great roads and bridges (another word for roads and bridges is infrastructure).

The Roman Empire eventually became huge and it was not easy to rule such a large piece of land. Increasingly, Roman dictators (leaders) were not effective in preventing invasions from the West. Germanic tribes kept attacking Rome, leading eventually to its fall. The decline of Rome was not a quick downfall, but instead, a gradual process that took hundreds of years.

#### 6. China's Dynasties

A dynasty is simply a ruling family. When one ruler dies or becomes too weak to rule, another person in his family (usually, his oldest son) takes over.

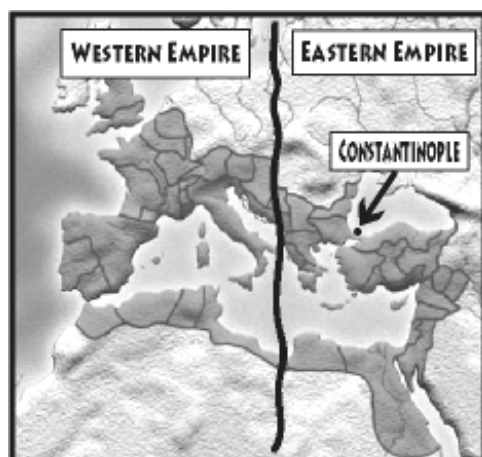
In China, for about 4000 years, there were many ruling dynasties. They were named after the heads of the ruling families. For example, the first period of dynastic rule was called the Shang Dynasty, after the Shang family that ruled it. After the Shang family lost power, the dynasties that followed were called the Zhou, Han, Tang, Song and Ming dynasties. These dynasties ruled in cycles of rising and falling power. This is called the Dynastic Cycle. You can see the Dynastic Cycle in the diagram to the left.



The Chinese dynasties accomplished much, including silk-making, building a system of roads that encouraged trade (such as the famous Silk Road), advanced sciences (such as astronomy and physics), the invention of paper, gunpowder and advanced medicine. They were great architects and built amazing temples and public buildings. The greatest golden age was the Han Dynasty, which lasted from 200 BC until 200 AD (that's 400 years).

#### 7. The Byzantine Empire

The Roman Emperor Constantine moved the capital of the Roman Empire from Rome to a city called Byzantium. He renamed it Constantinople, and it became the center of the Byzantine Empire. The Byzantine Empire was located in between Asia and Europe. It connected these two continents and blended the culture of Asia, the Middle East and Europe. It lasted from around 300 AD until 1000 AD. The Byzantine Empire's culture was very similar to the culture of the Roman Empire, with one big difference. Instead of the major language being Latin, the Byzantine Empire spoke mostly Greek. Eventually, even Roman culture was being phased out by the many Turks who moved into this territory. The Turks were Muslims – the Christian leaders of the Byzantine Empire wanted them out of his lands and started the Crusades, a series of holy wars fought between Christians and Muslims.



The accomplishments of the Muslims included the preservation of the culture of the Ancient Greeks and Romans. They kept the laws, literature, and works of art preserved for us to see today. The Byzantines were great traders, artists and developed a form of Christianity that is still around today – the Eastern Orthodox Church. Many Russians, Poles and other Slavic people are still influenced by the culture of the Byzantine Empire today.

# Economic Systems

## Manorialism

The economic portion of feudalism was centered around the lord's estates or manor, and is called manorialism. A lord's manor would include peasant villages, a church, farm land, a mill, and the lord's castle or manor house.

Manors were self sufficient; all economic activity occurred on the manor. This meant that little to no trade occurred during this time period. Most of the peasants during the Middle Ages were serfs. Serfs were generally farmers who were tied to the land. They were not slaves because they could not be bought or sold, but they could not readily leave the manor either. Serfs were given land to farm in exchange for service to their lord. This service usually involved working the lord's fields, maintaining roads and the manor, and providing military service in times of war. Serfs paid taxes to their lord in the form of crops. This is also how they paid the fee to use the manor's mill or other services.

## Commercial Revolution

The growth of trade, towns, and cities resulted in a commercial revolution. A new social class emerged composed of merchants, artisans, and traders. This new social class was called the Middle Class. The middle class quickly gained power and influence as feudalism came to an end, and the economies of Europe became reliant on money instead of service.

The Commercial Revolution and the resurgence of trade across Europe completely reshaped society. These changes resulted in the decline of feudalism, and a revival of arts, literature, and science known as the Renaissance.

## Mercantilism

Mercantilism is the policy of building a nation's wealth by exporting more goods than it imports. Colonies were instrumental in this policy as they supplied their parent nations with raw materials that were used to produce finished goods, and then exported back to the colonies. Colonies not only served as a source for the raw materials, but also as an exclusive market for the parent country. The result of this policy was the further weakening of the feudal system and the rise of the Middle Class as the dominating force in Europe.

From Mercantilism to Laissez-Faire	
Mercantilism	Laissez-Faire
Country's wealth based on exporting more than it imports Strict government control Uses colonies as source of raw materials and exclusive markets for selling goods	Developed by <u>Adam Smith</u> in his book, <u>Wealth of Nations</u> No government interference Capitalist/Market Economy

The Great Depression	
Stock Market Crash 1929	Financial panic became widespread as stock brokers called in the loans they had made to stock investors. This caused stock prices to fall, and many people lost their entire life savings as many financial institutions went bankrupt.
Raw Materials	During World War I, industrialized countries imported large amounts of raw materials from Africa, Asia, and Latin America. After the war, production fell and many of these areas faced severe economic difficulty.
Overproduction	Industrialized nations increased their levels of production to great levels during the war. At the war's end, industrialists continued this high production rate at a time when many consumers could not afford their products
Results	Millions of people lost their jobs as banks and businesses closed around the world. Many people were reduced to homelessness, and had to rely on government sponsored soup kitchens to eat.

## **Great Depression**

After World War I, severe

economic problems plagued Europe. Many countries were forced to rebuild cities destroyed by war, pay off huge a war debt, and find jobs for the thousands of returning soldiers. The United States enjoyed an economic boom as its economy was bolstered by efforts to rebuild Europe. However, the world's economy came to a near stop with the stock market crash in the United States in 1929.

World trade also declined as many countries imposed protective tariffs in an attempt to restore their economies. This resulted in conditions worsening.
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## **Market vs. Command Economy**

A large part of the Cold War was nations aligning themselves economically with either the U.S. or the Soviet Union. Capitalism, or a Market Economy and Communism, or a Command Economy came to dominate global economics. The conflict became about which system better provided for the people. In the end, Capitalism won out, but only by a slim margin.

## **The Modern World**

### ***Economic Interdependence***

During the Cold War the world became more interdependent economically. Examples of this include the European Union, OPEC, and NAFTA.  
**European Union:** The EU started as a small community in 1952 to regulate steel and coal production in Europe. By 1957, the initial 6 nations, West Germany, France, Belgium, Italy, the Netherlands, and Luxembourg, formed the European Community, or EC. The EC was a free trade association that lowered economic barriers, such as tariffs, between the members. During the 1980s and 1990s, the EC expanded and became the EU, and continues to work toward a common economic infrastructure.

Market & Command Economies		
	Market Economy	Command Economy
Ownership	Private ownership of all property and means of production	Government control of all property and means of production
Economic Controls	Little public control; private citizens and business makes decisions.	Government makes all economic decisions
Market Forces	Supply and demand control prices, promotes competition.	Government planning of entire economy. Focuses on industrial goods

**OPEC:** The Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries was formed by Iraq, Iran, Kuwait, Saudi Arabia, and Venezuela in 1960. Their goal was to control the oil industry by setting prices and production levels. Control of the majority of the world's oil supply has given OPEC strong political powers. In 1973, OPEC stopped the sale of oil to certain countries, namely the U.S.. This caused a major slow down of many western nation's economies, and made them realize how dependent they were on foreign oil. This continues today with OPEC limiting production of oil, which in turn causes gas prices to soar.

**NAFTA:** The North American Free Trade Association was created by the United States, Mexico, and Canada in 1993. Its purpose was to provide free trade between the three nations, by eliminating trade barriers like tariffs.

### ***Pacific Rim***

The Pacific Rim is a group of nations in Asia and the Americas that border the Pacific Ocean. Economic interest in this area has grown dramatically since the end of World War II. Many predict that the Pacific Rim will come to dominate world economics due to their large market size. Many nations in this area, including, Taiwan, Singapore, Hong Kong, and South Korea (known as the Asian Tigers) have experienced rapid economic growth and prosperity due

to industrialization. These nations were also aligned both politically, and economically with the West throughout the Cold War.

### ***Developing Nations***

Developing nations such as those found in Africa, Latin America, and some parts of Asia faced many economic problems after the end of European Imperialism. Some nations chose to follow the economic policies of the West, while others followed the path of communism. While each nation had different problems they all faced similar tasks such as building industry, attracting investment capital, stabilizing their governments, and controlling a growing population. These countries continue to face economic difficulty due to these issues.

### ***WTO***

The World Trade Organization oversees the drafting and implementation of rules for global trade in goods and services

# Political Systems

Throughout history, many kinds of political systems developed in different areas of the world depending on the needs of the people, and the economic resources available.

In Europe, as well as in parts of China, India, Africa, and South America, a system known as monarchy developed. Beginning in ancient Greece, the practice of democracy has continued into the 21st century. In both Europe and Japan, feudalism had developed by the 1100s.

By the 1500s, absolutism, and divine right monarchy, had emerged, especially in Europe. The Enlightenment, a rejection of absolutism, forced political changes in Europe, North America and Western Asia. The 1850s saw the rapid spread of an anti-capitalist economic & political system called communism.

Related Political Systems	
<b>monarchy</b>	a political system in which the government is under the control of one powerful leader.
<b>oligarchy</b>	a political system in which the government is under the control of the merchant class.
<b>theocracy</b>	a political system in which the government is under the control of a religious organization or its officials.
<b>aristocracy</b>	a political system in which the government is under the control of wealthy landowners.
<b>democracy</b>	a political system in which the government is under the control of the citizens themselves, or elected representatives chosen from eligible citizens.

## Monarchy

### China

Chinese emperors justified their actions by claiming the Mandate of Heaven, or divine right of rule. The Mandate of Heaven was later used to explain the Dynastic Cycle. A dynasty would remain in power only as long as it was providing good government. When a dynasty went into decline, and began to abuse its power, it was said to lose the Mandate of Heaven, or the favor of the gods. A strong leader would usually emerge to claim the Mandate, and establish a new dynasty. The dynastic cycle would then begin again.

### Modern European Monarchy

During the Middle Ages, kings and strong nobles battled with the Roman Catholic Church for supreme power. Beginning in England and France, kings began to strengthen their central power, and restrict the Church.

In Spain, England, France, Austria, Prussia and Russia, absolute monarchies were established. Each had a different level of success.

## Feudalism

### European Feudalism

About 500 CE, much of western Europe was left without a strong centralized government due to the breakdown of the Roman Empire. As a result of invasions, and a weak central government, a new social and political system known as feudalism developed. Strong local lords formed a strict code of behavior and allegiances which became the foundation of feudal life.

For example, the king controlled huge tracts of land. He would give his support and a large piece of land, called a fief, to a powerful lord in return for loyalty and military support. This meant the lord was now a vassal of the king. The Lord would then divide up that land among his supporters, usually less powerful lords, obtaining vassals of his own. The Lesser Lords would do the same, dividing up the increasingly smaller land holdings to their knights. Finally, the knights would be left in direct control of the land and the peasants or townsfolk who lived there. The peasants were expected to grow food, tend the land, and provide military support to the feudal lords. Under European feudalism, there was very little opportunity for social advancement.

### Feudal Japan

Japan's feudal period lasted from the 12th century until the 19th century. During this period, society was divided in different classes. At the top, was the Emperor, although he had little real power. Japan was ruled by the Shogun, who was a military leader with near absolute control. In Japan, the real political and military power was in the hands of the shogun. Much like in Europe, the shogun distributed lands to his loyal vassals, who were called daimyo. The daimyo then granted lands to their warriors, the samurai. Japanese warriors lived according to a code of conduct known as bushido, which was even stricter than that in Europe.

## Absolutism

### The European Model

Throughout the 1500s and 1600s, absolutism, when kings or queens have complete control over government and the lives of their subjects, was the most widespread political system in use in Europe and parts of Asia. Some of the most important absolute monarchs were Philip II of Spain, Louis XIV of



France, and Peter the Great of Russia. These kings believed they had the “divine right” (power of god) to rule their lands.

## Democracy

### Greece

The Ancient Greeks were the first to use democracy as a form of government. Under Pericles, male citizens in Athens participated in the daily running of government. This form of direct democracy excluded all non-citizens, such as women and slaves. Today, many governments around the world practice some form of democracy.

In Ancient Rome, a government where officials were chosen from among eligible citizens was established. A republic, a this form of democratic government is known, is not a direct democracy. It is called representative democracy, since only a few chosen officials represent the citizens as a whole.

### Rome

During the period when Rome was a republic, from about 509 BCE to around 270 BCE ., the Senate was the most powerful branch of government. Senators were elected for life, and only came from the group of land-owning aristocrats called Patricians. Senators, in turn, elected two consuls, who were responsible for the daily business management of the government, and who were in charge of the army. A consul is like a president, but is appointed, and serves for only one year.

Problems arose in Rome because the lower class plebeians had little power in government, and had to rely on the patronage of patricians in order to make changes. In fact, by 450 BCE, plebeians had succeeded in getting the laws of Rome written down for all to see. The Laws of the Twelve Tables were the basis of Roman law, and influenced later democratic thinkers during the Enlightenment, over 2000 years later.

As children of England, the colonies in America had the benefit of knowing a democratic form of government. In 1776, the American colonies declared their independence from England based on many real and perceived wrongs that they had suffered. The original revolutionaries wrote a declaration outlining their grievances, and claimed the right to self rule, or sovereignty. The Declaration of Independence included many Enlightenment ideas: the right to life, liberty and property (John Locke); religious toleration and freedom of speech (Voltaire); separation of powers (Baron de Montesquieu).

The success of the American Revolution and its guiding principles was a major inspiration of the French Revolution in 1789, and the Latin American Revolutions of the 1790s and early 1800s. Proof that foreign rule and slave chains could be thrown off was extremely encouraging to the mixed-blood inhabitants of the Caribbean islands, and Latin America.

### The Modern World

In the 1830s and 1840s, a series of democratic revolutions occurred throughout Europe. Most of them were harshly put down. After World War II, most of northern, western and southern Europe, America, Japan, South America and the parts of the former British Empire, practiced some form of democracy. Today, democracy is one of the most widely practiced political systems in the world.

## Fascism

Fascism is a type of government that was practiced in Italy under Mussolini and Nazi Germany under Hitler. This government puts the nation or a particular race (as in Nazi Germany) above all other concerns. Fascist governments were led by one particular leader or dictator.

## Communism

Socialism and Communism are more accurately called economic and social systems rather than political systems. However, the real world application of the economics behind socialism and communism requires a particular form of government able to support it.

Early socialists wanted to create self-sufficient communities where everyone owned everything together, and where no one was left in need of anything. In other words, all property and work was shared for the benefit of the entire community. Socialists believed that if there was no money and everyone's needs were met, war and fighting would stop.

In reality in every place that communism was practiced, totalitarian governments or dictatorships ruled the land (where one leader had total control- *example Stalin in USSR*). This was the case in the former USSR, China, North Korea, and Cuba. Every aspect of people's lives was controlled by the government. To strengthen its control, command economy, where government officials made all economic decisions, was put in place by the Communist Party. The government in the USSR fell apart in 1991, but China, North Korea, and Cuba still have Communist governments today.

# World Revolutions

## **Neolithic Revolution**

During the Paleolithic Period, which lasts from the beginnings of human life until about 10,000 BCE, people were nomads. They lived in groups of 20 -30, and spent most of their time hunting and gathering. In these groups, work was divided between men and women, with the men hunting game animals, and women gathering fruits, berries, and other edibles. These early peoples developed simple tools such as, spears and axes made from bone, wood, and stone. Human beings lived in this manner from earliest times until about 10,000 BCE, when they started to cultivate crops and domesticate animals. This is known as the Neolithic Revolution.

The Neolithic Revolution was a fundamental change in the way people lived. The shift from hunting & gathering to agriculture led to permanent settlements, the establishment of social classes, and the eventual rise of civilizations. The Neolithic Revolution is a major turning point in human history.

## **Commercial Revolution**

As a result of the Crusades, trade increased, which also increased cultural diffusion between the Islamic world and Europe. As this trade flourished and grew, new practices in business were developed, and a fundamental change in European society took place. This time period is known as the Commercial Revolution. Despite some setbacks due to the plague, the resurgence of trade continued across Europe, with many new innovations in business.

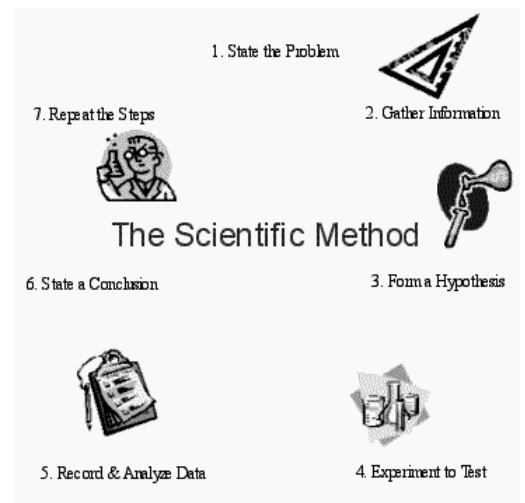
Guilds: were trade associations of craft workers and merchants. All of one craft would form together to set standards on prices and quality. Guilds dominated economic life during this period and were the main mode of production.

Capitalism: emerged with the decline of feudalism. Capitalism is based on trade and capital, which is money for investment. Higher demand for a product means higher prices and higher profits. Capitalism becomes the new economic system and resulted in the development of new business practices to handle the increase in trade.

The Commercial Revolution and the resurgence of trade across Europe completely reshaped society. These changes resulted in the decline of feudalism, and a revival of arts, literature, and science known as the Renaissance.

## **The Scientific Revolution**

The Scientific Revolution changed the way people thought about the physical world around them. The same spirit of inquiry that fueled the Renaissance, led scientists to question traditional beliefs about the workings of the universe. The most prominent scientists of this time include, Copernicus, Galileo, and Isaac Newton. The basis for the Scientific Revolution was the Scientific Method. The scientific method uses observation and experimentation to explain theories on the workings of the universe. This process removed blind adherence to tradition from science, and allowed scientists to logically find answers through the use of reason. This method of research is the basis for modern science. The Scientific Revolution had far reaching effects. Besides changing the way people thought about the universe, the use of the Scientific Method resulted in discoveries in medicine, physics, and biology.



## **Political Revolutions**

Political revolutions occur throughout history. They are usually the result of poor or oppressive government, and many times end in a worse situation than before. However, some political revolutions can be seen in a positive way, with the government becoming more responsive to their people's needs. Whatever the case, political revolutions are major turning points in a country's history.

### **American Revolution**

Causes: The 13 British colonies in North America were upset over a lack of representation in Parliament, and perceived over taxing. This resulted in a short period of protests and demonstrations, until July 4, 1776, when the American Colonists declared independence. War followed with the Americans emerging victorious.

Effects: The American Republic, based upon Enlightenment ideas, became a symbol of freedom in Europe and Latin America. The United States Constitution became a model for liberal government. The American Revolution's success inspired others to revolt against their governments.

### **French Revolution**

Causes: The French Revolution has political, social, and economic causes. Politically, France suffered under an Absolute Monarchy, and most people were denied basic rights, or a say in their government. Socially, France was divided among 3 Estates, or classes. The 3rd Estate, which constituted 98% of

the population, had the fewest rights, the least amount of land, and the heaviest tax burden. Economically, France faced a severe financial crisis due to overspending. Also, bad harvests resulted in food shortages. The Third Estate faced the greatest burden because of these problems. In 1789, King Louis XVI called the Estates General, France's weak legislative body to deal with the crisis. The meeting begins the French Revolution as the Third Estate attempts to better their situation by taking control of government.

### ***Latin American Revolutions***

**Revolutions:** The main causes of Latin American revolutions are Enlightenment ideas, the examples of the American and French Revolutions, and the basic inequalities present in their societies. By the beginning of the 19th century, many wealthy landowners in Latin America were tired of European control. These landowners enlisted the support of the lower classes in an attempt to gain their independence. The Latin American revolutions are initially successful, gaining independence from Europe, but they fail to address any of the social class problems that exist. This leads to more almost 200 years of continued problems, with revolutions, military coups, and foreign control dominating Latin American politics.

### ***Russian Revolution***

In the early 1900s, Russia was not yet an industrial nation; most of its people were poor peasants working the land. Nonetheless, a group of Russian socialists led by Vladimir **Lenin** thought Russia was ready for a socialist revolution. Their chance came with World War I. The war didn't go well for Russia. The army was poorly led, poorly fed, and poorly equipped, and eventually it fell apart. When soldiers were ordered to shoot women textile workers rioting for food, the soldiers opened fire on their own officers instead. As rioting spread in Russia, Nicholas II was forced to step down as tsar in 1917. Into this power vacuum stepped Lenin's well-organized political party, the **Bolsheviks**. Promising peace for soldiers, land for peasants, and better conditions for workers, the Bolsheviks took control of Russia in October 1917 and removed Russia from the war. The term "communism" has come to mean an extreme form of socialism that blends Marx's economic philosophy with Lenin's ideas about socialist revolution. Struggling to hold the Bolshevik (or Russian) Revolution together, Lenin executed thousands of Russians suspected of opposing communism. Among those killed were the tsar and his family. The communists banned other political parties, took over banks and industries, and set up a secret police. The Russian Empire was renamed the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, or the **Soviet Union** for short.

### ***Chinese Revolution***

**Causes:** After China freed itself from foreign control, the Kuomintang, or Nationalist Party began a war against the Communist Party led by Mao Zedong. Jiang Jieshi believed that Mao Zedong was a threat to his power. China under the Nationalists did little to improve the lives of the people, as had been promised. Mao, along with 100,000 supporters, were forced to retreat from the Kuomintang in 1934 in what became known as the Long March. Despite losing 80% of his forces, Mao continued to fight against the government, and eventually overthrew it in 1949. Mao then setup a government based upon Communist principles.

### ***Iranian Revolution***

**Causes:** In 1953, Great Britain and the United States helped Muhammad Reza Pahlavi take control of the Iranian government. Pahlavi proclaimed himself Shah, and ruled as a dictator. He instituted a policy of westernization and modernization that caused problems among Islamic fundamentalists. During the 1970s, the Ayatollah Khomeini, an Islamic religious leader, led the opposition movement against Pahlavi. In 1979, the Shah was forced into exile, and Khomeini took control of the government.

### **Industrial Revolution**

In 1750, most people in Europe lived on small farms and produced most of their needs by hand. A century later, many people lived in cities and most of their needs were produced by complex machines using steam power. The Industrial Revolution began in Great Britain and spread to Belgium, France, Germany, the United States and Japan. It was a fundamental change in the way goods were produced, and altered the way people lived. The Industrial Revolution is a major turning point in world history.

***Agrarian Revolution:*** was a change in farming methods that allowed for a greater production of food. This revolution was fueled by the use of new farming technology such as the seed drill and improved fertilizers. The results of this revolution if farming was a population explosion due to the higher availability of food. Also, the Enclosure Movement, which was the consolidation of many small farms into one large farm, left many people jobless and homeless. These people would provide the workforce of the Industrial Revolution.

**Mass Production:** The use of the Factory System allowed for mass production of textiles and other goods. This shifted people from production at home with the Put Out System, to production in large factories in cities. Mass production also allowed for lower prices on the good produced.

**Big Business:** As the Industrial Revolution grew, so did business. To meet the needs of this growth, business owners sold shares of their companies to stockholders who would share the profits and losses. The influx of capital allowed business to grow into corporations that had dealing in many different areas.

# Reformation

## Background

The Protestant Reformation was a major turning point in history. Not only did it affect religious life in Europe, but also affected social, political, and economic institutions as well. The Reformation's leaders were Martin Luther and John Calvin, both educated as priests for the Catholic Church. The Reformation was a **protest** against perceived wrong doings by the Catholic Church. The followers of Luther and Calvin became known as Protestants, because of their "protesting."

Luther's and Calvin's ideas spread across Europe quickly. This was due to unrest in the **peasant population**, inventions like the **printing press**, and the **support of rulers** wishing to free themselves from Catholic control. Religious unity in Europe was lost, which resulted in many wars including, civil wars in Germany and France, and wars between Protestant England and Catholic France and Spain. Overall, the Protestant Reformation and the Counter/Catholic Reformation changed the face of society in Europe. Before the Reformation, Europe was united behind a single faith, with a strong Church for guidance. By the end, Europe is divided religiously, and strong monarchs fill the leadership void left as a result of a weakened Catholic Church.

## Age of Exploration

### Background

The resurgence of trade following the Middle Ages in Europe resulted in a demand for goods from Asia. Trade routes were established across the Mediterranean and through the Middle East to handle this need. But, when the expansion of the Ottoman Empire caused disruption along these routes, Europeans were forced to seek alternative ways of importing these goods. This led to the exploration of **water routes** to Asia, and eventually the discovery of the **Americas** by the Europeans.



In the early 1400s, Europeans began exploring the west coast of Africa in search of an all water route to Asia. These early explorations were led by the **Portuguese**. In 1488, Bartholomeu Dias rounded the Cape of Good Hope at the southern tip of Africa. In 1498, Vasco Da Gama established an all water route to **India**. The success of these explorations led Spain to begin its own voyages. In 1492, Christopher Columbus crossed the Atlantic Ocean and discovered the Americas for Spain. These discoveries had a lasting impact on Europe, Asia, Africa and the Americas. **Columbian Exchange**

The Age of Exploration is a turning point in history because it altered the way people lived across the world. The biggest aspect of this change deals with the exchange of **people, plants, animals, ideas, and technology**. This is known as the **Columbian Exchange**, because it starts with Columbus. While many aspects of this exchange had

positive effects, such as the exchange of foods between Europe and America, there were also negative effects, such as the exchange of diseases between Europe and America.

The Age of Discovery changed the world. Access to new and better foods allowed the European population to grow, and access to the New World gave these people a place to go. New World civilizations such as the **Inca** and **Aztecs**, faced near total destruction of their cultures either through disease brought by the Europeans, or by **colonization**. Africa faced a **diaspora**, or forced movement of its people, as slavery became the dominant labor force in the Americas. The Age of Exploration was both a positive and negative experience for many **civilizations**.

# Imperialism

## Imperialism

**Imperialism** occurs when a strong nation takes over a weaker nation or region and dominates its economic, political, or cultural life. This type of foreign policy was practiced by European nations and Japan throughout the 1800s and early 1900s. In every case, a nation would experience **industrialization** prior to practicing imperialism on a foreign nation or region. This was due to the nearly insatiable demand for cheap **raw materials** and the need for markets to buy manufactured goods

## Old Imperialism

Old Imperialism occurs in the **15th** through **18th** centuries in **Africa**, **India**, the **Americas**, and parts of **Asia**. The motives were the same for most areas, the establishment of lucrative **trade routes**. Various European countries dominated these trade routes and one time or another, and a some countries, such as Great Britain and Spain, came to dominate entire countries.



## Industrial Roots

Abundant **raw materials** and vast **markets** are needed in order to maintain an industrialized economy. Raw materials such as iron and cotton can be turned into products such as steel and textiles. Finally, these products need to be sold to a market in order to realize a profit.

The forces of industrialization caused nations to begin looking outside of their borders for cheaper and more abundant raw materials. Foreign populations were also viewed as vast markets where goods produced in domestic factories could be sold.

## Other Causes

**Nationalism**, or pride in one's country, also contributed to the growth of imperialism. Citizens were proud of their country's accomplishments, which sometimes included taking over foreign areas. As European nations became competitive with one another, there was an increased pressure to practice imperialism in order to maintain a **balance of power** in Europe.

Causes of European Imperialism	
<b>Economic Motives</b>	The <b>Industrial Revolution</b> created an insatiable demand for raw materials and new markets.
<b>Nationalism</b>	European nations wanted to demonstrate their power and prestige to the world.
<b>Balance of Power</b>	European nations were forced to acquire new colonies to achieve a balance with their neighbors and competitors.
<b>White Man's Burden</b>	The Europeans' sense of superiority made them feel obligated to bring their version of <b>civilization</b> to areas they considered uncivilized.

## Results

In the short-term, imperialism was a very profitable **foreign policy** which came at the expense of the foreign regions where it was being practiced. **Cultural diffusion** also occurred, leading to an exchange of ideas between the West and the East. For example, European methods of education were adopted, leading non-Europeans to study ideas of liberty and democracy embraced during the **Enlightenment** and various political revolutions. This exchange eventually led to the demise of imperialism and **colonialism** throughout the world after **World War Two**.

## The Enlightenment

Another result of the Scientific Revolution was the **Enlightenment**. The Enlightenment changed the way people lived as political and social scholars began to question the workings of society and government, while rejecting **traditional** ideas. While the Scientific Revolution focused on the physical world, the **Enlightenment** attempted to explain the **purpose of government**, and describe the best form of it. The most influential Enlightenment thinkers were **Thomas Hobbes**, **John Locke**, **Voltaire**, **Baron de Montesquieu**, and **Jean Jacques Rousseau**.