

Eight Features of Civilization

<p>Cities: As farmers settled in fertile river valleys, they began to grow surplus or extra food. This extra food increased the population of the settlements. In time, the settlements grew into cities, such as Ur in Sumer or Babylon in Mesopotamia.</p>	<p>Organized Central Governments: As cities developed and expanded, the food supply and irrigation systems needed to be maintained. Governments, such as councils or religious leaders, began to oversee the business and existence of the cities.</p>
<p>Complex Religions: Religious leaders would conduct elaborate ceremonies to appease the gods (<i>polytheism</i>) and insure a bountiful harvest. Floods and droughts were blamed on the gods' anger so rituals were conducted in the temples.</p>	<p>Job Specialization: As civilizations became more complex, <i>artisans</i> and <i>craftsmen</i> were needed to maintain specific items and tasks. No longer could individuals do all the work. Now some concentrated on teaching, <i>scribing</i>, stone-cutting, and so forth.</p>
<p>Social Classes: As jobs became specialized so did the status and needs of certain individuals. The need for a knowledgeable and educated religious leader was more respected than an unskilled worker. Herders were needed and respected for the food, while masons were needed for building. The slave was on the lowest rung of the social ladder warriors and kings were on top.</p>	<p>Writing: Records were needed to keep accounts on trade goods and food storage. Writing was needed because the information became too great. In addition, one needed to express more complex ideas such as "belief" and "social order" where pictures and words simply would not suffice.</p>
<p>Art and Architecture: This expressed the beliefs and values of a civilization. Different styles were developed and copied by societies. Often the art was used to impress visitors and people about the beauty and power of a king or a community.</p>	<p>Public Works: The government would order these, although costly, to aid and benefit the community. Such things as a wall to protect from attack or a canal to aid in irrigation would help insure the survival of a people.</p>