

World History Comprehensive Review

Units 1–6: From the Origins of Civilization to the Modern World

UNIT 1 — The Foundations of Civilization (c. 8000 BCE – 600 BCE)

Core Concepts

- The **Neolithic Revolution** marked the transition from hunting and gathering to agriculture.
- **River Valley Civilizations** (Mesopotamia, Egypt, Indus Valley, China) established the first complex societies.
- Development of **writing, religion, political hierarchies, and trade networks** set patterns for later civilizations.

Key Terms

Neolithic • Domestication • Fertile Crescent • Cuneiform • Ziggurat • Pharaoh • Monsoon • City-State • Polytheism

Big Picture Connections

- Environment shaped early settlements and resource distribution.
- Early states centralized power to manage labor and irrigation.
- Religion and law codes (e.g., *Code of Hammurabi*) created social order.

Review Prompts

SAQ: Identify one cause and one effect of the Neolithic Revolution.

LEQ: Evaluate how geography influenced the development of early river valley civilizations.

Group Review Activity

“**Archaeologist for a Day**” – Groups analyze artifact images (pottery, tablets, tools) and infer social structure, religion, or technology.

UNIT 2 — Classical Civilizations (c. 600 BCE – 600 CE)

Core Concepts

- Classical empires (Persian, Greek, Roman, Maurya, Gupta, Qin, Han) expanded through conquest and administration.
- Major belief systems (Buddhism, Hinduism, Confucianism, Christianity) unified populations.
- Long-distance trade grew along the **Silk Roads, Indian Ocean, and Mediterranean.**

Key Terms

Empire • Bureaucracy • Polis • Republic • Silk Roads • Mandate of Heaven • Dharma • Karma • Pax Romana

Big Picture Connections

- Empires balanced expansion with governance and infrastructure.
- Religion and philosophy created moral frameworks for diverse populations.
- Interregional exchange spread ideas, technologies, and disease.

Review Prompts

SAQ: Explain one similarity between classical empires in East Asia and the Mediterranean.

LEQ: Evaluate the ways belief systems provided unity within classical civilizations.

Group Review Activity

“**Classical Congress**” – Groups represent empires debating what makes a state powerful: military, trade, or culture.

UNIT 3 — The Postclassical Era (c. 600 – 1450 CE)

Core Concepts

- Expanding **trade networks** (Silk Roads, Trans-Saharan, Indian Ocean) connected Afro-Eurasia.
- **Islamic Caliphates, Byzantine Empire, Mongol Empire, and Tang/Song China** shaped global exchange.
- Technological diffusion (paper, gunpowder, compass) and urban growth marked the period.
- Rise of **feudalism** in Europe and Japan reflected regional diversity.

Key Terms

Caliphate • Caravanserai • Crusades • Feudalism • Mongols • Pax Mongolica • Ibn Battuta • Dar al-Islam

Big Picture Connections

- Trade increased wealth and cultural diffusion but also transmitted disease (Black Death).
- Mongol conquests created temporary unification across Eurasia.
- Regional networks supported new centers of power (Mali, Delhi Sultanate).

Review Prompts

DBQ: Evaluate the impact of trade networks on cultural diffusion in Afro-Eurasia between 600 and 1450.

LEQ: Compare the roles of religion in uniting societies in the Postclassical world.

Group Review Activity

“Silk Road Exchange Simulation” – Groups act as merchants trading goods, technologies, and ideas, keeping trade journals to record gains and losses.

UNIT 4 — The Early Modern Era (c. 1450 – 1750 CE)

Core Concepts

- **Maritime exploration** connected the world’s hemispheres for the first time.
- **Columbian Exchange** transformed diets, populations, and environments.
- **Gunpowder Empires** (Ottoman, Safavid, Mughal) dominated Eurasia.
- **Reformation, Renaissance, and Scientific Revolution** reshaped thought and culture.
- **Mercantilism** guided early capitalist economies and imperial rivalries.

Key Terms

Columbian Exchange • Mercantilism • Absolutism • Humanism • Protestant Reformation • Scientific Method • Empire

Big Picture Connections

- Global empires expanded through technology and conquest.
- Exchange accelerated integration but also slavery and disease.
- New ideas challenged authority and promoted inquiry.

Review Prompts

SAQ: Explain one economic and one cultural effect of the Columbian Exchange.

LEQ: Evaluate the extent to which the Early Modern Era created a truly global economy.

Group Review Activity

“Global Trade Marketplace” – Teams simulate mercantilist trade; each represents a European empire balancing wealth, colonies, and alliances.

UNIT 5 — The Age of Revolutions and Industrialization (c. 1750 – 1900 CE)

Core Concepts

- **Enlightenment** philosophies inspired democratic revolutions in America, France, Haiti, and Latin America.
- **Industrialization** revolutionized production, urban life, and global trade.
- New ideologies (liberalism, socialism, nationalism) reshaped political and social systems.
- Industrial powers extended influence through **imperialism**.

Key Terms

Natural Rights • Enlightenment • Nationalism • Socialism • Urbanization • Industrial Revolution • Imperialism

Big Picture Connections

- Enlightenment ideals expanded human rights but excluded many groups.
- Industrial capitalism increased inequality and reform movements.
- Imperialism justified domination through “progress” and race-based ideologies.

Review Prompts

DBQ: Evaluate the extent to which the Industrial Revolution changed social and economic life between 1750 and 1900.

LEQ: Compare causes and outcomes of two political revolutions.

Group Review Activity

“Revolution Roundtable” – Groups represent revolutionary movements (American, French, Haitian, Latin American) and debate whether their goals were achieved.

UNIT 6 — The Modern World and Global Transformations (c. 1900 – Present)

Core Concepts

- The 20th century brought **global conflicts, ideological struggles, and rapid technological change.**
- **World Wars I & II** reshaped borders and global power.
- The **Cold War** divided the world into rival blocs.
- **Decolonization** led to new nations and independence movements.
- **Globalization** linked economies and cultures through technology, trade, and communication.

Key Terms

Total War • Nationalism • Genocide • Decolonization • Cold War • Globalization • Technology • Human Rights

Big Picture Connections

- Global conflict and cooperation defined the modern era.
- The rise of supranational organizations (UN, EU, WTO) reflected interdependence.
- Environmental challenges and inequality became defining global issues.

Review Prompts

SAQ: Identify one political and one technological change in the 20th century that increased global interdependence.

LEQ: Evaluate the extent to which decolonization reshaped global power structures after 1945.

Group Review Activity

“Global Summit Simulation” – Students represent world leaders debating modern challenges (climate change, inequality, human rights).

Cumulative Review Tools

1. Chronological Challenge

Arrange the following in order and describe why each marks a turning point:

- Neolithic Revolution
 - Fall of Rome
 - Mongol Empire
 - Columbian Exchange
 - Industrial Revolution
 - World Wars
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2. Thematic Review by SPICE-T

Theme	Unit 1–2	Unit 3–4	Unit 5–6
Social	Social hierarchy in early civilizations	Feudalism and slavery	Feminist & labor movements
Political	Divine kingship	Gunpowder empires	Revolutions & nationalism
Interaction	River valley agriculture	Columbian Exchange	World Wars & climate change
Cultural	Polytheism, philosophy	Reformation, Enlightenment	Globalization & secularism
Economic	Bronze trade	Mercantilism	Capitalism & industrialization
Technological	Irrigation	Gunpowder, printing	Digital revolution

3. Writing Practice

- **SAQ:** Identify and explain one continuity and one change in global trade between 1450 and 1900.
 - **DBQ:** Using the documents, analyze how industrialization affected global power between 1750 and 1900.
 - **LEQ:** Evaluate the extent to which global conflicts in the 20th century represented continuity with earlier imperial rivalries.
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4. Visual and Interactive Review

- **Timeline Race:** Teams build a visual timeline of major world events from 8000 BCE–Present.
- **Quote Match:** Match thinkers (Confucius, Locke, Marx, Gandhi) to their ideas.
- **Map Challenge:** Identify trade networks, empires, and key cities for each unit.

- **Gallery Walk:** Create posters for major turning points — one per unit.
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Final Reflection Essay

Prompt:

Across six major periods of world history (Foundations to the Modern World), human societies have evolved through innovation, conflict, and exchange. Which single period saw the greatest transformation in how people live, govern, and connect globally? Support your claim with evidence from at least three units.