

The meaning of "the winners writes history": defining the concept of "civilized" ...

[History](#)



To be “ Civilized”

The definition of a civilization has been rewritten by human beings for as long as the idea of a “ civilized” society existed. Some consider a definite definition of civilization to be offensive to societies that do not check off one of the boxes on the civilization requirements, and yet others argue that there is no room to peer through the gray area of the meaning of a “ civilization”. However, by observing the typical characteristics of ancient people, readers can conclude that all civilizations had three things in common; an agricultural surplus, advanced architecture, and writing.

An agricultural surplus allowed communities to grow and gave birth to cities. With extra food, there was a population boom, and people were able to accommodate larger groups. Agriculture alone made humans settle down and form communities living in permanent housing, while a surplus of food gave the chance to make the communities grow. Agriculture gave humans a stable source of food, which led to artisans being developed, as they did not have to spend all their time hunting and gathering and instead worked on specialized tasks such as pottery, metallurgy, and textile making. An agricultural surplus was a must in civilizations in ancient times, as it laid down the basic foundation of comfort for human beings.

Civilizations were advanced in technology that was much needed for permanent dwellings. For example, the Mohenjo-Daro figured out how to use draining systems to survive the heavy rainfall and floods of the Indus River. Without the draining systems, they would have been flooded regularly and not been able to live in the Indus River Valley. Other civilizations, such as

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those existing in Egypt, created irrigation systems to water their crops, settling down near rivers so that they could make the most of the water and feed crops with it, such as the Nile River. And still others, like the Harappa, were able to invent toilet and sewer systems, which showed how far in technology they were above other cities or city-states. Each of the civilizations dealt with nature and was able to overcome, proving that they had the right to be considered "civilized" in their time.

Ancient civilizations developed systems of writing. The Shang in China, as an example, would write on oracle bones, bones used to "tell the future".

Mesopotamian writings, such as the Epic of Gilgamesh, survived through huge libraries in Babylonian kingdoms. The Maya created a calendar and a writing system, with the calendar around 17 seconds off of the modern day calendar. With the use of writing came record-keeping, allowing people existing in current time to examine the past of the ancient civilizations.

With an agricultural surplus, advanced architecture, and system of writing, it's clear to see why the civilizations of ancient times are considered civilizations. They were far ahead in terms of moving past hunting and gathering ages, and were able to make the use of their time to create useful inventions and to use their heads to organize their city structures. Ancient civilizations were able to continually move to keep in time, eventually allowing human beings to reach the level that they are today.