

World History & Civilization: Comprehensive Cheat Sheet

1. Ancient Civilizations

Mesopotamia (c. 3500–500 BCE)

- **Cradle of Civilization:** Tigris and Euphrates rivers (Fertile Crescent).
- **Key Innovations:** Cuneiform writing, wheel, plow, Epic of Gilgamesh.
- **Empires:** Sumer, Akkad, Babylon (Code of Hammurabi: *"an eye for an eye"*), Assyria.

Ancient Egypt (c. 3100–30 BCE)

- **Geography:** Nile River valley; annual predictable flooding.
- **Society:** Pharaohs viewed as living gods; complex polytheism and mummification.
- **Achievements:** Hieroglyphics, pyramids at Giza, advanced medicine.

Indus Valley Civilization (c. 3300–1300 BCE)

- **Urban Planning:** Grid systems, advanced drainage, Harappa and Mohenjo-Daro.
- **Economy:** Extensive trade networks with Mesopotamia.

2. Classical Era (500 BCE – 500 CE)

Classical Greece (c. 800–323 BCE)

- **Polis:** City-states like Athens (democracy, philosophy) and Sparta (military oligarchy).
- **Conflicts:** Greco-Persian Wars, Peloponnesian War.

- **Legacy:** Socrates, Plato, Aristotle, Alexander the Great's Hellenistic spread.

Ancient Rome (753 BCE – 476 CE)

- **Phases:** Roman Kingdom → Roman Republic (Senate, Twelve Tables) → Roman Empire.
- **Pax Romana:** 200 years of relative peace under Augustus and successors.
- **Decline:** Economic trouble, overexpansion, barbarian invasions (fall of West in 476 CE).

3. Post-Classical Era (500 – 1500 CE)

The Middle Ages in Europe

- **Feudalism:** Decentralized socio-political structure based on land-for-loyalty (King → Lord → Vassal → Serf).
- **The Church:** Dominant cultural and political unifying force; Crusades (1095–1291).
- **Crisis:** Black Death (1347–1351) decimated one-third of Europe's population.

The Islamic Golden Age (8th–14th Century)

- **Centers of Learning:** House of Wisdom in Baghdad.
- **Contributions:** Algebra (Al-Khwarizmi), optics, medicine (Ibn Sina), preservation of classical texts.

4. Early Modern Era (1500 – 1800 CE)

The Renaissance & Scientific Revolution

- **Renaissance:** Rebirth of classical art and humanism in Italy (Da Vinci, Michelangelo).

- **Printing Press:** Gutenberg (c. 1440), democratized knowledge.

- **Scientific Revolution:** Heliocentrism (Copernicus, Galileo), Newton's laws of motion.

Age of Discovery & Imperialism

- **Explorers:** Columbus (1492), Vasco da Gama, Magellan.
- **Columbian Exchange:** Global transfer of plants, animals, culture, and diseases between Old and New Worlds.

5. The Modern Era (1800 – Present)

Industrial Revolutions

- **First (c. 1760–1840):** Steam power, textiles, iron, mechanization in Britain.
- **Second (c. 1870–1914):** Steel, electricity, assembly lines, petroleum.

Global Conflicts of the 20th Century

- **World War I (1914–1918):** Allied vs. Central Powers; trench warfare, Treaty of Versailles.
- **World War II (1939–1945):** Allied vs. Axis; deadliest conflict in human history; onset of Nuclear Age.
- **Cold War (1947–1991):** Geopolitical tension between USA (Capitalism) and USSR (Communism); proxy wars and Space Race.