

## Brief History of Human Kind

### Paleolithic Hunter-Gatherer Tribes

For most of the time that humans have lived on earth, they lived in small, nomadic groups that moved from place to place, hunting animals and gathering plants that were already growing. They didn't really build buildings that would last a long time. They did not farm although they might keep track of places where they found a lot of food available or try to grow plants in the hope that they might return to the same place in the future. People who live this way are called hunter-gatherers. Before 10000 BC, everyone was a hunter-gatherer; no one knew of any different way to live. Today, only small groups of people in sparsely populated areas continue to live as hunter-gatherers.

### Neolithic Agricultural Revolution

About 12,000 years ago, these nomads found fertile river valleys where they could be successful farmers. They figured out that they could artificially water plants using the rivers (irrigation) to grow many more plants than they could find by gathering. They also figured out that if they could train animals to do some of the work, farming would be easier and they would also be able to use the animals for their milk, eggs, and meat. Training animals to work for humans is called domestication. They settled down to live in one place and began growing extra, or surplus, food. Extra food meant some people did not have to spend their time farming to feed themselves, so they began doing other jobs (this is called a division of labor or specialization). Exchanging food and other goods worked best when everyone was in the same place, so towns and cities started. Over time, these cities became civilizations. Civilizations are highly organized, city-based societies with advanced knowledge. This change in lifestyle is called the Agricultural Revolution. Agriculture is the big word for farming.

### Cultural Hearths

Several of these permanent settlements became cultural hearths, or early civilizations whose ideas and practices spread to surrounding areas. The Nile Valley, Mesopotamia, Indus Valley, Yellow River Valley, and Middle America were all cultural hearths. They all had certain things in common that made it easier for civilization to develop: warm climate, fertile land, located near a major river or water source. They were also very successful in growing surplus crops. Because they had extra food, they began trading with other regions that needed the extra food or specialized workers. Along with the trade of goods and people, ideas were traded. The spread of a culture is called cultural diffusion. It is because of trade that people developed written languages and began writing things down.

### The Next Revolution: Industrialization

Although a lot had changed from the time of the cultural hearths to the 1700s, life stayed the same for most people: they were farmers and their lives revolved around agriculture. After the 1700s, this began to change and change quickly. People began studying the world in a scientific way. The Scientific Revolution led to many inventions. In several countries (the United States, Great Britain, some European countries) people began using power-driven machines and factories to make a lot of the same products quickly and cheaply (this is called manufacturing). People in places that started to use manufacturing learned how to use machines for most of the stuff they needed. A place that uses mostly manufacturing to make stuff has industrialized. Before industrialization, most things were made one at a time and by hand. This is difficult and expensive; so few people had a lot of material objects.

## The Next Next Revolution

The next revolution occurred at the end of the 1900s. It is called the Information Revolution. Before the late 1900s, it was hard to find information easily. Now, people often have computers connected to the Internet in their homes and they can easily get information or communicate over long distances. Even more, easy access to computers and the internet has changed how people live their daily lives.

## Life Today

The way people live their lives is greatly influenced by where they live. The world can be divided into two different kinds of countries: developED and developING. DevelopED, or industrialized, countries have a lot of industries, or businesses that makes things or offers services for sale. There are a large number of different types of jobs. Only a small fraction of people are farmers in developED countries. The type of farming they do is called commercial farming, or farming in which food is grown to sell, not eat. Usually large machines and huge farms are used in commercial agriculture. They also use chemicals called pesticides and fertilizers to kill bugs and make things grow. DevelopED countries use a lot of technology to improve their lives and economies. Most people in an industrialized country have enough food, clothes, and housing.

Other countries have only a few industries. These countries are called developING countries. Most of the people in developING countries are subsistence farmers, or farmers who only grow enough food to eat rather than sell. Most of the time, humans using animals and small farm tools do this farming. Sometimes they grow extra food and sell it but they usually only make enough to live. It is sometimes difficult for the governments of developING countries to make sure that everyone has food, clothes, and shelter.

The United States is highly industrialized and developED.