

become important in world trade and industrialization include the gold and diamonds found in Africa and the tin and copper found in South America.

Agricultural resources Important world agricultural resources include the wheat grown in Europe, Asia, and North and South America; the rice grown in Asia; and the cotton grown in North America, Africa, and Asia. Each region also raises farm animals, such as cattle, sheep, pigs, and chickens. Like mineral resources, agricultural products are traded in world markets.

In Review

The following questions refer to Section I: How Geography Influences Culture.

- Key terms:** Define each of the following:

nomad	plain	climate
population density	plateau	tundra
- Give the characteristics of each of the following climate zones: (a) tropical, (b) temperate, and (c) subarctic.
- Give three examples of how the physical geography of an area either aids or hinders the movement of people.
- Critical thinking:** "In the modern world, geography no longer presents a barrier to travel and communication." Do you agree or disagree with this statement? Explain your answer.

II. Cultural Traditions and Cultural Diffusion

The term *culture* refers to a group of people's whole way of life. It includes that group's religion, values, language, customs, art, music, literature, technology, economic system, and political system. The scientific study of human cultures—both past and present—is called *anthropology*. Those who study anthropology are called *anthropologists*.

A. STUDYING CULTURES OF THE PAST

What evidence do scholars look at when studying various cultures? Books, newspapers, and other written records help them to draw conclusions about *historic cultures* (those with a written record). But how can scholars learn about people of the distant past who had not yet invented a system of writing? *Prehistoric cultures* are those cultures

of the past whose people did not leave any written record. Fortunately, however, prehistoric peoples left behind *artifacts* (objects) of their culture that can be examined and interpreted. The social science that is most directly concerned with such evidence of past cultures is called *archeology*, a branch of anthropology.

Sometimes *archeologists*, those who study ancient artifacts, can directly view stone monuments or other structures that are still standing. More often, they must dig in the ground to find the remains of buildings, burial sites, and campsites. Each artifact that they find can become a clue to finding the way that a prehistoric people lived.

Archeologists can determine the approximate age of bones and other artifacts in a burial site by a process called *radiocarbon dating*. Their instruments measure the amount of radioactive carbon that is present in an object. Since radioactive carbon slowly decays at a constant rate, the amount of it that remains in an artifact tells archeologists approximately how old it is.

Another important clue to the prehistoric past is provided by *oral traditions*. In some societies that did not develop writing systems,



ARTIFACTS: The objects above were created by a prehistoric people in Europe more than 10,000 years ago. Can you identify the uses for any of these artifacts?

knowledge of the past has been transmitted by word of mouth. Thus, the stories, folktales, songs, and poems of a people are often of ancient origin and provide significant clues to the way their early ancestors lived. In many societies, traditional folktales and songs continue to have importance because they help maintain cultural identity.

Prehistoric societies From their study of artifacts and oral traditions, archeologists believe that they understand how prehistoric societies were organized. These societies consisted of small groups of people who migrated from one campsite to the next in search of food. The earliest human groups had an economy based on fishing, hunting of wild animals, and gathering of wild fruits, nuts, and grains. Their tools (including knives, needles, arrows, spears, and harpoons) were made of stone, wood, and bone. Tools of metal—copper, bronze, and iron—were the artifacts of more advanced societies of later ages.

Although the cultures of prehistoric peoples are important, this book will concentrate on describing later cultures—those that have engaged in agriculture, built cities, fashioned metal tools, and developed a written language.

B. ELEMENTS OF CULTURE

While all cultures share parts of the same global environment, they differ in how they relate to that environment.

Religion and values Many different religions have come about through the ages. The dominant religion of a people often influences their values. For example, a basic belief of Hinduism, the major religion of India, is *reincarnation*. This is the belief that one's soul does not die when the body dies. Instead, the soul reappears after death in another living form, such as in another person or in an animal. Because of this belief, Hinduism teaches respect for all forms of human and animal life. Consequently, many Hindus do not eat meat.

Language In today's world, some 3,000 languages are spoken. But only 19 of these languages, including English and Spanish, are considered "major" (spoken by at least 50 million people). Some languages originated very early in a culture's history. Some were imposed on a culture through military conquest. Spanish, for example, became the dominant language in Central and South America after Spain had conquered and colonized much of that region in the 1500s. Other languages were adopted from another culture in more peaceful circumstances, such as when a group migrates and settles near people of a different culture.

Social organization In all cultures of the past and present, the basic unit of social organization has been the family. The most common family unit of past societies was the *extended family*. In such a family,

several generations—grandparents, parents, aunts, uncles, and children—lived together in the same household. Villages in traditional societies often consisted of family members who were descended from the same ancestral couple. Such a social unit is called a *clan*. Extended families and clans still exist. But today, especially in urban areas, nuclear and single-parent families are more common. In a *nuclear family*, two parents and their children live in the same household. In a single-parent family, just one parent and her or his children live together.

Traditionally, the teaching of a culture's values was chiefly the responsibility of the adult members of the family. Children tended to adopt the cultural values of their parents and to marry according to their elders' wishes. Today, families in modern cultures still teach values. But their influence on children is shared with schools, places of worship, governments, and the *media* (television, radio, recorded music, newspapers, books, and magazines).

Economic systems An *economic system* is the way that a society chooses to produce and distribute its goods and services. The three major systems are generally described as traditional, market, and command. A fourth system, known as a mixed economy, reflects aspects of both the market and command economies.

A *traditional economy* is one in which old ways of producing goods are continued without change for generations. In traditional economies, children tend to follow the occupational roles of their parents. In parts of Africa, Latin America, and Asia, for example, people in villages still plant and harvest food on their own land.

A *market economy* is one in which many businesses compete to sell their goods and services to potential buyers. Consumers are free to decide which of the competing goods and services offered for sale they will buy and which they will reject. Consumers thus have the last word in determining what goods and services will be produced. A leading example of a market economy is the one we have in the United States.

The United States and other countries with a market economy have *free enterprise*. That is, private businesses compete freely with one another in their quest for profits. Governments regulate this competition to protect consumers. Free enterprise is one of the basic principles of *capitalism*, another term for a market economy.

A *command economy* is one in which key economic decisions are made by the government, and all major industries are under government control. The leading example of such a system was the economy of the Soviet Union. When the Communist party governed this nation, all means of production were owned and operated by the Soviet government, including factories, farms, mines, railroads, and retail shops.

Another term for a command economy is *socialism*, an economic system in which the means of production (factories, farms) are



SHOPPING IN TOKYO: Japan is a leading example of a capitalist, or free enterprise, system. In such a system, how do both buyers and sellers determine what goods shall be produced?

publicly owned. A socialist government may make decisions on what to produce, whom to hire, and what prices and wages should be. An extreme form of socialism is *communism*, which combines the socialist economic system with a dictatorship. According to Communist theory, the dictatorship (and all other forms of government) will eventually disappear. In fact, however, no Communist society has ever achieved such a stage of development.

In some forms of socialism, certain industries may be owned privately while others are owned and operated by the government. Examples of such economies include India and Sweden. (The latter two nations have also been called *welfare states* because the government of each provides citizens with extensive social services, such as health care.)

Political systems The way in which people are governed is called a *political system*. In the 16th century, for example, some monarchs in Europe and Asia governed with absolute power. They believed that all political power rested in their hands. They did not want to share this power with anyone else (such as with religious leaders or nobles). We call this type of political system an *absolute monarchy*. Saudi Arabia provides a present-day example of this political system, which is not very common today.

In the 18th century, certain European philosophers challenged the idea of absolute rule. They insisted that laws had to have the consent of elected representatives of the people. Another of their ideas was that governments must protect the basic rights, or liberties, of all people. These ideas became the basis for *democracy*, the system of government upon which the U.S. government is based. Today, democracy is popular in many regions of the world.

Still another form of political system is the dictatorship. In a *dictatorship*, the ruler (dictator, emperor) has total control over his or her nation's political system. All government officials take orders from the dictator. The dictatorship is similar to the absolute monarchy except for the fact that a dictator usually does not inherit power from a parent. Instead, the dictator usually comes to office by seizing power. Fidel Castro of Cuba provides an example of a modern-day dictator.

Some dictators (and some absolute monarchs) have ruled *totalitarian* governments. The word "totalitarian" comes from the word "total." Under a totalitarian government, the state aims for total control over all activities of the people—their religions, social organizations, art—even over what they read, write, and say. Such regimes demand total loyalty of their subjects. Nazi Germany under Adolf Hitler, the Soviet Union under Joseph Stalin, and China under Mao Zedong all had totalitarian governments.

C. CULTURAL DIFFUSION

Once again, we may ask why and how cultures change over time. Historic changes would probably occur more slowly, if at all, if it were not for one simple fact: People move about from one place to another. They travel; they trade; and they migrate. As they do so, they come into contact with cultures different from their own. Contact with ideas that are different tends to produce a strong reaction. It challenges traditional ways of doing things. People then must decide whether to accept or reject the unfamiliar religions, customs, and technologies that they encounter in a foreign culture. If they accept them, then *cultural diffusion* takes place. This is the process by which ideas and practices from one area spread to another.

History provides many examples of cultural diffusion. One is the spread of the religion Buddhism from India to other parts of Asia. Another example is the spread of Islam from the Arabian Peninsula throughout the rest of the Middle East and elsewhere.

Today, cultural diffusion is less dependent upon the movement of peoples. Now ideas and ways of doing things can easily travel via television, the mails, and computer networks and through the export of films and recorded music. Young people in Russia, for example, now dance to rock music that originated in the United States and Western Europe.

D. ETHNOCENTRISM

Contact between cultures can have a negative effect if, as often happens, one culture rejects another. Dislike, and even hatred, can develop, for example, as one people migrates into an area that has long been settled by another. Under such circumstances, it is common for a feeling of *ethnocentrism* to develop. This is the belief that one's own culture is superior to all other cultures. Throughout history, ethnocentrism has been a powerful force, one that underlies the outbreak of many wars.

History has provided many examples of the destructive effects of ethnic pride. In ancient times, both the Romans in Europe and the Chinese in Asia viewed foreigners as barbarians. Chinese rulers tried to limit the contact of their people with foreigners. In modern times, the German dictator Adolf Hitler argued that the Germans belonged to a superior race whose duty was to destroy "lesser races." Acting on this ethnocentric idea, Hitler first ordered the persecution of Jews, Gypsies, Slavs, and other groups. Then during World War II (1939–1945), he launched a campaign to round up and kill all Jews and many others whom he considered to be of "inferior races."

ETHNOCENTRISM: In the 1930s, Adolf Hitler (standing in the car) came to power in Germany by arousing Germans' feelings of racial or national pride. What examples of ethnocentrism do we find in the 1990s?



Today, ethnocentrism is still strong. In Eastern Europe in the 1990s, Serbs, Croats, and Muslims fought bitterly over control of land in the tiny state of Bosnia. Serbs adopted a policy of *ethnic cleansing*, forcing thousands of Muslims to leave their homes and towns. (This subject is discussed further in Chapter 8.)

In Review

The following questions refer to Section II: Cultural Traditions and Cultural Diffusion.

1. **Key terms:** Define each of the following:

culture	archeologist	cultural diffusion
artifact	totalitarian	ethnocentrism

2. Give the characteristics of each of the following economic systems: (a) traditional economy, (b) market economy, and (c) command economy.
3. State how a democratic form of government differs from both (a) an absolute monarchy and (b) a totalitarian system.
4. **Critical thinking:** "In our times, cultural diffusion is occurring at a faster rate than ever before." Do you agree with this statement? What evidence could you give to either support or refute the statement?