**“Four Early Civilizations”**

**Chapter 2-4**

1. Geography
   1. Mesopotamia
      1. First civilization formed between the Tigris and Euphrates rivers
      2. Fertile Crescent had easily domesticated plants and animals
      3. Location was ideal for **cultural diffusion**- spreading of ideas, beliefs, customs, languages, skills, and technology
   2. Egypt
      1. Formed around the Nile river **delta**- mouth of river
      2. Natural defenses of desert, Mediterranean Sea, and unnavigable river
   3. China
      1. Formed on east coast of China around the Yangzi and Yellow (Huang He) rivers
      2. Long distance from other civilizations because of mountains and desert to the West
   4. India
      1. Formed around the Indus River in the Indian subcontinent
      2. **Monsoons-** seasonal winds and rain
2. Organization
   1. **Cities**
      1. larger than villages with diverse populations and formal organization
      2. centers of trade
      3. **City-state**- a political unit based on a city government and the land around that it controlled
   2. **Government**
      1. Ruled by kings who formed **dynasties**- rulers come from one family
      2. Usually close connection b/w religion and government:
         1. **theocracy**- rule by religious figures
         2. Egypt was ruled by **pharaohs**- kings who were believed to be descended from the gods
      3. Complex governments developed **bureaucracies**- structured, organized gov’t run by trained officials
3. Society
   1. **Social Classes**
      1. Kings and priests
      2. Large landowners and wealthy merchants
      3. **Artisans** (skilled craftspeople), farmers, laborers
      4. Slaves
      * Ex: Indians developed a **caste system** with little social mobility
   2. **Religion and Philosophy**
      1. Most early religions were **polytheistic**- worship of many gods
      2. First formalized religion was Hinduism (India)
      3. Hebrews (in Mesopotamia) developed monotheistic religion- **Judaism**
4. Expression
   1. **Writing**
      1. Earliest writing systems were cuneiform (Sumer) and hieroglyphics (Egypt)
      2. **Hammurabi’s Code**- first written legal code (Babylon)
      3. **Phoenicians**- developed the first alphabet
   2. **Art and Architecture** 
      1. At the heart of each Sumerian city was a **ziggurat**- a pyramid-shaped temple
      2. Egyptians built **pyramids**- tombs for pharaohs