

Time Traveler's Expedition: Uncovering Ancient Societies

Your mission, should you choose to accept it, is to journey back in time and decode the secrets of some of the world's most fascinating ancient societies!

Materials for Your Expedition:

- Computer with internet access
- Your trusty Explorer's Notebook (or digital document)
- Pens/pencils (or keyboard)
- Access to the 'Digital Dig Site' links provided below
- Optional: Large paper/poster board and markers for creating a comparative 'Ancient Atlas' or 'Civilization Timeline'

Your Grand Mission Objectives (What You'll Achieve):

By the end of this expedition, you'll be able to:

- Shine a spotlight on the complex structures of early Australian Indigenous societies.
- Compare the ingenious ways different ancient civilizations organized themselves.
- Understand how their environment shaped their lives and structures.
- Recognize the echoes of these ancient worlds in our lives today.
- Become a pro at using digital tools for historical detective work!

Warm-up: The Blueprint Challenge (5-10 minutes)

Imagine you and a small group are the first people to settle a newly discovered, uninhabited island. What are the first three 'rules' or 'structures' you'd create to help your small society function? Why are these important? Jot down your thoughts in your Explorer's Notebook.

Phase 1: What Makes a Society?

Every society, past or present, has key features and structures. These can include:

- **Governance:** Who makes the rules and how? (Kings, councils, elders?)
- **Social Hierarchy:** How are people grouped? (Nobles, commoners, priests, workers?)
- **Belief Systems:** What did they believe about the world, gods, or spirits? How did this influence daily life and structures (like temples)?
- **Economy:** How did they get what they needed? (Farming, trade, tribute?)
- **Technology & Innovations:** What tools, buildings, or ideas did they create?
- **Connection to Land/Environment:** How did they view and interact with their natural surroundings?

Keep these elements in mind as you explore each civilization!

Phase 2: Spotlight on Resilience - Early Australian Indigenous Societies

As per your curriculum focus (HI5-SPE-01: Analyses the key features and structures of past societies), we begin with the First Peoples of Australia. Indigenous Australians have the oldest continuous cultures on Earth, with incredibly complex social structures, governance systems,

profound spiritual beliefs, and a deep, sustainable connection to Country that predates all other civilizations we'll study.

Key Understanding: Indigenous Australian societies were diverse, with hundreds of distinct language groups and cultural practices. Their structures were often based on kinship, intricate law/lore systems, and custodial responsibilities for specific territories. These were vastly different from European structures encountered at invasion/colonization.

Your Digital Dig Sites for Early Australian Indigenous Societies:

1. **AIATSIS Explore Map:** <https://aiatsis.gov.au/explore/map-indigenous-australia> (Explore the diversity of Indigenous Australia through this interactive map.)
2. **Creative Spirits - Social Structure:**
<https://www.creativespirits.info/aboriginalculture/social-structure> (Read about kinship, moieties, and totems.)
3. **National Museum of Australia - Indigenous Histories:**
<https://www.nma.gov.au/defining-moments/indigenous-histories> (Explore articles on history and culture.)

Explorer's Field Notes (Answer in your notebook):

- Describe three key aspects of social organization in traditional Aboriginal societies (e.g., kinship, moieties, totems, elder roles).
- How was knowledge typically passed down through generations?
- What does 'Connection to Country' mean for Indigenous Australians, and how did it shape their societal structures and practices?
- How were decisions made and rules upheld within these societies?

Phase 3: World Tour of Ancient Civilizations

Now, let's expand our journey to other monumental ancient societies!

1. Ancient Egypt: Land of Pharaohs and Pyramids

Quick Facts: Known for pyramids, pharaohs (god-kings), hieroglyphs, and life along the Nile. A hierarchical society with nobles, priests, and commoners.

Digital Dig Site:

- **Google Arts & Culture - Pyramids of Giza:**
<https://artsandculture.google.com/project/pyramids-of-giza> (Take a virtual tour!)
- **British Museum - Ancient Egypt:**
<https://www.britishmuseum.org/collection/galleries/ancient-egypt> (Explore artifacts and learn about daily life, religion, and rulers.)

Explorer's Field Notes:

- What was the role of the Pharaoh? How did this belief shape Egyptian society and its structures (like pyramids)?
- Describe two other key features of Egyptian society (e.g., their writing system, religious beliefs, jobs).

2. The Roman Empire: Roads, Republics, and Rule

Quick Facts: Vast empire famed for its military, engineering (roads, aqueducts), and law. Society divided into patricians and plebeians, with a complex political system (Republic then Empire).

Digital Dig Site:

- **Google Arts & Culture - Rome Reborn:**
<https://artsandculture.google.com/project/rome-reborn> (Explore a 3D model of ancient Rome.)
- **PBS Empires - Romans (Interactives):**
<https://www.pbs.org/empires/romans/special/index.html> (Explore interactive features, like 'Emperor of Rome' or 'Roman Life'.)

Explorer's Field Notes:

- How was Roman society structured (consider patricians, plebeians, and citizenship)?
- What were two key features of Roman governance or engineering that helped them manage such a large empire?

3. The Inca Civilization: Masters of the Andes (Machu Picchu)

Quick Facts: Renowned for mountain architecture (Machu Picchu), terraced farming, and a vast road system. Highly organized society with an emperor (Sapa Inca) and collective labor (mit'a).

Digital Dig Site:

- **Google Arts & Culture - Discover Machu Picchu:**
<https://artsandculture.google.com/story/discover-machu-picchu-the-inca-citadel-in-the-andes-romper%C3%BA/OAWbOIm9bj9klg?hl=en> (Take a breathtaking virtual tour.)
- **National Geographic - Machu Picchu:**
<https://www.nationalgeographic.com/history/article/machu-picchu> (Read about its history and purpose.)

Explorer's Field Notes:

- How did the Inca organize their society to thrive in the challenging Andean environment? (Think about mit'a, food storage, road system.)
- What does Machu Picchu tell us about Inca engineering skills and societal organization?

4. Ancient China: Dynasties and Discoveries (Shang & Zhou)

Quick Facts: Early dynasties like Shang and Zhou saw the development of writing, bronze work, and foundational philosophies. The concept of the 'Mandate of Heaven' legitimized rule.

Digital Dig Site:

- **DK Find Out! - Ancient China:** <https://www.dkfindout.com/us/history/ancient-china/> (Get an overview of key aspects of society, inventions, and dynasties.)
- **British Museum - China (filter by Shang/Zhou if possible, or explore early artifacts):**
<https://www.britishmuseum.org/collection/galleries/china> (Look for early bronzes or oracle bones.)

Explorer's Field Notes:

- What was the 'Mandate of Heaven,' and how did it influence Chinese dynasties and social structure?
- Describe two significant developments or features of the Shang or Zhou dynasties.

5. The Maya Civilization: Glyphs, Gods, and City-States

Quick Facts: Known for sophisticated writing (glyphs), mathematics, astronomy, and impressive city-states with pyramids. Society included nobles, priests, and peasants, ruled by kings often

claiming divine right.

Digital Dig Site:

- **Google Arts & Culture - Exploring the Maya World:** <https://artsandculture.google.com/project/exploring-the-maya-world> (Dive into Maya art, architecture, and writing.)
- **Maya Adventure (Science Museum of Minnesota):** <https://www.smm.org/mayan> (Explore interactive sections about the calendar, math, or a day in the life.)

Explorer's Field Notes:

- How were Maya city-states typically structured and governed?
- What do their achievements in mathematics, astronomy, or writing tell us about their society?

Phase 4: Comparative Chrononauts - Connecting the Dots

Now that you've explored these amazing societies, it's time to compare! Choose at least **three** civilizations (making sure one is Early Australian Indigenous Societies) and compare them using a table or a mind map in your notebook. Consider these comparison points:

- **Leadership/Governance:** How were they ruled?
- **Social Layers:** Who held power? Who did the work?
- **Beliefs & Values:** What was important to them spiritually or culturally? How did this show in their structures?
- **Relationship with Environment:** How did they adapt to and use their surroundings?
- **A Key Innovation/Feature:** What stands out most to you about each?

Phase 5: Legacy Unveiled - Echoes in Time

Many aspects of these ancient societies still influence us today! Think about:

- Roman law and language.
- Egyptian architecture and mathematics.
- Chinese inventions.
- Mayan calendrics or agricultural techniques.
- The enduring wisdom and land management practices of Indigenous Australians.

In your notebook, jot down one lasting legacy from three different civilizations you studied and explain how it impacts the world today.

Final Mission Debrief: Showcase Your Discoveries!

Choose **one** of the following projects to showcase what you've learned. Be creative and have fun!

1. **Curate a 'Museum of Ancient Structures':** Design a virtual or physical (poster) exhibit. For each chosen society (at least 3, including Early Australian Indigenous Societies), select an 'artifact' (can be a concept, a building, a social role) that represents a key feature of its structure. Write a museum label for each.
2. **'Ancient Societies Influencer' Post Series:** Create a series of 3-5 'social media' posts (text and description, no actual images needed unless you are drawing them yourself) from the perspective of a time traveler. Each post should highlight a fascinating societal structure or feature of a different civilization.
3. **A 'Day in the Life' Comparative Diary:** Write two diary entries from the perspective of a 15-year-old living in two different ancient societies you studied. Describe their daily life, social

roles, and how the societal structure impacts them.

4. **Comparative Civilizations Presentation:** Prepare a short (5-7 minute) presentation (you can talk it through or write a script) comparing and contrasting the societal structures of three chosen civilizations (including Early Australian Indigenous Societies), highlighting their unique adaptations and innovations.

Your project should demonstrate:

- Understanding of 'key features and structures'.
- Ability to compare different societies.
- Insight into how environment and beliefs shaped societies.
- Clear communication of your findings.

Concluding Your Expedition

Well done, Time Traveler! You've successfully navigated the complexities of past societies. By understanding their structures, we gain a richer appreciation for human history, ingenuity, and the diverse ways people have organized their lives across time and around the globe. Keep exploring!