

Introduction

The study of Ancient civilisations explores the development of human societies, which traces how early cultures shaped the foundations of politics, art, philosophy, culture and religion. Ancient civilisations uses archaeological evidence, historical texts and culture to reconstruct how people lived, their beliefs and what they achieved. People such as the Egyptians, Greeks, Mesopotamians and the Romans. The direction of this has evolved over time from just looking at monumental achievements and elite figures to a more broad and inclusive look into people's everyday life, how they used to trade and what they traded to technology, religion and beliefs of these people. This shift in what we look at has shifted across many other humanities subjects such as archeology, creative writing, philosophy and anthropology which ancient civilisations have vital connections with and all seek to understand the human experience. When looking into the forms of art, governance and moral thoughts ancient civilisations digs into human questions about identity, power and belief. Ancient civilizations not only looks into the past but also helps us understand patterns in current governments and civilisations around the world so we don't make the same mistakes as before.

Ancient civilisations

Ancient civilizations represent the first human societies that transitioned from agrarian communities into places with urban centres such as cities, organised government, these societies thrived with high levels of cultural, technological, and political complexity, featuring large urban hubs, specialised labour, trade networks and defined social hierarchies.¹ The term civilization is explored more broadly by New World Encyclopedia, which describes it as “a complex human society in which people live in groups of settled dwellings comprising cities” and that differentiate them from tribal or nomadic societies.² Further material from National Geographic Society highlights key markers, large population centres, monumental architecture, shared communication strategies and complex division of labour.³

The development of ancient civilizations was rooted in good environmental and agricultural conditions and surplus food allowed portions of the population to engage in crafts, trade and

¹ *Key components of civilization* (no date) *Education*. Available at: <https://education.nationalgeographic.org/resource/key-components-civilization/> (Accessed: 26 October 2025).

² *Civilization* (no date) *Visit the main page*. Available at: <https://www.newworldencyclopedia.org/entry/Civilization> (Accessed: 26 October 2025).

³ *Key components of civilization* (no date a) *Education*. Available at: <https://education.nationalgeographic.org/resource/key-components-civilization/> (Accessed: 26 October 2025).

politics instead of subsistence farming. Urbanisation, writing systems, centralised administration and distinctive cultural work such as art then followed. For example, the earliest urban societies such as ones in Mesopotamia and Egypt demonstrate these attributes. At the same time, the concept of “civilization” has been critiqued as New World Encyclopedia discusses, the term often carries assumptions suggesting superiority and then marginalises societies that do not conform to the model of urbanity, writing or class hierarchy.⁴ Ancient civilizations are human formations characterised by complexity of urban settlement, division of labour and cultural innovation.

Archeology

Ancient civilisations and archeology are both fields of study that work together, archeology provides evidence and interprets the material remains of the early societies which ancient civilisations will use this to make more in-depth judgments on how these societies worked. Ancient civilisations such as Egypt and Mesopotamia and the Indus valley are all defined as urban development, with a social hierarchy and a centralized authority.⁵ Archeology however is a scientific study of past human life through a process of recovering artifacts and analysing them and other physical evidence.⁶ Through excavation and interpretation archeology reconstructs social, economic and religious structures that helps differentiate these societies, which offers insights to an academic of ancient civilisations that written sources alone cannot provide for them.

For example the Rosetta Stone enabled people to be able to decipher the Egyptian hieroglyphs, this led to the transformation in understanding the ancient Egyptian governance system and what they believed in. Similar to this Archeological studies of sites such as Pompeii revealed the way they built houses, sanitation systems and day to day life that written records could not show.⁷ However the relationship between archeology and ancient civilisations is not without challenges. Archaeological records are often not complete, this is due to decay, looting and environmental factors, this means that reconstructions of ancient civilisation are sometimes more up to interpretation. In addition concepts like civilisation are often debated and reflect modern biases and interpretations,

⁴ *Civilization* (no date) Visit the main page. Available at: <https://www.newworldencyclopedia.org/entry/Civilization> (Accessed: 26 October 2025).

⁵ Mark, J.J. (2022) *Civilization*, *World History Encyclopedia*. Available at: <https://www.worldhistory.org/civilization/> (Accessed: 26 October 2025).

⁶ Glyn Edmund Daniel Disney Professor of Archaeology, U. of C. (2025) *Archaeology*, *Encyclopædia Britannica*. Available at: <https://www.britannica.com/science/archaeology> (Accessed: 26 October 2025).

⁷ *Archaeology* (no date) *Education*. Available at: <https://education.nationalgeographic.org/resource/archaeology/> (Accessed: 26 October 2025).

leading to how we look on past civilisations to be tainted with the views we have today as a society.⁸ How we look at both ancient civilisations and archeology shows how physical remains of the past can show humanities history while reminding us that its fragile and how selective artifacts can be for what remains

Philosophy and ancient civilizations are connected from when early philosophical thought emerged. Ancient civilizations such as Greece, Egypt, China, and India gave social structures and educational systems and written traditions which allowed philosophy to become what it is today. Philosophy originated due to people wanting to understand their existence and why we are here through reason instead of what they used to believe in such as myths or superstitions. For example the ancient Greeks created thinkers such as Socrates, Plato, and Aristotle, whose ideas about ethics and logic shaped Western philosophy. Their work critiqued the democratic and social values of Athens. Meanwhile other philosophical ideas in ancient China, such as Confucianism and Daoism, were created during periods of political instability. Comparing philosophy and ancient civilizations shows how intertwined they both are as humanities subjects. Philosophy has helped societies shape their morals and political systems in societies. Philosophy's search for meaning and ethical order have helped with civilization's evolution. Ancient civilizations gave philosophy its context, and philosophy gave those civilizations ways to live by and to keep searching for knowledge.

Creative writing and ancient civilisations seem to be very different, one is seen as more modern and imaginative, ancient civilisations are less imaginative and more factual. However when you examine how writers like Homer and Virgil engage with their societies, we see that creative writing is a good route into understanding ancient civilisations, and that ancient civilisations themselves provide the rich raw material which creative writing shapes.

In doing so, the poems do more than tell stories, they show the cultural values of ancient Greece honour (kleos), fate and divine intervention within narratives of war, home coming and human struggle for example, the Iliad for the ancient Greeks "reminded them of their history and added to their identity."⁹ Thus creative writing in Homer's case is inseparable from the civilisation that produced it: the story is both art and cultural record.

Virgil, writing in Rome (in the form of his epic the Aeneid), deliberately engages with Homer's model but transforms it to serve the needs of his civilisation. The Aeneid "incorporates the various legends of Aeneas and makes him the founder of Roman greatness."¹⁰ Virgil's poetry thus echoes Homeric themes and techniques, yet it re-configures them to articulate Roman identity, historical destiny and political ideology. His work was regarded by the Romans as "their

⁸ Brown, C.S. (no date) World history connected: Vol. 6 no. 3: Cynthia Stokes Brown: What is a civilization, anyway?, World History Connected | Vol. 6 No. 3 | Cynthia Stokes Brown: What Is a Civilization, Anyway? Available at: <https://worldhistoryconnected.press.uiillinois.edu/6.3/brown.html> (Accessed: 26 October 2025).

⁹ *Archaeology* (no date) *Education*. Available at: <https://education.nationalgeographic.org/resource/archaeology/> (Accessed: 26 October 2025).

¹⁰ Robert Deryck Williams Professor of Classics, U. of R. (no date) *Virgil*, *Encyclopædia Britannica*. Available at: <https://www.britannica.com/biography/Virgil/> (Accessed: 26 October 2025).

greatest poet” precisely because it “proclaims the Roman mission to civilize the world under divine guidance.”¹¹ In this way, creative writing becomes not just the retelling of myth or legend, but a forging of communal myth for a civilisation the story of Rome’s beginnings, civic duty and imperial mission.

Anthropology is defined as “the science of humanity,” studying human beings in terms of biology, evolution, society and culture. It includes things such as cultural anthropology, archaeology, physical anthropology. In contrast, ancient civilisations are human societies of the distant past that display features such as settled cities, complex social organisation, writing or symbolic systems, infrastructure and cultural achievements.¹²

The comparison lies in how anthropology seeks to *understand* human cultures and societies by applying methods like fieldwork, archaeology, while the study of ancient civilisations focuses on reconstructing historical societies.¹³ Anthropology provides the theoretical framework and methodological tools such as archaeology, one of its integral branches for exploring ancient civilisations. Meanwhile, ancient civilisations offer the empirical material settlements, artefacts, written records that anthropology uses to test theories about culture, societal development and human behaviour.¹⁴ Moreover, anthropology emphasises cross-cultural comparison and processes such as change, adaptation and interaction, which are vital for interpreting how ancient civilisations rose, flourished and declined. anthropology and the study of ancient civilisations are deeply interlinked anthropology furnishes the lens through which we examine ancient societies, and ancient civilisations enrich anthropology’s understanding of human cultural variation and historical depth.

In conclusion it is impossible to study ancient civilisations without, creative writing, philosophy and anthropology as they are all interlinked together. For example creative writing uses ideas and topics from the past to create extravagant works of literature, people like virgil and homer used real and fake topics to help them with their epic poems that were spread all throught the world through oral performances, this links with ancient civilisations due to looking back at cultures and understanding how cultures worked thousands of years

¹¹ Robert Deryck Williams Professor of Classics, U. of R. (no date) *Virgil*, *Encyclopædia Britannica*. Available at: <https://www.britannica.com/biography/Virgil/> (Accessed: 26 October 2025).

¹² <https://www.britannica.com/science/anthropology?>

¹³ Carol L. Delaney Associate Professor of Cultural and Social Anthropology, S.U., Russell Howard Tuttle Russell H. Tuttle is an active Professor of Anthropology, E.B. and All (2025b) *Anthropology*, *Encyclopædia Britannica*. Available at: <https://www.britannica.com/science/anthropology> (Accessed: 26 October 2025).

¹⁴ Carol L. Delaney Associate Professor of Cultural and Social Anthropology, S.U., Russell Howard Tuttle Russell H. Tuttle is an active Professor of Anthropology, E.B. and All (2025b) *Anthropology*, *Encyclopædia Britannica*. Available at: <https://www.britannica.com/science/anthropology> (Accessed: 26 October 2025).

ago. Looking at Homer has helped us understand how daily life was in Greece and the morals they upheld and continued to live by. Philosophy is interlinked with ancient civilisations due to the understanding and thinking of the likes of Plato and Aristotle, we understand why and how people thought in ancient societies. Societal ethics and governance were debated for many years and having their works still intact is allowing us everyday to see why and how people acted and why the reason behind their thought processes. You can also look back at what was happening during these time periods too see exactly why these philosophers had such harsh or airy ways of thinking too.

Archaeology and ancient civilisations are interlinked due to how physical evidence can be used to add to our understanding of ancient civilisations such as Greece, Rome, Egypt, India and Mesopotamia. Using scientific methods we can get exact dates from when artifacts were made and also using other methods we get why and how they were made. Ancient civilisations add to this by re-imagining the scenes and recreation of the senses for scholarly education, we can now educate people all over the world with these methods and it gives people of all different backgrounds and educational backgrounds access to these pockets of information. Museums are working with scholars who study both archaeology and ancient civilisations, creative writing and philosophy to work together to gather the most information to put together all of what they know to try and get the most historically accurate information. Ancient civilisations is the study of societies such as Greece, Rome and Egypt they study why and how civilisations were made, and how they became urban centres of the world. Scholars of ancient civilisations study the way people live through day to day life by reimagining and recreating historical sights.