

Emergence of Early Cities

Chapter 4: New Beginnings: Cities and States · Topic 1

Key Concept

As farming techniques improved, communities could grow more food than they needed immediately, creating a surplus that could support people not directly involved in farming.

This surplus allowed some people to become craftspeople, traders, priests, or rulers, leading to more organised, complex societies in early cities.

Early cities, like those of the Indus Valley or Mesopotamia, developed features like planned streets, marketplaces, and administrative centres to manage growing populations.

The emergence of cities marked a major shift in human history, from small farming villages to larger, more complex urban centres with specialised roles and trade networks.

Quick Revision Notes

- Surplus food allowed populations to grow.
- Surplus supported people not directly farming.
- Some people became craftspeople, traders or rulers.
- Early cities had planned streets and marketplaces.
- Indus Valley and Mesopotamia had early cities.
- Cities needed administrative centres to manage populations.
- Cities marked a shift from villages to complex societies.
- Trade networks grew alongside early cities.

Practice Questions

- 1 Research one early city, like Mohenjo-daro.
- 2 Discuss how surplus food changed society.
- 3 Explain the connection between farming and city growth.
- 4 Draw a simple diagram of an early city's features.
- 5 Discuss what jobs might have existed in early cities.
- 6 Compare an early city to a modern city.