HISTORY 100: Categories

In order to better understand the “workings” of history you need to know with what “type” (or category) of information you are dealing. Generally historical facts or data fall into five broad categories: (G) Geographic, (E) Economic, (S) Social, (P) Political, and (C) Cultural i.e. religious, ideological, etc. Sometimes, of course, a statement may contain aspects of more than one category or type. Mark the following sentences with a G, E, S, P, or C to indicate what type of fact or statement it is.

1. By 7000 BCE Neolithic people in West Asia lived in true farming villages and engaged in the cultivation of wheat, barley, peas, beans, and lentils and in the raising of goats, sheep, pigs, and cattle.

2. Food surpluses freed some members of the Neolithic community, generally males, to become at least part-time specialists.

3. Since the Tigris and Euphrates Rivers were subject to unexpected and erratic flooding, Sumerians were less certain of reliable harvests than the Egyptians.

4. Writing, probably the most significant lasting achievement of the Sumerians, has been found on many thousands of clay tablets inscribed in cuneiform.

5. Sumerian gods were chiefly personifications of natural forces such as: Inana, goddess of fertility, Enlil, storm god of earth, wind, and air etc.

6. The Nile—the longest river in the world—literally defines the country of Egypt.

7. Perhaps 80 to 90 percent of the inhabitants of ancient Mesopotamian city-states were nothing more than slaves or tenant farmers who produced the abundant crops that sustained their society.

8. During the Egyptian Empire (New Kingdom) Egyptian control again reached across the Sinai into Palestine and Syria and to the Euphrates.

9. Amonhotep IV was most notable for his innovations in religion; he recognized as gods only himself and the solar disk, Aton.
10. In 591 BCE the Kushites moved their capital to Meroe a location which provided them with substantial deposits of iron ore and wood, good grazing land for cattle, and a navigable harbor.

11. In Meroe, the Kushites continued to prosper from their trade with Egypt and established particularly good relations with the Greeks following Macedonian conquest of Egypt in 332.

12. Once literate in the Egyptian language, the Kushites gradually developed a written language of their own based on hieroglyphics.

13. As early as 2200 BCE the Olmecs were living in agricultural villages, cultivating large maize crops in the lush, steamy environment along the Gulf coast, and supplementing their diet with abundant seafood and shellfish, game, and dogs.

14. The most striking artistic expressions of the Olmecs are the gigantic heads carved from basalt boulders, apparently advertising the authority of specific rulers.

15. Amerindian farmers grew maize, vegetables, avocados, potatoes, and peanuts in the short, narrow Andean valleys.

16. The Chavin religion promoted two gods which archeologists call the Smiling God and the Staff God.

17. The Aegean world was not so blessed as Mesopotamia and Egypt, for it consisted primarily of many mountains, small and scattered coastal plains and river valleys, and the ever-present sea.

18. The Cretans apparently worshiped female deities, particularly a snake goddess who perhaps embodied the forces of fertility.

19. Heinrich Schliemann set out to prove the historical veracity of Homer’s *Iliad* and *Odyssey* written centuries after the “dark ages” of Greece, which they described.

20. From the Minoans the Mycenaeans borrowed the idea of the palace, the centralized economy, and their administrative bureaucracy.
21. The average life span of the Indus people was around thirty years, which remained the norm for Indians until the early twentieth century.

22. Around 1200 B.C.E. invaders from the north destroyed Hattusha, and the Hittite kingdom came crashing down, ushering in the destruction of many of the old centers of the Middle East and Mediterranean.

23. Because so little written evidence has survived, the Indus civilization continues to be classified as prehistoric.

24. Many historians feel that environmental factors, including drought and drastic changes in the courses of some of the major rivers, probably led to the collapse of the Indus civilization.

25. Between 1600 and 1700 BCE, the Hittites played a major role in the power politics of West Asia, due in part to their monopoly of iron working technology.

26. Aryan society was already divided into castes before their invasion of India and was based on function and skin color.

27. During the Late Vedic period the doctrine of *karma* developed based on the idea that one’s position in this life was the result of deeds and actions taken in a previous life.

28. Under the feudal system devised by the Zhou (Chou) rulers, the king ruled a royal domain directly and divided his territories into fiefs, which he granted to relatives, allies, and even to surviving relatives of the previous Shang dynasty.

29. The Shang Dynasty is noted for its beautiful bronze objects and the use of oracle bones for foretelling the future.

30. The Zhou (Chou) rulers developed the doctrine of the Mandate of Heaven, to justify their overthrow of the Shang Dynasty and to establish their absolute rule over ancient China.

31. Like the Shang before them, the Zhou (Chou) worshipped the spirits of their ancestors.
HISTORY 100: Categories (continued)

32. The Assyrians’ use of art as political propaganda was an innovative departure in the Middle East from the almost exclusive dedication of art to the worship of the gods.

33. The Assyrians, using land based military technologies, created an empire on a scale that never before had been seen in the world, extending over vast distances and encompassing many different ethnic groups.

34. Many of the people the Assyrians deported were employed as mass labor on the estates of king and nobility, to open up additional lands for agriculture, and to build the new palaces and cities.

35. Many traditions about the Israelites’ early days were long transmitted orally, and it wasn’t until the tenth century B.C.E. that they began to be written down by means of an alphabet borrowed from the nearby Phoenicians.

36. The reign of David’s son Solomon marked the high point of the Israelite monarchy between 960 and 920 B.C.E.

37. The period after Solomon’s death mark the crystallization of monotheism, the absolute belief in Yahweh as the one and only god.

38. The Phoenicians developed earlier Canaanite models into the first alphabetic system of writing.

39. An unusual feature of Carthage was that its’ citizens were not required to serve in the military, because they were of more value in a civilian capacity.

40. Unlike the Assyrian royal family and aristocracy who were enriched by booty, taxes, and forced labor, the Carthaginian merchant families grew prosperous from trade and manufacture.