

Answer each of the following questions in a few paragraphs. Include specific examples to support your thesis and conclusions.

1. **Comparative Analysis:** What did all Paleolithic peoples share in common, and what differences subdivided them?
2. **Historical Analysis:** What were the key changes in human society that came with the Agricultural Revolution?
3. **Personal Reflection:** Would you prefer to live in a Paleolithic society, a pastoral society, an agricultural village society, or a chiefdom? Why?

Answer Key

1. *Answer would ideally include:*

- For much of the period, Paleolithic societies shared a number of important features, including life in bands of twenty-five to fifty people, a gathering and hunting lifestyle, a mobile lifestyle, a relatively egalitarian social structure, and relatively equal gender relations.
- Population density was low, and the population grew slowly.
- Relationships were understood in kinship terms.
- There were no formal chiefs, kings, bureaucrats, soldiers, nobles, or priests.
- Rituals, particularly those associated with burial, were important.
- Some societies were monotheistic; others believed in various spirits.
- Religion had a strong feminine dimension (Venus figurines, Great Goddess).
- Many subscribed to a cyclical view of time.
- However, varied environments and food supplies did create differences between groups that became increasingly pronounced as humankind spread around the globe. For instance, the spread of humans into the Pacific islands required the development of seaworthy canoe technologies that other Paleolithic groups did not develop, and the cold weather in parts of Eastern Europe, along with the lack of caves, spurred the development of multilayered clothing and partially underground dwellings constructed from the bones and tusks of mammoths.
- Another key differentiation occurred between 16,000 and 10,000 years ago, after the end of the last Ice Age. As plants and animals thrived, making a larger and more secure food source, some Paleolithic groups were able to settle down in more permanent settlements or villages. Others continued their nomadic existences. Those societies that settled down became larger and more complex. Settlement also meant that households could store and accumulate goods to a greater degree than their nomadic ancestors. This accumulation of goods led to inequality and a wearing away of the egalitarianism found in more nomadic Paleolithic communities.

2. *Answer would ideally include:*

- The Agricultural Revolution created a new relationship between humankind and other living things. Men and women no longer simply used what they found in nature but actively changed it.
- Population increased, and societies became larger and more densely populated.
- Permanent settlement allowed households to store and accumulate goods to a greater degree than their nomadic ancestors.
- People were able to accumulate more personal possessions
- More sophisticated techniques were developed in pottery making, textile weaving, and metallurgy.
- Humans secured more food resources from a much smaller area of land than was possible in gathering and hunting societies, starting a process of intensification.
- In many cases, a poorer diet and more disease were results.
- Settlement led to greater social inequality, which ran counter to the egalitarianism of Paleolithic communities.
- More elaborate functions of government emerged, whether through formal leaders

or informal lineage systems.

- Chiefdoms developed, with positions of power and privilege becoming inherited.
- The possibility of economic surplus opened the door to growing populations, specialization, and inequality.
- For all the changes brought about by Agricultural Revolution, some agricultural societies supplemented their food supplies by gathering, hunting, and fishing.

3. *Answer would ideally include:*

- A Paleolithic society had a more egalitarian social structure, without great differences in wealth and power.
- There was more equality in gender and social relations in a Paleolithic society, a pastoral society, and an agricultural village society compared to a chiefdom.
- People spent fewer hours working in a Paleolithic society, with greater leisure time than in later societies.
- Agricultural diets were often nutritionally poorer than those of Paleolithic societies, and agricultural societies were often more vulnerable to famine should their crops fail.
- Agricultural societies were larger and more densely populated than Paleolithic societies.
- Agricultural societies developed more advanced technologies than Paleolithic societies, including techniques for making pottery, weaving textiles, and metallurgy.
- A pastoral society allowed for greater mobility.
- An agricultural village society provided more stability and protection.
- Chiefdoms mostly benefited those who inherited positions of power.
- Commoners in chiefdoms had to pay tribute to the chief.