

Overview

The ancient world

Historians refer to the period of human history from around 60 000 BCE to 650 BCE as the ancient world. During this time, some of the most important ancient civilisations developed on the continents we now know as Africa, Europe and Asia.

Over this huge stretch of time, there were many changes in the way humans have lived. The earliest humans moved around in search of food, hunting and gathering as they went. Over time, people began to live in villages, and then towns, and then cities.

This year in history, you will be learning about the skills and techniques used by historians to investigate the ancient world. You will also be learning about one ancient civilisation in detail.

6A

Where and when did civilisations in the ancient world develop?



chapter 6

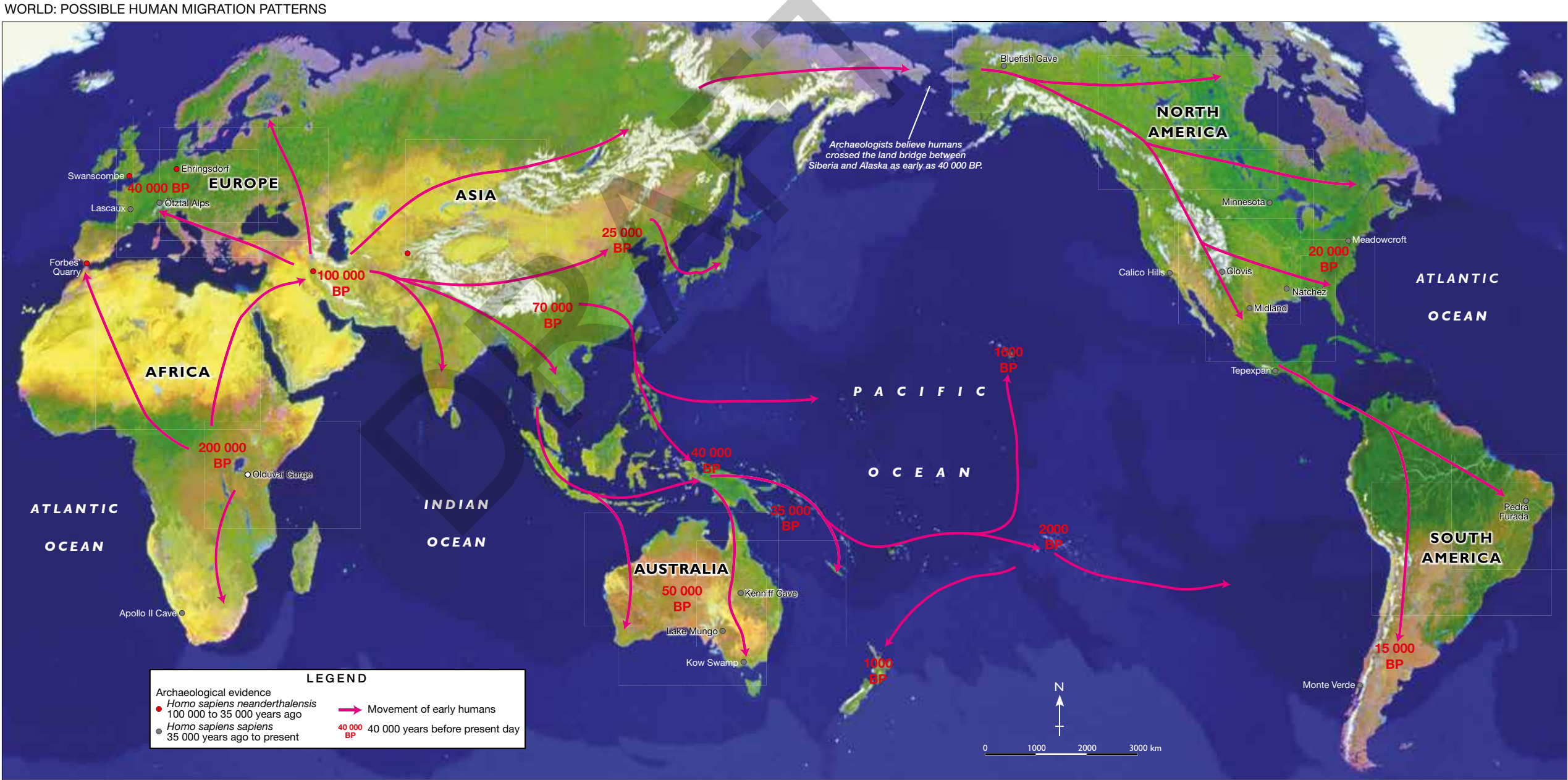
Source 1 The Great Sphinx and the pyramids at Giza in Egypt are some of the most important artefacts from ancient Egypt. They have helped historians uncover many secrets from the ancient world.

6.1 The first humans

Modern humans have existed on Earth for about 200 000 years. **Archaeologists** and scientists have gathered **primary sources**, such as bones and early tools, to uncover **evidence** about early humans, and to generate theories about how they spread across the Earth. The earliest remains of people that are anatomically similar to modern humans (*Homo sapiens*) were found in East Africa. From there, historians believe *Homo sapiens* spread to other parts of Africa. Ancient peoples were mostly nomadic, meaning that they moved around a lot in search of food and shelter.

It is believed that approximately 100 000 years ago, these first humans left Africa and arrived in the Middle East. Over thousands of years, many waves of migrating groups of humans left Africa, travelling in different directions and living nomadic lifestyles. This continued until around years ago. Evidence of agriculture dating back to that time was discovered in the Middle East, which proved that groups of people were able to settle in one place. From then on, humans started to develop increasingly complex societies and civilisations.

Source 1 shows the spread of humans from their beginnings in East Africa to other parts of the world. This spread of humans across the world from origins in Africa is known as the ‘**Out of Africa**’ theory. Some scholars argue that early humans developed simultaneously in different parts of the world. However, fossil and genetic evidence strongly supports the ‘Out of Africa’ theory.



Source 1 This satellite image of Earth shows the likely migration routes and settlement patterns of humans (*Homo sapiens*) according to the ‘Out of Africa’ theory.

Check your learning 6.1

- Remember and understand
- 1 How long do historians think modern humans have existed on Earth for?
 - 2 What is the scientific name given to modern humans?
 - 3 What is the ‘Out of Africa’ theory?
- Apply and analyse
- 4 According to the ‘Out of Africa’ theory, how long ago did humans arrive in Australia?

6.2 The location of ancient civilisations

Some of the most important ancient civilisations developed on the continents we now know as Africa, Europe and Asia. They included ancient Egypt, ancient Greece and ancient Rome in the Mediterranean region, and ancient India and ancient China in Asia.

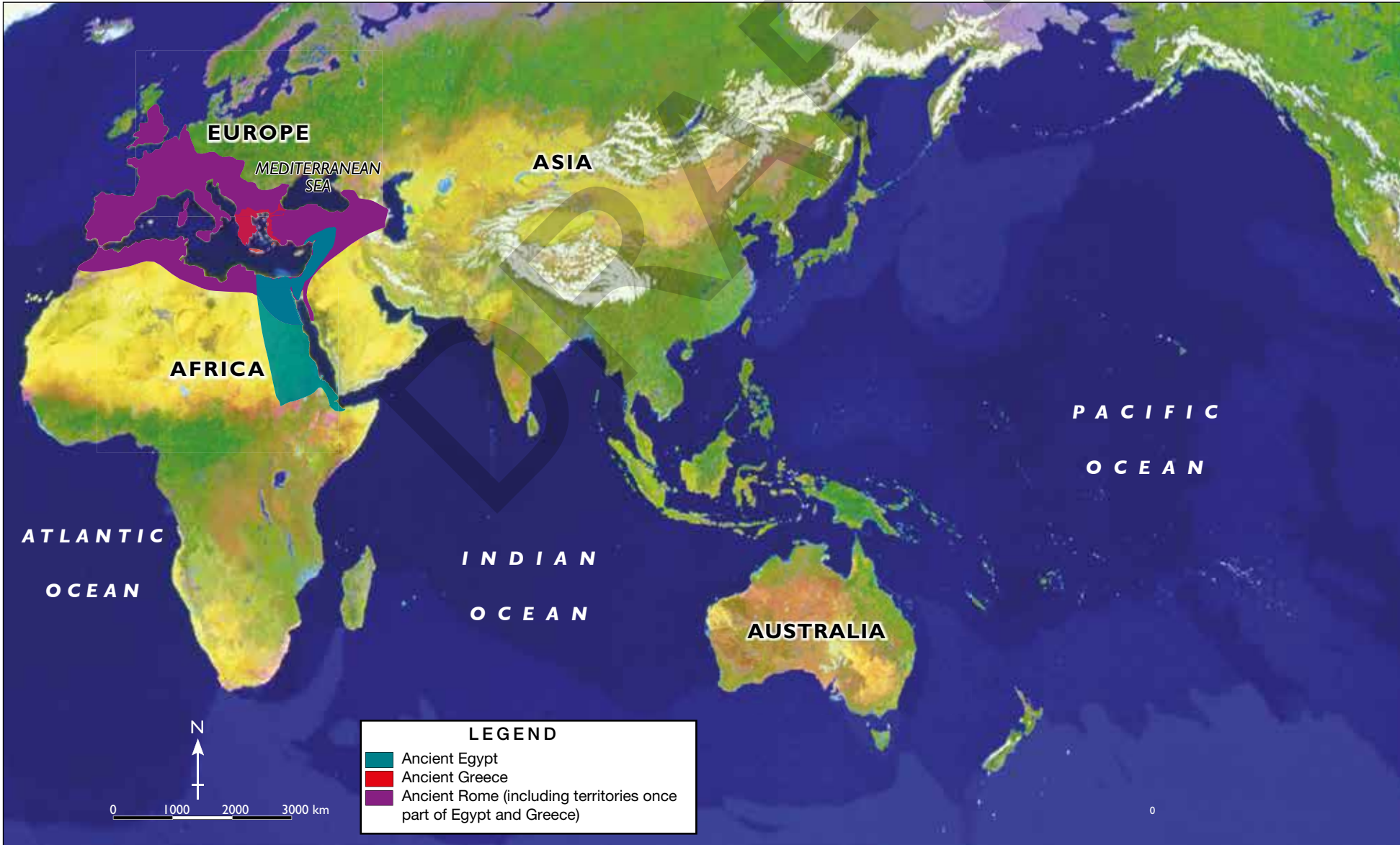
This year you will be studying one of these ancient civilisations in detail. To get a better understanding of ancient civilisations, it helps to look at some of the factors they had in common and how their development was linked.

Source O.2 shows the location and size of these ancient civilisations and provides some key information about each of them. Note the dates for each civilisation as you are looking at the map – not all of them existed in the same time periods. Some flourished and then disappeared, only to later become part of another civilisation. This was the case with ancient Egypt and ancient Greece, both of which became part of the Roman Empire, and the Indus Valley civilisations in India, which became part of the Mauryan Empire. The timeline in Source 1 on page XX also shows the dates for each of the civilisations shown here.

Source 1 This satellite image of Earth shows the location and size of key ancient civilisations when they were at their peak.

Source: Oxford University Press

WORLD: KEY ANCIENT CIVILISATIONS



Check your learning 6.2

Remember and understand

- 1 Name the continents where some of the world’s most important ancient civilisations developed.
- 2 Name the two ancient civilisations that developed in India.
- 3 Ancient civilisations in Europe and Africa developed around an important sea. What is it called?

Apply and analyse

- 4 Which of the five ancient civilisations shown is the oldest? When did it begin?
- 5 The lands occupied by ancient Egypt and Ancient Greece both eventually became part of another ancient civilisation. What was it called?

Ancient Egypt (c. 3100–30 BCE)

Ancient Egypt was a civilisation based around the Nile River in northern Africa. It was one of the world’s first civilisations. Ancient Egypt was ruled under one government from about 3100 BCE. Between 3100 BCE and 30 BCE, when the last **Pharaoh** (ruler) died, there were 31 **dynasties** and 70 pharaohs.

Ancient Greece (c. 776–146 BCE)

Formed from three existing cultures in the region, Ancient Greece covered all of modern-day Greece as well as parts of Turkey and other settlements around the Mediterranean and Black seas. The civilisation lasted only about 400 years, but its legacy (including democracy) influences the Western world to this day.

Ancient Rome (753 BCE–476 CE)

The civilisation of ancient Rome lasted approximately 1300 years. It was centred around the city of Rome, in modern-day Italy. The Romans conquered the ancient Egyptians and Greeks, as well as many other peoples. During its history, Rome was ruled as a monarchy, a republic and an empire. It was a powerful civilisation with a strong military and an advanced culture.

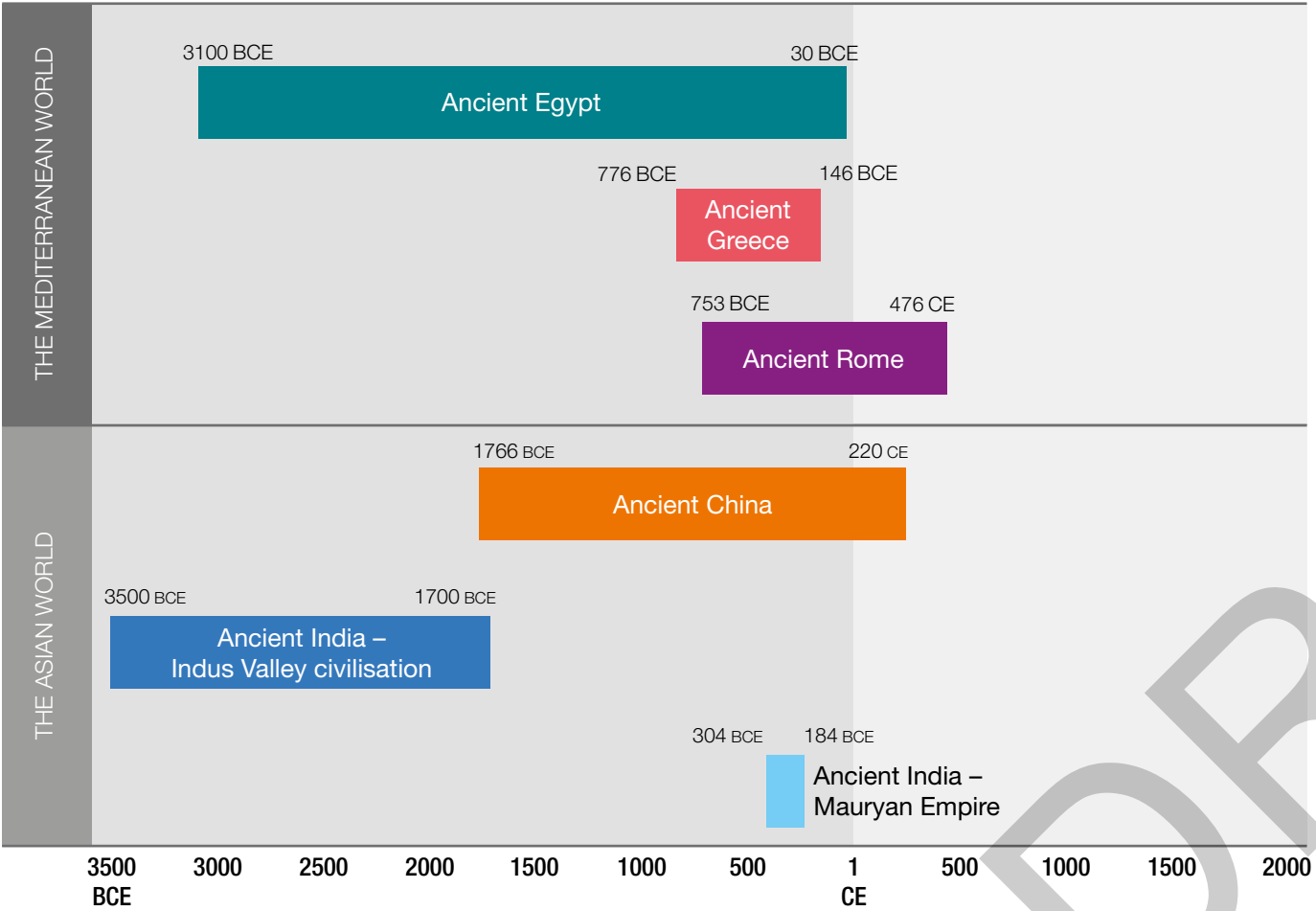
Ancient India (3500 BCE–184 BCE)

Civilisation in India began in the Indus Valley in 3500 BCE. For much of its history, ancient India was a collection of separate regions and kingdoms, some of which were at war with one another. At different times, some of these were ruled as part of dynasties or empires; this included the Mauryan Empire, whose authority rose and fell in just 120 years.

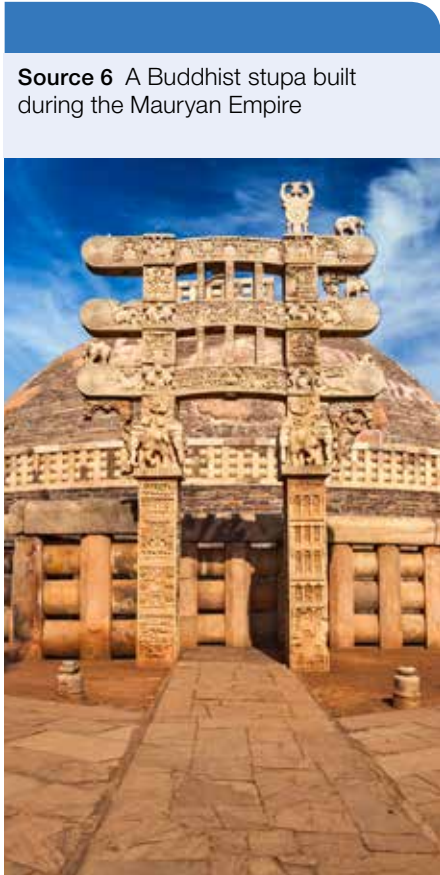
Ancient China (1766 BCE–220 CE)

Ancient China was ruled for 3600 years by dynasties (families). The last dynasty – the Qing – ended in 1912. Chinese society was one of the earliest in the world to establish towns and cities. It also contributed important technological developments to the rest of the world, such as gunpowder and printing.

6.3 A timeline of ancient civilisations



Source 1 A timeline showing the rise and fall of ancient civilisations



Check your learning 6.3

Remember and understand

- 1 According to the dates shown on the timeline, calculate how many years the following ancient civilisations lasted:
 - a Ancient Egypt
 - b Mauryan Empire in India
 - c Ancient Rome.

Apply and analyse

- 2 Sources 2–6 show some of the most important structures from the ancient world. Use the Internet to complete the following tasks:
 - a When was each structure built?
 - b Why was each structure built and what was it used for?
 - c Were any of these structures built for similar reasons/uses? If so, which ones?