Development and Transformation of Social Structures

This theme is about relations among human beings, how human societies develop ways of grouping their members, and norms that govern interactions between individuals and social groups. Additionally, this theme explores the processes through which social categories, roles, and practices are created, maintained, and transformed.

**EXAMPLE:** The chart to the right shows the social structure of ancient Mesopotamia.

**Essential Questions:**
- How have distinctions based on kinship, ethnicity, class, gender and race influenced the development and transformation of social hierarchies?
- How, by whom, and in what ways have social categories, roles, and practices been maintained or challenged over time?
- How have political, economic, cultural, and demographic changes affected social structure over time?

**Quick Summary**
- Relations among humans
  - Gender roles and relations
  - Family and kinship
  - Racial and ethnic constructions
  - Social and economic classes
- Different from “Culture”
  - Social is how we deal with each other
  - Culture is how we deal with our world
**POL**

**State Building (SB), Expansion, and Conflict**

This theme explores how hierarchical systems of rule have been constructed and maintained over time and the impact of these processes.

This theme encourages the comparative study of different state forms (e.g. kingdoms, empires, nation-states) across time and place and the interactions among them.

**EXAMPLE:** How did government develop out of the early civilizations?

**Essential Questions:**
- How have different forms of government been constructed and maintained over time?
- How have economic, social, cultural, and environmental contexts influenced the processes of state building, expansion, and dissolution?
- How have conflicts, exchanges, and alliances influenced the processes of state building, expansion, and dissolution?

**Quick Summary**
- Different forms of government
  - Kingdoms, empires, dynasties, nation-states
- How different kinds of societies need different forms of government
  - Leaders/groups
  - State structures
  - War and conflict
  - Diplomacy/treaties
  - Courts/laws
The interaction between humans and the environment is a fundamental theme in world history, as the environment shaped human societies, but increasingly, human societies also affect the environment.

**EXAMPLE:** The early Indus River civilizations of Harappa and Mohenjo-Daro are believed to have disappeared due to environmental degradation or natural disaster (flood or earthquake).

**Essential Questions:**
- How have people used diverse tools and technologies to adapt to and affect the environment over time?
- How and to what extent has human migration and settlement been influenced by the environment during different periods in world history?
- How has the environment changed as a consequence of population growth and urbanization?
- How have processes of industrialization and global integration been shaped by environmental factors and in turn how has their development affected the environment over time?

**Quick Summary**
- How the environment changed humans
  - Races, diets, lifespans, migrations, spread of disease
- How humans changed the environment
  - Irrigation, farming, land development
  - Biggest during Industrial Revolution (1700s)
This theme explores the origins, uses, dissemination, and adaptation of ideas, beliefs, and knowledge within and between societies and how the processes of adopting or adapting new belief and knowledge systems are complex and often lead to syncretic (fusion of) cultural forms and practices.

**EXAMPLE:** The ancient Egyptians were polytheistic - believing in many gods who controlled nature

**Essential Questions:**
- How and why have religions, belief systems, philosophies, and ideologies developed and transformed as they spread from their places of origin to other regions?
- How have religions, belief systems, philosophies, and ideologies affected the development of societies over time?
- How were the scientific and technological innovations adapted and transformed as they spread from one society or culture to another?
- In what ways do the arts reflect innovation, adaptation, and creativity of specific societies?

**Quick Summary**
- Spreading of beliefs, actions, and knowledge between and within societies
  - Religions and philosophy
  - Art / music / literature
  - Architecture
  - Technology
  - Education
- Diffusion – spread of culture from one society to another
ECON
Creation, Expansion, and Interaction of Economic Systems

This theme surveys the diverse patterns and systems that human societies have developed to produce, distribute, and consume desired goods and services across time and place.

EXAMPLE: Ancient Chinese coins dating back to the earliest Chinese dynasties. China was also the first to use paper money 1,400 years ago.

Essential Questions:
● How and to what extent have modes of production and commerce changed over time?
● How have different labor systems developed and changed over time?
● How have economic systems and the development of ideologies, values, and institutions influenced each other over time?
● What is the relationship among local, regional, and global economic systems: how have those relationships changed over time?

Quick Summary
● Major transitions in trade
  ○ From bartering to regional trade to long-distance trade
● Economic systems
  ○ Agricultural, pastoral, industrial
● Labor systems
  ○ Forced labor, farmers, capitalism, socialism