**Who Ruled the Ancient World?**

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| What does it mean to rule the world (to you)? |

**Following the Neolithic Revolution and the stabilization of society, many early civilizations began to flourish, leading to the expansion of civilization. The Egyptians, the Chinese, the people of Mesopotamia, and the people of the Indus, all faced challenges and successes as they navigated the sometimes favorable geography of their region. But, who ruled?**

**Contenders:**

**Ancient China**

**Ancient Egypt**

**Ancient Mesopotamia**

**Ancient Indus River Valley**

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| **What questions does one need to consider when attempting to answer the big question, who ruled the ancient world?** |

Ancient China:

The Chinese have built a civilization that has lasted longer than any other in the world. In 5000 B.C., Chinese lived in the fertile Huang He river valley. In the 1700s B.C., invaders called the Shang entered their valley. These invaders built the first permanent, organized civilization. Since the Shang takeover, China has mostly been ruled by dynasties.

Ancient Egypt:

Egyptian culture has been called “the gift of the Nile.” Without the Nile River, Egypt might never have existed. Most of Egypt was dry, barren desert. Along the Nile, though, the land was different. Yearly floods brought fertile soil to the river valley. When the floods ended, farmers began planting. While the water level was low, they grew crops.

Farmers knew the Nile would flood every year, but in other ways the floods were unpredictable. Sometimes the flood level was low. Then farmers could not raise enough food. If the water rose too high, fields and homes were destroyed. The ancient Egyptians had to find ways to control the river. They built canals to carry water to inland fields. They built up the riverbanks to keep floods from causing damage.

Ancient Mesopotamia:

Mesopotamia is the region within the Tigris and Euphrates rivers located south of Anatolia and West of the Iranian plateau. It hosted the earliest large-scale civilizations, who bequeathed the earliest forms of organized government, religion, warfare, and literature. Mesopotamian civilizations flourished from the founding of the Sumerian Empire in 3100 BC to the fall of Babylon in 539 BC to the Achaemenid Empire.

Ancient Indus River Valley:

The [Indus Valley Civilization](https://www.ancient.eu/Indus_Valley_Civilization/) was an ancient [civilization](https://www.ancient.eu/civilization/) located in what is Pakistan and northwest [India](https://www.ancient.eu/india/) today, on the fertile floodplain of the Indus River and its vicinity. Evidence of religious practices in this area date back approximately to 5500 BCE. Farming settlements began around 4000 BCE and around 3000 BCE there appeared the first signs of [urbanization](https://www.ancient.eu/urbanization/). By 2600 BCE, dozens of towns and [cities](https://www.ancient.eu/cities/) had been established, and between 2500 and 2000 BCE the [Indus Valley](https://www.ancient.eu/Indus_Valley/) Civilization was at its peak.