# Learning Targets: The Rise of Classical Empires and Emergence of World Religions

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<th>No.</th>
<th>Learning Target</th>
<th>Feedback Notes</th>
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<tr>
<td>LT4.1</td>
<td>I can discuss the characteristics that are common to all empires.</td>
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| LT4.2 | I can discuss the different forms of government that civilizations had during Era 3.  
  - What impacts did these governments have on the civilizations? |                |
| LT4.3 | I can explain the role of slavery in the development of empires.                |                |
| LT4.4 | I can discuss the development and spread of major beliefs systems that arose during Era 3.  
  - What are the five major world religions? |                |
| LT4.5 | I can discuss ways in which empires in this era interacted with one another in regards to technology sharing and trade. |                |
Lesson 1: Unit Overview: From Early Civilizations to Empires

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<th>Big Ideas of the Lesson</th>
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<td>• In the time period from 1000 B.C.E. – 500 C.E., large civilizations developed in present-day China and India, as well as in the Mediterranean, Middle East, and Northeast Africa. Many of these civilizations became major empires that spanned large portions of Afroeurasia.</td>
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<td>• These empires were organized around a core city center but reached well beyond urban areas through trade and imperial expansion over time.</td>
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<td>• People in these empires developed governments and militaries as well as networks for transportation and trade that connected diverse peoples across Afroeurasia.</td>
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<td>• A somewhat different version of empire was developing independently in the Americas during the same time period.</td>
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Lesson 2: What is the recipe for empire? A comparative analysis of Era 3 empires

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<td>• Era 3 was characterized by the rise of a series of important, large empires throughout Afroeurasia. These empires shared several significant characteristics.</td>
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<td>• Empires did not start from scratch; they emerged where large civilizations were already developed and where there were sufficient human and natural resources. Empires often changed hands, were conquered, or were absorbed by new empires.</td>
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<td>• Empires depended upon strong leadership and large armies. In addition, bureaucratic systems – systems of rules and government – were needed to control large territories and lots of people.</td>
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<td>• The development of trade and trade networks – especially roads – was important and ongoing and led to the exchange of goods as well as ideas and cultures.</td>
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Lesson 3: How did empires wield power and authority?

**Big Ideas of the Lesson**

- Power is the ability, strength, and capacity to do something. Authority is the right to use power to enforce rules or give orders. Empires in Era 3 wielded power and authority in different ways.
- The global pattern of development for human societies during Era 3 included the emergence of large empires in most of which an individual ruler held most of the power.
- Not every major society existed as an empire. Both empires and other types of civilizations during Era 3 organized power and authority in different forms including democracy, republics, and oligarchy.
- Empires exercised power and authority over vast geographic areas and many, many people during Era 3, thereby having an enormous impact on the development of civilization in general.

Lesson 4: Social Hierarchy and Slavery in the Age of Empires

**Big Ideas of the Lesson**

- With civilization and the development of empires, human societies also developed complex social hierarchies with small groups of people controlling most of the resources and power.
- Slavery was part of these early social hierarchies, and slaves were at the bottom of society. Slavery developed along with civilization, specialization, the development of agriculture, and a growing desire for cheap labor.
- Slavery was organized differently in different places and at different times, but always revolved around forced labor and the unequal treatment of certain groups of people. In empires like Rome, slavery became an important part of the overall economy.
- Slavery affected people differently, depending upon their place in the social hierarchy.

Lesson 5: The Emergence and Spread of World Religions

**Big Ideas of the Lesson**

- As larger civilizations formed at the end of Era 2 and the beginning of Era 3, new opportunities arose for the development and spread of common belief systems, both philosophies and world religions, which could appeal to a wide range of people.
- The religions were “world religions” in that they united people with different cultures across different places. World religions are portable, as opposed to local religions that are more rooted to a specific place, and they spread through networks of contact and exchange.
- These world religions offered belief systems that appealed to many people. For example, they offered salvation or new life in different forms to all people, even the poor. They also provided common values and practices that shaped government and facilitated trade and communication across different cultural regions.
Lesson 6: From Religious Tolerance to Book Burning - Leadership in the Empires

**Big Ideas of the Lesson**

- The authority of emperors during Era 3 was generally absolute, but how they used their power differed from one ruler to the next.
- Emperors justified their power in different ways, but assumed that they had the right or obligation to rule. Most emperors claimed a divine, or God-given, right to rule.
- Some emperors obtained power from being born into a specific family; they inherited power based on the idea of hereditary succession.
- Emperors sought to manage their people and societies through different means. Sometimes they used rewards, and other times they used force and punishment.

Lesson 7: Connections and Contacts in Era 3: Exchanging ideas, technologies, and goods in the age of empire

**Big Ideas of the Lesson**

- Life during the Age of Empires in Afroeurasia (Era 3) was also characterized by increasing contact and connection that spread ideas, belief systems, commercial goods, and technologies between peoples across this vast region.
- These exchange networks also connected people across different ecological zones; for example, nomadic peoples of the Asian steppes were in contact with agricultural peoples in river valley areas.
- Stable empires needed ever-increasing access to new resources and ideas, so they created the conditions that allowed for trade to expand.
- As exchanges increased, so did collective learning across the region. Technologies developed and spread, including iron, which lead to marked changes in human societies.

Lesson 8: Empire... what it is, and what it is not: Using non-examples to refine the concept

**Big Ideas of the Lesson**

- The global pattern for the development of human societies in Era 3 was the growth of large empires that spanned vast regions of land.
- Although Era 3 was, in many ways, the Age of Empires, it is likely that more people did not live in empires as compared to those who did.
- Nevertheless, even where empires did not exist, human societies were rapidly growing and developing, although in different ways, all across the globe.
- By studying both examples and non-examples of empires, we gain a better understanding of what empires actually were and why they were important.