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Review Questions

•Archaeologists working with the earliest cities of Mesopotamia and Egypt asserted that a true city must have writing. In light of the findings in the Americas and in Jenne -jeno, do you agree with those archaeologists that the settlements in these regions are not cities; or do you think that they are cities and that a city’s definition should be changed?

•How has the discovery and deciphering of ancient writing helped to form our understanding of urban life in ancient China and Mesoamerica?

•Anthropologist Jared Diamond says that Mesopotamia and Egypt had an advantage in technological and social development over other areas of the world because they were ecologically rich in animal and plant resources. As you compare the early urban developments in China, the Americas, and Jenne-jeno,

would you agree or disagree with Diamond? Why?

•In at least six of the early seven urban locations, we find evidence of human sacrifice, or of killing some of the ruler’s companions to accompany him (or her) to an afterlife.Why do you think these practices stopped?

•In which of the four urban centers represented in this chapter did the ruler seem to have the most power? What evidence can you cite to support your view?

•Are you convinced by the arguments of the McIntoshes that Jenne-jeno is an example of an unusual kind of city that challenges our understanding of early urbanization? Whyor why not?