

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

### **Viewing Guide: Teacher's Answer Key Guns, Germs, and Steel: Episode 1**

**Directions:** Before viewing the film, read each question below so you know what information and ideas you should be looking for as you watch Episode 1. Record your answers to each question by providing as many facts, details, and examples as possible to answer each question. Be prepared to discuss your answers with the class and to use them as you work on a project.

1. According to Jared Diamond, what are the three major elements that separate the world's "haves" from the "have nots"?

**Answer: Guns, germs, and steel**

2. Jared Diamond refers to the people of New Guinea as "among the world's most culturally diverse and adaptable people in the world", yet they have much less than modern Americans. Diamond has developed a theory about what has caused these huge discrepancies among different countries, and he says it boils down to geographic luck. Give several examples from the film to support Diamond's theory.

**Answers will vary but could include discussion of people living in the Middle East (Fertile Crescent) and all of their resources compared to the relatively small amount of resources provided by the jungle areas of New Guinea, and how having more food resources and the ability to store them led people to become more agrarian and less reliant on being hunter-gatherers. This, in turn, allowed societies to develop specialists who could improve and develop technologies in a variety of areas. Societies that were not blessed with growing conditions that support nutrient rich crops or allow for their easy, long-term storage are simply not as successful at farming, thus must continue to rely on hunting and gathering to survive.**

3. For thousands of years, people have been cultivating crops. Describe the process used to domesticate crops and create plants that yielded bigger, tastier harvests.

**Answer: By domesticating crops, we mean that people interfere with what actually happens in nature by planting and harvesting at specific times, choosing only the biggest, tastiest, easiest to harvest seeds from the crops, and selecting individual plants for use in breeding the next year's crops to increase the harvest.**

4. According to Diamond, livestock also plays a significant role in a civilization's ability to become rich and powerful. How did the domestication of animals help people? Give several examples.

**Answers will vary but could include: breeding animals for use as meat and for their milk as well as providing other resources such as skins for clothing, using the animals as beasts of burden/plowing, and using the animals for transportation or warfare. In addition, animals were important to farming because they could eat the stubble from the fields and provide the fields with fertilizer at the same time.**

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5. List the animals that can be domesticated and where they can be found.

**Answer: llama-South America, Asia, North Africa, and Europe had the others: goats, sheep, pigs, cows, horses, donkeys, camels, water buffalo, reindeer, yaks, nithans, and cattle.**

6. Looking at the list of animals and locations from question 5, discuss how Diamond's theory about geographic luck applies here.

**Answers will vary, but should include the idea that domesticated animals led to greater productivity, and the majority of these domesticable animals were native to the temperate climates of the world where the most powerful civilizations developed.**

7. How did the movement of the early civilizations of the Fertile Crescent (Middle East) further support Diamond's idea that geography played a key role in the success of a civilization?

**Answer: The Fertile Crescent had a dry climate and a fragile environment. The people of the time did not have conservation methods. Instead, they over-exploited the land and environment. Over time, the land could no longer support them. The fact that the Fertile Crescent shared the same latitude with Europe and Asia allowed them to move their crops and animals to these areas and continue to thrive. Had they not lived adjacent to land masses that could support their crops and animals, they may have died out.**

8. Do you agree with Jared Diamond when he says of a civilizations ability to gain power, wealth, and strength, "...what's far more important is the hand that people have been dealt, the raw materials they've had at their disposal." Why or why not?

**Answers will vary. Encourage students to cite examples from the film to support their answers.**