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February 23, 2011

Outline

“The past is a foreign country; they do things differently there”

People often learn from their mistakes. No matter the circumstance or the situation, people who make mistakes tend to realize what went wrong and why an outcome occurred. This stays true for the degree of success that a society maintains. In his book, Collapse, author Jared Diamond describes both contemporary and ancient societies who have failed to survive throughout time. Diamond attributes these societal collapses to five separate situations. These five factors are: attacking neighbors, climate change, environmental destruction, decreased support by friendly neighbors, and the society’s response to its problems. In civilizations such as ancient Maya, Easer Island, the Pitcairn and Henderson Islands, and today’s society, these five factors are common threads that connect each society. Although current society appears to be a lot more advanced than past societies, when it comes down to it, the way we live is similar to the way people of the past lived. As a result of not doing things differently and not learning from people’s past mistakes, societies are at a risk for collapsing just like civilizations of the past.

Maya

1. Concerned with short term living, not long term🡪 use of materials
2. Environmental destruction
3. Society’s response to its problems
4. Corn

Easter Island

1. Environmental destruction🡪deforestation
2. Statues🡪where the majority of the people’s effort was going
3. Attacking neighbors (on island)🡪12 colonies competing for the best statues
4. Lack of surrounding societies
5. What affects deforestation on pacific islands chart pg. 116

The Pitcairn and Henderson Islands

1. Mangareva conditions🡪 best island for society to live on
2. Pitcairn🡪abundant volcanic glass for tools but bad terrain, no nearby reef
3. Henderson🡪no stones for tools, no streams or freshwater sources, used to be a reef
4. Environmental destruction
5. Decreased support by friendly neighbors (even though not too helpful to one another, the societies on the 3 islands faded away)
6. Society’s response to its problems

Today’s society

1. Resource extraction🡪oil; deforestation; food industry
2. Climate change🡪global warming
3. Attacking neighbors/decreased support by friendly neighbors🡪war
4. Society’s response to its problems

Conclusion

1. Attacking neighbors
2. Climate change
3. Environmental destruction
4. Decreased support by friendly neighbors
5. Society’s response to its problems
6. We haven’t learn from history’s mistakes yet