World Politics Name \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

**Characteristics of a “modern” country: Class Brainstorm**

* Up-to-date, changing technology
* New forms of transportation
* New forms of communication
* Infrastructure: roads, electricity, plumbing
* Modern construction (e.g. skyscrapers)
* Modern health care/hospitals
* Mass production/distribution of goods
* Use of more/new resources
* High standard of living
  + Long life expectancy, low infant mortality rates
  + High literacy rates – education system
* Growth of wealth and population
* Military protection
* International relations/trade
* Organized government and political system (democratic?)
* Cultural change
* Standardized currency
* Recognized and consistent laws, legal process, justice system
* Citizens have rights, freedoms, and equality

These characteristics generally fall into two categories: Modern “stuff” (towards the top of the list) and modern ideas.

The items at the top of the list – modern “stuff” – deals with how *developed* a country is. Generally, these are things that you could *see* when you visit a country, like the growing skyscrapers of Shanghai. A highly developed country tends to be up-to-date with these items. The standard of what counts as “modern” in these areas change over time, so countries have to continually evolve to stay current.

The items towards the bottom of the list tend not to change as quickly. Many of these ideas – about how a country should be organized and how its citizens should interact – we can trace back to ancient Greece and Rome. In other words, they are not new ideas but they still help us define modernity.

Civilizations that can trace their philosophies back to Greece and Rome are given the name “Western” civilizations (note the capital W – it’s not necessarily related to directions on a map.) Other civilizations that don’t trace lineage to Greece and Rome – like China, for example – are said to be outside of the Western world. For our purposes in this unit, we will refer to the above list as the “Western standard of modernity.” People in other parts of the world might have somewhat different definitions of what it means to be a modern country.