**Viewing Guide: Guns, Germs, and Steel, Episode 1**

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**Directions:** Before viewing the fi lm, 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.

1. According to Jared Diamond, what are the three major elements that separate the world’s

“haves” from the “have nots”?

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.

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.

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.

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

6. Looking at the list of animals and locations from question 5, discuss how Diamond’s theory

about geographic luck applies here.

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?

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?

Write a Compare and Contrast or Change and Continuity thesis using two of your PERSIAN themes and the topic/content of the film you are viewing. These may be very broad and involve outside sources (example: comparing and contrasting the French Revolution with the Russian Revolution.)

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