



SECTION
3

HISTORY

River Valley Civilizations



8.01 Describe the role of key historical figures and evaluate their impact on past and present societies in Africa, Asia, and Australia.

11.04 Identify examples of economic, political, and social changes, such as agrarian to industrial economies, monarchical to democratic governments, and the roles of women and minorities, and analyze their impact on culture.

Connecting to Your World

How would you get to sporting events or to the mall if the wheel had never been invented? How would you keep track of important information if you had no way to write it down? Think about what life would be like if your home didn't have indoor toilets, or if you couldn't wear cotton T-shirts or jeans. The people of ancient river valley civilizations invented many things that we rely on every day, including the wheel, writing, indoor plumbing, and cotton cloth.

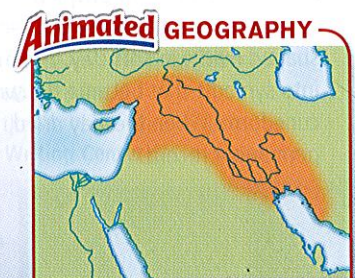


Wheel The two-wheeled chariot was invented by the Sumerians in Mesopotamia around 3000 B.C.

Mesopotamia and the Fertile Crescent

KEY QUESTION What are the main characteristics of civilization?

In Section 1, you learned that the Tigris and the Euphrates rivers flow from Anatolia to the Persian Gulf. What you didn't learn is that the land between the two has its own name—**Mesopotamia**, which means “land between the rivers.” In the spring, rain and melting snow in the Anatolian highlands fed the Tigris and Euphrates. As the swollen rivers rushed downhill, they picked up soil. When the rivers reached the flat region of Mesopotamia, they overflowed and spread over a wide area. The fine soil in the water, called **silt**, settled on the land. Silt is very fertile and makes good soil for farming.



Mesopotamia This floating village is located in the marshes of southern Iraq near the eastern end of Mesopotamia.

 [Click here](#) to learn more about Mesopotamia @ClassZone.com

Civilization Arises The earliest humans lived by hunting animals and by gathering nuts, fruits, and seeds. Over time, they learned to save and plant some seeds to ensure they would have a food supply. That was the start of agriculture. When people began to irrigate their fields, their ability to grow crops improved and they had extra food.

Farming changed human life. Instead of wandering to find food, people settled in one place. In time, villages grew into cities. City dwellers had to figure out how to defend their city and how to do jobs such as building irrigation canals. To solve such problems, societies developed a more complex way of life. The advanced form of culture that arose in cities is called **civilization**. Civilization has five traits:

Advanced Cities Cities arose as places where farmers could store and trade their extra food.

Specialized Workers When a society has extra food, not everyone has to farm. Some can build houses or make pottery.

Complex Institutions A civilization has institutions such as an army, schools, a government, and a temple for worship.

Record Keeping People in cities needed to record information such as how much food they had stored. So civilizations developed record keeping, which involved writing.

Advanced Technology Early civilizations developed new technologies such as irrigation and bronze tools.

CONNECT Geography & Culture

Cuneiform

For writing supplies, Sumerians used a material they had a lot of—tablets made of clay from the riverbeds. At first, Sumerians drew pictures that stood for words. Later, they used a sharpened reed to make wedge-shaped marks in soft clay. The marks were combined into symbols that became the writing system called cuneiform. When the clay dried, it hardened, making a permanent record.



Sumerian Civilization The first civilization of Mesopotamia arose in **Sumer**, which was a land of many city-states. A **city-state** was made up of a city and nearby farmlands.

Walls surrounded the cities of Sumer. Buildings were made of dried mud because few trees grew in Mesopotamia. In many Sumerian cities, one building towered over all the others. It was the **ziggurat**, a temple built on a series of increasingly smaller platforms that made the ziggurat peak like a mountain. The Sumerian people were **polytheistic**, which means they believed in many gods.

The Sumerians invented many things we still use today, including the wheel and the plow. The Sumerians also developed the first writing system, which is called **cuneiform**.

 **FIND MAIN IDEAS** Give the main characteristics of civilization.

City-States and Empires

KEY QUESTION Who were two rulers of Mesopotamian empires?

The first rulers of city-states were priests, because people believed priests communicated with the gods. However, cities often came under attack because they stored extra food and wealth that outsiders wanted. In wartime, military leaders gained power. Eventually, those leaders became permanent rulers called kings, chosen with the approval of the priests.

The First Empire In 2334 B.C., a ruler named Sargon came to power. He conquered many cities and became the first king to rule all of Mesopotamia. His empire stretched from the Persian Gulf up the two great rivers and over to the Mediterranean Sea, a region called the **Fertile Crescent**. Sargon built a wealthy capital city called Akkad. During his grandson's rule, invaders broke up the empire.

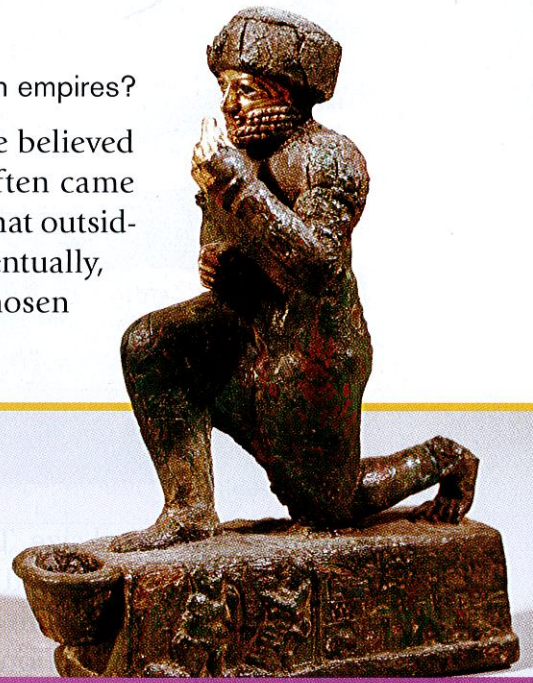
Hammurabi About 500 years after Sargon, another great empire rose in Mesopotamia. A king of Babylon named Hammurabi conquered other city-states and built a vast and powerful empire. Because of his conquests, Hammurabi was the ruler of many peoples with different customs. He wanted a consistent way to govern his subjects, so he compiled a set of laws that applied to everyone under his rule. **Hammurabi's Code** was one of the earliest law codes in the world. His concept of justice—that punishment should fit the crime—has continued to evolve.

SUMMARIZE Identify two rulers of Mesopotamian empires.

Indus River Valley Civilization

KEY QUESTION What were some of the accomplishments of the Harappan civilization?

An ancient civilization also developed on the Indus River in what is now Pakistan. As you know, monsoons cause South Asia to have a rainy season and a dry season. During the rainy season, the Indus River often flooded and deposited fertile silt on the land. Farming villages sprang up, and some gradually grew into cities.



HISTORY MAKERS

Hammurabi (died about 1750 B.C.)

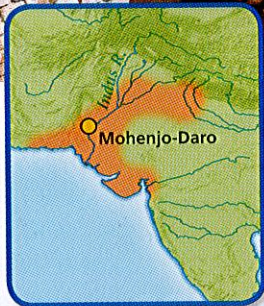
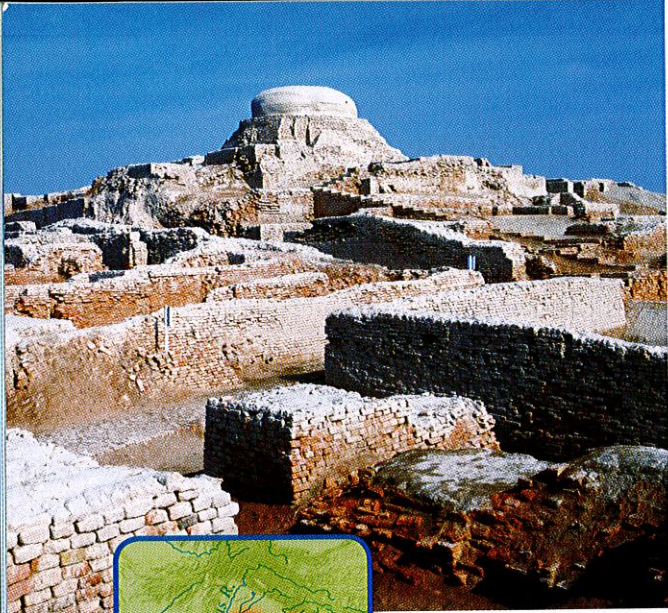
When Hammurabi became king, Babylon was a small state. Hammurabi led Babylon in conquering surrounding lands. One tactic he used was to dam main waterways to deprive his enemies of water.

During his reign, Hammurabi oversaw the creation of one of the world's oldest set of laws. He made Babylon so magnificent that for centuries after his death, it remained one of the most important cities of the ancient world.



ONLINE BIOGRAPHY

For more on the life of Hammurabi, go to the Research & Writing Center @ClassZone.com



Mohenjo-Daro Ruins of the ancient city of Mohenjo-Daro, located in present-day Pakistan

Ruins of more than 100 settlements have been found spread across a vast area of South Asia. The two greatest cities of this civilization are called Mohenjo-Daro and Harappa, and the culture is called the **Harappan civilization**. It is also known as the Indus Valley civilization. The ruins of those cities show that the Harappan people had advanced technology and a system of measurement. The cities were laid out on a **grid** with straight streets that crossed at right angles. Houses had indoor plumbing, and there was a sewer system. The Harappan civilization used a system of weights and bricks that were a standard size. The Harappan people engaged in trade with Afghanistan, Persia, and Mesopotamia. The Harappans developed their own writing system to keep records. Around 2000 to 1500 B.C., the Harappan civilization declined, and people left the cities. No one knows why, but possible causes include earthquakes, a shift in the river's course, and attacking invaders. The Harappan people might simply have exceeded the environment's ability to support the population.

SUMMARIZE Describe accomplishments of Harappan civilization.

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Section 3 Assessment

TERMS & NAMES

1. Explain the importance of

- Mesopotamia
- civilization
- Sumer
- Harappan civilization

USE YOUR READING NOTES

2. Summarize

Use your completed chart to answer the following question:

What were some achievements of the civilizations mentioned in this section?

| SUMERIAN | HARAPPAN |
|----------|----------|
| | |

KEY IDEAS

3. What were examples of complex institutions in Sumer?
4. What was Sargon's important achievement?
5. What are some possible causes for the decline of the Harappan civilization?

CRITICAL THINKING

6. **Make Inferences** Which developed first, specialized workers or complex institutions? Explain.
7. **Compare** How were the Sumerian and Harappan civilizations similar?
8. **CONNECT to Today** In Southwest Asia, farmers dig up objects from ancient ruins and sell them. Do you think historic objects should be kept in museums or owned by individuals? Explain.
9. **TECHNOLOGY Plan a Multimedia Presentation** Choose either the Sumerian or Harappan civilization and use books, the Internet, or a field trip to a museum to learn more about it. Plan a multimedia presentation showing its art, geography, and technology.