Chapter 4

Mesopotamia: Cradle of Civilization

Where would *you* build a city? In what kind of place could a lot of people live together, get the food they need, and do all the activities that always go on in cities?

If you visited the land where the world's first cities appeared, you might be surprised. You'd find a hot, dry place—almost a desert. Only a few trees dot the landscape, and you wouldn't see any stone or other building materials.

About five thousand years ago, an ancient farming people turned this harsh environment into an abundant garden. Their agricultural settlements grew into the world's first great cities. And within these cities, the world's first civilization burst into life. We call the land of this incredible people *Mesopotamia* [me-suh-puh-TAY-mee-uh].

In this chapter, you will see how the environment of Mesopotamia helped civilization flourish. You'll see how contact with other peoples benefited Mesopotamians but also brought conflict to the land.

Land Between Rivers

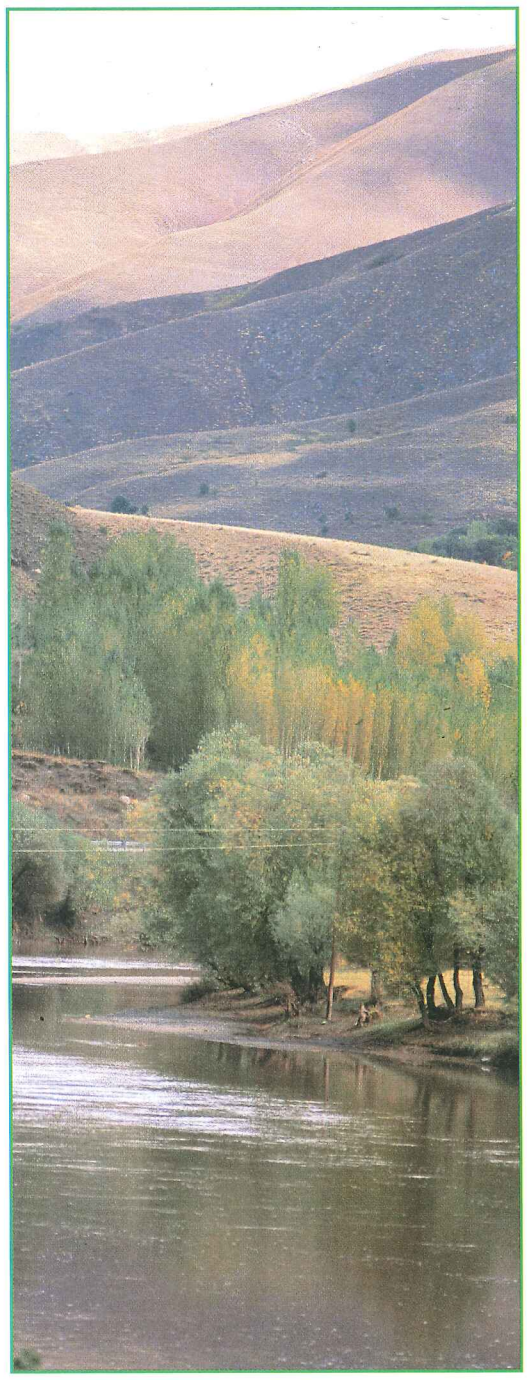
Farming technology consists of the tools we make and use to grow food.

Civilization develops only when people have plenty of food, and only farmers can produce plenty of food. The people who settled in Mesopotamia took full advantage of a fertile land and hot climate by developing their farming methods and **farming technology**. They created an abundance of food never seen before.

The Fertile Crescent was an arc of land in the Middle East that had good soil, a hot climate, and water.

A Fertile Valley

Mesopotamia was part of the area known as the **Fertile Crescent**. This arc of land stretched from the northern end of the Persian Gulf to the Nile River valley in Egypt. The Fertile Crescent was an ideal place for farming. Along the rivers, the land was rich in edible plants, especially fruit, wheat, and barley. Fish and birds were plentiful. Pigs, sheep, and goats lived in the wild. Over time, people learned to **domesticate** [duh-MES-TIH-kate], or tame, the animals and wild plants so that they would have a steady supply of food.

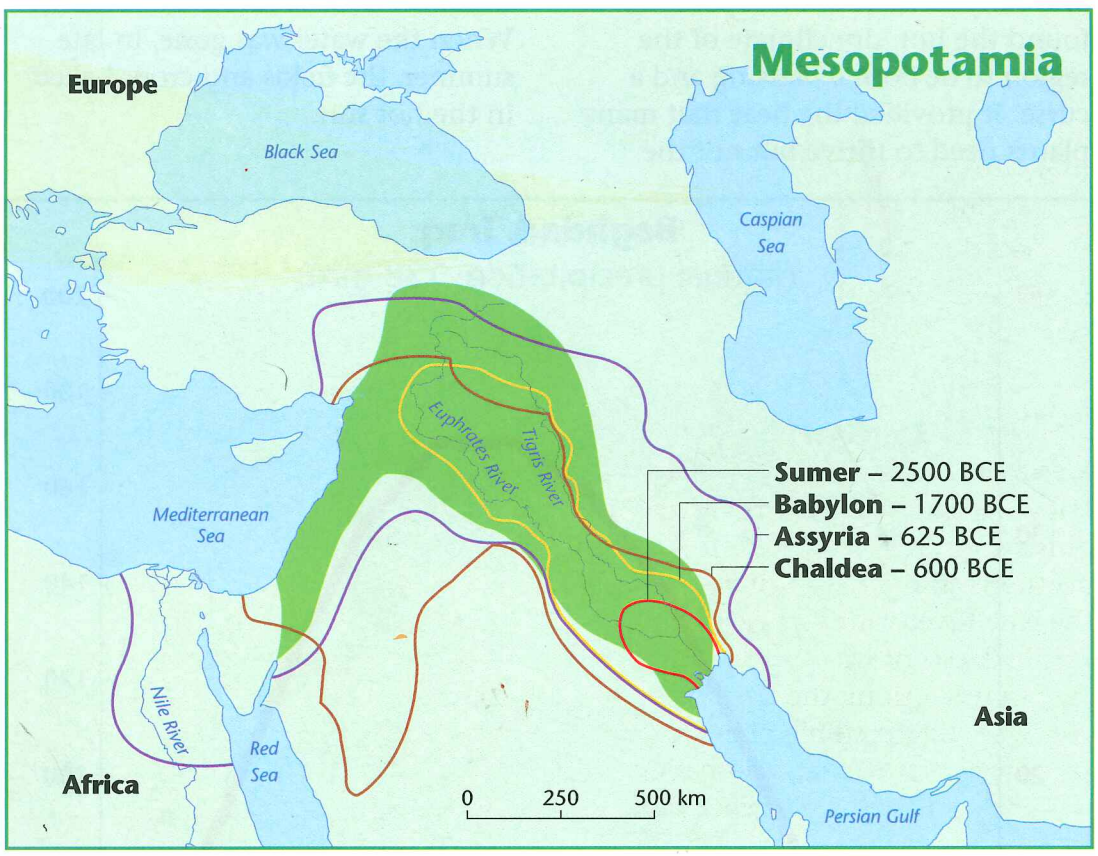


The Tigris and the Euphrates Rivers begin in the mountains of Turkey. Water rushes down to the hills below, picking up fertile silt and carrying it to the valley floor. What other river valley do you know of that has good farmland?

Mesopotamia is the ancient name for the **plain**, or large flat area that stretches between the Tigris [TY-gris] River on the east and the Euphrates [yoo-FRAY-tees] River on the west. These rivers begin in mountains to the north and flow through the valley towards the Persian Gulf. In ancient times, the **silt** (fine sand) carried downstream by the rivers built up along the riverbeds, creating excellent, fertile soil.

Near the gulf, the rivers split into smaller streams, creating a marshy area called a **delta**. Besides attracting plenty of wildlife for hunting and fishing, the marshy swamps provided reeds that made excellent materials for building houses.

The name "Mesopotamia," which comes to us from Greek, means "the land between two rivers."



When we speak of Mesopotamian civilization, we really mean the four civilizations that existed on the Mesopotamian plain: Sumer [SOOM-ur], Babylon [BAB-ih-lon], Assyria [uh-SEER-ee-uh], and Chaldea [kal-DEE-uh]. Find these civilizations on the map and identify the date when each began. What pattern do you see?

This map shows the modern political boundaries of the area shown in the map above. Most of Mesopotamia lay in the area we now know as Iraq [ih-RAK].

Investigate

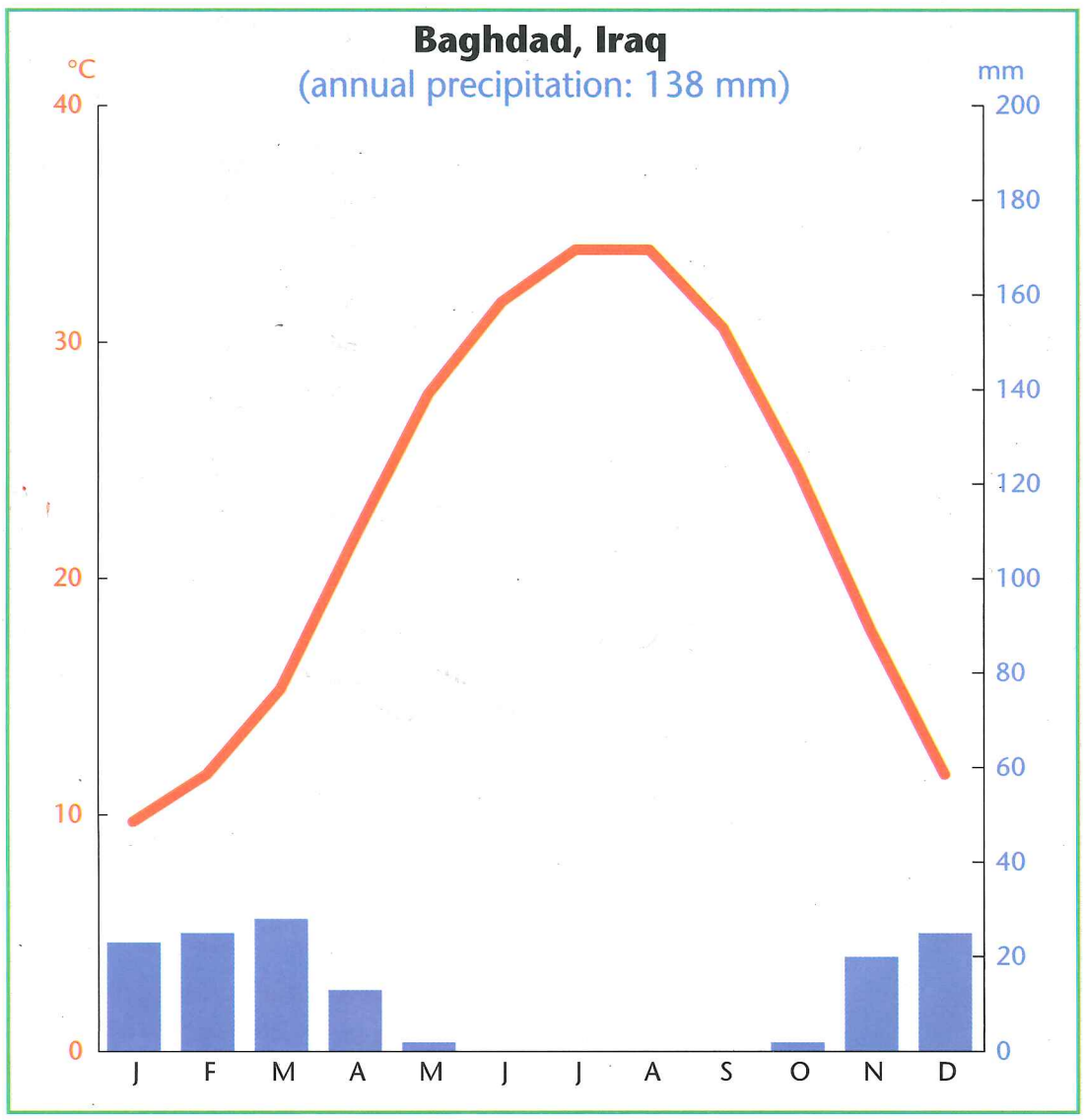
All over the world, cities have flourished along river valleys. In an atlas, find 10 of the world's largest cities. How many of these cities are located beside a river? What conclusion can you make?

A Hot, Dry Climate

The early farmers of Mesopotamia found the hot, dry climate of the region to be both a blessing and a curse. It provided the heat that many plants need to thrive but not the rainfall. In spring, fields flooded after the snow melted in the mountains. When the water was gone, in late summer, the fields and crops baked in the hot sun.

This **climagraph** [KLY-muh-graf] shows the average monthly temperatures and rainfall for Baghdad [BAG-dad], Iraq. Many scientists believe that the climate of Baghdad is just like Mesopotamia's was 5000 years ago. The annual **precipitation** [prih-sip-uh-TAY-shun] of Vancouver is 1167 mm. How does this compare with Baghdad's?

Precipitation can be rain, snow, or hail.



HOW TO... Make a Climagraph

The two pieces of information that tell us the most about the climate of a region are its precipitation and temperature patterns. By looking at both pieces of information together, we can see what the weather will be like at any time of year.

The table below shows the average monthly precipitation and temperature for Vancouver, BC. Follow the steps below to make a climagraph of Vancouver.

	Temperature (°C)	Precipitation (mm)
January	3.0	150
February	4.7	124
March	6.3	109
April	8.8	75
May	12.1	62
June	15.2	46
July	17.2	36
August	17.4	38
September	14.3	64
October	10.0	115
November	6.0	170
December	3.5	178
Annual		1167

This table shows the temperature and precipitation for Vancouver, British Columbia. After you have made your climagraph, decide which form of presentation—table or climagraph—makes the information easiest to understand.

1. Start by making a graph like the one for Baghdad. Label the twelve months across the bottom. Label the temperature units along the left side in red. Label the precipitation units in blue along the right. Write the annual precipitation at the top.
2. Make a dot in the first column, to show the temperature for January. Mark the temperature for each month the same way. Connect the dots with a red line.
3. In the first column, use a ruler to draw a line showing the total precipitation for January. Do the same for every month. Fill in every bar with blue.

Throughout history, people have settled along river systems because these areas have such rich soil. Unfortunately, this also puts them in the **flood plain**—the area of land that floods when the river overflows its banks.

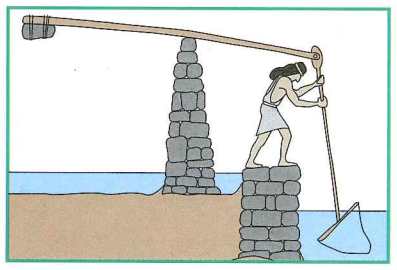
Try This

1. Compare the temperatures and precipitation of Baghdad and Vancouver. What differences do you notice between the two climates? How are these two climates similar to and different from the climate where you live? Make a climagraph for your community to help you answer this question.
2. What characteristics of the environment and landscape of Mesopotamia made it suitable for the development of a civilization? What factors of the environment and landscape worked against the people?

   You may want to make a chart like this one to help organize your thinking.

Suitable for development	Unsuitable for development

After people learned to build dams and irrigation systems such as the Assyrian method shown below, they could control the spring floods. This made the flood plain a much safer place to live and farm. Why was a stone attached to the pole?



Adapting the Environment

Except for springtime floods, Mesopotamia was a dry land. After the floodwaters flowed away, the people were left with sun-baked ground. The biggest challenge for the farmers was to control the flow of water so that the fields would neither flood nor bake. Only in this way could they make sure their crops would survive.

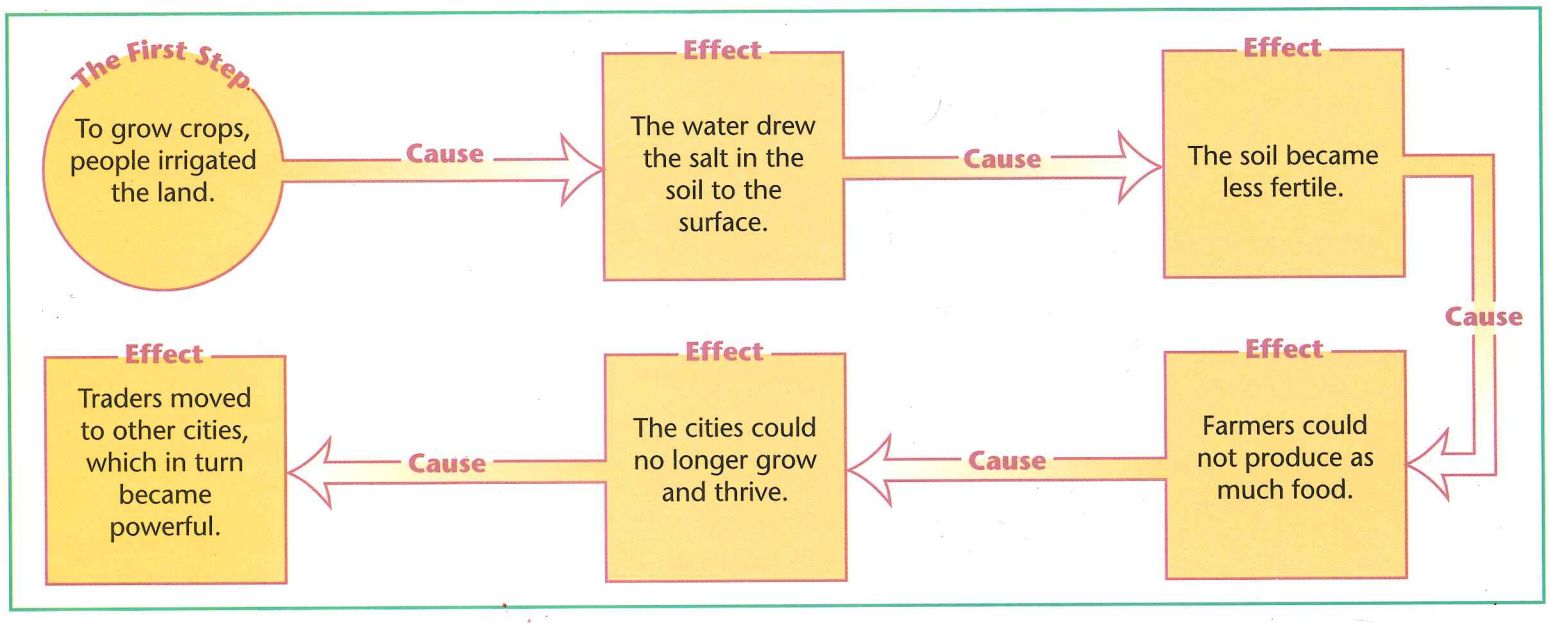
The people found ways to **irrigate** [IR-uh-gate] the land, or bring water to their fields. At first, people dug away parts of the riverbank so that the water would flood onto their land. They built dams to make pools and dipped water out of them with buckets tied to poles. They built **dikes** (a low earthen wall) to direct the flow of water. Later, they created a complex network of irrigation ditches and canals. This irrigation system forced people to work together because they had to maintain the canals for the good of everyone.

People have used dams for many purposes. This dam was owned by a Canadian mining company. It once held back poisonous waste from a mine in Spain. When the dam broke, the waste poured onto nearby farmland.

The network of canals brought greater communication and co-operation among towns, as well. The canals and rivers became the roadways of the Mesopotamians.

As it turned out, the methods used by the Mesopotamians created an even more difficult problem. Because of the farmers' success, food grew plentifully. The population increased, and so did the need for water. The desert soil contained a lot of salt, however. The irrigation caused this salt to rise to the surface of the soil. The extra salt poisoned the plants. The more the people irrigated their fields with water from the rivers, the saltier the soil became. After a few hundred years of irrigation, the soil could no longer produce crops. The people of these cities either died off or moved to more fertile land. New cities would arise at the new location.

Trace the series of causes and effects that, in turn, brought to an end the powerful cities of Sumer, Babylon, Assyria, and Chaldea. Do you think it's possible to predict long-term consequences and avoid them? Why or why not?



Think For Yourself

By irrigating the land, the people of Mesopotamia made the land too salty to produce food. It is easy to look back in time to make judgments about others' mistakes. But what about us today? Are we having some impacts on our environment that could cause problems in the future? Think about the following actions of people:

- A family buys a second car.
- A student makes a lunch that includes a disposable plastic container.

In a two-column chart, list at least one consequence for each action. Then add three more actions and consequences.

Contact and Conflict

Mesopotamian women enjoyed several freedoms. They could own property and slaves, run businesses, and take part in trading.

The communities thrived partly through the hard work of slaves. Some people were made slaves after being captured in battle. Others sold themselves or their children into slavery to cover their debts.

A community's economy is its wealth and resources.

Like the history of all civilizations, Mesopotamia's history can be described as a series of contacts and conflicts. Each of the four major civilizations—Sumer, Babylon, Assyria, and Chaldea—rose to power, thrived, and then declined.

Mesopotamia Thrives

Because there was plenty of food in Mesopotamia, some people could make a living by creating goods or selling their services in exchange for surplus food. People began to develop skills in leatherwork, pottery, carpentry, weaving, and metalwork. They learned to make gold rings, statuettes covered with **lapis lazuli** [LAH-pis LAH-zuh-ly] (a blue gemstone), and shell containers for make-up. By trading these goods, people could make a good living—the **economy** thrived.

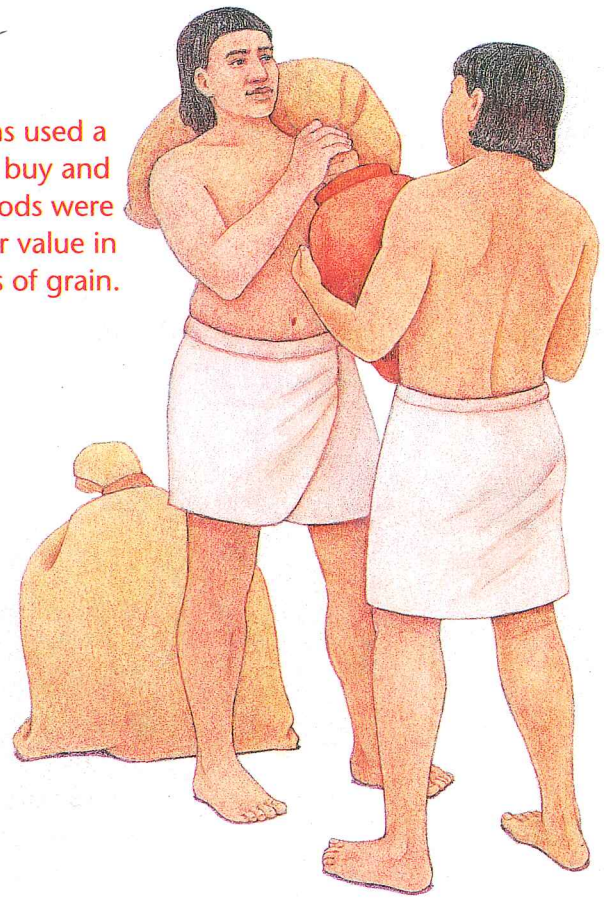
With its many rivers and canals, the region soon became a centre of trade. The Sumerian traders sailed up and down the Tigris and Euphrates Rivers in small boats made of reeds with goatskin sails. They also traded with their neighbours throughout the Mediterranean. Caravans and long ships powered by square sails and oars carried building stone from Africa, copper from Cyprus, gold from Egypt, and cedar from Lebanon. In trade, the Sumerians offered wool, cloth, jewellery, oil, and grains.

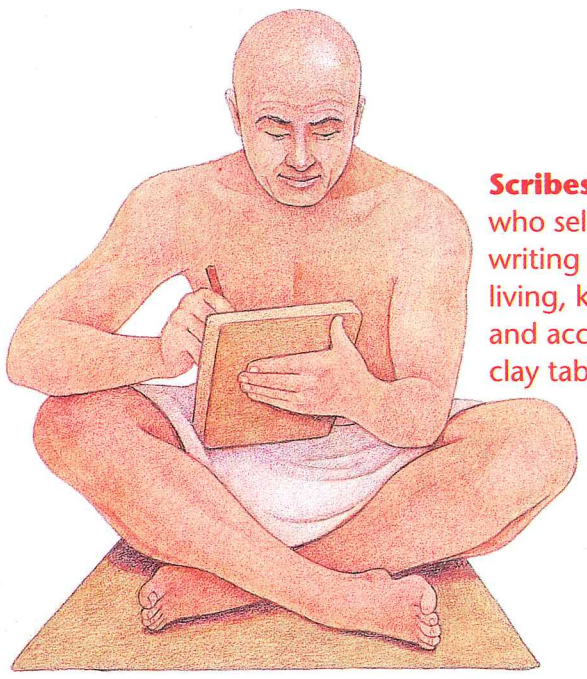
Babylon thrived as a trading centre because it lay at the centre of the main trade routes. Babylonian caravans travelled to Persia and Asia Minor. Their ships traded along the rivers and along the coasts of Arabia and India.

Trade with nearby lands brought more than goods. People also learned about one another's language, religion, and inventions. For example, new ways of making pottery and new tools for farming spread quickly through the Mediterranean after they appeared in Mesopotamia. This "trade" in ideas helped the Mesopotamian society flourish.

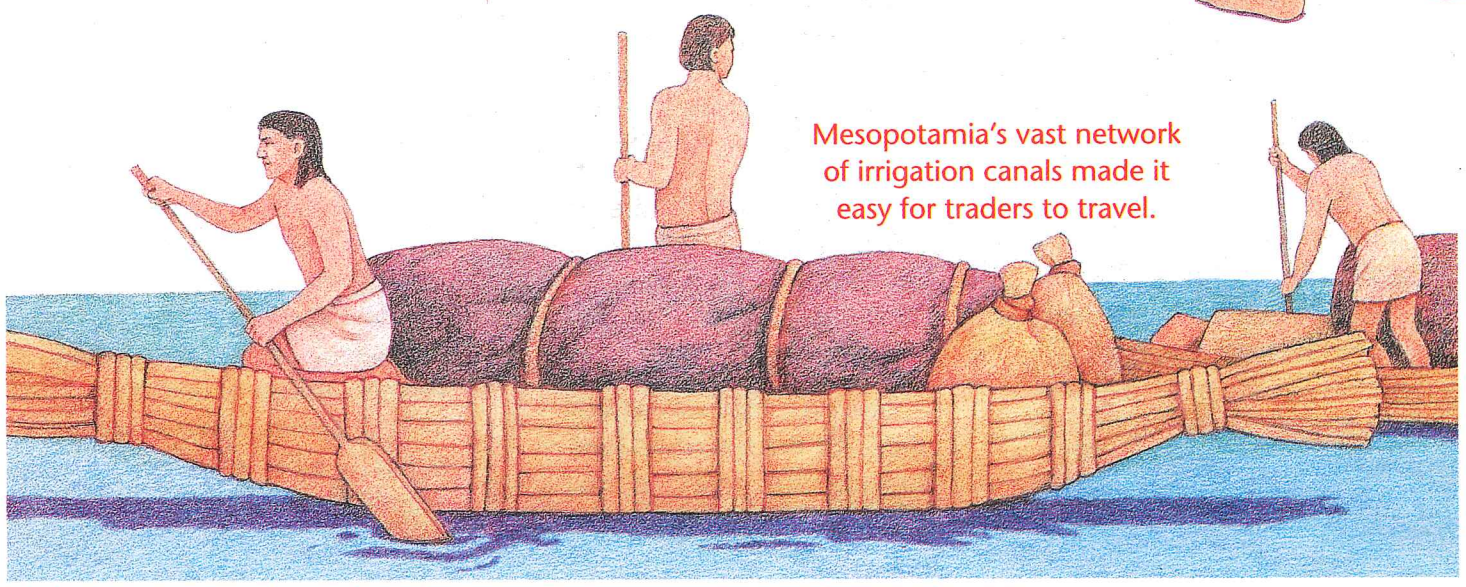
The Babylonians were one of the first peoples to exchange money for goods. The **shekel** [SHEK-ul] was a silver, copper, or gold coin that weighed the same as 180 grains of barley. A **mina** [MEE-nuh] was worth 60 shekels, and a **talent** was worth 60 minas. How many grains of barley was a talent worth?

The Sumerians used a **barter system** to buy and sell goods. Goods were exchanged for their value in sacks of grain.



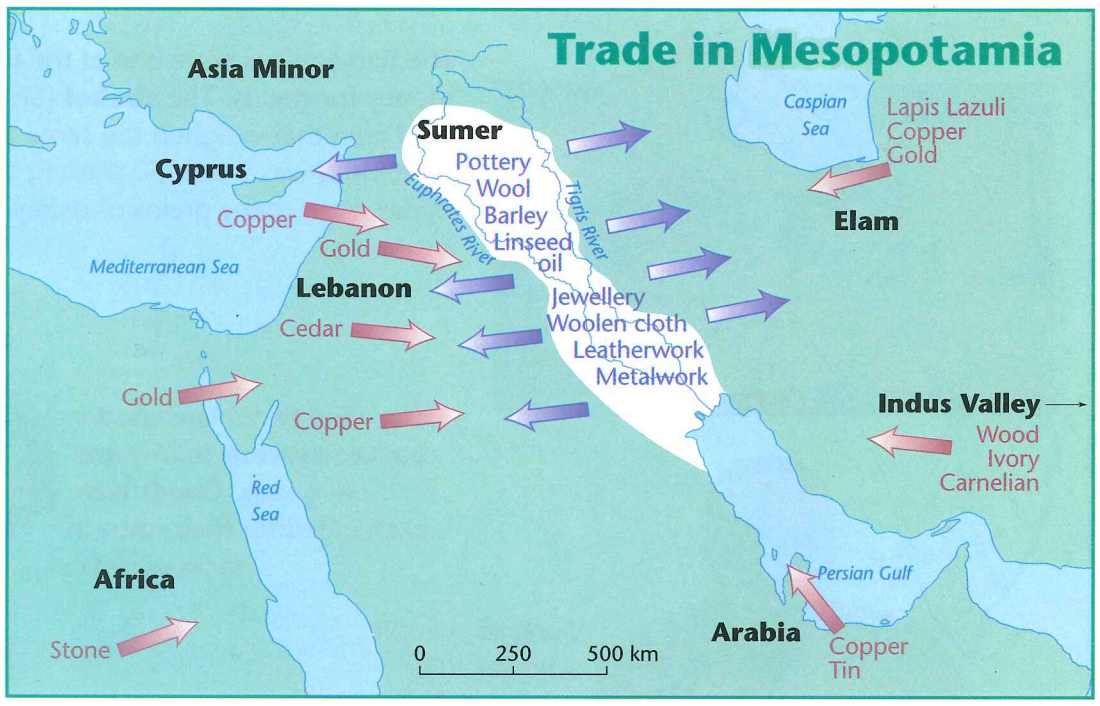


Scribes, people who sell their writing skills for a living, kept records and accounts on clay tablets.



Mesopotamia's vast network of irrigation canals made it easy for traders to travel.

The peoples of Mesopotamia traded goods with people throughout their corner of the world. Did Sumerians trade their goods for raw materials or finished goods? Why?



Ancient Stories

Voyage to Nippur

The Mesopotamians were the first people to leave a written record of their civilization. Thousands of clay tablets tell us about their daily lives. By piecing together the fragments of information, we have gradually come to understand what life was like in Mesopotamia. One writer, Elizabeth Lansing, used this knowledge to create a fictional account of the journey of a Sumerian trader from his home city of Erech along the Euphrates River to another Sumerian city, Nippur [NIP-poor]. As you read, you'll notice that the trader seems to be gathering information. Think about why he might be doing so.

The riverbanks were wide bands of green, dotted with date palms and thick patches of reeds. Near the half dozen cities that lay between Erech and Nippur the belts of green broadened out into cultivated fields and pastureland, vineyards, and groves of fig trees. These lands were the property of each walled city. Their size and state of cultivation were an indication of the city's prosperity.

The river itself was a lively place, for the muddy waters of the Euphrates provided the broad highway between one Sumerian city and another. Many of the craft were long trading vessels, such as the one in which the man from Erech journeyed. Among them were vessels capable of travelling long distances. Sometimes, aided by a huge square-shaped sail, they ventured far out on

the wide waters of the Mediterranean Sea to the west to bring cedars from Lebanon or stone and precious metals from the lands to the north. Smaller basket-like boats were more common. They crowded the waters, particularly near the wharves of each walled city....

In the fields and vineyards surrounding the walled cities that he passed, workers were gathering in the harvest.... Both men and beasts were taking the harvest to the temple compound within the city. There the harvest would be **allotted** [divided into shares] and distributed to the people....

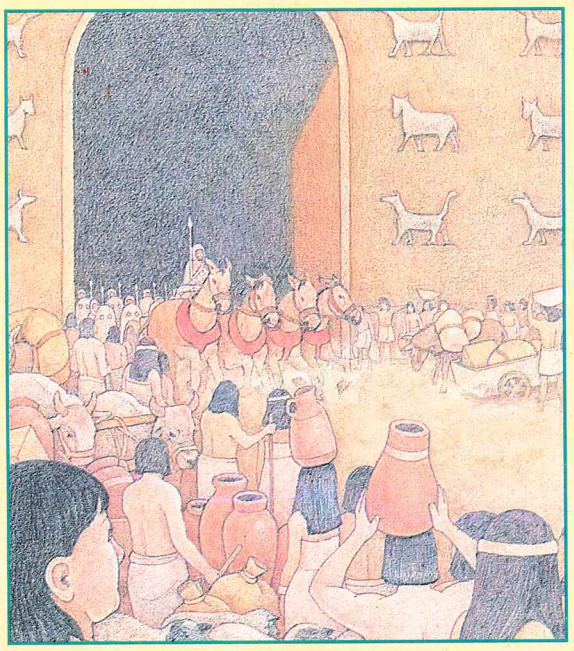
The stranger's boat was approaching Nippur. The high walls of Sumer's cultural city rose splendidly above the broad fields that stretched away for miles on either side of the river.... The traffic thickened as the long, high-decked boat drew nearer to Nippur....

The logs of cedar heaped along the wharf told [the trader] that Nippur was trading with the northern provinces, where the trees grew in the great forest of the mountains. The bars of gold and copper were evidence that Nippur was in touch with the lands to the east. He took careful note of these signs of prosperity. Later he would hire a scribe to write his observations with a **stylus** [reed pen] on a soft bit of clay. He himself could not write; that was an art for the learned men and was perhaps beneath his dignity as a member of his king's household.

Once beyond the dock area, the stranger followed a hard-packed dirt roadway leading toward the Nanna Gate.... Like the wharf area, it swarmed with activity. A cloud of dust rose above the laden donkeys; herds of sheep and goats were being pushed and prodded along in the direction of the gate. Wheeled carts, heaped with goods and produce, rattled past, drawn by oxen or pairs of donkeys. The crowd grew thicker as the massive gate loomed closer.

A shouted order sent the entire throng scurrying back. A two-wheeled military chariot drawn by four donkeys swept out from the city. A driver, wearing a bronze helmet, stood on the axle, supporting himself by gripping a fleece-covered headboard. He guided the donkeys with long leather reins fixed to their noses by a ring. After the chariot, marching four abreast and wearing leather tunics, came a detachment of foot soldiers. Their highly polished short swords and shields gleamed in the sun. This was a guard detail, one of the many that watched over the city. The stranger, from his place in the shadow of the gate, observed that the soldiers looked tough and hardy, a fact that would interest his king.

From Elizabeth Lansing, "A Stranger in Nippur," *The Sumerians: Inventors and Builders*, (Toronto: McGraw-Hill Book Company, 1971), 54–61



The trader scurries out of the way to avoid being trampled by the military chariot coming through the Nanna Gate.

Try This

1. Look back through "Voyage to Nippur" to find out what the trader found interesting. Put the following items in the first column of a two-column chart. Add your own findings. Then, in the second column, describe what each discovery told the trader about Nippur.

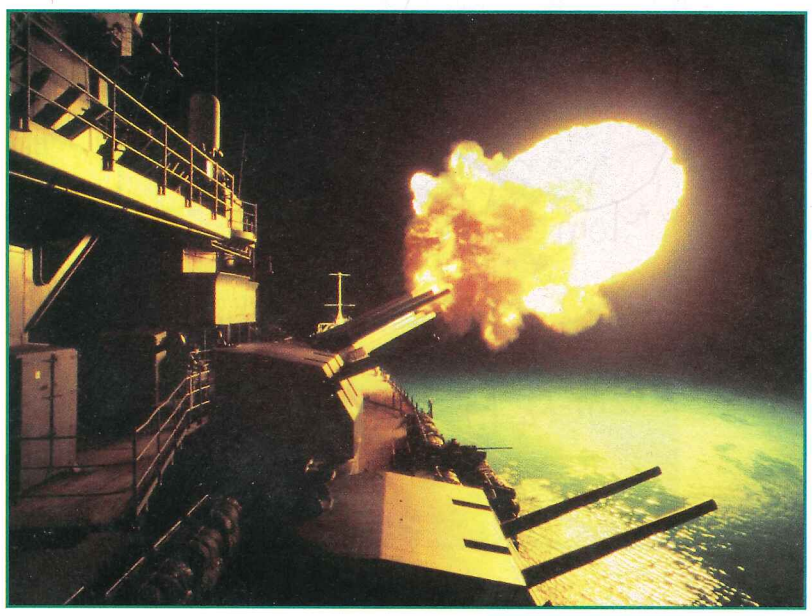
What the Trader Saw
• pastureland, vineyards, and groves of fig trees
• vessels in the harbour that could travel long distances
• cedar logs heaped along the wharf
• bars of gold and copper
• a wharf area busy with people moving goods and animals towards the city
• people moving out of the way quickly when a military chariot arrives

2. Think, pair, share. Think about the following question and write down your thoughts. "What made Nippur a good place for people to build a city?" Discuss your ideas with a partner. Then, with your partner, meet with another pair of students to share your ideas.

Conflict and Warfare

Competition for the growing wealth of the Fertile Crescent brought conflict.

As you saw previously, trade and other peaceful contact enriched the civilization of Mesopotamia. But other contact led to warfare. When a civilization traded regularly with its neighbours, it usually flourished. But if it had many strong enemies, it was usually doomed.



The battleship *Missouri* fires its guns during the Gulf War, a war fought in the Middle East near the former lands of Mesopotamia. As in the battle pictured on the clay tablet shown on the next page, this war was a fight over land and resources. Compare the technologies of war shown in these two pictures.

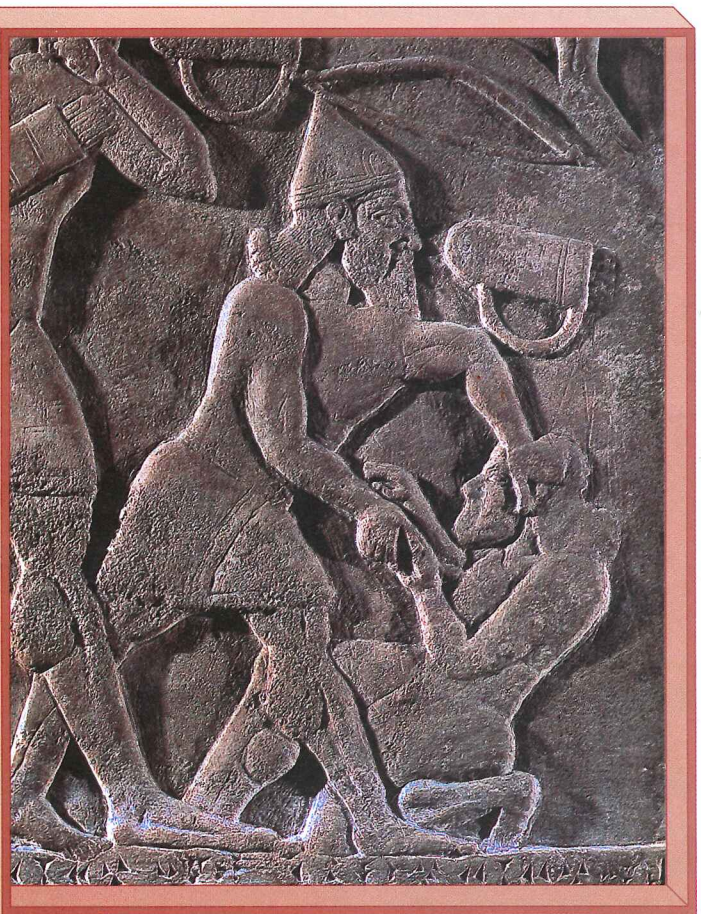
How was conflict a part of life in Mesopotamia? We could use many types of information to find out. Three that help us discover the stories of the ancient world are artifacts, chronologies, and maps.

Artifacts Help Tell the Story

Look at the following artifacts to learn more about conflict in Mesopotamia. What special kinds of information do you learn by studying pictures of artifacts and their captions?

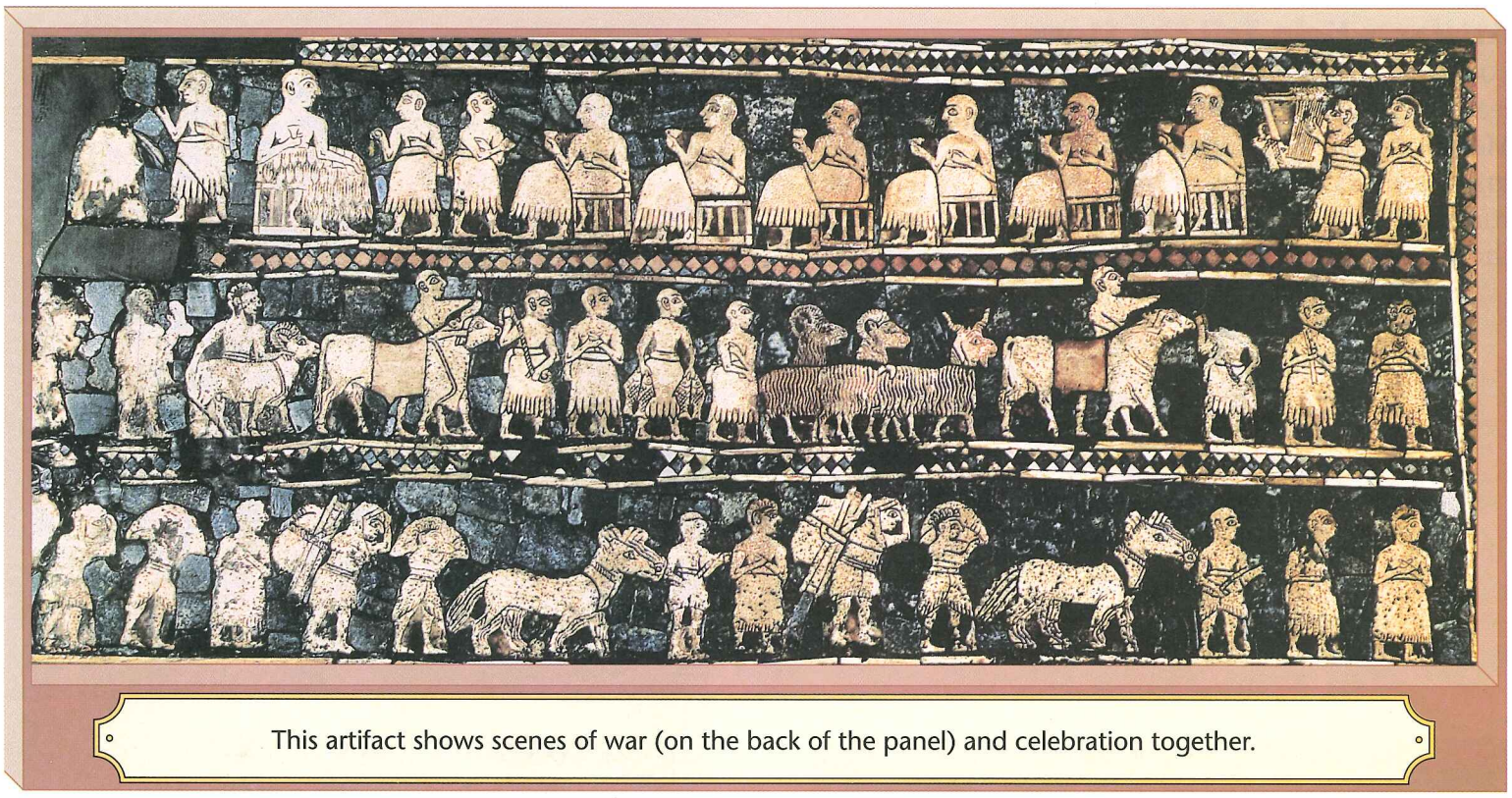
This **relief** (carving on a stone surface) was found at the palace of Ashurbanipal at Niniveh [NIN-uh-vuh]. Each soldier has a different task. What are they?

This artifact shows Babylonian battle techniques.



This artifact shows that war prisoners were treated harshly.

This relief, found in the palace of Ashurnazirpal II in Nimrud [NIM-rood], shows an Assyrian soldier killing a captive. Some captives were killed; others became slaves or labourers.



This artifact shows scenes of war (on the back of the panel) and celebration together.

The Standard of Ur [UR] (made about 2700 BCE) was probably the sounding board of a **lyre**, a mini harp. This inlay of shell and lapis lazuli shows a banquet with animals and men carrying goods. The other side of the standard shows a scene of war. Why would a banquet and a war be shown together?

Chronologies Help Tell the Story

Chronologies [kruh-NOL-uh-jeez] list important events or developments over a period of time. They always list the events in order, from earliest to most recent. Some chronologies are set up as time lines, which help us see the events spaced out in relation to one another. As you read the following chronology, think about its strengths and weaknesses as a source of information.

A Chronology of Mesopotamian Empires

6000 BCE Early herders and farmers from the north move into the Tigris and Euphrates River valleys, farming villages and towns. They begin raising animals, growing crops, and irrigating fields. In times of severe drought, herders who live on the edge of the desert move into the cultivated areas and allow their herds to feed on the crops in the fields. This usually leads to conflict.

3500 BCE The use of irrigation ensures a food supply for the growing cities. Artisans and merchants living in the cities help trade expand. Cities give rise to the Sumerian civilization.

3000 BCE Under the rule of the first kings, cities become **city-states**. A city-state is independent and does not belong to a country. Trade grows with cultures in Anatolia [a-nuh-TOLE-ee-uh], Syria [SEER-ee-uh], Persia [PUR-zhuh], and the Indus [IN-dus] Valley. Conflict among the city-states over water and land lead to a constant state of warfare.

2300 BCE The Akkadians [uh-KAY-dee-uns] overpower the Sumerians, uniting the whole region into the first Mesopotamian Empire. A short period of peace follows.

2125 BCE The Sumerians revive and conquer the region. Art and writing flourish, and some of the great structures are built.

1792–1595 BCE Under Hammurabi [ham-uh-RAH-bee], Babylon gains control. The economy thrives throughout Mesopotamia. Astronomy and the arts flourish before Babylon is conquered by the Hittites [HIT-tites].

1595–1157 BCE A chaotic age lasts for centuries. Several empires rise and fall, but none can create a lasting empire because tribes on the edges of Mesopotamia continue to attack.

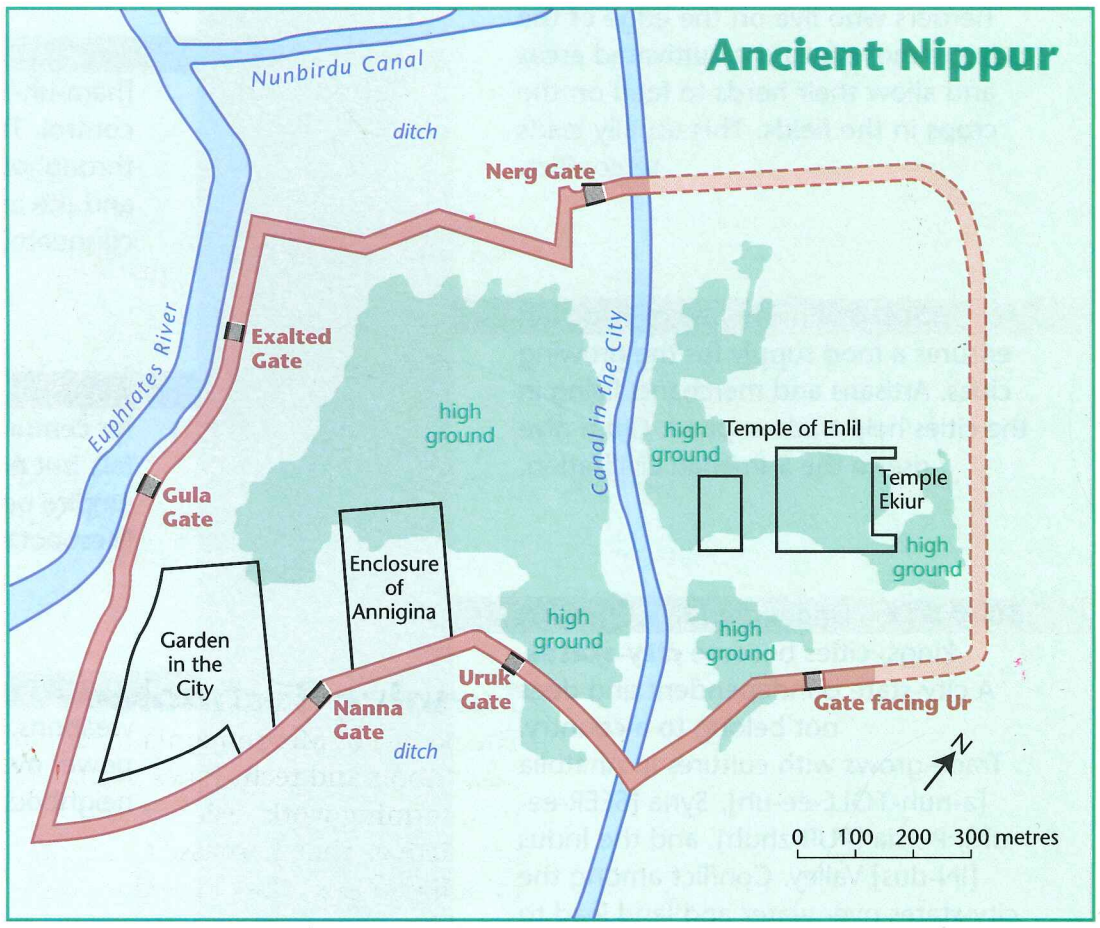
883–612 BCE With chariots and iron weapons, Assyria rises to a position of power over the region, ruling its neighbours as far away as Egypt.

612–539 BCE The Chaldeans defeat the Assyrians. A new Babylonian empire emerges. Nebuchadnezzar [neb-uh-kud-NEZ-ur] brings Babylon new glory and takes the Israelites captive.

539 BCE–CE 637 Eleven centuries of foreign rule begin with the Persian capture of Babylon in 590 BCE.

Maps Help Tell the Story

Maps can help us understand the history of an area. For example, we can see how political boundaries change over time, or how an area's landforms make it vulnerable to invasion. We can also use maps to present specialized information such as the location of natural resources or settlements. As you examine the map below, think about the strengths and limitations of the information in maps.



This city map shows the major features of Nippur, the sacred city of Sumer. It is based on a map of the city created about 1300 BCE. Find the Nanna Gate, which is the gate used by the fictional trader in the Ancient Stories feature on pages 74–75.

Try This

1. Think, pair, share. Think about the following question and write down your thoughts. "In what ways was contact both good and bad for Mesopotamia?" Discuss your ideas with a partner. Then, with your partner, meet with another pair of students to share your ideas.
2. Work with a partner to create a chart showing the strengths and limitations of the three sources of information described in this section: artifacts, chronologies, and maps.

Innovations of Mesopotamia

Can you imagine life without the wheel? How about books or laws? You wouldn't have to go to school, but you couldn't do much else that you're used to. Depending on where you live, you and your family might end up living a simple lifestyle, hauling heavy loads of fuel and water on your back, growing vegetables on a small plot of land, and living in fear of attack by hungry neighbours.

The Mesopotamians were the first to discover or invent some of the most basic improvements in human life. Their **innovations**—or new ways of doing things—changed the way people lived in much of the world. Just consider the most famous of these innovations: the wheel, sailing ships, writing, irrigation, law, and **architecture** [AR-kuh-tek-chur].

Engineering

Although we can only guess how the wheel was discovered, the Mesopotamians were the first humans to use it. The wheel changed human life greatly. It allowed people to build wagons to transport goods and to build war chariots. Wheels were also used as pulleys to raise water from wells. Using potter's wheels, potters could make fine pottery.

How has the wheel made life easier for the woman on the right?

Farming Technology

The people of Mesopotamia invented many tools and techniques to make their farming work easier and more productive. They harnessed animals to pull ploughs. They placed a shoulder yoke on oxen to make them easier to guide. They altered the plough so that it would turn the soil and drop seeds into the freshly ploughed rows.

Architecture is the art of designing buildings.

Astronomy

Mesopotamian **astronomers** worked out a twelve-month calendar based on the cycles of the moon. They divided the year into two seasons: summer and winter.

An astronomer [uh-STRON-uh-mur] is someone who studies the universe.

Mathematics

The Mesopotamians used mathematics to build canals, to keep accurate farm and trade records, and to calculate the taxes each family owed to the state. Their counting system was based on the number 60. We still use 60 when we measure the degrees in a circle or count time in minutes and seconds.

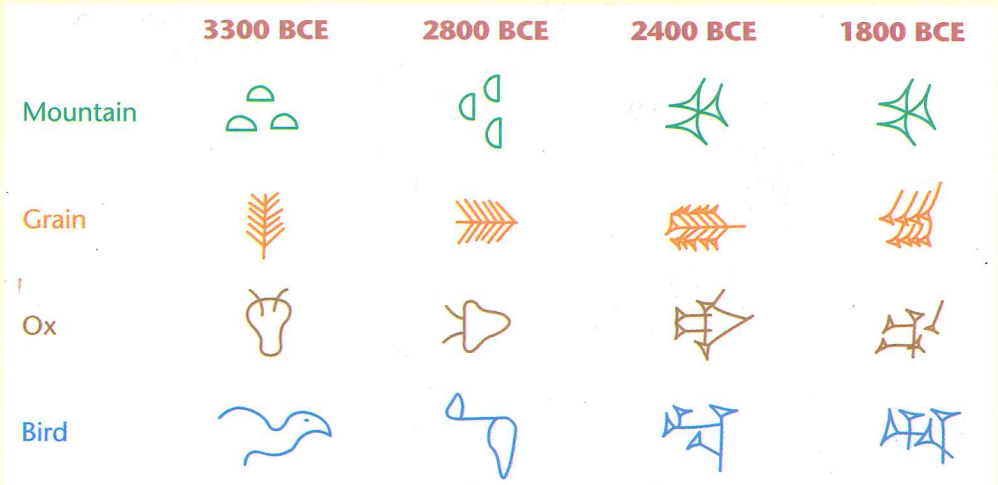
Writing

The Mesopotamians were the first people to develop written language. Writing was probably first used to keep track of trade. Education, laws, history, and literature all became possible after humans could record their ideas. The Sumerians developed a form of writing called "cuneiform."

A Closer Look

Cuneiform

The Sumerians developed the earliest known system of writing, called cuneiform [kyoo-NAY-uh-form]. Cuneiform first appeared in Sumer about 3000 BCE. It evolved from simple picture signs for words, called **pictographs** [PIK-tuh-grafs]. At first, one pictograph was marked on one small clay token, to symbolize and record a trade. Then someone realized it was handier to mark several pictographs on one large clay tablet. Pictographs evolved over the years into symbols that stood for sounds instead of words. The name cuneiform means "wedge-shaped" from the shape of the marks made by the reed pens used to write on clay tablets.



After people get used to writing, they tend to write faster. Over time, the early pictographs were simplified into strokes that could be written more quickly. Would this make learning to write easier or more difficult?

Think For Yourself

What did the people of Mesopotamia use writing for? How do you think the invention might have developed? How do you think this invention changed people's lives? What would life be like today without writing?

Laws

With the development of writing, the Mesopotamians began to write down laws. The best-known set of laws of the ancient Mesopotamians is the Code of Hammurabi. Hammurabi was a king of Babylon. He brought prosperity and peace to the city-states he ruled throughout Mesopotamia. He claimed that the gods had told him to write down laws to make sure that "the strong may not oppress the weak." This set of laws helps us understand the values and customs of the ancient Babylonians.

Hammurabi's code was an important step toward creating a society in which everyone's rights are recognized. The code lists 282 laws. They cover all aspects of people's daily life, including family, labour, buying and selling land, possessions, and trade. Each law has a set punishment.

All civilizations have laws that say what people can and cannot do. When laws are written down, everyone knows them and everyone can expect equal treatment. Why do you think laws are considered a sign of civilization?

Hammurabi's complete code of laws was carved onto this stela [STEEL-uh], an upright stone. The stela originally stood in a temple in Babylon. More recently, it was moved to a museum in Paris, France. Do you think this is a good place to keep the stela? Why, or why not?

PERSPECTIVES

Hammurabi vs. Canadian Law

Hammurabi's laws were based on the idea of "an eye for an eye." People could be put to death, lose an eye or a limb, be tortured, or have their children put to death, sometimes for minor crimes. It was believed that tough punishments would scare people into obeying the law. Decide if the following sample laws would stop you from disobeying the law.

- If a noble destroys the eye of another noble, his eye shall be destroyed.
- If a noble destroys the eye of a commoner or breaks the bone of a commoner, he shall pay one mina of silver.
- If a noble destroys the eye of a noble's slave, he shall pay one-half the slave's value.
- If a man helps a male or female slave escape through the city gates, he shall be put to death.
- If a house collapses causing the death of a son of the owner of the house, the son of the builder of the house shall be put to death.
- If a son strikes his father, his hand shall be cut off.
- If [a woman] has not been discreet, has gone out, ruined her house, belittled her husband, she shall be drowned.

In Canada, we believe that people will obey the law out of respect rather than fear. We believe that people who break the law can learn from their mistakes and should be given a second chance. Our laws are also meant to protect people from being punished for something they did not do.

Consider the first of Hammurabi's laws in the list above. In Canada, if someone caused another person to lose an eye, the punishment would depend on a lot of things. For example, here are some of the questions that we would ask in a Canadian court of law.

- Is the offender a youth or an adult?
- Was the crime committed on purpose?
- Has the offender caused similar injuries before?
- Does the offender admit guilt?
- Is the offender likely to commit the crime again?
- Should the offender be treated less harshly for some reason (e.g., fatal illness)?
- Is the offender sorry?

Different answers to these questions would lead to different punishments. Do you think Canada's or Hammurabi's laws are better? Why?

Think For Yourself

List six ways our lives would be different without the innovations mentioned in this section. Which of the innovations of the Mesopotamians do you think was the most important to future people? Give at least two examples showing how that invention or innovation changed peoples' lives. Be prepared to present your opinion to the class.

Try This

Mesopotamia was fortunate in many ways and unfortunate in others. For example:

Fortunately, Mesopotamia had lots of food.	Unfortunately, lots of people wanted it.
Fortunately, the landforms of Mesopotamia made travel easy.	Unfortunately, the landforms made Mesopotamia easy to attack.

Create some more "Fortunately/Unfortunately" statements about Mesopotamia.

Looking Back

In this chapter you have seen the beginnings of civilization. You saw how the environment encouraged the development of cities, and how contact with other peoples brought both benefits and drawbacks to Mesopotamia. What do you think was the most important factor that made civilization possible in Mesopotamia?