

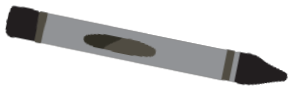
Mesopotamia STATION 1

GEOGRAPHY

- I. Using colored pencils color in the map on your "Geography" station worksheet as follows:

BLUE:

- Persian Gulf
- Mediterranean Sea
- Nile River
- Tigris River
- Euphrates River

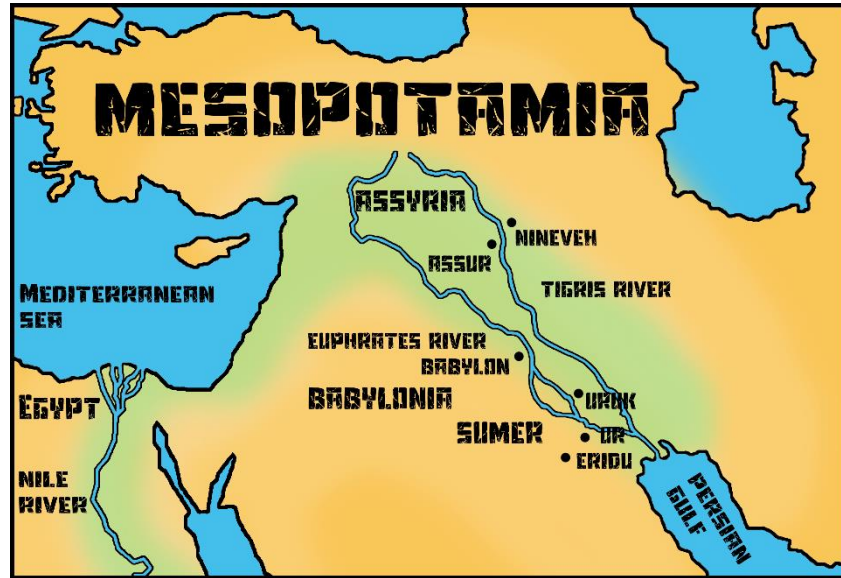


GREEN: (shade)

- Mesopotamia

YELLOW:

- Land surrounding Mesopotamia



2. Read the following facts about the geography of Mesopotamia.

- The **Fertile Crescent** is a curved region with rich soil in the Middle East.
- It includes Mesopotamia which means "land between the rivers."
- Mesopotamia lies between the Tigris and Euphrates rivers.
 - Each spring, the rivers flooded spreading water and silt across the plain. This left behind rich, fertile soil perfect for farming.
- The region stretched between the shores of the Mediterranean Sea to the east and the Persian Gulf to the west.
- The region had fertile, or rich, soil.
 - In the northern part of Mesopotamia, streams and rivers were fed through the Taurus and Zagros mountain ranges.
 - The southern region was dryer and hotter. Therefore, the Tigris and Euphrates rivers were used for irrigation.
 - The Sumerians used technology to irrigate, or supply water to, their crops.
 - They dug canals to bring river water to their fields.
- Today, the Fertile Crescent includes the countries Iraq, Syria, Lebanon, Cyprus, Jordan, Palestine, and Kuwait.

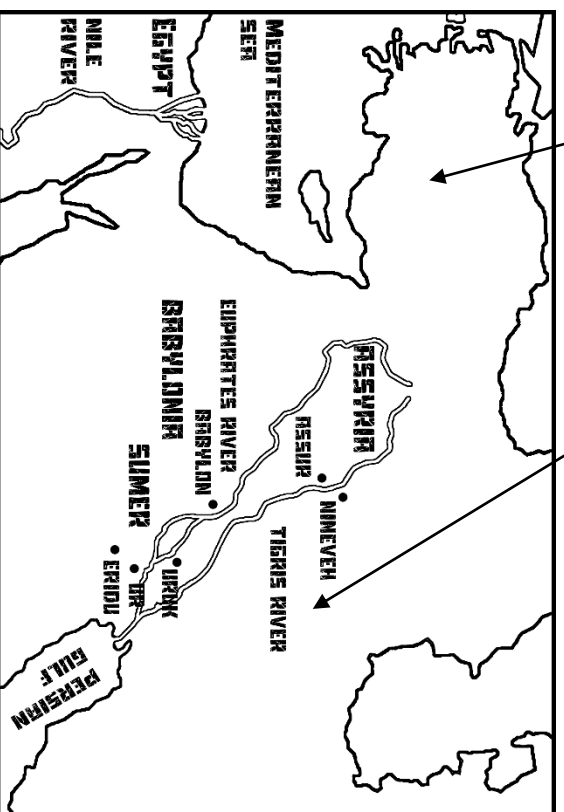
3. Fill in the blanks on your "Geography" station worksheet using information from the facts.

4. Answer the "Think" question on your "Geography" worksheet.

GEOGRAPHY

- The Fertile Crescent is a curved region with _____ in the _____.
- It includes _____ which means “_____.”

In the _____ of Mesopotamia, _____ and _____ were fed through the _____ and _____ ranges.



Each _____, the rivers _____ spreading water and silt across the plain. This left behind _____, perfect for _____.

THINK! Why did irrigation in Mesopotamia lead to an increase in population? _____



The _____ region was _____ and _____. Therefore, the Tigris and Euphrates rivers were used for _____.

The _____ used technology to _____, or _____, their crops.

STATION 2

MATERIALS



Mesopotamia STATION 2

RELIGION

1. Read about the role of religion in Sumerian society.

The Sumerians practiced **polytheism**. Polytheism is the belief in more than one god. Sumerians believed that the gods behaved similarly to people. They thought that the gods ate, slept, and even got married. However, the gods also had great power. According to the Sumerians, the gods used their power to either help the Sumerians prosper or struggle. Since the Sumerians believed that every aspect of their lives were controlled by the gods, they gave the gods prayers and offerings so that they might have good fortune. As a result, the Sumerians tried to keep the gods happy.

Sumerians believed that only priests could communicate with the gods. Therefore, priests had an important role in their society. Sumerians believed that priests' connections to the gods brought peace to the society.

Each Mesopotamian city had a chief god. In larger Sumerian cities, pyramid-shaped temples were built for their god. The temple or **ziggurat** consisted of a series of stacked platforms that formed a pyramid shape. The largest ziggurats were seven stories high.

2. Read the statements on the "Fix the Mistakes" handout.
3. Make each incorrect statement correct by crossing out the wrong information and writing in the correct information.
4. Then, cut apart the statements and glue them onto your "Religion" station worksheet.
5. Answer the "Think" question on your "Religion" worksheet.

FIX THE MISTAKES

Fix the mistakes in the statements below.

Cut them out and glue them onto your station worksheet.

Mesopotamia STATION 2

Polytheism is the belief in one god.

Sumerians believed that some parts of their lives were controlled by the gods.

Sumerians tried to make the gods angry.

Everyone could communicate with the gods.

Each Mesopotamian city shared the same god.

The ziggurat was a square-shaped school built for their priest.

FIX THE MISTAKES

Fix the mistakes in the statements below.

Cut them out and glue them onto your station worksheet.

Mesopotamia STATION 2

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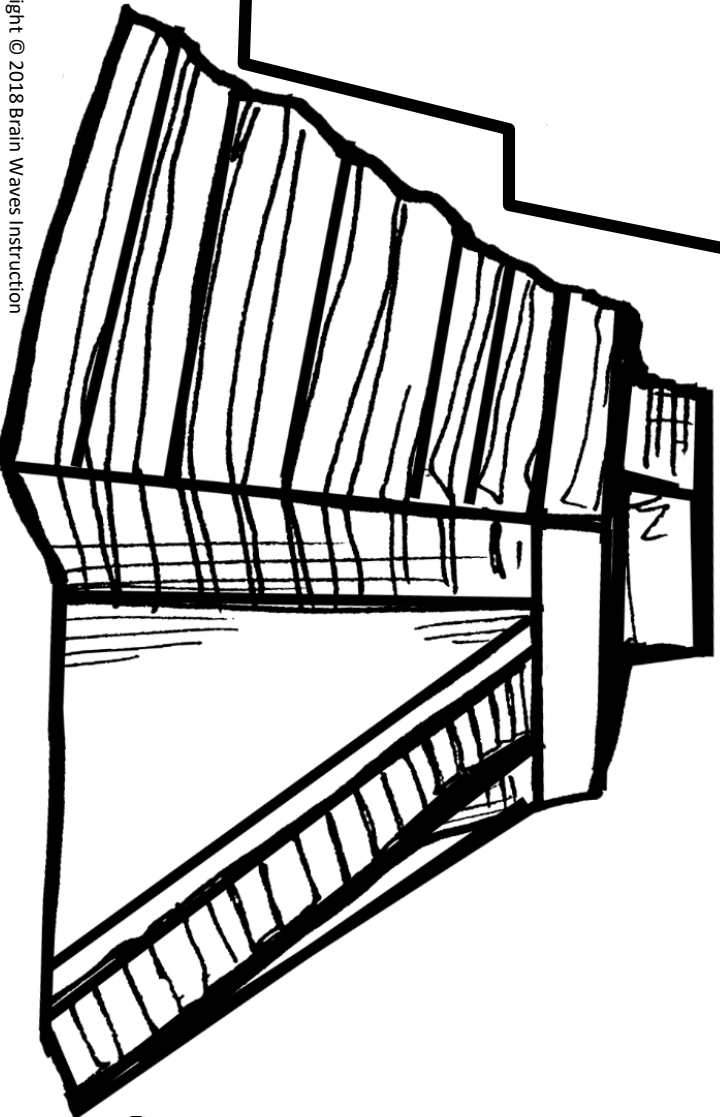
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RELIGION



THINK! Why did Sumerians believe the success of their society depended on their priests?

STATION 3

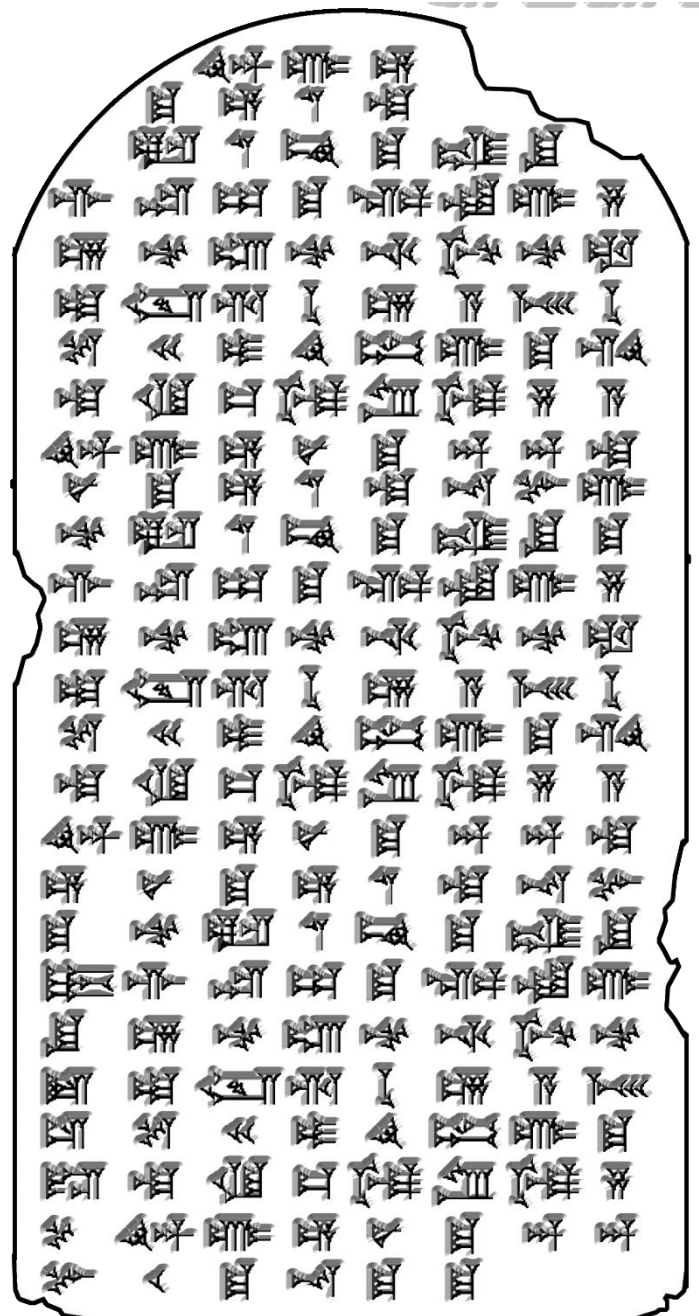
MATERIALS



Mesopotamia STATION 3

ACHIEVEMENTS

1. Have each group member select a reading card.
 - If you have less than 5 group members, you may need to read more than one.
 - If you have more than 5 group members, you will need to share cards.
2. Read the cards out loud to each other in the following order:
 - FARMING
 - WRITING
 - MATHEMATICS
 - BRONZE
 - THE WHEEL
3. After a card is read out loud, pause and write 3 facts about the achievement on your "Achievements" worksheet.
Reference the reading card to make sure your facts are accurate.
4. Repeat this process of reading/listening to the achievement cards and then recording information about the achievements until all 5 cards have been shared.
5. Finally, answer the "Think!" question about the achievements.



Mesopotamia STATION 3

READING CARDS

THE WHEEL

The wheel was invented in ancient Mesopotamia. At first it was used for irrigation, pottery making, and milling. Then, the wheel was used to create the chariot, which was the first concept of personal transportation.

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FARMING

Sumerians created a new way to plant crops. Sumerian farmers developed a seed funnel that could attach to their plows. As the plow advanced forward, seeds automatically dropped into the soil. This was a much easier way to plant seeds compared to earlier farmers.

WRITING

In about 3200 B.C. the Sumerians invented a system for writing. At first, the writing consisted of simple pictures to represent objects. Then, by about 2400 B.C., the picture writing simplified. The system of writing used triangular-shaped symbols to stand for words, ideas, or sounds. A **scribe** or professional writer, wrote by pressing a reed into a wet clay tablet. When the tablet dried, there was a permanent record. This form of triangular-shaped writing is known as **cuneiform**.

MATHEMATICS

As civilizations began to trade, they needed to have a way to count the goods given and received. Sumerians were the first people to develop a concept for counting. Mesopotamians also developed the concept of time. They divided an hour into 60 minutes and a minute into 60 seconds. Sumerians also divided the year into 12 months of 30 days each.

BRONZE

Sumerians mixed copper and tin to make a new metal: bronze. Bronze is harder than copper so it was much better for making weapons and tools. The stronger bronze weapons would eventually play an important role in the growth of cities into powerful city-states.

ACHIEVEMENTS

FARMING

WRITING

MATHEMATICS

BRONZE

THE WHEEL



THINK! Choose one achievement and explain how it helped the Sumerians become more prosperous.

STATION 4

MATERIALS



Mesopotamia STATION 4

POLITICS

I. Read about the government of Sumer.

In Mesopotamia, government and religion were closely linked. Sumerians believed that each city was protected by a particular god. The chief god looked after the city's interests. Since it was believed that priests were connected to the gods, they were the most important people in the community. Naturally, priests took on a governing role. However, as cities grew and conflicts arose, priests needed assistance from a leader. So, priests chose leaders to rule the city-states particularly in times of war.

When the war ended, many of the leaders kept control of the city-states. To stay in power, kings worked closely with the priests. Kings tried to respect the priests' powers. In exchange, the priests declared that the king was sent from the gods to rule the city. Gradually kings took over many of the jobs and responsibilities once completed by the priests. Kings hired workers to build temples, roads, and canals. Each king became the city's primary lawmaker and judge.

Some rulers even created a written set of rules or law codes. The earliest known law code was issued around 2100 B.C. by the king of Ur, Ur-Nammu. His law code contained laws about slavery, marriage, and hurting other people.

2. Answer questions about the Mesopotamian government on your "Politics" worksheet. Use complete sentences and details from the text.
3. Be sure to answer the "Think!" question at the bottom of the worksheet.

POLITICS

WHY WERE PRIESTS CONSIDERED SO IMPORTANT?

WHY DID PRIESTS NEED ASSISTANCE FROM A LEADER?

WHAT DID LEADERS DO TO STAY IN POWER?

WHAT DID LEADERS GET IN EXCHANGE?

WHAT DID THE KINGS DO?

WRITE TWO FACTS ABOUT THE LAW CODES.



THINK! How did the kings
and priests of Sumer
support one another?

STATION 5 MATERIALS



Mesopotamia STATION 5

ECONOMY

I. Read about trade in Mesopotamia.

CITY-STATES

- City-states formed in Mesopotamia.
- A **city-state** is an independent state complete with its own government and traditions.
- The city-state included a city, surrounding territory, city walls, and densely packed houses.

TRADE

- Each city-state was a station of trade.
- Traders from one city-state would take goods to another city-state to **trade** for materials or goods lacking in their own city-states.
- Traders packed donkeys with goods like cloth and barley. Then, they went on long journeys before they returned with goods like wood, stone or copper.
- Most trade was done through **barter**. Bartering is a trading system in which people exchange goods without using money.

TRADE IMPROVEMENTS

- At first, some traders used major canals and rivers to transport goods. They carried goods on barges (large rafts).
- Eventually, Sumerians invented the wheel so they were able to create carts to carry goods.
- In addition, Sumerians used sails on their boats to make trading easier.

2. Select one fact from each section of information above. Write the fact on your "Economy" worksheet.
3. Then, draw a simple doodle or sketch to illustrate the fact that you wrote down.
4. Be sure to answer the "Think!" question at the bottom of the worksheet.

ECONOMY

CITY-STATE

TRADE

TRADE
IMPROVEMENTS

FACT:

FACT:

FACT:

THINK! How did trade make
each city-state's culture richer?

STATION 6

MATERIALS



Mesopotamia STATION 6

SOCIETY

I. Read about social classes in Mesopotamia.

The population in the city-states of Mesopotamia were divided into social classes. The most powerful class consisted of the king and nobility in the top upper class. A great king would enlarge the kingdom and make the city-state prosperous. Next in the social order were the upper class. These included the priests and priestesses. They ruled over the sacred aspects of daily life. Merchants, scribes and artisans were also in the upper class. These people held respectable and accomplished positions in the society. The middle class was made up of farmers and skilled workers. People in this class were responsible for keeping the city-state operating. The lowest class was made up of slaves.

The separation of people into social classes was a new development in human civilizations. While men usually had higher social positions than women, women in the higher social classes could gain power. For instance, some women were priestesses.

2. Cut out the people on the "Station 6 - People" handout.
3. Sort the professions into each section of the social class structure on your "Society" worksheet.
4. Glue each profession into place.
5. Color each social class and the people within the class a different color.
6. Answer the questions on your "Society" worksheet.
7. Be sure to answer the "Think!" question at the bottom of the worksheet.

STATION 6 PEOPLE

PRIESTS	FARMERS	SLAVES
SKILLED WORKERS	SCRIBES	MERCHANTS
ARTISANS	KING	PRIESTESSES

STATION 6 PEOPLE

PRIESTS	FARMERS	SLAVES
SKILLED WORKERS	SCRIBES	MERCHANTS
ARTISANS	KING	PRIESTESSES

STATION 6 PEOPLE

PRIESTS	FARMERS	SLAVES
SKILLED WORKERS	SCRIBES	MERCHANTS
ARTISANS	KING	PRIESTESSES

STATION 6 PEOPLE

PRIESTS	FARMERS	SLAVES
SKILLED WORKERS	SCRIBES	MERCHANTS
ARTISANS	KING	PRIESTESSES

STATION 6 PEOPLE

PRIESTS	FARMERS	SLAVES
SKILLED WORKERS	SCRIBES	MERCHANTS
ARTISANS	KING	PRIESTESSES

SOCIETY

How was the population of city-states divided?

Describe the positions of men and women in society.



THINK! In what social class would an architect belong in during Mesopotamia? Explain.