

The Fertile Crescent



The Fertile Crescent



ASIA MINOR

The area between the Tigris and Euphrates rivers is known as Mesopotamia.

TAURUS MOUNTAINS

Caspian Sea



Cyprus

Mediterranean Sea

MESOPOTAMIA

ZAGROS MOUNTAINS

Syrian Desert

Dead Sea

Sinai Peninsula

Arabian Peninsula

Persian Gulf

Fertile Crescent

Ancient coastline of Persian Gulf

Modern coastline

0 150 300 Miles

0 150 300 Kilometers

GEOGRAPHY SKILLS INTERPRETING MAPS

Movement In what general direction do the Tigris and Euphrates rivers flow on their way to the Persian Gulf?

The Fertile Crescent

- **Fertile Crescent**
 - Large arc of fertile farmland in the Middle East
- **Mesopotamia**
 - “Middle of the river area” “land between the rivers”
- **Tigris and Euphrates**
 - The two major rivers of Mesopotamia
- **Silt**
 - Makes the Fertile Crescent... fertile

The Fertile Crescent

- **Irrigation**
 - Bringing water to crops
- **Canals**
 - Man-made waterways for irrigation and trade
- **Surplus**
 - Extra food that can be stored or sold
- **Division of labor (specialization)**
 - Different people having different jobs

MAJOR CIVILIZATIONS

- Sumer
- Akkadian Empire
- Babylonian Empire
- Hittite Empire
- Kassite Empire
- Assyrian Empire
- Chaldean (Neo-Babylonian) Empire
- Phoenician Empire



Sumer

- Civilization formed along river banks ... Why?
- Silt made land fertile and allowed for permanent settlements
 - “Neolithic Revolution” made this possible
 - Agriculture
 - Domestication
- Had developed city-states by 3500 BC
- Lasted until about 1900 BC



City-States



City-States

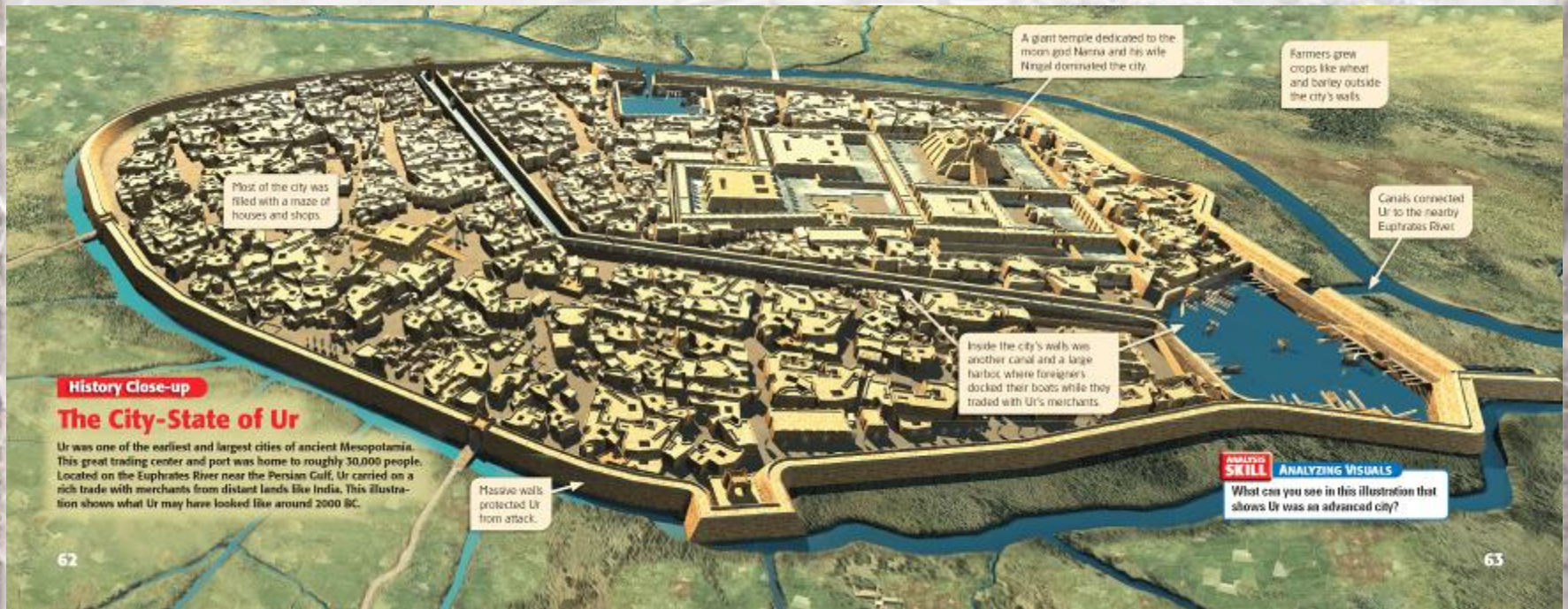
- **Rural vs. Urban**
 - Rural = countryside; Urban = city
- **City-state**
 - Consisted of a city and surrounding countryside
- Examples → **Kish, Uruk, Ur**
- Like an independent country
 - Laws, language, religion, military
- Ruled by a king (lugal)
 - **Lugal** = “the big man”



City-State of Ur

Click to view in Google Maps

[30°57'45.07"N 46° 6'9.85"E](#)



ل۷۹۲۱

- **Gilgamesh**

- King (lugal) of **Uruk**
- [31°19'12.00"N 45°37'48.00"E](#)
- What does this statue tell us about Gilgamesh?
What was the sculptor telling us?
 - Holding a lion and a snake (power)
 - Long beard (wisdom)
 - Propaganda !!!



Archaeologists think this statue from the 700s BC represents Gilgamesh.

RELIGION



RELIGION

- **Polytheistic**

- Many gods
- City gods; humanistic

- **Marduk**

- creator

- **Anu (Utu / Shamash)**

- sun god

- **Ishtar**

- goddess of love and war

- **Ba'al**

- fertility god



Religion

- **Priests**
 - Performed religious ceremonies
- **Ziggurats**
 - Temples; step-pyramid shaped



Social Hierarchy



Social Hierarchy

- **Social Hierarchy**
 - Division of society by rank or class (social classes)
- **King**
 - (*Lugal* – “the big man”) ruled a city-state
 - Chosen by gods to rule
- **Upper class**
 - Priests, government officials, scribes, landowners
- **Middle class**
 - Skilled workers, craftsmen, traders, farmers
- **Lower class**
 - Unskilled laborers, farm workers, slaves

ACHIEVEMENTS AND INVENTIONS



ADVANCES AND INVENTIONS

- **The Wheel**
 - Used for carts and wagons; potter's wheel; cars
- **The Plow**
 - Increased farm production
- **Science**
 - Names of animals, plants, and minerals
 - Medicines for healing and catalogued medical knowledge
- **Number system based on 60**
 - 60 sec., 60 min., 24 hour day, 360 degrees
 - [Babylonian Mathematics Video](#)

WRITING

Cuneiform

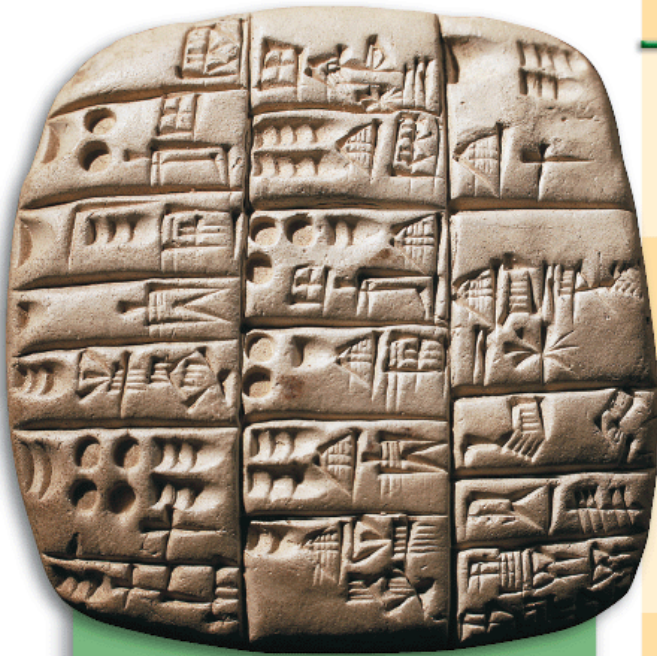
- World's first system of writing
- Cuneiform symbols could represent syllables. Earlier **pictographs** had represented only objects.
- The Sumerians wrote on clay tablets with a stylus.

Scribes

- Writers
- Kept track of items people traded and wrote down government records
- Scribes could move up in social class.






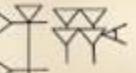







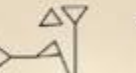





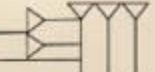






What they wrote

- Wrote works of literature, stories, proverbs, and songs
- Wrote poems about the gods and military victories.
- Created **epics**, long poems that tell the stories of heroes.



Sumerian writing developed from early symbols called pictographs. Writers used clay tablets to record business deals, like this tablet that describes a number of sheep and goats.

Development of Writing				
	3300 BC	2800 BC	2400 BC	1800 BC
Heaven				
Grain				
Fish				
Bird				
Water				

							
A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H
							
I	J	K	L	M	N	O	P
							
Q	R	S	T	U	V	W	X
							
		Y	Z				



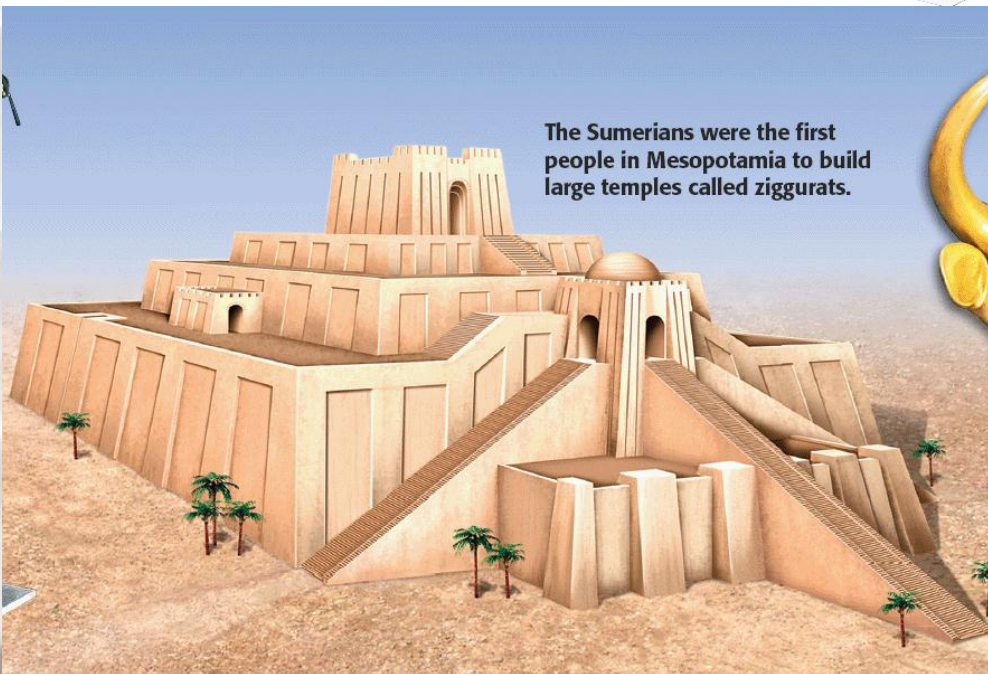
Sumerian Achievements

The Sumerians' artistic achievements included beautiful works of gold, wood, and stone.



Cylinder seals like this one were carved into round stones and then rolled over clay to leave their mark.

This stringed musical instrument is called a lyre. It features a cow's head and is made of silver decorated with shell and stone.



The Sumerians were the first people in Mesopotamia to build large temples called ziggurats.



This gold dagger was found in a royal tomb. The bull's head is made of gold and silver.



ANALYSIS SKILL

ANALYZING VISUALS

What animal is shown in two of these works?

THE EPIC OF GILGAMESH

- First recorded epic story
- **Gilgamesh**, king of Uruk
- Legendary hero; the flood
- [Read “The Epic of Gilgamesh”](#)



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